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Social Marketing as a Catalyst for Building New Relationships between Sport Practitioners and Academicians

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ABSTRACT

Social marketing, conceptualized by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) as a means to promote social objectives and causes more effectively, has the potential to be the catalyst for addressing the disparity and creating positive perceptions. Social marketing is a significant means to address communication, conceptualization, and intellectual gaps between groups, which often results in clarifying differences in product and value outcomes; and the need for change and shifts in paradigms associated with practitioner-academician interaction (Hanna, 2001). Primary and secondary research conducted showed that there is fragmentation within the sport industry between academicians and practitioners, resulting in a large intellectual gap. It was evident that a majority of practitioners understood the concepts of research and consumer behavior, but do not understand how to utilize these concepts in the application of promotions, advertising, and sponsorship. There also seemed to be differences based on the divergence of beliefs between sociological theorists who look at the big picture and marketers who only look at the application aspect. These findings led to the determination that there is a need for further analysis of theoretical research and application methods related to this interaction between academicians and practitioners. Through the analysis of documented research and current best practices, the goal is to help understand the disparities between academia and practitioners and provide a conduit that would serve as a catalyst to create real change in the sport industry.

INTRODUCTION

Social marketing, conceptualized by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) as a means to promote social objectives and causes more effectively, has the potential to be the catalyst for addressing the disparity and creating positive perceptions. Social marketing is a significant means to address communication, conceptualization, and intellectual gaps between groups, which often results in

clarifying differences in product and value outcomes; and the need for change and shifts in paradigms associated with practitioner-academician interaction (Hanna, 2001).

In 2008, a roundtable of academicians and sport practitioners discussed the interaction of sociological theory and management sciences to identify the trends and issues that will affect the future of the sport industry. The discussion centered on five areas - the relationship between intangible and tangible forms of capital; the intellectual conflict and academic divide created by the divergent views of marketing and sociological theory; the connection between concepts of “brand equity” and “sense of community”; the association between traditional marketing and lifestyle marketing; and the correlation relationships and experiences in customer management.

The information collected from this roundtable showed that there is fragmentation within the sport industry between academicians and practitioners, resulting in a large intellectual gap. It was evident that a majority of practitioners understood the concepts of research and consumer behavior in a generic sense, but do not understand how to utilize these concepts effectively within the real world model of their application of promotions, advertising, and sponsorship. In addition, there seemed to be significant differences between practitioners and academicians based on the divergence of beliefs between sociological theorists who look at the big picture and marketers who only look at the application aspect. These findings led to the determination that there is a need for further analysis of theoretical research and application methods related to this interaction between academicians and practitioners. Through the analysis of documented research and current best practices, the goal is to help understand the disparities between academia and practitioners and provide a conduit that would serve as a catalyst to create real change in the sport industry.

CONCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

A roundtable entitled “The Interaction of Sociological Theory and Management Science: Trends and Issues in College Sports Affecting the Future of Sport Marketing” (Schwarz, 2008) was held at the College Sports Research Institute’s Inaugural Scholarly Conference on College Sports. This roundtable was comprised of academicians and sport practitioners, and discussed the interaction of sociological theory and management sciences to identify the trends and issues that will affect the future of the sport industry. One of the areas of discussion was “the intellectual conflict and academic divide created by the divergent views of marketing and sociological theory” (Schwarz, 2008). Through that discussion, it became clear that the over-arching dilemma for academicians and practitioners to overcome is an inability to overcome numerous intellectual conflicts. These conflicts serve as the conceptual questions for this paper.

1. What are the causes of the communication and conceptualization gaps between academicians and practitioners?
2. What is the rationale for the conflict between the intellectual nature of the academic perspective and the applied realities of the practical perspective?
3. Are there significant differences in the problem resolution processes between academicians and practitioners?
4. Are there fundamental differences in "product outcomes" and “value systems” between academicians and practitioners?
5. What are the reasons for the inability to change and/or shift paradigms between the academic and practical perspectives?
 1. What is the origin of the perceived lack of respect between academicians and practitioners?

The results of this analysis have the opportunity to expand the body of knowledge regarding academician-practitioner relationships in the sport industry. The goal is to help understand the disparities between academia and practitioners, and provide a conduit that would serve as a catalyst to create real change in the sport industry by minimizing these misperceptions.

UNDERSTANDING THE DISPARITY

There is a considerable lack of harmony and synchrony between thinking in the academy and developments in the professional world – and in general this is bad for both theorists and practitioners (O’Driscoll and Murray, 1998). A common perception among practitioners is that theory emanates from the fabled “ivory tower” – however without a foundation in theory, practice would be based more on hunches than logic...hence practice needs academics, and academics need feedback from practitioners in order to alter and fine tune their paradigms (Nataraajan, Henthorne, and LaTour, 1998). However, there continues to be a weak link between academicians and practitioners that needs to be strengthened through better networking between the parties, such as (1) encouraging both academicians and practitioners to be involved with local organizations such as sports commissions and community groups; (2) creating interactions through the establishment of social media and other computer networks; (3) having academicians create advisory boards for their programs, and (4) inviting practitioners to be members that provide input; and developing contracted, cooperative academic-practitioner projects so the groups have the opportunity to work together (Caldwell and Dorling, 1995).

This communication and conceptualization gap seems to be focused on academics considering theories to be the bedrock of scientific research, while many business practitioners find them esoteric and difficult to understand (Schneberger, Pollard, and Watson, 2005). Additionally, academicians often recognize the "value", need and connections of theory to practice, but practitioners appear to view this as a distraction to getting their jobs done. As a result, there continues to be a major "barrier" to mutual understanding. Previous discussions on these issues have often framed theories and research in terms of either rigor or relevance—with little middle ground for academics and practitioners to meet. Research maintains theories are useful to academics and practitioners, and that it is essential for both parties to take advantage of the characteristics and usefulness of theories (Schneberger, Pollard, and Watson, 2005). However, the reality shows that the interface between academicians and practitioners struggles to find a middle ground as a result of not conversing in the same terms. In addition to the thinking processes being different, conceptualizations tend to be polarized.

In the field of law enforcement, a study conducted by Caldwell and Dorling (1995) asked two significant questions: “(1) are those who teach and do research in colleges and universities (academicians) out of touch with the realities of what goes on in the ‘real world?; and (2) are those who work in that real world (practitioners) so wrapped up in their job that they cannot see the big picture of what effects their actions have on that world?” These two questions are central to the communication and conceptualization gap between academicians and practitioners. The results of the research showed the following: (1) some practitioners felt that academicians have disdain for practitioners; (2) practitioners feel that academicians did not communicate with practitioners often enough, and when they do – they do not listen; (3) practitioners feel that academicians are too theoretical and lacked contact with the real world; and (4) academicians feel practitioners were reluctant to reach out to academicians (Caldwell & Dorling, 1995). It seems that as a result in the differences in the problem resolution processes, product outcomes, and value systems, between academicians and practitioners, a lack of trust and respect has developed that has resulted in an inability to change and inhibited shifts in paradigms. Basically, if academicians and practitioners do not trust and respect each other, then how can they work together?

PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCESS

Both academicians and practitioners are concerned about problem resolutions in terms of outcomes and benefits, however there are significant differences in the problem resolution processes. From the 2008 panel discussion, it would appear that academicians often consider the theoretical basis of problem resolution for outcomes and benefits, whereas practitioners tend to be more concerned about the practical outcomes and benefits that resolve problems (Schwarz, 2008). Therefore there is a need to look at the similarity and differentiation of these problem resolutions. One way to analyze these problem resolutions are in terms of the intellectual nature of efforts versus realities (Handley, 2005;

Macduff & Netting, 2000). An additional method for considering these problem resolutions would be to investigate the differences in product outcomes and the disparity in value systems (Baldrige, Floyd, and Markoczy, 2004).

The Intellectual Nature of Efforts versus Realities

There is a significant barrier to problem resolution when one individual or group does not believe in the other. In many industries, and especially the sport industry, there is a belief that academicians have the easy life – they pursue their theories and concepts behind closed doors to the “real world”, they bring real world experiences to the future leaders of the industry through the classroom based on past experiences or hearsay (rather than current reality), and have more time on their hands for a life outside of work as compared to the practitioner (Handley, 2005). The reality is that academicians, while they may appear to have more free time than practitioners, actually spend as significant time engaging in their research and teaching, which requires a significant amount of self-discipline, time management, and similar requirements (albeit on a slightly different time scale) for moving up within the academic organization (promotion and tenure) (Handley, 2005). In addition, the need to network on a constant basis and supplement past experiences and research with current, real-world connections and realities are becoming more of the norm in academia (Handley, 2005).

This is why there seems to be a need for academicians and practitioners to align their efforts and realities via collaboration. Traditionally, the most dominant forms of collaboration between academicians and practitioners were grounded in rigidly structured hierarchical models, driven by highly specific goals, and carried out by people conforming to clearly defined and delineated roles (Macduff & Netting, 2000). The reality is that collaboration has shifted in the 21st century to include (1) multiple considerations including building of trust, following through on promises of task completion, and seeking order through quality communication and relationship building (relational considerations); (2) recognition of different organizational and professional cultures as related to collaborative practice, interdisciplinary relationships, and interprofessional teaming (philosophical considerations); (3) the desire to work together (organizational considerations); and (4) the compatibility in the way the groups work together (political and ethical considerations) (Macduff & Netting, 2000). One can find this paradigm shift in higher education itself, with increasing demands among faculty to work collaboratively in developing multidisciplinary programs of study. One example of this shift is apparent in the sport marketing field, where business and sport marketing disciplines are forging joint degree programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Differences in "Product Outcomes" and Value Systems

Academia thrives and survives on articulating and dissecting issues in our academic pursuits - conference presentations, manuscript generation and publication, data collection and analysis, and testing questions/hypotheses associated with such exercises (thinkers and dreamers), whereas practitioners are focused on problem solving and revenue generation (the doers) (Schwarz, 2008). One of the best descriptions of this conflict in outcomes and values comes from Baldrige, Floyd, and Markoczy (2004) where they investigate the question “Are managers from Mars and academicians from Venus?” In this study, they investigate the relationship between academic quality and practical relevance, and how that information can be understood by both sides. The results of their study showed (1) a positive correlation between an expert panel’s assessment of practical relevance and an objective measure of academic quality; and (2) a positive correlation between the expert panels’ a posteriori assessments of interestingness and justification and a priori judgments of global relevance (Baldrige, Floyd, and Markoczy, 2004). However, while these results lend support for creating compatible outcomes and values, the reality was that the magnitude of the overlap between academic quality and practical relevance was fairly small (Baldrige, Floyd, and Markoczy, 2004). The result of this inability to find a middle ground has resulted in an inability to change and the continued notion that “we have always done it this way, so why change?” As a result, this inhibits paradigm shifts, which stifles creative solution generation to problems. The inability to “walk in someone else’s shoes” may contribute to paranoia of not trusting each other, especially among

practitioners, who appear skeptical of “academic analysts” offering innovative ways to enhance the "value" of practice in the sport industry.

Hope for the Future?

According to Burton (Robinson, 2008), practitioners in the sport industry are starting to recognize the importance of collaboration with academicians, which is evident in practitioners hiring academicians as consultants to conduct specific research to explain the theoretical concept of why something works in such a way. One example is at Saint Leo University in Florida, where the sport business faculty and students have been commissioned to collaborate on projects with practitioner partners including conducting economic impact analysis for the Under 16 Youth World Cup for the International Softball Federation; completing a risk management plan and audit for both an international sport federation and a municipal parks and recreation program; and developing sales and promotions plans for both minor league baseball teams and an NHL franchise. Another example is at West Virginia University, where they have partnered with ESPN to create a one-of-a-kind ESPN Sports Poll class, and the program has provided marketing research and data-mining consultant experiences for NBA, MLB, and NHL franchises.

While it may take another generation before this reality is truly understood, there seems to be some guidance the sport industry can take from professionals in the field of transportation and logistics as to how to effectively connect academicians and practitioners. Researchers tend to emphasize an applied orientation to research (Hanna, 2001; Murphy & Poist, 1994) that can be useful to practitioners. In this model, academicians and practitioners appear to recognize the synergy between basic and applied research, creating a partnership between the two that allows for academic research to be effectively applied to the business environment faced by practitioners (Hanna, 2001). This goes beyond the traditional internship and experiential learning models, it expands to industry collaborations and partnerships where research conducted by academicians is relevant and useful to practitioners, and practitioners partner in the process by directly communicating their needs to academicians. To enhance this direct communication, academicians need to either reduce the amount of statistical explanation of research or take the statistical results and explain them in an applied orientation. By showing practitioners in an applied orientation, they can see the benefits of the academicians work in a more direct and clear manner, which in turn can build the necessary respect and trust between both. As a result, this will allow the practitioner to take the results from research about logistical concepts, analytical tools, and organizational procedures necessary for operations and apply them in day to day operations and long term strategic planning (Hanna, 2001).

CLOSING THE INTELLECTUAL GAP AND CREATING POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS – THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MARKETING

The need to recognize the disparity caused by the intellectual gap between sport industry practitioners and academicians has necessitated the creation of a conduit to minimize the misperceptions between both groups. Social marketing, conceptualized by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) as a means to promote social objectives and causes more effectively, has the potential to be the catalyst for addressing the disparity and creating positive perceptions. Social marketing was originally described as “a promising framework for planning and implementing social change” (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971, p. 3); and has evolved to be defined as “the use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon a behavior for the benefit of individuals, groups, or society as a whole” (Kotler, Roberto and Lee, 2002, p. 5).

Social marketing is a significant means to address communication, conceptualization, and intellectual gaps between groups, which often results in clarifying differences in product and value outcomes; and the need for change and shifts in paradigms associated with practitioner-academician interaction (Hanna, 2001). The ultimate goal is to determine how to eliminate the perceived mutual lack of respect between sport marketing academicians and sport industry practitioners. This begs the question as to how social marketing can be a catalyst and conduit for change that will enhance

discipline and industry benefits in sport marketing and be mutually beneficial to both practitioners and academicians.

Social Marketing as a Catalyst and Conduit for Change

Building on the conclusions drawn from the roundtable discussion at the 2008 Collegiate Sport Research Institute's (CSRI) Inaugural Scholarly Conference on College Sport, the authors made a complementary presentation at the 2009 CSRI Conference entitled "College Sports Marketing as a Catalyst to Connecting Social and Management Theory/Practice". The underlying theme of the presentation was to suggest that intercollegiate athletics may serve as the ideal segment of the sport industry to "bridge the intellectual and professional gap" between practitioners and academicians, as athletics simultaneously exists in a sport business and academic environment. Yet, even if college sports provided a suitable industry segment to provide the bridge in theory, what requisite vehicle or platform in the sport marketing discipline could affect the necessary behavioral changes for practitioners and academicians to engage in and build upon mutually beneficial relationships? In addition, if an acceptable template could be crafted for intercollegiate athletics, could it be applied in other sport industry segments as well? With these and the previously asked research questions, the authors suggest that social marketing may provide the catalyst and conduit for an integration of purpose on the part of practitioners and academicians.

Does social marketing offer the magic bullet or conduit to affect fundamental rethinking and changes in behaviors on the part of practitioners and academicians for "the greater good" and their mutual benefit? The following benefits of social marketing are offered by the authors to influence serious consideration of this idea:

- Social "goodness" does not lend itself to keeping score—there are no "losers"
- Social marketing can be profitable
- Social marketing is "value added", providing a competitive advantage
- Social marketing is active, not passive
- Social marketing can differentiate traditional marketing mix
- Social marketing is theory-based and informed ("Definitions of", 2008)

As sport industry practitioners grapple with the financial vagaries of an uncertain economy and, as academicians scramble to meet the ever-increasing scholarly demands of publishing and external funding (grants, contracts), this "perfect storm" presents a very powerful, yet embryonic opportunity to "bridge the gap" between these two sets of professionals by engaging in social marketing program collaboration. The most positive outcome of exploring this possibility may be the unintended consequence of building relationships between practitioners and academicians in their respective communities, one of the fundamental tenets of social marketing (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971).

Social marketing, with an eye on social responsibility, has undergone marked growth in the past two decades in the sport industry (Swanson, 2009). Yet, even with this reported growth, many efforts to operationalize social marketing and socially responsible sport-sponsored programs in particular, as well as sport philanthropy efforts in general, are largely underdeveloped, with great up-side potential for growth and enhancement. This opens the opportunity for academicians and practitioners to work together to advance this important aspect of social marketing.

Sport Marketing Discipline Benefits

One of most apparent benefits sport marketing academicians could derive is the opportunity that social marketing presents to the development of this unique sport-related body of knowledge. Further, social marketing touches many of the sub-disciplines in the field, including marketing, management, sociology, law, psychology, finance, economics, and communication. In short, it is a multi-interdisciplinary "garden" that begs tending. From a sport marketing perspective, social marketing, social responsibility, cause-related marketing, and sport philanthropy tied to sport sponsorship are increasingly seen by sport industry practitioners "as a new sort of platform to, a) do

good work from a community perspective and help people and to b) find new revenue streams” (Swanson, 2009, p. 15). In addition to the revenue potential of social marketing efforts, it can also serve as a brand awareness and brand building platform (See Table 1). Vada Manager, former director of global issues management for Nike states, “Sports properties are right to remain committed to their philanthropic efforts...as they can be essential for brand-building” (p. 15). Finally, the PGA Tour’s storied social marketing effort, begun in 1938, is building on its “Drive to a Billion” campaign and is well on its way to contributing \$2 billion (by 2015) to local, regional, and national charities through the “Together, Anything’s Possible” campaign (Show, 2009). What is remarkable about this commitment by the Tour’s sponsors during an economic downturn is that the campaign has actually provided sponsors with a platform to defend their involvement with the sport...as “sponsors are really looking for a means to justify their investment” (p. 16). Thus, from a sport marketing perspective, social marketing can be profitable and revenue enhancing, it provides a unique opportunity to build a sport property’s brand, and sponsors have a more robust return on investment (ROI) strategy to justify their sponsorship decisions.

Table 1
Sport properties’ cause-related charitable giving

| Sport Property | Brand | Recipient Cause(s) | Annual Giving |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| National Football League | NFL Play 60 NFL Youth Football Fund NFL Charities | Youth United Way Breast Cancer | \$115 million |
| Major League Baseball | Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities Welcome Back Veterans | Boys & Girls Clubs of America ALS Association Habitat for Humanity | \$100 million |
| PGA Tour | Together, Anything’s Possible | Determined by Tournament | \$100 million |
| Lance Armstrong Foundation | Livestrong | Cancer | \$40 million |
| National Basketball Association | NBA Cares Basketball Without Borders Day of Service Read to Achieve Green Week | Youth Environmental Issues Community Service | \$25 million |
| Chick-Fil-A Bowl | Play It Smart | Team Scholarship Funds | \$1.2 million |
| Major League Soccer | MLS WORKS | Nothing But Nets Active Bodies, Active Minds FIFA’s Goal Program | \$1 million |
| National Hockey League | Hockey Fights Cancer | Cancer | \$600,000 |
| World Tennis Association | First Serve | UNESCO Habitat for Humanity | \$100,000 (approx.) |
| National Association of Basketball Coaches | Coaches vs. Cancer | American Cancer Society | N/A |
| American Football Coaches Association | Coach to Cure MD | Muscular Dystrophy | N/A |
| Women’s Basketball Coaches Association | Kay Yow Cancer Fund Pink Zone | Breast Cancer | N/A |
| Andre Agassi Foundation | | Nevada Charter School | \$100 million since inception |

From a management perspective, creating partnerships between sport properties and charitable causes is an increasingly important management topic of discussion in sport executive front offices. Kathy Behrens, the NBA’s executive vice president of social responsibility and player programs,

indicates that the league's employee volunteer program "is one of the things that we will always talk about... It is part of our (management) culture" (Lombardo, 2009, p. 19). The NASCAR Foundation, in dealing with a multitude of driver-, team-, owner- and track-sponsored programs, is currently re-evaluating its strategic planning process, vis-à-vis its charitable and philanthropic campaigns (Smith, 2009b). With now 80% of the teams in all four major sport leagues now supporting charitable foundations, sport marketing executives are planning, refining, and developing new social marketing programs to better 'connect' their properties with their respective communities.

In terms of sport sociology and sport psychology, social marketing impacts the broader community, its citizenry, and shapes perceptions of organizations that engage in and are committed to community building activities. Major League Soccer's MLS WORKS program, launched in 2007, is the league's "community outreach initiative dedicated to addressing social issues that affect young people" (Mickle, 2009b, p. 15). In addition, social marketing can and should be gender-neutral, providing similarly mutual benefits to female as well as male athletes. Termed by the authors as "generational", social marketing efforts like the Women's Basketball Coaches Association's Kay Yow Cancer Fund, founded in 2007 in honor of the late North Carolina State coach, was "a national platform of its own each February—Pink Zone—when teams, coaches, and fans wear pink to a game" (Smith, 2009a, p. 18). In addition, the NCAA stages a "4Kay" run as part of the Women's Final Four to honor Coach Yow and bring awareness to women's breast cancer. The NFL has also gotten into the generational game for the 2009 season by designating October as breast cancer awareness month, a new cause for the league to "in part acknowledge our female fan base" (Kaplan, 2009, p. 18). One can hardly miss the players and coaches in NFL games this fall wearing pink shoes, caps, wrist-bands, etc. Thus, as social marketing has many sociological consequences, the intrinsic connections between social (sport) marketing and sport sociology appear evident, so much so that one could conceive of these cause-related efforts as "sport sociology" as a new-found moniker.

From a sport finance, law, and economics perspective, social marketing engages these sub-disciplines as well. As many of the sport league and professional sport organizations have established "non-profit" foundations and charitable arms, with commensurate legal, tax, revenue and expense reconciliation, and economic impact considerations. As Vada Manager stated it, given the "long-lasting, connecting, generational ties to your brand and to the sports property..." social marketing, responsibility, and philanthropic efforts are increasingly long-term (multi-year), (sport) business-to-business derived, are (tax) consequential, are legally formulated and enforceable (by contract), and are community directed. As indicated earlier, they also increasingly contribute to an organization's "bottom line", financially as a newly-found revenue stream (asset) or as an organization's "good will" financial statement 'equity' entry. Some innovative social responsibility programs have even tapped into the "going green" phenomena, with the NBA's "Green Week" established to emphasize environmental issues (Lombardo, 2009). The NFL is likewise "going green", with a new initiative "to change the environmental practices of stadiums and offices" (Kaplan, 2009, p. 18). Thus, whether established to impact their bottom line or to positively impact the environments in which they operate, sport properties have discovered that responsible social marketing efforts can be 'eco'nomical as well.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING PRACTITIONERS AND ACADEMICIANS

In assessing social marketing efforts of sport properties as a viable conduit or catalyst to bring sport practitioners and academicians together for their "common good", the authors posit that no other single vehicle, platform, tool or opportunity may provide the mutual benefits afforded by collaborating on future social marketing programs. At the heart of social marketing is relationship building for the intended purpose of affecting some tangible social "good". Thus, by establishing academic/practitioner partnerships in this regard, each partner will be contributing toward the greater "good" in their community.

If academicians are the “thinkers and dreamers” and practitioners the “doers”, as the CSRI Panel suggested in 2008, certainly both creativity from the development and formulation side, as well as implementation skill sets are required for future social marketing programs to realize their full potential. Academicians can assist practitioners to discover new ways (paradigms) to enhance the “mentorship and role modeling” values of social marketing efforts necessary to support existing programs (Swanson, 2009, p. 14). Finally, on the creative side of the ledger, sport properties are exploring new ways to provide value-added benefits to their corporate partners, as sponsors are looking for ways to not only substantiate their return on investment, but also finding new platforms to ‘activate and leverage’ their sponsorship through more socially responsible outreach initiatives.

Kathy Babiak, assistant professor in sport management at the University of Michigan, who helped conduct a national study of teams’ philanthropic efforts, indicates that the findings reveal that sponsors “are becoming increasingly involved in sport philanthropy programs” and are “now leveraging that and getting involved in community outreach efforts” (Swanson, 2009, p. 15). Babiak’s study for Northeastern University’s Center for Sport in Society provides an ideal incubator for innovative research and scholarship opportunities for academicians, further supporting the mutual benefits social marketing may offer to sport properties, corporate sponsors and to the academy. What may also engender support for this proposed partnership is that social marketing is in its infancy and “just gaining momentum” and “getting started”, according to Eli Wolff, manager of research and advocacy for the Center (p. 14). These programs have “legs” and could serve as an opportunity for longitudinal studies as well. According to Alisha Greenburg, director of sports partnerships for the Sports Philanthropy Project, an organization that helps teams ,leagues and athletes maximize their social marketing efforts, philanthropic initiatives “should be sustainable and have a lasting impact”...“they’re going to be around for 20 years...there’s growth to them” (p. 15).

The sport industry’s efforts are also comprehensive in nature, which makes this domain fertile and multi-faceted for consumer (fan) research, publication, presentation, and grant-writing. Indeed, social marketing and philanthropy efforts marshal all of a sport organization’s assets including financial resources, the team’s brand, the “celebrity cache of the players or sponsors”, as well as “other resources, like facilities” (Swanson, 2009, p. 14). Socially engaged foundations are expanding and diversifying their outreach efforts, clearly recognizing the interdependence of community, service, and sport. As a result, grant and contract (consulting) opportunities will increasingly be made available to those academicians so inclined. Some sports leagues and teams indeed operate more like “grant-making machines” (Kaplan, 2009, p. 18).

Two other characteristics that make social marketing an ideal conduit for building practitioner and academician relationships is the extended “reach” of these efforts. Once local and fractured, social marketing programs are now regional, national, and international in scope. The World Tennis Association (WTA) has teamed with the United Nations’ UNESCO to “promote gender equality” (“Giving shows”, 2009, p. 19). Major League Soccer’s (MLS WORKS) “Nothing But Nets” program was established in 2007 to prevent malaria in Africa through donations to buy mosquito nets and to help FIFA’s Goal Program to build soccer fields in the Congo (Mickle, 2009b, p. 15).

In addition to extending their reach, community service initiatives appear to be recession-proof. Corporate sponsors and sport properties must continue to find ways to craft their brand awareness campaigns, get their messages out to consumers, and sustain their ‘creative frugality’ to give back to their respective communities. According to Alisha Greenburg, “charitable efforts” have remained on track...They haven’t shut down programs or cut funding for programs they are already funding” (Swanson, 2009, p. 15). Vada Manager validates this assertion, “that even in the midst of a recession, this is not a discretionary or optional expense. It should be part of your brand management...sport philanthropy is something (despite the economy) you can’t eradicate it...it becomes part of your brand building” (p. 15).

Finally, social marketing partnerships between leagues, teams, and players with their communities can present career opportunities for students heretofore not seen in the sport industry. Corporate entities like FishBait Marketing, who represent coaches associations in college football, men's and women's basketball, are emerging to provide consulting and social marketing program representation services to a growing list of engaged sport properties. Offices of social corporate responsibility, executive offices of social responsibility and player programs, and sport (individual, league, corporate) foundations certainly will be searching for young talent to develop, grow, and sustain social marketing and responsibility programs and activities. And now with the continued advanced of an every-growing number of social media platforms ranging from Facebook to Gowalla to Loopt, every business organization is practically forced into the realm of social marketing. Hence, in every conceivable regard, this emerging social marketing phenomena in the sport marketplace represents a "win-win-win" for all involved—sport properties, sport sponsors, and for academic constituents (faculty and students) who may want some of what this unique opportunity has to offer.

CONCLUSION

The last conceptual question posed at the outset of this paper was "what is the origin of the perceived lack of respect between academicians and practitioners?" The answer to this question seems to be the foundational catalyst for building new relationships between sport practitioners and academicians. It is not coincidental that the authors propose to characterize both of these two arguably disparate groups as "professionals". Indeed, this may be the most fundamental linkage that both the practitioner and academician share. If that premise is accepted from the outset, there is an established foundation upon which to build mutual respect. However, the authors are not naïve in proposing that respect from one to the other is freely given or assumed. To the contrary, for mutual respect to be established going forward between the practitioner and the academician, it will have to be sought, nurtured and sustained through networking opportunities including mutual involvement in local organizations, advisory boards, social media and other computer networking opportunities (listservs, discussion boards, blogs, etc.), and cooperative project partnerships.

What has been proposed here is an idea to get this process started. When one reviews the "benefits" of social marketing as a conduit or catalyst for change, there is enough "good" in "doing good" through social marketing for the professionals in the industry and the academy alike. While the "outcomes" i.e., revenue enhancing versus research driven, expected by each may not be identical, they are certainly not mutually exclusive either. As social marketing's central purpose is the community's greater good, what other purposeful effort, campaign, or initiative has the potential to satisfy both the wants and needs of the sport marketer and the sport academician. Social marketing realizes its full potential when it is "informed and theory-based", when it is "active, not passive", and when social marketing programs are selfless and "other" directed toward the greater community's benefit. Therefore, the theory of the 'ivory tower' needs to be integrated with informed, current, active, practical concepts that are targeted for the good of all.

The authors do not pretend to know how service is defined in all academies, but personal experiences have shown that service activities should benefit the citizenry of the affected institution. As important, social marketing provides a rich and emerging field of study, which could be shaped in many forms i.e., grants and contracts, research presentations and publications, as well as informing instruction. What sport entity would not like the publicity and brand building notoriety of having their social marketing efforts exposed as only academicians can?

Finally, the most important conclusion that may be drawn here is the realization that mutual respect and mutual benefits will not accrue without mutual effort. Academicians are certainly capable of doing their part to accommodate their unique contributions in this regard. It is the authors' strong opinion that collaboration on future social marketing campaigns would not inhibit one party or the other from "speaking the same language". Instead, the goal would be to contribute uniquely the "value-added dimensions of social marketing and teach each other new ways to express

(create and operationalize) the meaning of social responsibility and greater good. It would seem that the only thing left to do is to express one's willingness to "get in the game".

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