

Sports and Entertainment Marketing

Case Study Sample 208.02

You are to assume the role of marketing interns for the SMITHVILLE STARS, a major league soccer team. Since you are avid soccer fans, the marketing director for the team has asked you to create a plan to boost sagging attendance.

The SMITHVILLE STARS are located in the city of Smithville, population 300,000. The STARS are the only major league team in Smithville and have a history of enthusiastic community support. Of the 15,000 seats in the team's stadium, season ticket holders occupy 25 percent—the stadium has been sold out every year of the team's operation. In return, the STARS have brought home three league championship trophies in the past four years.

STARS management encourages its players and staff to support all of the youth sports programs in the city, especially the soccer leagues. However, this year the STARS are struggling. Four of the starters were traded during the off-season (including the fans' favorite player), injuries are plaguing the team and they have only won two games. With this poor record and an unusual season of bad weather at home games, attendance is down 60 percent during the week and 40 percent on weekends. Poor attendance means that sales of merchandise and concessions are also down. Fewer people watch the games on television, and media personalities constantly make fun of the team—referring to them as the Smithville Skunks. Major sponsors are threatening to pull out, since they feel the team has lost fan support. In addition some small vendors licensed to sell STAR merchandise, including items related to the usually popular mascot Starbright, do not want to renew their license.

With eight regular season home games left (six on the weekends, two during the week), the marketing director wants you to create a marketing/sales plan to help save the season. Since you cannot improve the team, you need to create a plan that will boost ticket sales to the quota of selling 85 percent of the single game tickets and raise actual attendance.

The defined target market for the STARS is families with an average of two elementary-school-aged children. One or more people in these families play or coach soccer in a youth league. Advertising has already been bought during the city's one local television news program and during the rush hour drive on the town's three radio stations. This advertising can be tailored to meet your needs.

YOUR CHALLENGE

Your challenge is to develop a plan to boost attendance for the remaining games. In addition to your plan's effect on end-of-season ticket sales and the direct implications to other sources of revenue (such as concessions), you should also discuss the importance of ending the year strong with regard to next season.

You will present your marketing/sales plan soon to the marketing director.