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Setting the Pole: Critical Factors in NASCAR's Success

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Running Head: CRITICAL FACTORS INNASCAR'S SUCCESS

Submitted in part: THESIS PROJECT
Master of Arts in Corporate and Public Communications
Setting the Pole: Critical Factors in NASCAR's Success

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Abstract

This study examines the critical factors that make NASCAR so successful. Now known as the fastest growing sport, NASCAR started out as a limited funding, dirt track racing sport to a multimillion dollar, super speedway sport. Just like every sport, NASCAR has gone through many changes and this study will further discuss how it went from a sport to a business and then to entertainment and now a lifestyle.

In the beginning NASCAR drivers were renegades with ties to moonshining; today drivers are considered role models and are active in Pop Culture. Constant changes in the sport have allowed it to grow from dirt tracks in a farmer's backyard, to millions of television sets across the country. Dirt to asphalt, barely 100MPH to over 200MPH, daily driver to super racing machines and Ralph Earnhardt to Dale Earnhardt to Dale Earnhardt Junior.

What makes NASCAR so successful? The answer is constant change while keeping the same basic concept of 43 drivers and teams battling it out for 500 miles to see who will be the victor and champion of the sport.

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Setting the Pole: Critical Factors in NASCAR's Success

Chapter I Introduction

Ernest Hemingway once said “there are only three sports: bullfighting, auto racing, and mountaineering. All the rest are merely games“ (Stahl, 2005).

Hemingway believed that in order for a game to be considered a sport, a risk must be involved. “The consequence of a ball missing a hole, or a batter missing the ball, is purely mathematical. In stock-car racing, however, there is no abstraction. A critical mistake on the racetrack can do more than spell defeat – it can kill you“ (Miles, 2005). At the time, Hemingway was talking about the Grand Prix, but auto racing today in the United States refers to stock cars and stock cars define the National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR).

“No matter which quiet corner of America you inhabit, you’ve heard of NASCAR by now, and of its meteoric rise to sporting and economic prominence; hottest show on the continent, The Great Inescapable, the 200-mile-an-hour platinum-plated V-8-powered Stars and Stripes hero machine”(MacGregor, 2005).

Now the fastest growing spectator sport in the nation, NASCAR has come a very long way from its early days as unorganized dirt track racing in the South. Officially NASCAR was founded in 1948 by several race track owners and drivers, including a man by the name of “Big” Bill France, to help organize the sport of late model racing. NASCAR then had its first sanctioned race a few months later when “14,000 people showed up at a race course just south of Daytona Beach. The 150-mile event was held on a unique track that was half on the beach and half on the highway behind the sand, making it interesting for drivers and spectators alike, particularly when the tide came in and the beach narrowed” (Martin, 2005). At the end of the day, one of the great early drivers, Red Byron, had won the race.

“While NASCAR started as a primarily Southern-based sport, this is no longer true. Once the media began paying attention to the fierce competition and the incredible bonds between drivers and fans, the sport inevitably boomed. Today, with impressive race tracks opening across the country, as well as multi-million-dollar sponsorship packages, licensing deals, and television contracts, NASCAR is everywhere” (Martin, 2005).

“For longtime fans of stock-car racing this wild success comes as no surprise. It was only a matter of time before everybody caught on to how sensational this whole million-horsepower traveling tent and revival deal really is, a boom sport” (MacGregor, 2005). Unlike other sports, NASCAR has developed with the times. It seems that each decade adds a new chapter in the history books and each year the sport changes for the better.

“According to the IEG Sponsorship Report, NASCAR had total corporate sponsorship revenue last year of \$1.5 billion, compared with \$445 million for the NFL and \$340 million for Major-League Baseball” (O’Keefe, Schlosser, 2005, p 48).

NASCAR is not only a successful role model for other sports, but for big business too. NASCAR is looked upon as one of the top brands in the country and this is why:

- 1.) #1 spectator sport
- 2.) #2 rated regular-season sport on television
- 3.) Over two billion in annual licensed sales
- 4.) More Fortune 500 companies than any other sport
- 5.) #1 in fan brand loyalty

This is NASCAR today and no other sport come close to its outstanding numbers.

Research Question

What are the critical factors that have made NASCAR so successful? This study will explore key elements that have made NASCAR become known as the fastest growing sport in America.

Subsidiary Questions

In order to truly understand the success of NASCAR, this study will address the following questions.

- 1.) What is the history of NASCAR, how did it all come together?
- 2.) What is the importance of sponsorship, and licensing?
- 3.) How did television help NASCAR broaden its audience?

- 4.) What is the role of technology in NASCAR?
- 5.) Employees, Drivers, Mechanics; what is their position in NASCAR?
- 6.) Why are fans one of the most important factors to NASCAR's success?

Purpose of this Study

It seems that NASCAR in the last couple of years has come out of nowhere. Until about 2001, NASCAR was a sport to fill in some empty time spots on television. "NASCAR was thought of as not much more than a novelty act, an occasional eight-minute filler on *Wide World of Sports*, like barrel-jumping from Lake Placid" (MacGregor, 2005). But now with the 2006 season concluding in November, NASCAR is the new sport to watch on Sundays.

As a child, I was always into cars, any shape or size; I played with them from morning till night. Automobiles are in my blood. My grandfather owned an auto body shop from the 1950s till the early 80's. When my father was growing up he would work for my grandfather in the shop. Although my father chose to become a business man, he was still able to teach me a few things about cars.

I was never a big fan of any auto racing other than drag racing until a young driver by the name of Jeff Gordon started winning some NASCAR races. Up until the mid 90's NASCAR had older drivers around the ages of 35 and up. But here is this young man at the age of 21 from California referred by the southerners as a "Yankee". His bright, rainbow colored #24 car, seemed to fit his personality perfectly which helped him draw a large fan base.

“Those traditional NASCAR fans considered Gordon an outsider and a threat, not just to win races but to somehow...I don't know, steal something from them. Gordon was a California kid who looked even younger than he was. He was good-looking, in a very clean-cut way, and very polite. He was about as far in looks and manners as you could get from the old, whiskey-running, hard-charging, redneck driver who was the early image of the sport” (Hammond, 2005, p.214).

This will become the new norm for NASCAR. Compared to the older drivers, young drivers are more articulate in front of the camera, and present themselves as much more than a tough driver from the south. The new image is to show that NASCAR drivers are intelligent and charismatic.

In 1995 Gordon won his first NASCAR championship and became the youngest man to do so. Currently he has four championship titles and is ranked 6th for the most NASCAR Cup wins just three shy of Dale Earnhardt.

Being a true “diehard” NASCAR fan involves watching weekly races every Saturday or Sunday for the duration of the ten-month season. Even though I am not as intensely committed to the sport as these diehards, I do consider myself an avid fan. While an early admiration for the charismatic Jeff Gordon may have sparked my interest in NASCAR, it was greatly intensified by attending my first race in August 2005 when I attended the Allstate Brickyard 400 at Indianapolis. You can never imagine how big NASCAR is until you go to an event.

“Race weekend involves so many things. There are displays from the sponsors with activities and games. Think you can change tires as fast as the big boys? Try your luck at the Home Depot trailer with their pit-stop challenge. Drivers were signing autographs, and there are free items up for grabs. The souvenir trucks were in full bloom, allowing you to sport your favorite driver's colors as a hat, shirt, license plate, sticker, inflatable car, flag, blanket, underwear, anything and everything” (Cranfield, Hansen, Adams, Aubery, Autio, 2005).

A NASCAR race is truly a full weekend event that, for most Cup race weekends, will begin on Friday and end on Sunday. No matter what time of day it is something is going on. It's a giant "tailgating" event for 3 days! On Friday you can watch the race teams practice and test their cars; on Saturday you can watch the drivers qualify for the race and then on Sunday is the main event. Between each practice and qualifying round there are many things to do at the track. Miles of parking lots are filled with RV's, trailer homes and campsites. This doesn't even include the countless number of merchandise haulers that border the track where race fans can purchase their favorite race team's apparel and souvenirs. It was there that I was able to purchase a used tire from a NASCAR race car and the front fender from Jeff Gordon's car which was actually used in a race, for the bargain price of \$350!

I was also fortunate enough to attend that race which is one of the biggest races of the year with over 350,000 fans in attendance! It was huge, with just mobs and mobs of people! "Lets face it NASCAR is putting on a Super Bowl every week" (Lowry, 2004).

To be at a race itself is amazing. When you're sitting in the stands and listening to the national anthem, you can't help but get emotional with everyone singing along around you. At the end of the anthem five fighter jets fly over the track and thousands of red, white, and blue balloons are released in the air. Then the man over the loud speaker says, just like in the movies, "Gentleman start your engines"! The roar of 43 motors turning over at the same time is just mind-blowing. And then of course the growl that the cars make when the pace car leaves the track when the green flag comes out and the drivers bring the "pedal to the metal"!

The whole event is just an incredible experience, which any sports fan should have at least once in their life.

The purpose of this thesis is not only to explain how NASCAR is so successful, but also to provide reasons why it is such a great sport for everyone to enjoy.

Objectives/Expectations

The expectations of this study is to gain a better understanding of why and how NASCAR has become the fastest growing sport in the country, by examining its key elements such as Television, Sponsorship, Technology, and of course the Fans. In addition to research, a survey was conducted to help gain a better perspective of the general public's opinion of sports, which can be used as reference for determining NASCAR's effect/success with its fan base.

Relevance

I chose this topic because I am a fan of NASCAR and I feel that it is the only professional sport that listens to its fans. I believe that NASCAR should be used as a role model for other professional sports. It can be said that, in an era when all one reads about is how much money a certain player is getting or a particular sport is going on strike because the players want more money, fans need a sport where they won't have to worry if their favorite athlete is going to switch teams or if the sport will be canceled for the duration of the season.

Furthermore I wanted to show that NASCAR is not just cars making left hand turns for 3 hours a day and should be considered a real sport. Each car has a team and just like any other sport team, each person has a different role to help them to victory. In

addition, drivers are athletes to; it takes enormous amounts of stamina to sit in a vehicle with 130 degree plus temperatures for three hours. And just like every professional sport, a different strategy must be planned with every lap made.

This topic is relevant not just to me but to all the sports fans out there that have lost the love and passion of certain mainstream professional sports and who feel they deserve something for all the years of their patriotism.

Definition of Terms

- 1.) NASCAR: National Association of Stock Car Auto Racing
- 2.) Stock Car: The type of car used in NASCAR, which resembles automobiles that anyone can buy from a car dealership.
- 3.) Setting the Pole: When a driver qualifies with the fastest time, he starts in the first position of the race.
- 4.) “Big” Bill France: Stock car driver and race promoter who founded NASCAR
- 5.) Daytona: The most famous race track in NASCAR: the Daytona 500 is considered the biggest event of the season. Also the opening race in February.
- 6.) Red Byron: The driver that won the first race in NASCAR, as well as the first NASCAR Championship in 1949.
- 7.) Jeff Gordon: Four time NASCAR Champion and driver of the #24 DuPont car became the youngest driver to win a championship in 1995.
- 8.) NASCAR Championship: At the end of each season NASCAR team earn points for each race and the team with the most points at the end of the season, becomes champion. Also known as the Winston Cup Championship until 2004 when it became the Nextel Cup Championship.
- 9.) Diehard Fan: Someone who watches all the races, buys all the apparel, and thinks nothing other than their favorite sport.
- 10.) Allstate Brickyard 400: Indianapolis Motor Speedway, nicknamed the Brickyard, because its racing surface used to be paved with bricks, has become one of the most popular races in the NASCAR season.

- 11.) Pit: The pit on the race track is where drivers during a race can get new tires, gas and any other work that needs to be done to their car.
- 12.) Pit Passes: A ticket that allows someone onto the pit surface.
- 13.) Souvenir Trucks: Large truck trailers that go to each NASCAR race, and carry all sorts of NASCAR souvenirs for every race team.
- 14.) Qualifying: Drivers try to get the fastest time around the track in order to determine their position on the track for the main race.
- 15.) Tailgating: Prior to a sporting event, the fans will relax by their vehicles and have a picnic
- 16.) Super Bowl: The most watched sporting event in America: two of the best Football teams play against each other to see who will be champion.
- 17.) Pace Car: A vehicle that drives on the track to help guide the drivers when there's trouble on the track.
- 18.) Pedal to the Metal: A phrase used to explain the acceleration of a car.

Limitations

This study is solely on NASCAR and NASCAR's Nextel Cup series. I will not discuss NASCAR's other racing series (Busch and Craftsman Truck), nor will I discuss various other auto racing series and leagues, such as Formula One, IRL, SCCA (Sports Car Club of America), Drift Racing, Trans Am Circuit, IROC (International Race of Champions), NHRA (National Hot Rod Association), ARCA (Auto Racing Club of America).

The survey will be limited to sports fans in general. The questions are setup so that any sport enthusiast can answer them. I did not want to ask specific questions about NASCAR or auto racing, because people question whether or not racing is a sport and I did not want to sway their answers to be negative because of it.

Summary

“43 drivers sweat it through 500 grueling miles to see who will get to pop the champagne cork. At speeds that will top 200mph, and sometimes just inches away from their competitors, the cars shoot around the track with a velocity that creates a fierce blast of air as the pack goes by, fuelling the energy of cars and people, the blended aromas of frying onions, hamburgers, burnt rubber and high octane gas are swept along in the shockwave” (Wilson, 2005, p.F1). This is NASCAR.

With recent slides in ratings and attendance in other professional sports over the past few years, one sport has been consistently growing its fan base and that is NASCAR. Compared to other sports NASCAR is a fairly young, but one wouldn't notice it from the millions of fans that attend the sport live or watch it in their homes every week. NASCAR has been on the right track for several years now, while other sports are losing viewers, NASCAR is gaining in fan support and continues to grow.

“The casual fan, though, the nonfan, the anti-fan, thinks: How did this happen? It's the dullest thing I've ever seen! Cars driving in a circle! For four hours! It's barely a sport! The drivers aren't even athletes“ (MacGregor, 2005)! This study will answer all these questions while discussing the critical factors that make NASCAR so successful.

Chapter II Review of Literature

Introduction

The following review of the literature explores the growing popularity and potential of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) to become the largest growing professional sport in the United States. The popularity of this fifty-seven year old sport has grown from small town dirt tracks in the south to 2-mile long concrete super speedways across the country and from 50 fans a race to an average of 150,000.

This, race fans, is the new world of NASCAR, the fastest growing, best-run sports business in America-with the emphasis on business. Once the province of the moonshine runners and good ol' boys, the sport has courted corporate America for decades. But NASCAR's recent explosion in popularity-and the establishment of its racetracks as big-time commercial venues-is unprecedented. Stock-car racing is now a multibillion dollar industry. The second-most watched sport on television behind pro-football, NASCAR has seen its ratings increase by more than 50% since it inked a six-year, \$2.4 billion network deal five years ago. The sport is on pace this year for its highest TV viewership ever; the last time a major professional sport set a new high was the NFL in 1981. Licensed retail sales of NASCAR-branded products have increased 250% over the past decade, totaling \$2.1 billion last year alone (up from \$1.3 billion in 2000). NASCAR.com is one of the most highly trafficked sports websites. The NASCAR name is so hot that market research firm PSB picked it as the country's No. 2 brand, ahead of both Google and iPod (Blackberry was No. 1) (O'Keefe, Schlosser, 2005, pg. 49).

Specifically, this review of the literature examines how NASCAR started as a hobby for adrenalin junkies, to becoming a super media monster for the entire family to enjoy.

History

“NASCAR has spent much of the past decade spreading its reach beyond its southern, stereotypical roots. But some of the places it’s been going lately are beyond anything its forefathers could imagine“ (Tays, 2005, p.3). Although NASCAR’s popularity has flourished in the last six years, the birth of this ever-growing sport began as a “small organization formed on the beaches of Daytona” (Martin, 2005). Before the establishment of NASCAR, people modified their cars and raced them on local dirt, clay, and wooden tracks in the south. During the time of the prohibition in the United States, bootleggers, also known as “moonshiners,“ were forced to make alcohol and deliver it only at night, hence the name. “The whole business of making, loading, and delivering moonshine occurred under the cover of darkness” (Hagstrom, 1998, p 22). The alcohol was then brought to speakeasies who would purchase the illegal alcohol and buy it only from the most reliable and fastest moonshiner.

The biggest majority of the drivers were bootleggers who hauled whiskey,’ said Earles. ‘I can’t say I ever saw the whiskey on them—it was just hearsay—but the moonshiners had a pretty good reputation for being good drivers, and they were the ones who got into racing (Golenbock, 2004).

In 1933, prohibition ended, and the United States government wanted to put an end to the production and distribution of the bootleg liquor. The moonshine industry did not want to go away. Moonshine drivers were forced to make their cars go faster to stay away from the police. “Back in the depression, North Carolina’s bandit drivers, when not outpacing the law, would get together to tune up their cars and organize informal races around improvised clay tracks on local farms. As the economy improved, and the thirst for moonshine dwindled, the drivers turned to competition racing in a bigger way” (Wilson,

2005, p.F1). Competition between the drivers grew. With the income that the moonshiners earned, they were able to construct and run their own circle dirt tracks.

The history books tell us that the first stock car race among moonshiners occurred in the mid-1930s in a cow pasture in the town of Stockbridge, Georgia. It seems that a few moonshiners started arguing about who had the fastest car and who was the better driver. To settle the dispute, someone carved out a quarter-mile dirt track in the middle of a farmer's field (Hagstrom, 1998, p. 22).

In the south, circle tracks were built not only to "settle the dispute," but also to entertain people who enjoyed the excitement of high-speed driving. Although moonshiners are considered the originators, the sport of racing continued to grow and a new breed of racers were formed.

Between the years of 1933 and 1945, race car driving reached a plateau. In 1945, there was a re-birth in the role of the participator and the spectator of the sport.

Post War America, the veterans returned home still longing for the rush of adventure felt during their time at war. Many of the veterans were mechanics, pilots, and drivers and utilized the knowledge gained through their experience in World War II to apply it to the development of their personal automobiles or race cars. Those with both the knowledge and spending power either developed land-speed racers and/or rear-engine sprint cars. In the south it was extremely expensive to build a race car from scratch, therefore those with the knowledge, but no funding, visited junkyards to purchase old and used sedans in order to participate in local track racing. They would take the sedan and re-construct it for an increase in speed. Mechanics were able to do this by modifying the motor, and installing the rear end and the shocks from a truck. Re-building the junker cost only 20% of the total cost of other major race cars, such as sprints. With these

improvements and knowledge, the new comers (the war veterans) were stiff competition to the racing veterans (the moonshiners). At the time, these competitions would not be categorized as organized or professional, but they were the start to what would become a well-structured sporting event.

Until the late 1940s, circle track racing was not organized. Race car drivers used any style, model, and/or year simply to participate in the race.

... random races were held here and there, sprinkled throughout the southeastern United States wherever tracks were available (some were well-built, but most were pretty shoddy). Drivers didn't race in each event, so fans had no idea which of their favorites would show up until they got to the track. Worse, some race promoters were less than honest, running off with the ticket receipts and race purses, never to be seen again" (Martin, 2005, p.10).

It was not until 1947, when NASCAR was founded, that rules were designed to maintain consistency amongst the drivers. These rules created a more controlled environment which benefited both the drivers and the fans. An entrepreneurial racer, promoter, named Bill France determined that a profit could be made by joining all the dirt-track races (Miles, 2005). "Racing needed change, thought Bill France, and he was going to change it" (MacGregor, 2005, p.19). Determined, devoted, and energetic, France was set on establishing "one sanctioning body" where drivers would compete in different events; each event containing its own individual rule, and at the end of the season, the victor would be crowned champion (Martin, 2005). "That's exactly what France, also known as "Big Bill," created with his brainchild—NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Racing) (Martin, 2005, p 11). In addition, he wanted NASCAR to oversee the promotions of each race and to control and enforce track rules, as well as car regulations. "On December 14, 1947, France met with 35 other men at the Streamline Hotel in Daytona

Beach to fashion the very thing he had seen in his mind's bright eye (MacGregor, 2005). Frances vision became reality in February of 1948, when the first sanctioned NASCAR race was held in Daytona Beach, Florida.

NASCAR is always evolving; changing or adding rules to help increase the popularity and of course the safety of the sport. The first and most important change NASCAR made in 1949 was the banning of modified cars which allowed only the use of late model stock-cars. That meant that the cars used in the races had to stay exactly the same as they were off the showroom floor. France believed that by using strictly stock-cars the competition would be tighter and would help gain attention from auto manufactures. Before 1949, the drivers would use modified cars of all different makes, models and years. Sometimes a driver would win by nine laps just because he built the better car. Now with the new rules, drivers not only had to have the skill of managing turns at a fast speed, but had to somehow sustain the car the entire race. "The very first late model or stock car race took place on June 19, 1949" (Golenbock, 2004, p.28), at the Charlotte Fairgrounds Speedway, in North Carolina.

Not only did the fans enjoy the close competition, but manufacturers loved the publicity of their vehicle. The slogan "Win Sunday, Buy Monday," became a popular line used by the manufacturers; it "was the sampler stitched and hung on the walls by every executive" (MacGregor, 2005). With a continuous increase in purchases of the stock cars, manufacturers saw a window of opportunity to gain financial backing (later known as, sponsorship) for the upkeep and maintenance of the vehicle. Not only did this decision benefit the manufacturers, drivers, and crew (by decreasing the amount of money needed to sustain the car), but also provided a marketing opportunity for the sponsors (additional

exposure of their company's name/services). Prior to what is known today as sponsorship, drivers "would have to run late-model cars" and "borrowed money to pay for the new cars" (Golenbock, 2004). "In other cases, a driver would go to a friend or acquaintance who had money, buy a car, and agree to split the winnings. They didn't have to do much to the cars. At the beginning, the race cars didn't even have rolls bars" (Golenbock, 2004).

In the 1960s, NASCAR was coming of age. There were improvements being made to not only the tracks, but to the support from outside sources as well. "...the Detroit manufacturers were pouring engineering and money and support and northern industrial ambition all over the sport to make sure that fans got the message that Ford or Chevy or Chrysler or Plymouth was the baddest, fastest mother out there" (MacGregor, 2005, p.140).

Not only did NASCAR's developments help the drivers and the organization, but it gained some much needed attention from the media. For example, in January of 1960, CBS Sports broadcasted parts of the NASCAR's first live Grand National event (Martin, 2005). One year later, ABC Sports televised two hours of the Firecracker 250 race from Daytona (Martin, 2005). But, like most sports, NASCAR had its ups and downs. Pre-1970, NASCAR's reputation and popularity was growing steadily, but it was not until the gas shortage that manufacturers pulled away from supporting the drivers and the crew (Golenbock, 2004). It was at this point, that sponsors became a necessity; without them, drivers ran the risk of losing more money toward their car.

That's when the hunt for sponsorship really took off. You see, Ford had been giving their NASCAR teams all the parts they needed, all the cars they needed, and \$2,000 a race. Ford and Chrysler *were* the sponsors. All of a sudden you take away the \$2,000 a race, plus you now have to buy the cars and the parts, and it's not very feasible to do this on your own. That's when car owners started to look for companies to pay it (Golenbock, 2004, p. 191).

Although there were probably numerous companies wanting to back up NASCAR's financial bind, only major companies could really afford to assist. The R.J. Reynolds Company of Winston-Salem was one of the first major sponsors who took on NASCAR. They were looking for additional ways to market their cigarettes and looking for a place to put their unspent ad budget (MacGregor, 2005, p.180). "Once Winston signed on, demonstrating the excellence of an investment in NASCAR, the rising tide of cash from other sponsors, especially the national breweries, lifted all boats. Pretty soon, every car on the track has a sponsor" (MacGregor, 2005, p.181). This was the beginning of sponsorship and other business deals between NASCAR and other companies. When cars and parts became more expensive there was need for more sponsorship.

Once NASCAR got a grip on sponsorship, the sport started to flourish in different avenues. More media outlets were participating in broadcasting NASCAR's races and the turmoil that occurred. For example, in February of 1979, "CBS broadcasted the first flag-to-flag coverage of the Daytona 500" (Martin, 2005). Three racers, Donnie Allison, Carl Yarborough, and Richard Petty, were head to head in the final lap of the race. Unfortunately for Allison and Yarborough, they collided, but fortunately for Petty, he won the race. When taking his victory lap, Petty checked on the status of the two other drivers; a verbal brawl began, eventually escalating into a scene only worth watching on television. "The flip to the story, the kicker, the element of the elemental that makes the

whole deal seem foreordained, was the substantial snowfall in the East that very weekend. It kept people inside, warming themselves by the sunny glow of the TV. More people saw that race than had ever seen any Cup race in the history of the sport. That one afternoon brought America into contact with something it might otherwise have never seen. NASCAR” (MacGregor, 2005). With events such as these, NASCAR became more than just car racing, but a phenomenon.

The 1980s drew a couple of major milestones for NASCAR. First, in 1986, NASCAR “drops Grand National from its top division, renaming it the NASCAR Winston Cup Series” (Martin, 2005). And, second, as of the late 1980s, early 1990s, every NASCAR Cup Series race was being televised on cable and satellite (Martin, 2005). Although, these are only a few of the successes of this period, nonetheless it demonstrates NASCAR’s ability to continuously improve with the time.

NASCAR’s fame and fortune only grew from here. First, the Tom Cruise blockbuster *Days of Thunder* hit box offices with its rendition of the life of a NASCAR driver’s successes and failures. It is one of many, but definitely the most intriguing and closest to replicating real life experiences within NASCAR. It can not be said that this movie made NASCAR a household name, but it aided in upgrading its popularity and status. Second, in 1992, Richard Petty retired, after 35 years of racing: 200 victories, 549 top-five finishes in 1,177 starts, and seven-time NASCAR cup Championship (Martin, 2005). Third, “Dale Earnhardt, Sr., joins Richard Petty” as he earned his seventh NASCAR Cup Championship in 1994 (Martin, 2005. p.300). Lastly, and possibly the most important milestone with broadcasting, NASCAR makes a multi-year, multi-billion

dollar partnership with FOX, NBC, and Turner Sports (beginning officially in 2001) (Martin, 2005).

Currently, NASCAR is a “humming media and marketing machine that keeps swiftly evolving from its start as a pastime for beer-guzzling Bubbas. NASCAR races are drawing the second largest sports-viewing audience after the NFL. Thirteen million fans bought tickets to the 2,200 races in NASCAR’s various divisions last year, with an average turnout of 186,000 for big events” (Lowry, 2004, p.91). Realizing that NASCAR was becoming more of a family oriented sport, a new major sponsor joined the team. “The wireless outlet is shelling out \$750 million over 10 years to put its name on the Nextel Cup Series—one of the biggest sponsorship deals ever. That a technology company is replacing a struggling cigarette maker (Winston) speaks volumes about where the sport is headed. Working with Nextel, NASCAR can now exploit opportunities to sell racing to teenagers, something it couldn’t do with Winston” (Lowry, 2005). 2004 marked the beginning for the Nextel Cup, where NASCAR’s top 10 drivers compete for the championship with 10 races left. “(Brian) France was adamant that NASCAR, like baseball and basketball would benefit greatly from a playoff run to keep it in the news, especially in the fall after the football season started. It turned out he was right. The race for the first championship in 2004 came down to the final lap boosting viewership” (O’Keefe, Schlosser, 2005, p.50).

NASCAR’s organization has grown tremendously since its start in 1947. With seven offices across the nation including Bentonville, Charlotte, Concord, Conover, Daytona, Los Angeles and New York, NASCAR has demonstrated its focus of expanding the sport nationwide. Regardless of its expansion and developments over the years,

NASCAR has always maintained its core values. NASCAR's history proves its ability to survive both the ups and downs, and not once showed signs of giving up; instead it held strong and continued to prosper into what is known today as the nation's fastest growing sport.

The Critical Factors Affecting NASCAR

Introduction

Every Business/sport has key factors and elements that help it grow.

NASCAR "crosses all types of demographics," said Marc Fink, president and chief executive officer of Fink's. "It's big business. Everybody realizes what this sport has become". (Boone, 2005). NASCAR has multiple factors that have helped make it grow.

Individually each factor can help any sport, but put them all together and you can get a power house of a sport. Through out the years each factor has consistently grown because each factor helps out the other.

This section will examine in-depth, each critical factor and explain how it has effected NASCAR individually, from sponsorship to the fans.

Sponsorship

"You can't ignore it. Even if you think you're some slick, big-city guy, it's impossible not to acknowledge and recognize the tremendous impact of NASCAR on the sporting world and the pop culture scene and Madison Avenue. The endorsements behind these guys and the sport in general are enormous" (Tays, 2005, p.3).

Sponsorship has always been a part of NASCAR in one form or another. Even in the early days of NASCAR it was expensive to keep the cars running so it was not uncommon to see cars with names painted on them from local garages or businesses such as Overseas Motors(# 22 Red Byron) or some dealership. For years, small, local businesses helped fund some of the drivers and teams until 1971, when one of the largest tobacco companies helped change the future of NASCAR.

When R.J. Reynolds put up \$100,000 for the top drivers in the points standings starting in 1971, the sport began to grow and change. The tobacco giant agreed to promote races that were 250 miles and longer. Suddenly the owners understood that if they were going to have the dough to pay for their cars, they would have to find corporate sponsors (Golenbock, 2004, p.191).

“Sponsors are quickly learning that activating a NASCAR integrated sponsorship not only generates more sales but also allows for more creative ways to get their message across to consumers” (Hagstrom, 1998). Since fans represent many different demographics, it opens up the chance for product promotions for various types of companies. “Sponsorship is a form of marketing in which companies attach their name, brand, or logo to an event for the purpose of achieving future profits” (Hagstrom, 1998). This is because “NASCAR fans are three times as likely as non-fans to purchase sponsors’ products” (Cassidy, 2002, p.16). Cassidy explains that “even among casual fans, 87 percent believe NASCAR is the kind of sport that needs sponsorship and 66 percent know which companies sponsor which driver” (2002, p.16). Companies use NASCAR to help boost their marketing campaigns by positioning their logos all over the vehicles and the team’s uniforms. Not only does the company get the benefits, but the teams do too.

Home Depot is the sponsor of Tony Stewart and the number 14 car. Every time you walk into a Home Depot you see cardboard cut outs of Tony and even carriages that are in the shape of the number 14 car. There are plenty of home improvement stores in this country but, diehard Tony Stewart fans will only go to Home Depot. That's because fans of NASCAR are 94% more likely to have positive feelings towards a certain sponsor.

In addition, "When NASCAR fans see an advertisement for Budweiser they think of Dale Earnhardt Jr., who is sponsored by that company. The same holds true for DuPont, which has reaped immeasurable benefits from its association with Jeff Gordon. Sponsors are integral in boosting NASCAR's popularity and in turn gaining financial rewards" (Martin, 2005, p.19).

Not only does a company invest in the car but the teams and drivers as well.

Drivers have responsibilities to their sponsors.

When a driver makes an *appearance*, he shows up to sign posters, programs, and trading cards for fans or employees at supermarket grand openings, auto shows, conventions, car dealerships, fairgrounds, auto stores, or other venues. Sometimes, sponsors also ask drivers to give a speech or host a question-and-answer session for fans or employees. With sponsors' increasing involvement in the sport, public speaking and public relations are big parts of a driver's life. How many appearances a driver is required to make depends on the contract he or she signs at the beginning of the season (Martin, 2005, p 23).

Companies across the country rely on NASCAR to help connect with potential consumers and ultimately raise sales. "According to a study by the Center for Sports Sponsorship at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA., 56 percent of fans believe NASCAR drivers use the products they endorse" (Boone, 2005, p.1).

Advertisers spend millions each year on teams to help get their products out there to the consumers. “The road to advertising success with NASCAR is paved with dollar bills. The cost of sponsoring a car in the Nextel Cup Division is a closely held secret, but estimates put the minimum at \$15 million per year, and sponsors of winning race teams pay upward of \$20 million” (Phipps, 2005, p.18). With such a popular sport and constant media exposure it is often heard that “the biggest mistake NASCAR advertisers make is not spending enough money“ (Phipps, 2005, p.18).

The Center for Sport Sponsorship conducted a study based on the relationship of the fans with the sport. The survey found that “93 percent of the fans said corporate sponsors are very important to NASCAR and 76 percent agreed that without corporate sponsors there would be no NASCAR” (Phipps, 2005, p.18). Other results from the survey were that “51 percent of fans agreed that when they buy a NASCAR sponsor’s product, they feel they contribute to the sport and 47 percent of fans said that they like a sponsor’s brand more because it sponsors NASCAR” (Phipps, 2005, p.18).

These days it seems that everyone is hopping on the sponsorship band wagon of NASCAR. In 2005 alone there are 107 Fortune 500 companies that are involved in some kind of sponsorship with NASCAR. That’s more than any other sport in this country.

It seems that sponsoring NASCAR is not limited to just businesses. Now colleges are starting to get involved with its sponsoring. In 2001, Wittenberg University had their name painted on the rear fender of several cars that were participating in a NASCAR race.

Screaming for attention on the rear fender of a NASCAR winning race car last year in big red letters, was a logo for Wittenberg University, a small, private, Lutheran-affiliated school in Western Ohio. College logos have

joined ads for gasoline companies, oil filters, soft drinks and beer as schools seek students among racing fans (Hannah, 2002).

Each year more and more companies join the NASCAR family with sponsorships. When a study was conducted to show the increase in ads from 2004 to 2005 at the Daytona 500, the results were “7:26:13 verses 5:46:40 in total on screen time, 230 versus 162 in verbal mentions, \$291 million verses \$224 million in comparable exposure value” (Phipps, 2005, p.18). Kyle Busch, the driver of the number 5 Kellogg’s car had 4 hours and 39 minutes of exposure time on television throughout the season. To Kellogg’s that is worth up to \$34 million in advertising value. And that’s just a rookie driver who finished 20th in points.

NASCAR is constantly changing for the better and in 2003 it signed a ten year deal with Nextel a deal worth \$750 million dollars. No longer will the series championship be referred as the Winston Cup instead it will known as the Nextel cup. “Becoming a NASCAR sponsor means you’re joining a family of brands that shares a unique bond with millions of consumers who are proud to call themselves NASCAR fans. As that bond continues to strengthen, sponsor brands continue to see the benefit of marketing programs that reach the amazingly loyal consumer” (“Powering Brands,” 2005).

With so many different avenues opening for sponsorship positions and the endless opportunities, there is no end for NASCAR.

Licensing

“Like sponsorship, the licensing program in NASCAR is designed to benefit drivers, teams, and tracks by growing business opportunities for the sport’s corporate partners” (Hagstrom, 1998). In order for companies to benefit, NASCAR needed to increase the number of fans and try to get the general public’s attention, thus NASCAR established official stores and even restaurants to sell products across the country. In 2001 “sales of NASCAR merchandise topped \$1 billion” (Franco, 2002). Now partners can sell their products name with the NASCAR logo to help boost sales. In 2002 NASCAR released two new ways for companies to understand more of what is going on within the sport. One is a newsletter “with brief bulletins to make it easier for the retailers to pinpoint hot markets” and the second is “Monday morning e-mails to highlight progress reports and marketing opportunities” (Mammarella, 2002).

“According to a NASCAR brand study conducted by market researcher Ipsos-Reid, there are 40 million hardcore NASCAR fans, many of whom regularly buy NASCAR- related merchandise and products with direct ties to racing, whether it’s NAPA automotive parts, Kellogg’s cereal or Craftsman tools” (Pyne, 2002). This is a strong advantage for companies because “the public sees NASCAR as a reputable motor sports organization that upholds the highest standards; on one recent market survey, 91 percent of the consumers and retailers polled said they would favor a product with the NASCAR name attached” (Hagstrom, 1998). “The breadth and volume of licensed goods NASCAR sanctions-in more than 3,500 categories-is extraordinary. They range from standard T-shirts and baseball caps to vegetables” (O’Keefe, Schlosser, 2005, p.48). This

leaves NASCAR with the upper hand, because now they can come up with rules for companies to become licensed.

In order for a company to become licensed/partner of NASCAR, they must go through several steps before activation. Because NASCAR is loyal to all its partners, each perspective company is screened to make sure their product does not infringe on other company's products. Being part of NASCAR now means they can receive the NASCAR bar mark allowing a product to be sold with the NASCAR name:

We see tremendous opportunities for corporate sponsors that keep their focus on effectively activating their involvement in the sport. Winning on Sunday may help sell on Monday, but leveraging sponsorships-with drivers, teams, tracks, and the sport itself-is what moves the needle, be it market share, growth or any other key measure. (Pyne, 2002).

To be apart of the NASCAR family, will bring a company to a new level. NASCAR feels that every company/product that is a partner represents quality. That is important to the NASCAR brand because 89% of its fans feel that if a product has the NASCAR logo, than it must be a quality product.

Television

In the popular culture of the late 20th century America, one truth is unassailable: if you're not on television, you don't matter. For the first three decades of its existence, NASCAR remained unseen by the vast majority of the American sporting public, save the occasional tape-delay broadcast, live but brief cut-in or the odd interview with Richard Petty (Dunnivant, 2001, p.22).

The NASCAR fan base is over 75 million in 2005, "about 37 percent of all men, women, and children in the United States" (Markon, 2002, p.F1). Up until 2000, NASCAR races were available on paid cable and local sports stations. "You had to look around to find it

from one week to the next” (Schanzer, Dunnivant, 2001, p.23). At the end of the 2000 season, NASCAR announced that the following season would be broadcasted nationwide on NBC and FOX television stations. “For the first time in its history, the sport will be aired mostly on network TV, as FOX and NBC have negotiated a six-year deal to televise 28 of 36 races each season” (Johnson, 2001). According to Johnson, (2001) the move to commercial television “will push auto racing into the mainstream, bringing in more viewers, and with them more advertising, sponsorship and licensing deals” (American Demographics, 2001, p.34). Fans can now watch their favorite drivers or team on regular television without driving hundreds of miles or purchasing cable.

NASCAR proved to the broadcast stations that the sport is well worth the money they paid six years ago. In 2005, the FOX network’s average ratings went up from “5.7 in 2004 to 6.0 in 2005” (Consoli, 2005, p.4). “35.3 million people” alone watched the first race of the season (Phipps, 2005, p.18).

An appealing element for networks and their advertisers is that NASCAR holds up well in a world of digital video recorders, analysts said. Since cars and drivers are plastered with ads, viewers might fast-forward through commercials, but they can’t avoid all the advertising (Stewart, James, 2005, p.1).

In December of 2005, NASCAR announced a \$4.48 billion, eight year television package contract (Carlisle, 2005). Still involved in the new package is FOX and TNT, but now Disney will have a piece of the growing sport. Starting in 2007, FOX will start the first half of the season with 12 races, TNT will get the next six races, and the new comers, ESPN and ABC will have the last 17 races, including the Chase for the Championship (Carlisle, 2005). With most sports today having difficulty maintaining ratings, NASCAR seems to increase each year. NASCAR is the only sport in which the ratings went up in

2005. For example, the ratings of major league sports, such as golf, baseball, basketball and hockey have either stayed the same or declined from the previous year. “The increasing appetite of advertisers to associate their names and brands with NASCAR helped to drive up the broadcast fees. With advertisers so smitten with NASCAR, network executives felt more comfortable agreeing to write these big checks, analysts said” (Stewart, James, 2005, p.1).

Technology

For the past five years NASCAR has taken advantage of technology. “NASCAR Online has been devoted to fulfilling the wants and desires of race fan. Today, www.nascar.com is one of the most popular websites, with over 500,000 weekly users and 22 million hits a week” (Hagstrom, 1998, p.198). On the website you can get any information on a variety of topics, from a biography on a driver to a chat room to discuss NASCAR news. One recent addition to the website is the ability to see what the driver sees, as it happens during the race, and the chance to hear the conversation between the driver and the crew chief. Because of NASCAR’s presence on the Internet, NASCAR now has the ability to attract an international fan base. NASCAR is open to all ways to grow a bigger fan base and satisfy those “hard core” fans. In 2002, “NASCAR in Car” was launched:

In Demand digital cable service puts viewers into the driver’s seat and director’s chair to experience the competition. The package features six dedicated channels of live-in-car camera coverage, and real-time, animated dashboards with car performance data and live team audio. This technology will soon feed live timing and scoring and GPS data into videogames that will place our fans in real-time race simulation (Pyne, 2002, p.6).

NASCAR has also developed videogames. “In the first year of a six-year exclusive video-game deal with Electronic Arts (EA) (some drivers, like Dale Earnhardt Jr., use the games’ racing stimulator to bone up on their skills). EA is talking with Nextel about offering some kind of NASCAR game on its phones. Nextel already offers a special news feed-NASCAR on the go-to its phone subscribers (Lowry, 2004, p.90). A second component to the development of video games is one that allows the fan to pretend they are the driver. Each version of the game allows the player to select any vehicle they want and race on any track. The game can also be played on the Internet, so you can virtually race side by side with a friend from, for example, another state.

At the track technology is changing as well. Scanners have been used for years to listen to the team’s conversations to the driver, but now with Nextel’s new Fan View a spectator can watch, hear and learn from this new hand held device.

“There is no end to what technology can do for NASCAR; there is practically no end to the marketing opportunities that new technology will create for NASCAR sponsors“ (Hagstrom, 1998, p.200).

Family-owned Business

Part of NASCAR’s success is that it has always been a family owned business. For decades NASCAR has been run by the France family. The company has been passed down from father to son to grandson. “Racing insiders like to say that Big Bill (France) turned stock cars into a sport, Bill Jr. turned them into a business, and now Brian wants to turn them into entertainment“ (Lowry, 2005, p.90). By keeping the business within the family, NASCAR is capable of sticking to the roots of the sport. No company or big shot

CEO will ever be allowed to change NASCAR. Now NASCAR is by no means a dictatorship. There are Presidents, VPs and committee's which help run the sport.

Whether you are walking around a race track, watching the races on television, or even reading an article, the phrase "NASCAR family" is resonated. NASCAR has always been a sport surrounded by family values. When NASCAR uses the word family, it doesn't just mean the France family, but it also includes the team's family, driver's family and of course the fan's family. NASCAR has always been known as a family oriented sport and it plans to remain that way for years to come.

Drivers and Staff

A big portion of why NASCAR is so popular and why there are so many die hard fans is because of the relationship they have with the drivers. The teams and drivers are made up of regular people. Just like the average Joe, they have a family, they attend church, they work and they sleep. Unlike other professional athletes, NASCAR drivers are very approachable, meaning that they don't have numerous body guards or an entourage.

During a time when many athletes are out of touch with the fans who pay their bills, NASCAR drivers are seen by many of their supporters as the guy next door. And they are definitely the most accessible of highly hyped superstars. Although some are naturally friendlier and others are more reserved, many retain an innate humbleness, which comes from remembering the early days of their careers when they built and worked on their own cars. They also recognize that without fans, NASCAR wouldn't exist (Martin, 2005, p.14).

NASCAR racing is a full time job. The teams don't just show up on Sunday for a race to change tires. There is so much more involved to prepare that car for race day. Most

people do not realize what goes into having a race team. Just like any other sport, there is a strategy planned for each race. The cars are repaired and prepped for the next race and ideas are always flowing on how to set the car up to gain a slight edge over their competitors.

The drivers don't have it any easier either. A lot is expected out of them. When Jeff Gordon was asked how he balances his responsibilities he answered "It's hectic all the time. After Talladega, I'm spending the first couple of days doing some testing in Charlotte, and then I am going to fly up to New York City to do some PR for Tag Heuer. I'm heading straight from there to Darlington for the race weekend. It's really an around-the-clock responsibility and with the season as long as it is, it can be tough sometimes" (France, 2005, p.84).

Drivers often give back to the community by setting up personal charities or donating time and money to established causes (ie. The NASCAR Foundation, Make A Wish Foundation Victory Junction Gang Camp). In Bobby Labonte's case (driver of the #43 car) his race team opens up a track to teach race car driving to children. Kyle Petty (driver of the #45 car and son of Richard Petty) and his wife Pattie founded The Victory Junction Gang Camp in memory of their deceased son Adam. The mission of VJGC is to enrich the lives of children with chronic or life threatening illnesses by creating camping experiences that are fun, exciting, physically safe, medically sound and free.

Drivers are also gaining attention outside of racing fans. For example "Boy-next-door Carl Edwards made People magazine's 50 Hottest Bachelors list this year, joining previously honored hot-wheel hotties Kasey Kahne, Earnhardt (Jr.) and Gordon, among others" (Tays, 2005, p.3). In 2002 the magazine GQ named Jeff Gordon one of its men of

the year. NASCAR drivers have now become part of the pop culture with appearances on David Letterman, Jay Leno, Saturday Night Live and even television series' like 24 on FOX. Even if you're not a fan, you just can't hide from NASCAR, it's everywhere.

Fans

“Decked out in T-shirts and hats projecting the images of their favorite drivers and race team, men, women and children join in the rising crescendo of noise as race time approaches. Giving a rest to their vocal chords, others chow their way through mountains of cholesterol-rich comfort food washed down with Dr. Pepper, beer or this years favorite beverage – frozen margaritas” (Wilson, 2005, p.F1).

Some feel the major reason why the sport has grown is the people that are a part of NASCAR. “NASCAR is the only major sport where a big deal is not made of the salaries the drivers are getting; it's kept kind of quiet, and most of them aren't on the level of other major sports” (Benton, 2002, p.32).

It appeals to the fans of football, basketball who have been soured by decades of free agency, scandal and star fatigue. “In an age when your favorite baseball player may be playing for the Cubs one year, the Yankees the next and the Tigers the year after that, it's refreshing to be able to follow one driver and have a chance to develop some loyalty” (Puffer, 2001 as cited by Dunnivant, 2001, p.24).

NASCAR takes great steps to continue this sort of fan loyalty. “The fans were attracted everywhere by the thunder of the cars, which have been able to reach 190 mph for 40 years now, and also by a host of stars every bit as human and accessible as the early characters, if better scrubbed” (Life, 2002, p.95). “NASCAR portrays itself as a family sport and despite the increased demands brought on by success, star drivers remain accessible for autographs” (Dunnivant, 2001, p.24). Fans feel they can relate to a

driver and form a bond with them. “A fan might be 160 pounds, they can’t play football, or they are 5 foot 9, they can’t play basketball. But, they feel they can drive a car”

(Kemba, 2001, p.34).

Undoubtedly the Dallas Cowboys and the New York Yankees occasionally draw fans from, say, Jamaica, but there probably aren’t any individual games that include fans from all fifty states. In fact, the Cowboys and Yankees seldom play games in front of fans from more than fifteen or twenty states. People don’t make road trips to NASCAR races. They make pilgrimages (Dutton, 2006 p.91).

The fan base of NASCAR has spread throughout the country; however there are still areas where large amounts of people are not exposed to this sport. This could be blamed on the lack of racetracks within the area. NASCAR has been getting their voice across the country thanks to the help of several sponsors; but still, they are labeled as a “hick” sport. Accordingly to research done in 2002, statistics show that in actuality “40% of fans are women; 64% have attended college; 70% use the net; 41% earn \$50,000 or more; 38% live in the south; 17% in the northeast, and 45% elsewhere“ (Life, 2002, p.102). Over the past four years there has been an increase in sponsorship and exposure, therefore, these numbers are likely to improve and multiply.

Another attraction certain fans have is that if given the right opportunities they could drive in a race.

Most people don’t know what it’s like to dunk a basketball or hit a 100-mph fastball 500 feet for a home run, but almost everyone knows how to drive a car—and that familiarity is the appeal of NASCAR and stock-car racing. Whether they admit it or not, lots of people speed down the highway and daydream about winning the Daytona 500. That daydreamer could be a 17-year old high school student who just got a driver’s license, a 35-year old orthodontist, or a 70 year-old retired teacher. Driving is nearly universal (Martin, 2005, p.9).

Even if you're a new fan to the sport, NASCAR's veteran fans will take you under the wing and help you out to learn all there is to know about it. Books are also available to inform the basic or wanna be fan such as NASCAR for Dummies.

It's pretty nice, actually. I got a little confused a few weeks ago. I needed to go to the mall about the time the race started, and got there and thought, what are all these people doing here? I thought everybody watched the race. I'm learning there's a whole new world out there. [A comment from the 1996 champion, Terry Labonte after recently retiring] (Dutton, 2006, p.67).

Life in NASCAR is like another world. And, because there are so many things connected to NASCAR that you can actually live your life solely on NASCAR products.

Fans feel as if they are apart of NASCAR. They are apart of the NASCAR family. In a book called Chicken Soup for the NASCAR Soul, one fan talks about how he experienced a driver's death (Dale Earnhardt Sr.) and how he shared the pain with other fans.

I am truly amazed at the pride NASCAR fans take in their drivers. They will defend them to the bitter end, right or wrong, black or white. I must admit, I am the same way. But when tragedy strikes this sport, fans rally around each other to offer strength and support (Canfield, Hansen, Adams, Aubery, Autio, 2003, p.87).

Fans can even pretend they are apart of the race teams literally. NASCAR gives fans the opportunity to go behind the scenes during a race with a Garage or Pit pass. A fan can be inches away from a team, driver and car. And if that isn't enough, a fan can also listen to everything their favorite driver says during a race by tuning into the teams radio signal with a scanner. Someone can pretend they are in the car with the driver.

NASCAR's New Developments

Today, NASCAR still has one major problem; they have enough tracks but the tracks are not spread out enough. For several years now NASCAR has been trying to build a track in the biggest media market, New York. "Still, the mind boggles at the thought of NASCAR bringing its noise to New York City, its mammoth marketing machine wheel to wheel with the East Coast media monster. Like when Dale [Earnhardt] Junior and Jeff Gordon and Tony Stewart come at you three across down the back stretch at Daytona, there ain't no stopping the roar" (McKee, 2005, p.D8). This year NASCAR's sister company, International Speedway Corporation (ISC) did purchase a large amount of land in Staten Island New York for \$110 million, "where it intends to plop down an 80,000-seat racetrack and retail center for the untapped New York City market (Miles, 2005, p.1).

NASCAR is also planning on broadening its fans outside of the United States. In 2005, NASCAR held a Busch series (AAA league) race in Mexico with hopes in the future to host a Nextel cup race. NASCAR also plans on racing to our northern neighbor Canada, where "NASCAR is the No. 1 televised motor sport" (Hawaleshka, 2005, p.86). It's possible that NASCAR is also looking over seas as possible places to host races. NASCAR has always been known as "white male" sport, even though 40 percent of the fans are women. NASCAR has already setup a program called Drive for Diversity, to increase the interest of female and minorities as well as putting them in the driver's seat.

Safety is also a big factor with the sports future. NASCAR plans to introduce the car of tomorrow which will be introduced in the 2007 season. The car is wider and taller

with the driver closer to the middle of the car. A new wing installed will assist with down force to help keep the car on the ground.

Also new for the 2007 season will be the introduction of Toyota in the Nextel Cup series. Toyota already is apart of NASCAR's truck series but now will try to compete in the major series with its Camry.

NASCAR is trying to become main stream entertainment in America. "Now NASCAR's goal is one film a year with a stock-car-related plot" (O'Keefe, Schlosser, 2005, p.48). This past summer Disney released "*Herbie Fully Loaded*", which feature several NASCAR drivers and of course a NASCAR race. In the summer of 2006 Will Ferrell will star in the comedy "*Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*".

Now just like any great sport, a Hall Of Fame must be involved. In March of 2006, NASCAR announced the introduction of the NASCAR Hall Of Fame in Charlotte NC, the home of motor sports. Finally, fans will have a place to visit and honor their favorite driver and teams.

The future of NASCAR, for now, has endless possibilities. With so many different markets, NASCAR has only scratched the surface. Only time will tell where NASCAR will be in the years to come.

Summary

The point of this literature review was to highlight the different factors that aid in making NASCAR the fastest growing sport. The seven different elements demonstrated the rise in NASCAR's success and its possibilities for the future. With so much media

coverage and a constant increase in the fan pool, there is no limit to what NASCAR can achieve.

“It was a coming-of-age moment for a sport long considered a regional curiosity; when “Big Bill“ France founded NASCAR in 1948” (O’Keefe, 2005, p.50). NASCAR’s history began with those interested in testing the limits of automobiles, but grew into what today is becoming a phenomenon. The elements mentioned above are only a few of the major components to NASCAR’s success, but they are the most effective and the most conducive to the continuing growth and survival of this sport.

Chapter III Methodology

Introduction

In order to determine the validity of some of the statements and opinions expressed by those who have written about the business of NASCAR, a survey was conducted. This survey was developed in order to find out if, by properly selecting its target audience, NASCAR is, as some researchers feel, on the right track with increasing their audience numbers.

Description/Design of the Study

The type of survey that was used is the Likert Scale and this approach gives the participants more of an opinion and assists in determining the proper ways for NASCAR to continue its current marketing strategies. Unlike other styles of surveys, the Likert Scale does not put pressure on the participating individual. This survey was conducted in order to make sure the participants were aware that it was about sports, but not based on any particular one. NASCAR has been placed in the same group as the more popular sports of football and baseball. The survey was carefully written so as to not mention any particular sport. Because of this, the possibility of predisposition towards a certain sport, affecting the outcomes of the results were reduced.

For this survey, a total of 15 statements were provided to the participants. These statements were written and grouped based on their overall theme and idea. Each grouping of the questions related to a particular area of concentration that NASCAR has used in order to grow its fan base. These subject included:

- A child's lifestyle growing up
- The effect of advertisements
- The effect of the popularity of a sport on the fans
- Location of sports complex and its effect of fans
- Tickets pricing
- Athletes generating interest
- The effect of violence in sports.

For each statement, the participants were asked to choose one of the following opinions.

Strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree.

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to determine the critical factors that make NASCAR the fastest growing sport. I chose this survey style because it has the potential to reach a large audience. Because NASCAR is broadcasted through several different mediums, interviews were not required. A survey will allow me to determine how people come to like a sport, how often they participate (whether it is physically or watching it on television), and if they feel they contribute to the marketing success of the sport (through purchasing gear/paraphernalia). Ultimately, this survey will provide results to either disprove or prove parts of this research topic and provide support for future studies.

Description of the Sample

The survey was given to young adults from a 55 year span, ranging in age 18 to 73. This age group was used because it represents the audience most likely exposed to all types of sports from young adults to senior citizens (See Appendix I).

Data Collection Method

The data collection method will be by survey. The survey will be placed on Zoomerang, a web based survey site (<http://www.zoomerang.com>) where over 150 surveys will be sent out and hopefully no less than a 60% respondent rate. When the survey time is completed, and the responses have been emailed to my account, I will collect the data and analyze the responses.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis section, Zoomerang assists by collecting all of the responses and putting them into a graph format. Using the graph, I will take the numbers to determine the response rate and score for each of the questions. I will then take the response rates and put them into an excel sheet to visually breakdown the percentages of strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA). At the end of the graph, I will total the number of responses to determine the measurement of SD to SA. After the information has been broken down, I will comment on each question with reference to the percentage rates. Once all of the information has been analyzed, I will then be able determine whether or not NASCAR is taking all the steps to make it the fastest growing sport.

Summary

The survey will help reveal that NASCAR has reached their target audiences by utilizing key factors. Although the sample is rather large, future studies should be conducted in order to further appreciate and understand the value of the quickest growing sport in the country.

Surveys, such as this one, are important because they can help determine what NASCAR is doing right or wrong, where they need to improve and what they can expand on. Surveys in general are beneficial because they can reach a wide audience and gain perspective on different topics for future research.

CHAPTER IV

Results of Research

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the critical factors that make NASCAR so successful. Over the years, NASCAR has become competition for traditional sports such as baseball and football. With increased exposure and a consistently developing fan base, the sport is flourishing. And with future plans to further expand the sport beyond the United States, for example, there is no limit to what NASCAR can achieve.

Description of the Methodology

In order to show how NASCAR is becoming the fastest growing sport, one survey was conducted. It was placed on Zoomerang, a survey based website. The survey was launched February 20, 2006 and within a week, the number of completed surveys hit 50. In addition to the random participators linked to Zoomerang, I randomly selected students at Seton Hall University to partake in the survey. In the email there was a link, which directed the students to the survey on the web. Furthermore, I sent the survey link to friends, family and co-workers who fulfilled the requirements for the target market. Once the surveys were completed, the results were tallied and placed into charts.

The survey consisted of 15 questions in an effort to obtain the opinions of the general public on how they chose to participate or watch certain sports and if anyone influenced those decisions. The survey did not include any reference to NASCAR because it was my intention to keep it an un-bias survey. This ultimately allowed me to gather honest opinions of whether the individuals believed auto racing was a sport.

Including references to NASCAR may have altered their responses and overall the		
results. My goal of the survey was to have 100 participants. I far exceeded that goal and		

concluded the survey with 131 completed surveys.

Survey Sample

Prior to explaining and analyzing the results, it is important to look at who participated in the survey. Below are the results of the demographic questions.

The following survey was launched in February of 2006 on a survey based website. The one restriction to filling out this survey is that the participators have to be at least 18 years old. This survey consisted of four demographic questions: gender, age, education level, and race. 131 individuals completely filled out the survey and a total of 151 participants partially responded to the survey questions.

What is your Gender?	# of Responses	Response Ratio
Male	67	51%
Female	64	49%

NASCAR has always been known as white male sport, even though 40 percent of the fans are women (Hawaleshka, 2005, p.86); therefore, my goal was to have a relatively even split between the percentage of men and women to see if gender made a difference in the results. Fortunately, of the 131 participants, 51% were male and 49% were female.

		Critical Factors 50
Age (in Years):	Total Number	
19-25	28	

26-32 39

33-39	17	
40-46	14	
47-52	7	
53-59	7	
60-66	13	
67-73	6	

What is your education level?	# of Responses	Response Ratio
High School	2	2%
Some College	9	7%
College Graduate	62	47%
Post-Graduate	58	44%

What is your predominant ethnic background?	# of Responses	Response Ratio
Native American / Native Alaskan / African American	2	2%
African-American (Non-Hispanic)/Black	4	3%
Asian	1	1%
Hispanic/Latino	6	5%

White, Caucasian	110	85%
Anglo (Non-Hispanic)	2	2%
Other	5	4%

Questions 2, 3, and 4 asked about age, education and ethnic background. I asked question 2 to see the average age of the participators. I asked question 3 to see what the experience level was of the participators. And, I asked ethnicity to determine what percentage of each race participated and to see if that had an effect on the results. The majority of those who took the survey were between the ages of (with having the most at). 47 percent have a college education, and 44 percent (the second highest) have a post-graduate degree. 85 percent of those who participated in the survey were white, Caucasian males and females. The second highest percentage of those who participated were Hispanics/Latinos at 5 percent.

For the most part, the results are what I expected. "In actuality, "40% of fans are women; 64% have attended college; 70% use the net; 41% earn \$50,000 or more; 38% live in the south; 17% in the northeast, and 45% elsewhere" (Life, 2002, p.102). Although my demographic questions are only two percentages in this research, the point is that NASCAR is targeting the audience that is actually watching the sport.

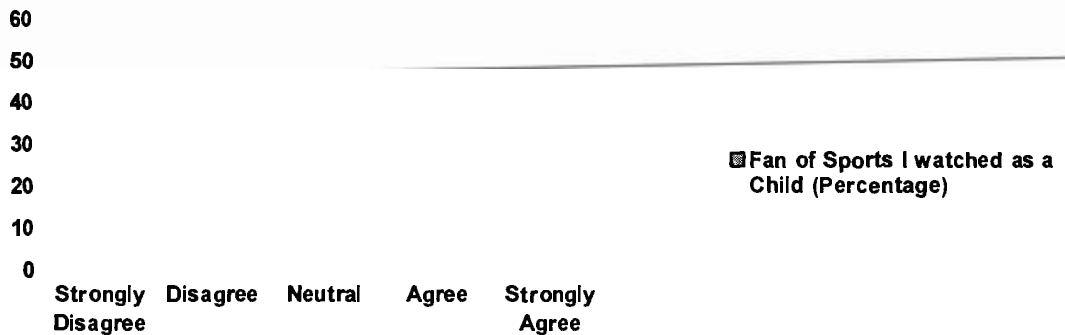
Description of the Results

This portion of the paper will be dedicated to explaining the results of the survey. Before actually analyzing the results (found in Chapter V), it is important to see the larger picture to get an idea of what is most important to those who were surveyed. Some of the

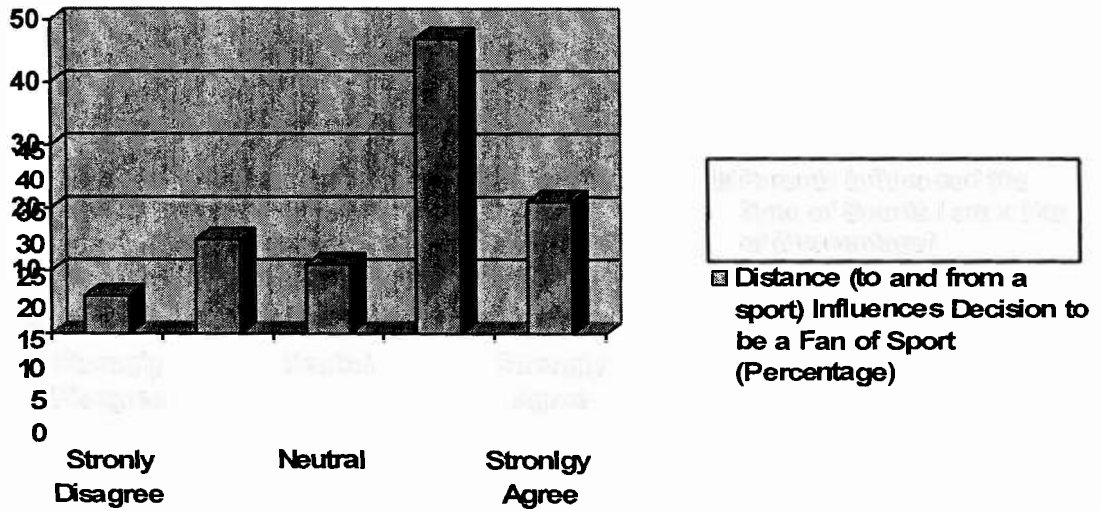
charts will be grouped together for a simple presentation of the results. This will also be beneficial for the analysis portion of the report because it will allow people to group the concepts and then see the overall implications of the survey results.

Fans:

As mentioned in Chapter II, NASCAR’s fan base has begun to grow over the past years due to increased exposure. And, this idea of fan loyalty has spread into a new realm. It appeals to a new set of fans; fans of other sports, who have been bounded by issues, such as scandals and free-agency. “In an age when your favorite baseball player may be playing for the Cubs one year, the Yankees the next and the Tigers the year after that, it’s refreshing to be able to follow one driver and have a chance to develop some loyalty” (Puffer, 2001 as cited by Dunnivant, 2001, p. 24).



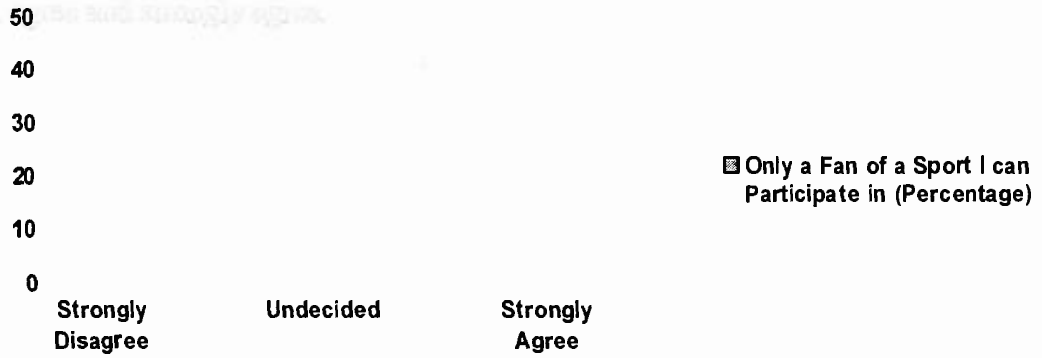
The results show that 53 percent of the general public agrees that they are still a fan of the same sports they watched as a child. In addition, 30 percent stated they strongly agreed, 13 percent disagreed, 3 percent were considered neutral, and only two percent strongly disagreed with that statement.



The results show that 21 percent of those who participated in this survey strongly disagree with the distance affecting the decision to be a fan of the sport. 46 percent disagree, 13 percent remain undecided, 18 percent agree, and only 2 percent strongly agree.

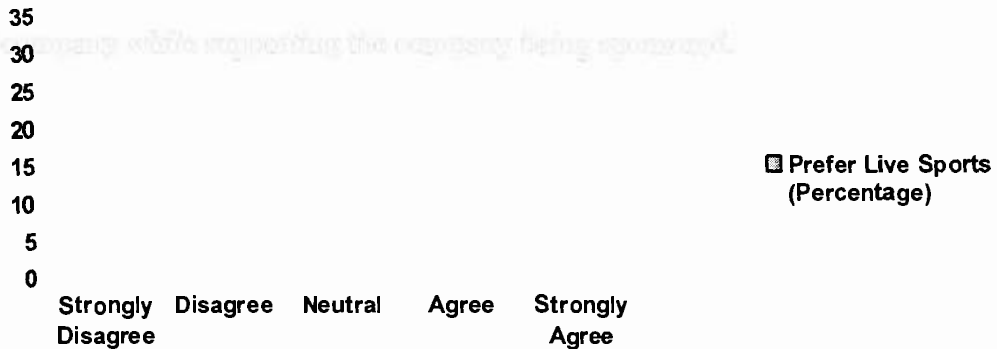
■ Parents Influenced the Type of Sports I am a Fan of (Percentage)

0 Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree



The above two charts are to gauge how fan loyal the surveyors are to the sports they participated in or watched. The results for the following two questions are as follows. For question two, the results show that 47 percent agreed that their parents influenced the type of sports they are a fan of today. While 20 percent strongly agreed; 16 percent disagreed, 11 percent stated they were indecisive or neutral and six percent strongly disagreed. For question 3, the results show that 50 percent of the general public disagrees with the statement “I am only a fan of a sport I can participate in.” 43 percent strongly disagreed and the remaining eight percent was divided amongst undecided or neutral, agree and strongly agree.

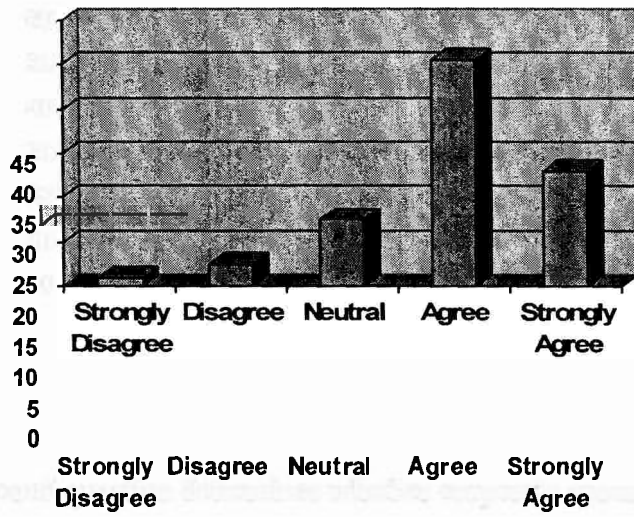
Viewing Sports:



The results show that 34 percent prefer watching live sports than on television. 31 percent disagrees, 16 percent remained undecided or neutral, 15 percent strongly agrees and four percent strongly disagrees.

Sponsorship:

According to the research “sponsorship is a form of marketing in which companies attach their name, brand, or logo to an event for the purpose of achieving future profits” (Hagstrom, 1998). Sponsorship helps not only the company that it sponsors, but its own company as well. It is a win-win situation and aids in marketing the sponsor company while supporting the company being sponsored.



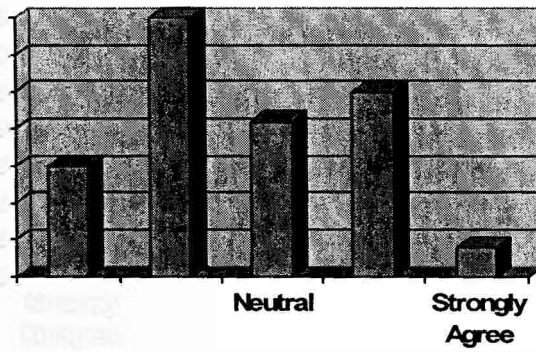
█ Likely to Purchase Product Endorsed by my Favorite Athlete

The first question focuses on the buying power of the consumer by asking if he or she will purchase a product that is endorsed by a favorite athlete. The results show that 45 percent disagrees, 25 percent strongly disagrees, 15 percent remained undecided or neutral, 13 percent agrees and only two percent strongly agrees.

60
50
40
30
20
10
0

█ Corporate Sponsorship Helps Sport Survive (Percentage)

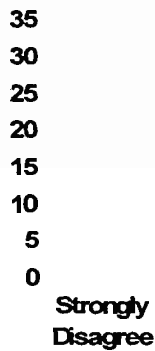
The second question determines whether corporate sponsorship helps a sport survive. The results show that 51 percent of the general public agrees, 26 percent strongly agrees, 15 percent are undecided or neutral, five percent disagrees and two percent strongly disagrees.



Advertisements increased my interest in a certain sport (Percentage)

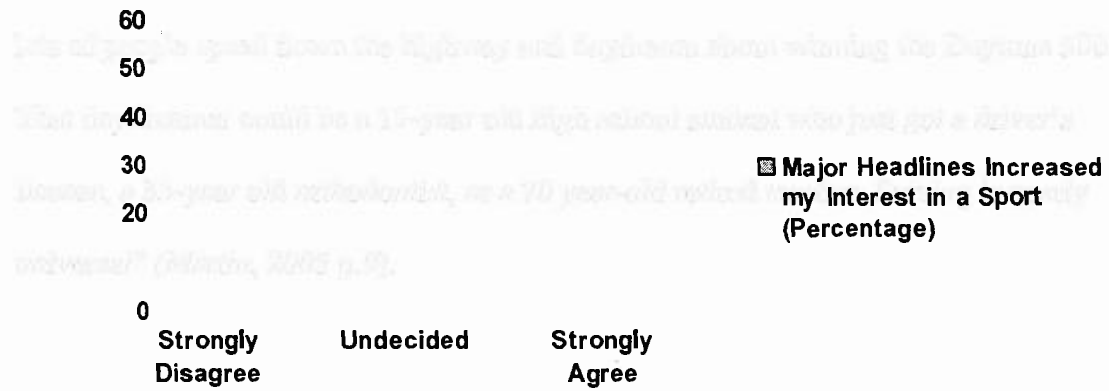
Advertisements increased my interest in a certain sport (Percentage)

The third question asks if advertisements increased the participants interest in a certain sport. The results show that 34 percent disagrees, 26 percent agrees, 24 percent strongly disagrees, 15 percent stated that they were undecided or neutral, and a mere one percent strongly agrees.



Purchasing a Product Endorsed by a Team/Athlete/Sport Contributes to the Sport Itself (Percentage)

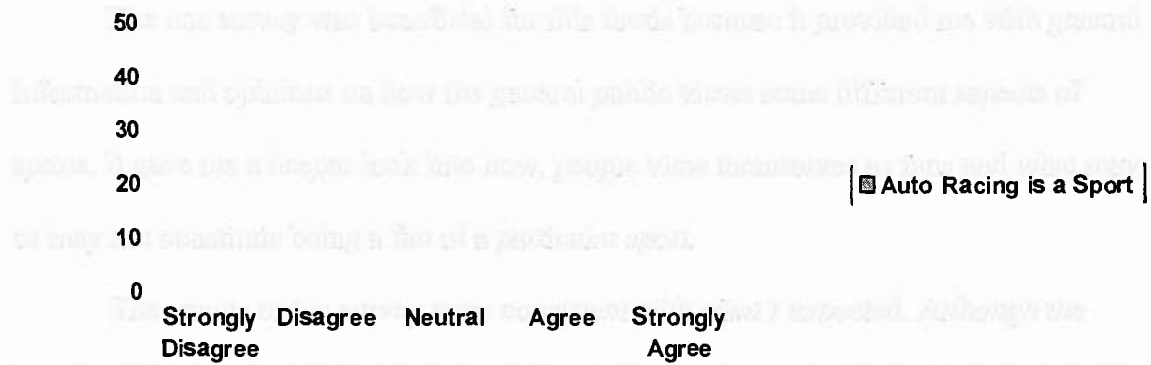
The fourth question asks if the surveyor feels he or she is contributing to the sport itself if he or she purchases a product endorsed by a team, athlete, and/or sport. The results show that 35 percent disagree, 25 percent agree, 21 percent are undecided or neutral, 15 percent strongly disagree and four percent strongly agree.



The fifth and final question asks if the surveyor believed that major headlines increased his or her interest in a particular sport. The results show that 3 percent disagree, 19 percent disagree, 14 percent undecided, 60 percent agree, and 5 percent strongly agree.

Auto Sports:

“Most people don’t know what it’s like to dunk a basketball or hit a 100-mph fastball 500 feet for a home run, but almost everyone knows how to drive a car—and that familiarity is the appeal of NASCAR and stock-car racing. Whether they admit it or not, lots of people speed down the highway and daydream about winning the Daytona 500. That daydreamer could be a 17-year old high school student who just got a driver’s license, a 35-year old orthodontist, or a 70 year-old retired teacher. Driving is nearly universal” (Martin, 2005 p.9).



The results show that 50 percent of those who participated in the survey agree that Auto Racing is a sport. 28 percent strongly agrees, while the remaining 22 percent falls either undecided, in disagreement or in strong disagreement.

Summary / Conclusion

Chapter IV is dedicated to providing the results for the surveys, and gives the readers an opportunity to draw their own conclusions from the results and charts.

The one survey was beneficial for this thesis because it provided me with general information and opinions on how the general public views some different aspects of sports. It gave me a deeper look into how, people view themselves as fans and what may or may not constitute being a fan of a particular sport.

The results of the survey were consistent with what I expected. Although the questions of the survey were for general sports, the results can be linked to the research cited in Chapter II, and combined produce questions about what NASCAR is doing well and what they need to improve upon in order to maintain their growing success.

Overall, Chapter IV's intention is to present the results. It is important to see how

the methodology worked in the end and what could be or needs to be improved upon for future studies.

CHAPTER V Conclusion

Commentary on Results

This portion of the paper focuses on analyzing the results from the survey. There is no question that gathering the responses is important, but it is the interpretation of those results that make this discussion purposeful. In this case, what developed were deeper explanations about NASCAR's impact in the United States and on the traditional meaning of sports.

When reviewing the survey, I noticed opportunities to group some of the questions based on similar topics. For the analysis portion, I will express the implications of the results by topic and then discuss them together, for an overall understanding.

Implications of Results

My intention for the survey was to eliminate NASCAR's name from the questions for fear of bias opinions; therefore, I asked general sporting questions so that assumptions could be drawn and paralleled to NASCAR.

In order to understand what the results imply, I divided the questions into four different categories, based on the type of question asked. The categories are: fans, viewing sports, sponsorship and auto sports. The most efficient way to determine what the results imply is to look at the top two percentages of each of the different questions asked to see how NASCAR is comparing to what the results show.

Fans & Viewing Sports

For this particular part, I decided to group Fans and Viewing Sports because I feel that the results can be grouped together, and their link shows the growing success of NASCAR. The recap of the results for fans is that 52 percent agree that they are fans of sports they watched as a child, while 30 percent disagree. 47 percent agree that their parents helped influence the sport they are a fan of today, while 21 percent strongly agreed. 49 percent disagreed that they are only a fan of a sport in which they can participate in, while 43 percent strongly disagreed. Lastly 46 percent disagreed that distance had an effect or impact on the sport they were a fan of, while 21 percent strongly disagree. The recap of the results for viewing sports is that 34 percent of those who participated agree that they would rather watch the sport live, than on television.

These results can be looked at two ways- through the eyes of the general public and through the eyes of a NASCAR fan. When looking at the survey from the perspective of a general fan, the results imply that participation and distance does not restrict a fan from enjoying the sport. It also shows that fans typically prefer watching the sport live. When looking at the results in terms of NASCAR, the results show that fans travel the distance to view the race and that potential recruits would be willing to travel.

According to the research in Chapter II, NASCAR's development in technology, the exposure on television and on the internet and the increase in popularity of the drivers has boosted the number of fans that watch NASCAR. In addition, NASCAR is not a one-age sport. Unlike some sports, an individual can become a fan of NASCAR at any age, and NASCAR is not typically considered a one-age sport. NASCAR can be considered

one of the only sports brands that thrill fans and creates a powerful connection through traditional family values they admire.

In addition, looking at the question on viewing a sport, there was a 34/30 percent split agreeing that it is preferred to attend the sport. What NASCAR has done is upgrade the technology available to its fans to benefit both types. NASCAR has installed in-car cameras and microphones for fans to feel the emotion and to see exactly what is occurring, even if they are not physically present. The internet also has up-to-date tracking on each driver, where you can listen to what the drivers are saying and see what the drivers are doing. Each pit stop crew also has microphones for fans to hear what is being done to the cars and what the potential problems are. For those fans that are able to attend, Nextel has a portable television for rent (called *Fan-View*) which combines the race telecast, and up to seven in-car camera channels. There are also direct audio feeds, allowing the user to listen to live driver and team conversations, as well as the radio broadcast and an exclusive audio replay feature. And, it provides real-time race data and statistics. NASCAR has an advantage to other sports because of all these devices which are affordable to their fans and allows them to feel as though they are participating.

Overall, the results imply that the NASCAR fan base is constantly growing. Although, some of those who participated in the surveys might not have been fans of NASCAR as a child, or have a family member who is influencing them, the point is that the exposure to NASCAR may influence their views on auto racing as a sport.

Sponsorships

In regards to sponsorship, 33 percent of those who participated in the survey disagree that advertisements have increased their interest in a certain sport, while 26 percent agreed. 46 percent disagreed that they would purchase a product endorsed by their favorite athlete, while 25 percent strongly disagreed. 50 percent agreed that corporate sponsorship helps a sport to survive, while 26 percent strongly agreed. 35 percent disagreed that when they purchase a product endorsed by a team, athlete or sport contributes to the sport itself, while 25 percent agreed. And, lastly, 59 percent agreed that headlines of a sport increased their interest, while 19 percent disagreed.

These results imply that the average fan does not purchase products endorsed by an athlete, the purchase does not contribute to the team and that advertisements do not influence their interest in the sport. What it does state is that sponsorship is a major element to the survival of a sport and that headlines do draw interested crowds. When looking at the results compared to NASCAR surveys, the results differ. NASCAR fans are three times as likely to try and purchase sponsor products and services, and fans are 94 percent more likely to have positive feedback about NASCAR sponsors. In addition, 89 percent of NASCAR fans know they are purchasing a quality product when the NASCAR logo is on it; 82 percent state that NASCAR related-products are always a good value for the money; 72 percent state that if the NASCAR logo appears on a product they are more likely to purchase that specific product than purchasing a product not NASCAR related; And, lastly, 66 percent state they do not mind paying more for a NASCAR product (Van Zelst, Personal Communication, March 15, 2006).

“NASCAR sponsorship is the best buy in marketing. The combination of awareness, favorability, and effectiveness is unparalleled in the sports world or anywhere else” (2006 Brand Review, 2005).

An appealing element for networks and their advertisers is that NASCAR holds up well in a world of digital video recorders. Since cars and drivers are plastered with ads, viewers might fast-forward through commercials, but they cannot always avoid all the advertising.

In regards to sponsor exposure, the amount of time a sponsored driver is shown benefits the sponsor greatly, doubling and sometimes tripling the value compared to the price. For example, Matt Kenseth, sponsored by Dewalt, had over six hours of exposure time. Dewalt paid an average of 10-20 million dollars to become the primary sponsor, but that time provided the company with an exposure value of over 50 million dollars.

Therefore, sponsorship is very valuable to the driver and the sponsor company, creating a win-win situation for both.

Overall, sponsorship is an important element to the survival of a sport. Although it may not be what increases purchases of sponsored products and/or services, it does contribute to the success of a sport. In this specific case, it has helped NASCAR become one of the most successful sports in the United States.

Auto Sports

When asked if those who participated in the survey thought that auto racing is considered a sport, 49 percent agreed and 28 percent strongly agreed. Although not all of the results from the survey agrees with NASCAR, it is apparent that majority of the

participants think that auto racing is a sport. Mark Martin, a NASCAR driver, states “most people don’t know what it’s like to dunk a basketball or hit a 100-mph fastball 500 feet for a home run, but almost everyone knows how to drive a car...” (2005, p 9). These results imply that NASCAR is marketing appropriately. Their advancements for fans, their constant sponsorship opportunities, and their success as the number two regular season sport on television demonstrates that they are in fact becoming the fastest growing sport, and a major success story.

Limitations

Throughout the process of gathering research and conducting the survey, there were some issues that I encountered. Time and funding were two issues that followed me from the beginning. First, I will discuss time. This thesis needed to be completed within a seven month period. Because NASCAR’s statistics change every season and depending on the individual driver, it is difficult to ensure up-to-date information and facts. If given more time or if the thesis was written around one season, more recent information could have been inputted to keep the thesis consistent with the results of the current season. Second, funding was another issue that faced. As a graduate student, it is impossible to provide unlimited funding to support the survey and research. If I had additional financial resources to aid in this process, the information may have been even more detailed. In addition, the survey could have been sent to a larger number of potential participants. With a higher number of response rates, the survey results might have been more conclusive, especially where the answers appeared close.

Summary / Conclusion

At the start of this thesis, I was unsure of how the results of the surveys would

turn out. Primarily because I was launching a general survey on sports and fearful of how

Recommendations for Future Studies

The first recommendation I have for future studies reflects the first limitation of time. Because time is an issue, it is important to follow the NASCAR season from start to finish. By tracking the statistics as they occur, the paper will remain up-to-date. Of course, this type of paper would have to be awarded the time to do so. The second recommendation I have is to have two different surveys conducted. I think that it would be beneficial to conduct the same general sports survey, but to also launch a NASCAR based survey. Once the results are tallied, the two surveys could be compared and more accurate assumptions could be drawn. Ideally, I would have liked to compare the average I found that the numbers/results from previous NASCAR surveys did not match the survey I conducted.

Summary / Conclusion

At the start of this thesis, I was unsure of how the results of the surveys would turn out. Primarily because I was launching a general survey on sports and fearful of how the results would match to my prior assumptions. For the most part, the results were consistent with my original assumption. Although there were a few differences, the research, (in conjunction with the survey), demonstrated that NASCAR's success is creating a new wave of sports and how we view the traditional method.

Referring to an article, stated in Chapter II, NASCAR is becoming a significant business and beyond being competition for other sports, it is also a top leader within the corporate world. "This, race fans, is the new world of NASCAR, the fastest growing,

best-run sports business in America-with the emphasis on business” (O’Keefe, Schlosser, 2005, pg. 49). Majority of those who participated in my survey would agree. NASCAR’s business tactics are by far the best in its industry thanks to its marketing team.

In conclusion, NASCAR has fought its way to the top in sports. No one knew back in 1947 that NASCAR would become the mega sports giant it is today. It is said that there was one family and a few dedicated, hard working individuals who never doubted that for a second. Because of the hard work of NASCAR’s drivers, teams, employees and partners it has become the fastest growing sport.

NASCAR is an addiction, and the only cure is more NASCAR. NASCAR to other sports is like a large pizza with all the free toppings. NASCAR is not just a sport, it’s a lifestyle.

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Appendix

Appendix I

Survey

The following answers will be private and confidential. The purpose of this survey is to determine how important sports are to the general public for the completion of my Master's Degree Thesis at Seton Hall University. I would like to thank you in advance for your time. If you would like to know the outcome of this survey, please contact me at maisanma@shu.edu. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You must be at least 18 years old to complete this survey. Thank you!

Directions: Please carefully read each individual question and answer. Check the box which applies to you and which you feel is the most appropriate response for the question.

Example:

I am satisfied with my job.
 ___ Strongly Disagree ___ Disagree ___ Undecided Agree ___ Strongly Agree

Demographic Questions:

- 1.) ___ Male Female
- 2.) Age _____
- 3.) Education:
 - High School
 - Some College
 - College Graduate
 - Post-Graduate
- 4.) Predominant Ethnic Background:
 - Native American
or Native Alaskan
 - African-American
(non-Hispanic), Black
 - Asian
 - Hispanic, Latino
 - White, Caucasian,

Anglo, (non-Hispanic)

Other

Survey Questions:

1.) I am still a fan of the same sports I watched as a child.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

2.) My parents helped influence the type of sports I am a fan of today.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

3.) I am only a fan of a sport that I can participate in.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

4.) Advertisements have increased my interest in a certain sport.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

5.) Distance (to and from a sport) influences your decision to be a fan of that sport.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

6.) I would rather watch a sport live in person than on television.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

7.) I am more likely to purchase a product endorsed by my favorite athlete.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

8.) I feel that corporate sponsorship helps a sport to survive.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

9.) I feel that when I buy a product endorsed by a team/athlete/sport I am contributing to the sport itself.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

10.) Major headlines such as a record being broken or declaring a champion, have increased my interest in a particular sport.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

11.) I consider Auto Racing a sport.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree