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Consumer-Led Brand Development for a University Athletics Program

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ABSTRACT

A foundational aspect of sports marketing is the study of how consumer relationships contribute to brand loyalty and behavior. A new baccalaureate university introduced intercollegiate athletics—and needed a process to define its distinctive brand assets and to select a brand name and brand mark. The qualitative and quantitative consumer-led process built brand loyalty using Gronroos' customer relationship model of external, internal and interactive marketing. A brand personality survey demonstrated significant differences in characteristics desired by different stakeholder groups. The benefits, challenges and implications of the consensus-building approach for practitioners are presented and the need for richer concepts and measures in this emerging research area identified.

INTRODUCTION

Sports marketing scholars work in a developing research field that is well positioned to capitalize on the dynamic interaction between the scholarship of discovery, integration, application and teaching. Specifically, integrative scholarship (incorporating work from other fields of study that elucidate key issues in sports marketing) and the scholarship of application (theory applied to practitioner decision-making) will create lively conversations that enrich both theory and practice (Boyer 1990). An extensively researched topic in sports marketing is the individual consumer's relationship with "the team/brand" and how it contributes to brand loyalty and brand support behaviors.

In this study, conceptual models and research from services marketing and sports marketing literature guided the design and implementation of a consumer-led process to identify the distinctive brand qualities a new university wanted to convey in its athletic branding. Quantitative and qualitative research methods yielded a richer understanding of the complexity of the fan base. The resulting mascot identity (name, colors and marks) and the level of community support indicated the approach was effective.

The benefits, challenges and implications of using a consensus-building process as a tool in brand development will be of interest to the practitioner and theoretician. The integration of theoretical constructs from the fields of sports marketing, service marketing and organizational behavior enrich

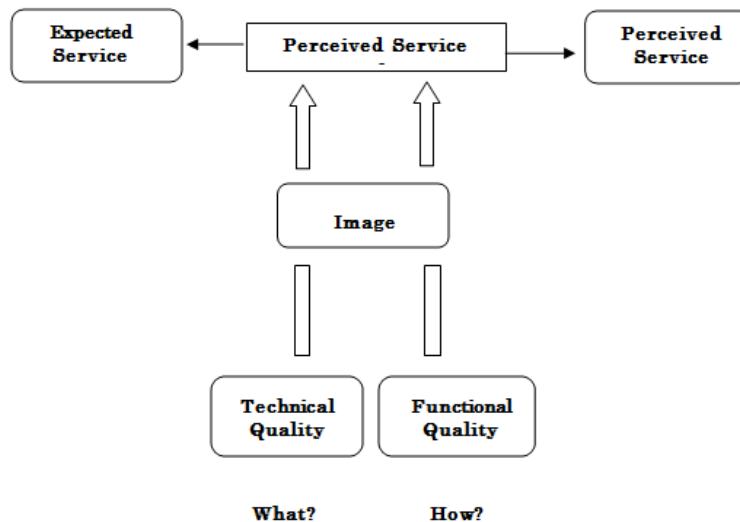
understanding of the applied problem and the managerial choices made to maximize benefit to the team and the university brand.

SERVICES MARKETING THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

“The pivotal difference between goods businesses and services businesses is that goods businesses sell things and service businesses sell performances.” Leonard Berry’s provocative comment explains quite simply why sports marketing can so easily draw upon the services marketing literature for models that drive research and practice (Berry, 1986:48).

Sport marketing addresses the marketing of intangibles. The customer experience includes both the instrumental or technical quality¹ of the product (did the athletes’ performances meet expectations? Was the view from the seat as expected?) and the functional or expressive quality² of the product (Were the service personnel pleasant? Did the announcer and cheerleaders create team spirit? Did I feel like a member of the “team family”?). Swan and Combs demonstrate that “satisfactory instrumental performance is a prerequisite for consumer satisfaction, but it is not enough. If the expressive performance of a service is not rated as satisfactory, the consumer will still feel unsatisfied.” Similarly, “a satisfied consumer will be more likely to mention expressive attributes, rather than instrumental attributes, as a reason for his satisfaction.” (Swan and Combs, 1976; Gronroos, 1984; empirically supported by Mels, Boshoff and Nel, 1997). Christian Gronroos argues for a model of service marketing that views image as a key third factor in consumer evaluation of service performance (Figure 1, Gronroos, 1984).

Figure 1
The Service Quality Model

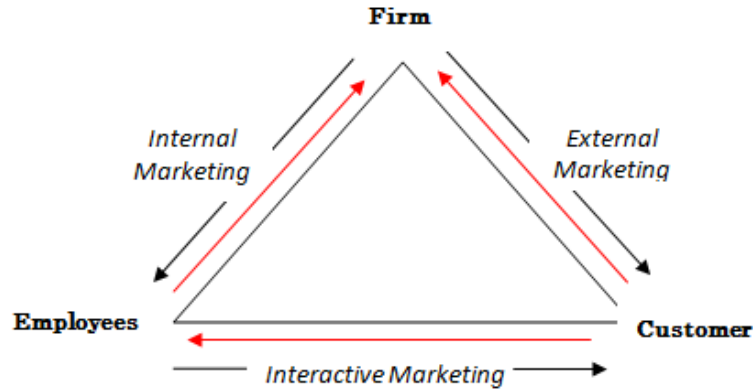


Berry challenges services marketers to be “power branders” (Berry, 1984). Since services and sports marketing “products” are largely intangible, symbols play a greater role in communicating and in meeting the consumer’s needs and objectives. The foundations of a sports team’s image are its brand name and mark—mascot name, colors and logo.

Gronroos also proposed that the *process* of services marketing is radically different from that of goods marketing. Service marketing requires three distinct, but integrated strategies: external,

internal and interactive marketing (Gronroos, 1984; Figure 2 in Kotler, 2009). *External marketing* describes the classic work to develop the product, price, distribution and promotion. *Internal marketing* describes the work to teach the messages and motivate employees to deliver the service brand promises. (Hauser, Simester and Wernerfelt, 1996; Greene, Walls and Schrest 1994). *Interactive marketing* is the process of sharing both the technical and the functional/expressive product during each customer interaction.

Figure 2:
Three Types of Marketing in Service Industries



Philip Kotler evaluated the internal/external/interactive marketing process conceptualization: “Gronroos’ model is one of the most thoughtful contributions to service marketing strategy” (Kotler, 2000: 453). Berry further advises service marketers to “market to employees and to existing customers,” arguing that the most important contribution the marketing department of a services firm can make is to be “exceptionally clever in getting everyone else in the organization to practice marketing” (Berry, 1988; see also Greene, Walls, and Schrest, 1994; Hauser, Simester, and Wernerfelt, 1996).

While the term ‘interactive’ suggests two way flows of information, Kotler’s model (black elements) did not depict these flows. External marketing in the branding study analyzed below was complemented by direct market research with consumers (reverse red arrow). Interactive marketing is made truly interactive when employees elicit customer feedback directly. Internal marketing is complemented by getting the employees involved in doing research on modifying the product and marketing elements (reverse red arrow).

The theory is powerful and intuitive but can it be implemented? Getting widespread involvement in the athletic identity development—a task that most team owners, marketers and graphic designers want to tightly control—seems unnecessary and risky. What if the different stakeholders disagree? What if they lead us in directions, we as owners and marketers don’t like? Yet, the theory argues that stakeholder engagement will make sports marketing strategies more successful. Can these theoretical notions guide an athletic branding project, without sacrificing design quality or alienating a stakeholder group whose preferences are not represented in the final choice?

SCHOLARSHIP OF INTEGRATION AND APPLICATION

In his monograph defining the range of faculty work needed “to reflect more realistically the full range of academic and civic mandates” in the modern university, Boyer proposed that universities

acknowledge faculty work in the scholarship of discovery, integration, application and teaching. Case studies particularly contribute to integration and application. Integration "builds connections across disciplines, places specialties in a larger context...(by) doing research in the boundaries where fields converge.... New intellectual understandings come out of the very act of application...theory and practice vitally interact and one renews the other" (Boyer 1990: 19,23).

Consistently scholars have challenged sports marketing researchers to develop "a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice" using the "scholarship of application [to create] a synthesis of the scholarships of discovery, integration and teaching" (Parks 1992: 221,227. See also Pitts, 2002). In response to that call, this study emerges from the realism and complexity of an applied problem; the solution is guided by theory and research from sports marketing, services marketing and organizational behavior.

SPORTS MARKETING RESEARCH

Sports Branding Research

Athletic brand management "involves the design and the implementation of marketing programs and activities to build, measure and manage brand equity" (Keller, 2003, p. 44). This study addresses the first two steps, establishing brand positioning (Ries and Trout, 2001) then planning and implementing brand-marketing programs.

The conceptual frameworks for building brand equity in sports marketing contexts posit an important role for the naming and visual identity elements of a team's branding. Aaker (1991, 1996) discusses equity in terms of the particular brand associations (positive or negative) connected to the brand name, logo or mark (Austin, Siquaw and Mittila 2003; Ross, James and Vargas, 2006). Gladden, Milne and Sutton (1998) and Kaynak, Salman and Tatoglu (2008) consider the name and visual symbols in their model as "brand associations." Keller (2003) considers the name and marks as "nonproduct related attributes" that describe the "brand personality," thereby building brand image (Braunstein and Ross, 2010). Gladden and Funk (2002) indicate that the retrieval of brand associations is strengthened with a logo. Hence, the scholars agree that the brand name and mark serve as a foundation for defining the brand and a focus for accumulating subsequent brand associations. These associations, in turn, build fan loyalty and create brand equity value.

Most research on athletic team identities has focused on the effectiveness of name and marks already in place, rather than development of an athletic brand identity in an athletics start-up situation (Biehal and Sheinin (1998), Schoenfeld (1998), Gladden and Milne (1998), Gladden and Funk, 2001). In their study of fans already highly committed to a particular professional sports team, Gladden and Funk (2001) hypothesize that "brand associations would be stronger for new and non-committed individuals." The development of a fan base for a newly formed athletics program and its teams addresses this question directly.

Sports Supporter Identification With Team Personality

One explanation of how brand associations lead to brand loyalty uses social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982). Rinehart (1998) argues that for a team or franchise to become accepted the fans must "identify with," or build some form of psychological and/or emotional connection with the team, a sense of belonging to the group (James and Ross, 2002; James, Kolbe and Trail, 2002; Wann, 1997; Wann and Branscombe, 1990; Judson and Carpenter, 2005; McAlexander, Shouten and Koenig, 2002; Muniz and O'Quinn, 2001).

Gladden and Funk (2001) found that identification was the factor most predictive of team loyalty, and cited Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn (1995) in recommending that to reinforce fan identification,

"the sport organization...adopt a customer-oriented focus." A "consumer-led" approach that integrates the prospective fans into each decision stage of brand name and brand mark development might enhance fan identification and support behaviors.

Even further, James, Kolbe and Trail (2002) conclude that individuals can develop a strong psychological connection to a team without actually experiencing the sporting event or being directly involved with the team (Alexander, 2008). The distinctive setting of this study, a university building consumer identification with a new athletics program that did not yet have teams in competition--provides a qualitative test of their hypothesis.

Mixed Research Method Approach

Recent reviews of the sports management literature indicate that few studies have combined qualitative and quantitative methods, although mixed method approaches can improve validity and causal inference (Rudd and Johnson, 2010). Because brand associations are largely unconscious, non-verbal, and difficult to elicit, using mixed methods approaches is viewed as important by Ross, Bang and Lee (2007) and Heere (2010). The mixed research method approach reported herein begins to address this gap.

FROM THEORY TO ACTION: THE CONSUMER-LED MARKETING PARADIGM

Context

A small (1500 student) campus of the state's flagship public university changed its role and mission from a two year campus to an independent, baccalaureate university in 2004. In that same year, it opened a new 200 acre site and began a period of rapid growth in academic programs and enrollment. During the 1960's and 70's, the two year school had intermittently competed in regional intercollegiate athletics leagues in a few sports as the "Pirates." However, there was no strong institutional memory or commitment to the earlier, informal athletic program and its symbols. In 2007, the university joined the NAIA and began fielding its first teams in the Sun Conference.

The university marketing challenges were twofold: to create an athletic identity that would enhance the visibility and recognition of the athletic teams--and boost the new university's developing brand platform. "Universities must work both hard and smart to build themselves as brands...to link themselves with that in which people take pride, with what they value as a society and with what they consider to be distinctive, central and enduring (Toma, 2003:196; see also Digis, 2004). The two project deliverables were (1) visual tools to convey the new athletic identity--a brand name, e.g. the "mascot" name of the university athletic program, brand colors, and brand marks (logos) (Shank, 2005) and (2) a group of committed supporters from many different university and community groups who would serve as brand apostles for the new mascot and the teams it would represent (Veldre, 2007).

The leaders consciously chose a consensus-based, research-driven athletic identity development process to develop the visual brand marks and to build a strong emotional connection with the community, respect the student, faculty and staff perspectives and build support for the branding and the athletic teams through inclusiveness. The project involved key stakeholders—faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, and media partners. It was implemented in three phases: (1) Mascot/brand name and colors selection; (2) Athletic brand mark development; (3) Formal adoption of the new athletic identity by the university and community. (See McGee 2008 for detailed process description.)

CHALLENGES TO THEORY IMPLEMENTATION

Customer relationship marketing theory assumes that relationships will deepen naturally through improved communication. However, closer communication can often reveal significant differences in goals, values and perceptions. In this practical application, significant differences in stakeholder preferences, power and influence challenged the implementation of the theory. Specifically, design preference differences between stakeholders, conflicting beliefs regarding leadership styles, and stakeholders outside the organization with unusual levels of expert and reward power potentially could de-rail the branding process.

Quantitative research indicated preference differences amongst stakeholder groups, which could lead to difficulty in the collaborative process. The 282 respondents to a nine item, online survey including both open ended and multiple item responses, demonstrated extreme variance in opinions regarding the desired brand personality. For example,

- One of the university's branding strengths is its connection to its geographic region. However, while 87% of faculty respondents felt the mascot should be "related to the geographic region," only 64% of students agreed.
- Good management practice indicated that the university would be best served if the resulting brand mark demonstrated racial, gender and ethnic neutrality. However, only 55% of the respondents agreed with this statement in the survey.
- Overall, the character of the new athletic image was preferred to be "proud" (54%), "aggressive" (39%), "tough" (36%) and "active" (35%). However, students were more likely to suggest "aggressive" than other respondent groups. Faculty and staff more often chose "active" and "friendly." Community and friends were more likely to suggest "tough."
- Survey respondents on average selected 2.2 adjectives to describe their preferred athletic artwork style. Taken together, the responses strongly emphasized "collegiate" (43%), "classic" (21%), "traditional" (21%) and "stylized" (22%). Students as a distinct subset expressed more support for "cartoonish" and "modern." Faculty chose "modern," more often than other respondent groups.

Conflicting Leadership Styles

The key influencer/internal customer, the athletic director, had little marketing experience, strong preferences and a directive, decision-oriented style. Letting this leader "lead," while also encouraging all stakeholders to actively participate in the exploratory process of finding consensus, was a challenge in implementing the customer-focused process.

Stakeholders with Unusual Reward or Expert Power

Community leaders recruited for the athletic director-led sub-committees were not always supportive of the directions chosen by the larger group. As the model suggests, commitment to the model's process by the most invested participants and individual relationship building activities—listening, building trust, and referring back to the overall criteria—were vital. The only negative internal stakeholder response was blocking behavior by a university executive committee member who chose not to participate in the development process, and then did not support the implementation strategy.

STRATEGIC PROCESS DESIGN DECISIONS

Build a Broad Stakeholder Base

Reaching out to identify and listen to as many relevant stakeholders as possible to create a broad and inclusive university and community conversation was accomplished early on. Even prior to the announcement of the intercollegiate athletics program start-up, media were recruited as partners in the mascot choice discussion. Media partners helped lead the process by writing editorials and feature articles that drew attention to the mascot choice, beginning the day the athletics program was announced. Media encouraged community members to share their ideas by completing a nine-item online survey the marketing lead placed on the new university athletics website.

Create Shared Criteria for Success

Early in the project, the marketing lead proposed and gained consensus on three criteria³ that the brand name and mark would meet. These criteria united and aligned the many different committees and sub-committees during the nine month process :

Strong for athletics. The 282 online survey respondents defined the desired athletic image for the new university as "proud, aggressive, tough, active."

Represents university's coastal service region. 75% of the survey respondents rated this criterion as important. The construct was defined by the steering committee as *environment*, a distinctively beautiful and fragile natural setting of tidal rivers, marshes and beaches inhabited by diverse wildlife; *history*, one of the earliest regions of the US settled by Europeans; *international resort community*; *dynamic, growing region*.

Strengthens the university's new baccalaureate identity. The steering committee adopted the marketing lead's proposal that the athletic identity must support the ongoing definition of the university's brand personality—as powerfully stated in university buildings: strong, enduring, visionary/forward looking. The image must communicate nationally *and* resonate in the hearts and minds of local citizens.

RESULTS

Brand Name, Colors and Mark

From over 150 brand names proposed, "Sand Sharks" was selected. This mascot met the criteria: (1) strong, aggressive, tough and proud for athletics, (2) representative of our environmentally sensitive coastal region, (3) strong, visionary, forward-looking in its sleek, flexible shape. The sand shark conveys the coastal location and university's bold aspirations, yet touches the hearts and minds of local citizens who catch "sand sharks" on family fishing trips. The colors also met the criteria—blue for the waters that surround the sea island environment; sand for the beaches and the color of the university's "Charleston grey brick" buildings; and garnet, the brand color of the system's flagship campus, to represent strong ties with the state university system. (The Sand Shark Identity Guide, Rickabaugh and McGee (2009), displays the marks and colors.)

Increased Community Support

Based on Gronroos' theory of employee and consumer involvement in the marketing of services, an inclusive process was utilized to engage employees and other stakeholders of relevance, with the expectation that if they were leaders in the decision process, they would take on leadership roles in supporting the adoption of the new athletic identity—e.g. they would engage in interactive marketing. This proved overwhelmingly true:

a) *The communications team leapt at the opportunity, developing a "pre-announcement" marketing campaign to build excitement.* The campaign theme borrowed an element from

the new image and teased people to come see how this element would be part of a new tradition. The student newspaper ran a full page ad using the poster design. Media were teased with weekly electronic invitations using the same graphic (McGee and West, 2008).

b) *All members of the expanded implementation committee led aspects of the unveiling and adoption ceremonies.* On the Historic Beaufort campus, the student lounge was repainted in the new school colors and the athletic identity painted on one wall—to be unveiled by the chancellor and athletic director in front of an overflow crowd. On the Hilton Head Gateway campus, the unveiling event featured 40 foot banners and a giant logo banner unrolled by the chancellor and athletic director. The graphic designer and a faculty member from another institution with unique expertise in sharks traveled significant distances to attend, giving up personal time to attend (Video documentation; McGee, 2008).

c) *The senior class* made its gift the sponsorship of a shark at the South Carolina Aquarium.

d) *Members of student government and athletic teams* were a key element of the adoption ceremony. They came to the front of the audience to receive the first Sand Shark logo shirts—thereby symbolizing their adoption of the new athletic/campus life identity and their commitment to build meaning behind it.

(e) *Campus life staff enthusiastically adopted the mascot*—hosted lunch with Sand Shark cups, napkins, and cookies and offered rides down a giant “shark slide” that provided a huge, colorful backdrop to the adoption event.

(f) *The 500 “Were you there?” T shirts designed by campus life staff* was exhausted within 15 minutes of the ceremony’s completion.

(h) *Campus life staff created and led “Sand Shark Week”*—dedicated to mascot themed events, including a spirit bonfire and dinner, chalk art contest, a movie and lunchtime “build a shark” activities (McGee and Torborg, 2008).

External Impact

Attendance at unveilings was larger than any campus public event to date. Media coverage included TV and radio from a two state area and extensive front page and top half of the sports page coverage in three newspapers—more than ever achieved by a single event in the university’s history. Requests flooded in for stationery and business cards, campus life publications, and bookstore merchandise. Local editors pulled the logo onto the front page of the paper and sports writers immediately began integrating the logo suite into articles. The Sand Shark brand clearly enhanced the visibility and recognition of the athletic program and the university.

Branding Program Costs

The entire project, including two major adoption events, was completed on budget and on time—at roughly the cost of hiring a more expensive design consulting firm who would have listened to 15-18 individuals in a day-long session, then sent ideas back for small group review. In contrast, the process engaged over 120 key internal and external consumer “experts” on the region and the university—and developed them as “brand apostles” and more skilled, effective marketers.

Conclusions

In the judgment of the chancellor and athletic director—who initially proposed a quick interview with a designer and a mascot ready to unveil in two months—the consensus based, collaborative process speeded adoption of the logo by internal and external stakeholders.

The study implemented Gronroos' external/internal/interactive services model, which proved useful to the practitioner who guided the branding process. Engaging the prospective "team family" in the decision-making process (red and black directional processes in the model, Figure 2) enhanced the quality of the brand marks and the engagement of the team family. Those individuals who perceived themselves as part of the decision took risks, led adoption activities, identified with the outcomes and built the brand community. Specific implications for practitioners planning to use the approach are summarized in Table 1.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The research is limited by its unit of analysis—a single university study. However, the development process itself incorporated both quantitative and qualitative assessments and multiple level, repetitive stakeholder group reviews.

The project deliverables were (1) a design that met the criteria and (2) an increased level of community commitment to the athletic program. Obtaining some self-report assessments of both deliverables from the process participants would strengthen the findings. In their review of the past decade of customer relationship management literature, Boulding, Staelin, Ehret and Johnston (2005) acknowledge that appropriate “measures of relevance” for “stakeholders of relevance” need to be developed. For example, asking participants or a panel of experts to evaluate the brand development process, to estimate the expected adoption rate, and to estimate the expected purchases of logo items under this and an alternate development scenario could measure the relative effectiveness of the three distinct stages of the process.

Measuring the stated and behavioral commitment (e.g. budget and time invested) of the team members in the months leading up to the announcement/adoption event would be an effective measure of internal marketing achieved by the process. Testing different “scenarios” and elements of the process might be done using a more controlled laboratory setting—using video and observer-respondent evaluations of the degree to which participants felt they shaped the decision (McGee, 1989).

FUTURE RESEARCH

A subsequent study might compare the brand personality defined by the development process with the perceptions of university and community stakeholders after the athletic teams have been in competition for several years. The methodology implemented by Heere (2010), in which the marketing manager's intentions are measured against the consumers' perceptions might serve as a model.

Future studies might look to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) research and constructs. Organ observed the difference between dependable role behaviors and “innovative and spontaneous behaviors” and defined an OCB as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization...not an enforceable requirement of the job description, rather a matter of personal choice” (Organ, 1988:4). Sports marketers are dependent on employees and volunteers (fans) to “carry the banner” for their brand to others. Hence, the marketing context of this study might be used to test the OCB researchers' suggestion that strong links will exist between the high level of task identity, task significance, and task autonomy and the incidence of organizational citizenship behaviors. (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach, 2000). For example, the

propensity of the individuals included in the brand development to take risks *voluntarily* to further the brand adoption by others (speaking positively about the brand, attending the adoption event, wearing the brand, using the brand in their communications, etc.) might be measured.

A second area of future research would address the cost/benefits of a tightly controlled, centralized brand development process versus the more open and time consuming customer relationship enhancing process presented in this case study. Measures of such a study would need to incorporate not only time and organizational resources used, but the effect on the organization's culture—levels of trust, sense of ownership of the brand and willingness to take risks in future projects—amongst the branding team members.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING PRACTITIONERS

Based on the study, the author offers six observations for marketing practitioners.

- 1. Direct the process at the conceptual level.** Act as brand archeologist and brand curator for the steering committee: propose and get team commitment to project goals and brand distinctive strengths/competencies/assets the name and mark should represent very early in the group formation process. These commitments will be tested when faced with conflicting research inputs. (See "shared criteria for success" above.)
- 2. Visibly offer an open customer listening posture.** Have fun with your stakeholders--to get them involved--and include your media partners. Use multiple qualitative and quantitative methods to capture the voice of each stakeholder who wants to be involved--through the medium they want to communicate. In the decision process described in this case, every "other" step was a review sent to a larger group than the steering committee--quantitative survey, qualitative review, focus groups, etc.
- 3. Build commitment to the process and sense of community.** Hold fast to the conceptual criteria and let the group apply them to the decisions at hand, in order of decreasing importance: name/colors/design elements/final design/"finishing touches." The process itself is an outcome--a team-building exercise that will energize the consumers around this and future marketing opportunities.
- 4. Go slow...to go fast.** Use iterative processes to give stakeholders time to accept the decision and to prepare for the next step in the process. The process began with broad based data collection, then cut to 100 feasible options/10 options/three options. The "name and colors" decision was announced midway to keep enthusiasm and interest high. Designs were developed in three iterations, sent to focus groups that included new participants, as well as steering and sub-committee members. At each stage, steering committee members went back to their stakeholder groups for explanation and further input on the next decision. The goal is to create brand apostles through respectful consideration of each person's input.
- 5. Position the consultant to lead in his areas of expertise.** The consultant for the project was the principal of a small, independent design firm focusing on branding and athletic identity development for universities. He spent time getting to know the campus and the branding team, developed the survey in conjunction with the university marketing lead, led the design process, attended all major meetings in person or by phone, and chaired sections of key design meetings. He led all sessions on design details, which took the branding leader out of contentious discussions that were less critical to the outcome.
- 6. Keep the boss in the loop.** Most strong leaders of entrepreneurial ventures know their product and are strong communicators. So, they often believe they "know" the answer to branding questions.

They may be frustrated that the marketing lead will not just "get on with it." Get up-front agreement to a thoughtfully designed process that builds emotional commitment to the new image--and honors the CEO's trust with regular updates.

THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: MARKETING PARADIGM SHIFT

This study is set in the context of a much larger paradigm shift in marketing. The shift of focus from the marketing mix tool kit approach to the customer relationship paradigm argues for a new definition of marketing: "Marketing is to establish, maintain and enhance...relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by mutual exchange and fulfilled promises." (Gronroos, 1990: 138; 1994). This paradigm should be very comfortable for sports marketing researchers and practitioners, as it supports the marketing management concept (McGee, 1988), but focuses on an integrative/networked/brand community approach well suited to sports marketing contexts.

This case analysis demonstrates a mixed-research method, customer-led brand development process and presents new measurement challenges. Building the brand with consumer input will require measures of relationship quality, partner objectives, mutual exchange and fulfilled promises.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Swan and Combs used the terms "technical" and "functional."
- ² This two factor structure for quality in service products was subsequently supported by Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1985) who referred to *physical* and *interactive* qualities. In a meta-analysis in which multiple sets of data across industries and countries were analyzed, Mels, Boshoff and Nel (1997) challenged Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's empirical evidence that service quality is better measured by five dimensions. Mels et. al. isolated two factors which they called "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" and noted that they were conceptually tied very closely to the two factor models proposed by Lehtinen and Lehtinen and Gronroos.
- ³ These three major criteria were repeatedly cited by committee members during the process. Other criteria included: racial, gender and ethnically neutral; unique among sports teams—no local, regional or NAIA conference overlap; visual characteristics of mascot will lead to powerful design options; name conveys powerfully as spoken word in events and radio contexts.

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