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# Assessing organizational attributes contributing to marketing excellence in American professional sport franchises

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**Abstract** *While an abundance of research exists on the topic of professional sport marketing, little, if any, has been directed toward identifying predictors of franchise marketing success or, perhaps more importantly, measuring excellence within this organizational unit. Therefore, the fundamental purpose of this investigation was to identify key indicators for success or excellence as defined by Peters and Waterman within marketing divisions of American professional sport franchises. The results have enabled the authors to develop a paradigm with which to assess strengths and weaknesses of various dimensions within a professional sport franchise's marketing operations. These findings have profound implications for team management as not all franchises are fortunate enough to produce winning team records and thus are challenged to explore other options for achieving marketing excellence.*

It has been argued that a for-profit business would not survive without effective marketing operations. In fact, Dunn *et al.* (1994) concluded from their assessment of the impact of organizational goals, values, and climate on marketing effectiveness that marketing has emerged as an increasingly valuable business philosophy. Furthermore, Peters and Waterman (1982) cited that sound marketing practices and strong consumer orientation were factors that differentiated "excellent" companies from their competitors.

Obviously, the marketing division is but one unit within an organization, however, its relevance to an organization's successful business performance appears quite evident. According to Phil Knight "marketing is what knits the whole organization together" (Willigan, 1992, p. 92). Nike's increasing emphasis on marketing and its shift towards being a "marketing company" is paradigmatic for successful organizations in the sporting industry (Korzeniewicz, 1994), be it Nike, the National Basketball Association, or a single professional franchise such as the National Football League "World Champion" Green Bay Packers or the lowly Kansas City Royals of Major League Baseball.

While it has been argued that a number of peculiarities exist associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of sport thereby placing unique

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demands upon marketing management and personnel (Mullin *et al.*, 1993; Stotlar, 1994), professional sport in the United States has always been a profit-seeking business competing for consumers in the entertainment marketplace. In fact, professional sport executives contend that sport and business are managed in a similar fashion (Mullin *et al.*, 1993).

Taking into consideration the pivotal position occupied by marketing within the sports business it is astonishing that the body of research dealing with crucial sport marketing-related questions is relatively limited. Research has predominantly focused on the one-dimensional identification of marketing strategies or tactics and their effectiveness for different sport organizations in a specific environment (e.g. see Hansen and Gauthier, 1989; Marcum and Greenstein, 1985; Martin, 1990; Mawson and Coan, 1994; Wakefield and Sloan, 1995).

A multidimensional approach, encompassing manifold factors and overriding beliefs and principles, which build the general foundation and guidance for all the ongoing action within a franchise or more importantly, its subunits, has yet to be accomplished. The realization of such work would appear to assist in the identification of a set of criteria which contribute to successful or “excellent” sport franchise marketing management as marketing within such organizations has advanced to the stage at which it has become a critical factor in determining success or failure (Herremans and Ryans, 1995). The existence of such a void in the literature serves as the fundamental motive for this paper.

#### *Excellence and effectiveness*

The notion of “excellence” was first introduced through the landmark book *In the Search of Excellence* from Peters and Waterman (1982), the authors concluded that enterprises characterized as successful or excellent possessed eight common attributes. It is the multidimensional approach of Peters and Waterman’s study that makes it so valuable as well as unique according to Caruana *et al.* (1995) who venture that few research endeavours have as profoundly permeated the thinking of practicing managers.

Other scholarly attempts to measure traits of company excellence have typically focused on one item measures (Sharma *et al.*, 1990b) as have empirical assessments of sport organizations’ effectiveness. While criteria such as win/loss records (Wakefield and Sloan, 1995) and attendance (Soucie, 1994) are often used to measure the success of sport enterprises, the use of single-dimension and output-oriented assessment processes such as these only foster the same inherent weaknesses as cited for corporations choosing to focus on sales volume and market share fluctuation. Moreover, Marcum and Greenstein (1985) found that season-long performance measures have relatively little effect on daily attendance while Kennedy (1980) and Spoelstra (1997) have convincingly refuted the commonly held opinion that more victories equals more profits.

With many industry leaders rethinking the measurement of their company performance (or subdivisions of it) to include factors relating to customer satisfaction, product quality, or human resource management the use of single dimension assessment procedures inherently possesses considerable

shortcomings (Eccles, 1991). While authors have offered diverging opinions as to which approach may be most appropriate for assessing effectiveness within sport organizations, agreement does appear on the complex nature of measuring effectiveness within such organizations and the need to employ more than one measurement criterion with the suitable approach perhaps varying according to the type of sport organization assessed (Chelladurai, 1987; Koski, 1995; Soucie, 1994). Therefore, Caruana *et al.*'s (1995) advocacy of the Peters and Waterman approach, in which management seeks a balanced performance on a set of criteria in order to enhance organizational effectiveness supports the notion of a multi-dimensional analysis.

Within the sport management literature, empirical analysis has exclusively focused on the organization as a whole which was typically a not-for-profit or sport club setting (Bourner and Weese, 1995; Koski, 1995; Morrow and Chelladurai, 1992; Weese, 1995). The literature review failed to reveal an empirical assessment of effectiveness at the professional sport franchise level or any of its subunits, most specifically, the marketing unit. Furthermore, a comprehensive analysis has yet to be conducted assessing the relationship of internally manageable variables such as philosophy and structure, as well as the franchise won/loss record, to the overall team marketing performance.

These omissions prompted the following investigation which aims to identify distinguishing characteristics of effective professional sport franchise marketing programs. It is our belief that this study will elucidate some of the under examined influences of managerial and communication principles and practices on the results of various measures of professional sport marketing performance standards, such as attendance, ticket sales, renewal rates, sponsorship and/or advertising sales.

## **Methodology**

### *Instrumentation*

For data collection purposes a validated instrument was sought that accommodated the variety of effectiveness assessment criteria identified within the literature. It was determined that the EXCEL instrument, specifically designed by Sharma *et al.* (1990a) to operationalize the Peters and Waterman (1982) attributes of excellence, appropriately met these parameters. Peters and Waterman's (1982) eight attributes of excellence:

- (1) A bias for action – getting on with it and overcoming the inertia that often occurs with size.
- (2) Close to the customer – understanding the needs of “lead” users and providing the desired levels of service, quality and reliability.
- (3) Autonomy and entrepreneurship – devolution, providing space and support for creative ideas that lead to innovative product and service launches.
- (4) Productivity through people – people are seen as the primary source of productivity gains.

- (5) Hands on, value driven – the organization’s values result in a distinct and binding culture which gives direction to action by all members.
- (6) Stick to the knitting – concentration on and development of the organization’s areas of distinctive competence.
- (7) Simple form, lean staff – simple organization structures, with efficient management supported by small staff teams.
- (8) Simultaneous loose-tight properties – an effective balance between central direction and individual authority.

The instrument, comprising 16 affirmation statements regarding organizational practices, policies, and beliefs, has been rigorously put together following the procedures outlined for developing and testing marketing constructs (Churchill, 1979) demonstrating that the scale is a reliable and valid measure of the overall excellence of business firms (Sharma *et al.*, 1990a). This assessment was supported by Caruana *et al.* (1995) who stated that the EXCEL-scale by Sharma *et al.* provides the greatest possibility of testing the Peters and Waterman paradigm. Consequently, this instrument would provide the best possibility of assessing relationships between a marketing department’s practices, principles, procedures, and beliefs and its business performance.

Since it is our belief that excellence or effectiveness should be seen as the extreme, perhaps even unreachable point, on a continuum rather than a dichotomous classification which divides working units into either “excellent” or “non-excellent”, respondents were requested to rate on a five-point-Likert type scale, their level of agreement – from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” – with each of the statements contained within the EXCEL-scale. This approach follows Sharma *et al.*’s understanding of the construct (a higher-order construct defined by an overall score) and thereby embraces their scale, since its methodical use leaves space for a flexible evaluation of the research subjects.

In order to assess relationships between measures of excellence and performance a need arose for evaluating the marketing departments’ performance. Therefore, similar to the methodology employed by Koski (1995) and Bourner and Weese (1995) for comparative analytical purposes, a team marketing index (TMI) was constructed in consultation with a panel of experts from the sports marketing field which consisted of descriptive variables such as home game attendance, ticket plan sales and renewal rates, as well as sponsorship/advertising renewal rates, in order to produce a general description of the marketing department’s general business performance (Table I). Due to anticipated differences that would arise between teams surveyed regarding the size of arena and market, the quality of the product

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Team marketing index (TMI) = Attendance (percentage of capacity)  
 + Ticket plan sales (percentage of accounts available)  
 + Renewal rates (Ticket plan holders and advertiser/  
 sponsors)

**Table I.**  
Calculation of team  
marketing index (TMI)

(major or minor league), or simply the sport played it was decided to use relative performance figures such as percentages of a possible maximum (e.g. percentage of capacity/inventory) in order to render comparable variables. Distribution of the TMI was limited to individuals within the organization with knowledge of all variables under investigation (i.e. department supervisor).

#### *Sampling procedures*

In an effort to test the relationship between franchise TMI outputs and the variables under investigation published attendance figures were used to categorize a pool of potential respondent franchises found in the *1996 Sport Market Place Directory*. A range of responding franchises was sought relative to team winning percentages (high = > 0.501, medium = 0.500, and low = < 0.500). Ultimately, marketing directors from 15 professional sport franchises (five from each category) agreed to allow staff members to participate in the study with appointments made to arrange onsite, researcher facilitated surveying. Where geographical constraints limited personal distribution an appropriate number of EXCEL-scales were forwarded to the franchise contact person. In each case the survey was completed by all marketing staff members who had been employed within the department for at least three months. While this is a slight departure from the methodology used by Peters and Waterman, who surveyed enterprises' counsellors and other exterior connoisseurs, it was hypothesized that employees comprise the ideal sample group as internal experts of organizational and departmental operations. While the authors recognize that inherent limitations exist with this data collection protocol it was believed that alternative methodologies would yield limited increases in response reliability and validity. In an effort to protect the confidentiality of responses all participants were provided with researcher addressed, postage paid envelopes for returning completed survey instruments.

#### *Statistical analysis*

All data will be reported using descriptive statistics for profiling purposes. Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were used to assess bivariate relationships between Peters and Waterman's (1982) eight attributes of excellent organizations, operationalized within the EXCEL instrument (Sharma *et al.*, 1990), and the independent criteria contained within the author-constructed Team Marketing Index (Table I) as well as the overall TMI score. Subsequently, with the eight attributes of excellent organizations, their sum total (scores of all eight attributes combined), and team winning percentage as the predictor variables, forward stepwise regression analysis was used to assess variables significantly predicting independent Team Marketing Index criteria as well as the overall TMI score (Table I). All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) with a significance level for all analyses set at  $p < 0.05$ .

## Results

A total of 100 EXCEL instruments were completed for analysis by marketing personnel meeting the respondent criteria from the 15 professional sport franchises contacted for participation. The variability sought among responding franchises was achieved in terms of team and marketing performance standards as revealed in Table II. Additionally, teams included in the analysis represented major as well as minor league baseball, basketball, ice hockey, and soccer. Slightly more than one-half of the teams surveyed (60 per cent) attained a winning team performance record when standards equivalent to industry highs and lows were employed for the marketing performance criteria under investigation. The Cronbach alpha, used to assess the internal consistency of the instrument, was found to be 0.90, indicating a high degree of response uniformity among respondents.

The accumulative EXCEL scores for the professional sport franchises under investigation ranged from a low of 30 to a high of 78 with an average of 62 out of 80 possible total points (16 instrument items worth five points each). Independent survey items were subsequently consolidated into the appropriate attribute of excellence as defined by Sharma *et al.* (1990). For analytical purposes, all attribute scores were consequently standardized by dividing each aggregate attribute score by the number of contributing EXCEL instrument items.

As revealed in Table III it appears that marketing managements of the professional sport franchises under investigation have strongly encouraged

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Ticket plan sales (percentage of accounts available)	15	50.53	20.22	20	100
Attendance (percentage of facility capacity)	15	57.11	22.06	28	100
Advertiser/sponsor renewal (percentage of previous accounts)	15	83.17	12.96	66	115
Ticket plan renewal (percentage of previous accounts)	15	84.62	10.10	69	99
Team winning percentage	15	534.21	78.14	390	713

**Table II.**  
Responding team  
performance  
characteristics

Attributes	Standardized mean score	Raw means	Raw standard deviation
Close to the customer	4.46	13.39	1.64
Bias for action	4.08	4.08	0.76
Autonomy and entrepreneurship	4.07	12.21	1.88
Loose-tight properties	3.89	3.89	0.66
Productivity through people	3.86	7.72	1.51
Stick to the knitting	3.58	7.17	1.41
Simple form and lean staff	3.43	6.86	1.49
Hands on value driven	3.36	6.72	1.59

**Table III.**  
Standardized attribute  
scores

staff members to provide personalized customer service while displaying considerably less regard for establishing and/or communicating a prescribed set of marketing/sales department operating values and principles. In fact, further analysis of the individual 16 EXCEL instrument items revealed that the survey statement suggesting that a mission statement is the driving force behind all departmental operations attained the lowest average score (3.17) thus contributing to the relatively low score for the hands on value driven attribute (3.36). Personal comments from several survey respondents indicated that the absence or disregard for such a written document severely hindered departmental productivity. In stark contrast, survey items contributing to the attribute close to the customer attained the highest overall ratings from respondents with encouragement of personalized customer attention (4.37), after-the-sale service (4.49), and listening to what the customer has to say (4.53) outdistancing all other survey item ratings. This finding appears to reflect an emerging trend among sport, as well as mainstream, marketers for establishing reliable relationships with their customer base.

Attributes with multiple corresponding survey items included autonomy and entrepreneurship (staff is encouraged to develop new ideas, 4.28; experimentation with new ideas is considered important to management, 4.04; management creates an atmosphere that encourages creativity and innovativeness, 3.89), productivity through people (management demonstrates confidence in staff, 3.82; top level management believe marketing staff is of utmost importance to the franchise, 3.91), stick to the knitting (efforts are concentrated where staff possess high level of expertise, 3.53; tactics are developed that are natural extension of organizational strategies, 3.64), and simple form and lean staff (decision making autonomy is delegated to staff, 3.37; staff operates with a high level of efficiency, 3.49). A survey item indicating a set of principles had been instilled in marketing staff members (3.55) jointly comprised the hands on value driven attribute with the aforementioned mission statement availability survey item. The remaining attributes were composed of single item responses.

As revealed in Table IV a limited number of marketing performance criteria comprising the Team Marketing Index correlated significantly and positively with one or more of the attributes of excellence. While the limited strength of these correlation coefficients warrants cautious inferential interpretation the findings provide insights for operational decision making. Conversely, team winning percentage correlated significantly and positively with all marketing performance criteria under investigation except advertiser/sponsor renewal rates, a marketing performance criterion that tended to correlate with the greatest number of EXCEL attributes. This finding may provide hints that a professional sport franchise's relationship with corporate customers is built upon factors other than team performance.

Analysis of Tables V, VI, VII, and VIII indicates the strong relationship between winning and spectator-oriented marketing performance indicators. Perhaps this relationship is best illustrated by the significant contribution of

team winning percentage to the Team Marketing Index (Table IX), an author-constructed composite score of all marketing performance standards under investigation. While this finding should come as no surprise to any astute sport marketer this revelation provides an insightful implication as to the degree of

EXCEL attribute	Team marketing index (TMI) criteria and composite score				TMI
	Attendance	Ticket plan sales	Ticket plan renewal	Adv./sponsor renewal	
Close to the customer	0.28*	0.18	0.22*	0.11	0.31*
Bias for action	0.22*	0.12	0.28*	0.27*	0.20*
Autonomy and entrepreneursh	0.07	0.02	0.10	0.23	0.05
Loose-tight properties	0.08	0.03	0.09	0.10	0.14
Productivity through people	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.33*	0.08
Stick to the knitting	0.26*	0.31*	0.01	0.18	0.25*
Simple form and lean staff	0.01	0.10	0.06	0.37*	0.05
Hands on value driven	0.05	0.08	0.10	0.06	0.12
Total EXCEL score	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.28*	0.04
Team winning percentage	0.44*	0.67*	0.29*	0.03	0.68*

**Note:** \* $p < 0.05$

**Table IV.**  
Pearson product moment correlations of excellence attributes, team winning percentage and Team Marketing Index criteria

Item	Beta	Percentage of explained variance	Percentage of total variance
Bias for action	0.30	21	7
Close to the customer	0.42	29	10
Stick to the knitting	0.23	16	5
Team winning percentage	0.51	34	12

**Notes:**  $R$  square = 0.34,  $F$  = 0.000

**Table V.**  
Forward stepwise regression analyses with attendance (% of capacity) as response variable

Item	Beta	Percentage of explained variance	Percentage of total variance
Stick to the knitting	0.21	22	11
Team winning percentage	0.73	78	39

**Notes:**  $R$  square = 0.50,  $F$  = 0.000

**Table VI.**  
Forward stepwise regression analyses with ticket plan sales (percentage of volume available) as response variable

Item	Beta	Percentage of explained variance	Percentage of total variance
Bias for action	0.37	37	8
Close to the customer	0.37	37	8
Team winning percentage	0.26	26	6

**Notes:**  $R$  square = 0.22,  $F$  = 0.000

**Table VII.**  
Forward stepwise regression analyses with ticket plan renewal as response variable

contribution typically secured from a strong team performance and, perhaps more importantly, the contribution of other more controllable organizational attributes (e.g. close to the customer, stick to the knitting, bias for action).

As revealed in Table IX factors other than team winning percentage appear to contribute significantly to franchise advertiser/sponsor renewal rates, if only in a limited capacity. Perhaps the most interesting result may well be the inclusion of the total EXCEL score in the regression equation for advertiser/sponsor renewal rates. This finding may best demonstrate the integrated nature of advertiser/sponsorship marketing. While it is recommended that these results be interpreted tenuously due to the low variance accounted for by the variables the findings provide valuable clues for team marketing managers constructing retention programs for franchise advertisers and sponsors.

While productivity through people correlated positively and significantly with advertiser/sponsor renewal rates the attribute failed to statistically emerge as a predictor for this, or any other, marketing performance criterion included in this investigation. Similarly, autonomy and entrepreneurship, hands on value driven, and loose-tight properties failed to emerge as significant predictor variables within this analysis.

However, the analysis does reveal that several of the attributes under investigation meaningfully contribute to multiple marketing performance criteria warranting marketing management to concentrate attention accordingly. For instance, close to the customer, bias for action, and stick to the knitting all were found to contribute significantly to two marketing performance criteria analyzed whereas close to the customer and stick to the knitting were also found to contribute significantly to the overall Team Marketing Index.

**Table VIII.**

Forward stepwise regression analyses with Team Marketing Index as response variable

Item	Beta	Percentage of explained variance	Percentage of total variance
Close to the customer	0.22	17	10
Stick to the knitting	0.31	14	14
Team winning percentage	0.71	58	32

**Notes:** *R* square = 0.56, *F* = 0.000

**Table IX.**

Forward stepwise regression analyses with advertiser/sponsor renewal as response variable

Item	Beta	Percentage of explained variance	Percentage of total variance
Simple form and lean staff	0.38	40	6
Total EXCEL score	0.57	60	8

**Notes:** *R* square = 0.14, *F* = 0.02

## Discussion

The multi-dimensionality of the survey instrument provided a welcome unique opportunity for empirically assessing areas of franchise marketing strengths and weaknesses, elements infrequently evaluated via internally administered constructs. Furthermore, these measures provide team marketing management with yet another valuable means of assessing performance as well as the workforce's perception/interpretation of organizational philosophy.

These descriptive findings yield baseline standards for further analysis and industry comparison. While the sample size as well as the scope of this investigation did not allow for the appropriate statistical testing of variability between franchises based on product quality the attained standard deviation scores and alpha coefficient appear to indicate a high level of uniformity in response patterns providing strong potential for considering these measures as generalizable standards. Further analysis will undoubtedly test this assumption.

The results reflect a current trend among sport marketing practitioners for spotlighting customer relations and communication through aftermarketing, a concept defined by Vavra (1992) as the process of providing ongoing satisfaction and reinforcement to current as well as past customers. Professional sport franchises adopting this philosophy should consider the implementation of vehicles facilitating customer dialogue. Such mechanisms may include personal or written correspondence, focus group discussions, and/or patron surveys. The employment of personal account representatives enable assigned staff members to build relationships between the organization and customer while simultaneously allowing the paying customer to affiliate with an individual (often a voice and in some cases a face) within the organization.

Interviews with professional team marketing executives indicate that such tactics have favourably contributed to increases in attendance and ticket plan renewal rates thus substantiating the findings of this investigation. For instance, Major League Baseball's San Diego Padres, who recently realized sizeable gains in attendance, attribute much of the success to the establishment of the Compadre Club a program designed to identify, track, and reward registered members with team merchandise and prizes.

Additional measures to be considered by professional sport organizations wishing to exploit the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with customers may include tailored personal correspondence describing the benefits of affiliating with the team, establishing formalized customer/guest relations programs, as well as the utilization of data based marketing tools. In each case, the team marketing representatives are charged with obtaining detailed information about the customer and storing it in an accessible and functional source (Irwin and Sutton, 1995).

Such communication tactics often reveal problems within the organization warranting immediate attention by marketing and public relations staff thus linking the excellence attributes securing the highest ratings, closeness to the customer and bias for action. The results warrant that professional sport

organization aiming to achieve marketing effectiveness, particularly in the areas of attendance and ticket plan renewal, be poised and flexible to respond to problems that emerge from this discovery process. Furthermore, a propensity for action, as defined by Peters and Waterman (1982), would likely serve the marketing staff well when team performance fails.

While the current analysis does not attempt to account for all variables contributing to professional sport franchise marketing effectiveness the findings provide valuable clues regarding a number of dominant influential factors several of which are controllable by team marketing management (Table X).

Unsurprisingly, the data indicate that team performance profoundly contributes to the marketing success of a professional franchise particularly with reference to fan-related marketing performance criteria. Simply stated, winning tends to stimulate demand due to the perceived quality of product and associated value of holding a ticket to an upcoming contest.

In reality, team marketing personnel are typically unable to influence or control team performance thus magnifying the value of the findings from this exploratory investigation. Armed with these results team marketing management can begin to strategically prepare themselves for combating lean team performance challenges and limitations. Focusing on such tactics as personalized customer relations, streamlined efforts in areas that represent organizational strengths, and charting a responsive course of action for arising marketing-related dilemmas enables team marketing personnel to potentially realize greater returns via controllable marketing and service variables.

This critically important point may be best illustrated by contrasting the predictors of attendance and ticket plan sales, each dominated by team performance measures (won/loss record), with the predictors of renewal rates, which tended to be attributes unrelated to team performance. From this analogy it may be safe to presume that winning, or the prospect of winning,

Variable	Team performance	Close to the customer	Stick to the knitting	Simple form lean staff	Bias action
Ticket plan sales (percentage of accounts available)	X		X		
Attendance (percentage of facility capacity)	X	X	X		X
Advertiser/sponsor renewal (percentage of previous accounts)				X	
Ticket plan renewal (percentage of previous accounts)	X	X			X
Team marketing index	X	X	X		

**Table X.**  
Team marketing performance criteria and significantly contributing attributes

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will initially draw customers, individual as well as corporate, to the team while factors such as customer servicing and proactive responsiveness to arising problems will serve to retain them. The cost-effectiveness of customer retention further underscores the need for team marketing managers to strategically design on-going renewal campaigns incorporating tactics that satisfactorily address these respective attributes.

Interestingly, team performance failed to significantly contribute to advertiser/sponsor renewal rates. While the findings indicate that a vast volume of factors contributing to this critical marketing performance criterion are yet unaccounted for the results give credence to the integrated nature of sponsorship relations, is essentially indicating that team marketing programs experiencing high overall performance measures are more likely to retain their corporate clients.

The results appear to indicate that leaner staffed franchise marketing departments, where authority is appropriately delegated, experience greater success in renewing accounts with team advertisers and sponsors. It is speculated that a smaller sales force, perhaps more vested in the sales and renewal process, has greater ability to respond to the needs and interest of corporate customers.

While the attribute sticking to the knitting achieved an overall mean considerably lower than several other attributes under investigation it emerged as a frequent significant contributor for several team marketing performance criteria. Successful organizations tend to have a specialized sales force with assigned individuals handling individual accounts, corporate accounts, luxury/club suites, group sales, etc. The purpose of sales specialization has been to train sales people to understand the benefits and limitations of each customer type thereby furthering the franchise's closeness to the customer and consequently linking these two distinct attributes as well. Furthermore, these results reflect a need for team marketing managers to "stay the course" when developing and executing marketing campaigns. Expanding into areas where staff are ill-prepared or constructing services that do not mesh with the organization's strengths are therefore strongly discouraged.

Of great interest is the fact that the summative EXCEL score was found to be a contributor to only one marketing performance criterion, advertiser/sponsor renewal rates. This finding appears to provide support for the notion of intra-multidimensional analysis as well as highlighting the need for specialization within team marketing operations. These findings may also suggest that management need only concern themselves with excelling in a limited number of areas. However, it is strongly believed that additional research is necessary to substantiate this assumption.

### **Summary**

It is the belief of the researchers that utilization of the modified EXCEL instrument successfully achieved the intended purpose of this exploratory investigation which was to identify distinguishing characteristics of effective

professional sport franchise marketing programs. From this analysis the significant contribution of a winning team performance record to the marketing performance of professional sport franchises has been accounted for as have three distinguishable organizational attributes (closeness to the customer, a bias for action, and sticking to the knitting), each controllable by team marketing management. Furthermore, the current study reveals which of the attributes germane to successful organizations (Peters and Waterman, 1982) receives the greatest amount of emphasis within contemporary professional sport franchise marketing operations.

Furthermore, the instrument used for data collection purposes, EXCEL, a multidimensional scale designed by Sharma *et al.* (1990a) for measuring excellence in business operations, proved to be a valuable resource to management of the responding professional sport franchises. All findings appear to indicate that the modified EXCEL instrument is a valid tool for similarly assessing excellence within professional sport marketing programs. Of equal importance, results obtained from the multidimensional instrumentation process employed, allowed participating team marketing managers to establish operational benchmarks and identify organizational strengths and weaknesses based on the scores generated for each franchise as well as the norms established by the total sample. Lastly, areas of disparity between staff and management for individual survey items or organizational attributes could be recognized thereby serving to enhance employee relations, the foundation of solid customer relations, according to Rosenbluth and Peters (1992).

As an exploratory analysis this investigation provides ample foundation for further research on this topic. Future endeavours warrant an expansion of the sample size to include a broader disparity of professional sport franchises with particular interest in securing representation of respondents with poor team performance records. The increased volume of participating professional sport franchises will provide an ample data base from which to generate inferential industry standards for individual survey items as well as attributes of excellence. Additional analytical perspectives may include comparisons by quality of product (major vs. minor league), team performance records (winning vs. losing), and by professional sport (e.g. basketball vs. baseball).

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