2001

Marketing Sports to Women

Jennifer A. Sloan
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MARKETING SPORTS TO WOMEN

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Corporate and Public Communication
Seton Hall University

2001
Dedication

The author wishes to dedicate her thesis research to her father ("daddy"), who taught her everything she knows about sports and shared his love for baseball with her. He also taught her that just because she was a girl there was no reason for her not to know and love the game.
Acknowledgements

The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of several individuals to her research study. The author expresses her appreciation to Dr. Michael McGraw for his wisdom, guidance and, most of all, patience. The author also wishes to thank Dr. Larry McCarthy and Dr. John Collins for their assistance; and Cheryl Derites, Kathleen Fineout, Phyllis Merhige, Julie Penner and the women working in Major League Baseball for their support and enthusiasm in her research project. The author is especially grateful to her family—Dad, Carol, Lori, Grandma and Auntie Debbie—for their encouragement and faith in her ability to complete this research project; as well as three special women: Mom, Grandma, and Yia Yia—who, even though they are no longer with her, continue to inspire her every day. Finally, the author wishes to thank her best friend and the love of her life, Rob Doelger, for being by her side every step of the way.
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As sports marketers compete with each other -- and the many entertainment options that exist today -- the need to target women becomes more important. Statistics show it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract new fans. According to Burton (as cited by Consol, 1999, par. 10), 60% of National Basketball Association (NBA) and National Hockey League (NHL) teams reported flat or declining attendance in recent years and Major League Baseball (MLB) has lost between $200 million and $300 million each year since 1993. Because women are making the decisions for their families, they are the key to increasing attendance. In addition, women are showing an interest in men's sports more than ever before. "While women are remaining loyal to the sports they've traditionally watched (figure skating, gymnastics, tennis)," they are also tuning into sports such as football, baseball, and basketball (Smith, 2000, par. 19).

The National Football League (NFL) and MLB both estimate that 43% of their fan base and 45% of their television audience are made up of women and the NBA claims 40% of their attendance and television audience are women (Grossi, 1993). In fact, "nearly 40% of the consumers of men's professional sports -- fans who attend games, watch games on television and buy licensed products -- are women" (Mosley, 1997, par. 5). Women's interest in these sports continues to increase each year. The NFL, for example, found that in 1999, 42%
of females said they followed the NFL, an increase from 39% in 1997 and 32% in 1993 (Harris Sports Poll, as cited in NFL, 2000).

With female spending power estimated at $1 trillion annually (Women's Sports Foundation, 1999), women's growing interest in sports should be of major importance to sport marketers and advertisers. Fernandez (as cited by Lebowitz, 1997) claims "there are 32 million women between the prime ages of 18-34 with a cumulative spending power of $52 billion (par. 8)." This is meaningful because women are making 80% of the decisions for their families. Since women tend to be the key to bringing the rest of the family to the game, it is time for strategies and initiatives to be implemented specifically to this lucrative target market. This is especially true in the age of increased choices for programming as it becomes more difficult for marketers to reach fragmented audiences.

According to Lopiano (1999), within the next two decades women will comprise 50% of spectators of men's sports. She believes "the question is not 'whether' but 'when' for corporations who are eager to tap into this new female consumer" (p.17).

The focus of this study is to explore the importance of women to the success and survival of the sports industry. The author will examine literature about marketing to women and provide a perspective of how sport marketers can effectively reach this target market.

Background

The American Marketing Association (as cited in Kotler, 2001) defines marketing as "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing,
promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals" (p. 4). Kotler (2001) believes that every marketer must start with market segmentation. Market segmentation, to "identify and profile distinct groups of buyers" that may be interested in a product, involves "examining demographic, psychographic, and behavioral differences among buyers" (Kotler, 2001, p. 4). Kotler (2001) further suggests that companies are most successful when they choose their target markets carefully and prepare marketing strategies that are tailored to meet their needs.

"As the needs and demographic makeup of sport consumers have become more complex" (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2000, p. 8), the need for a clear understanding of marketing as it relates to sport and sport consumers exists.

Mullin et al. (2000) offer the following definition:

Sport marketing consists of all activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sport consumers through exchange processes. Sport marketing has developed two major thrusts: the marketing of sport products and services directly to consumers of sport, and marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through the use of sports promotions. (p. 9)

Although similarities exist between traditional marketing and sport marketing, the primary difference is "a sport marketer is asked to market a product that is unpredictable, inconsistent, and open to subjective interpretation" in a highly competitive marketplace (Mullin et al., 2000, p. 20). In many ways, this can make their job more difficult. There is, however, much to be learned from the marketing trends that exist in today's marketplace. Mullin et al. (2000) suggest that although sport will continue to be unique in many ways it will always follow the same principle that exists in all industries: "those sport organizations
most likely to succeed will be the ones that have the best handle on the marketplace" (p. 41).

For many years, women were not considered a target market for sport marketers, promoters or advertisers. The sport industry was marketed almost exclusively to men. According to Branch (1995), "sport marketers concluded that sport was something that could not be appropriately targeted to women" (p.9). In his article, "Tapping New Markets: Women as Sport Consumers," Branch (1995) suggests that sport marketers believed women "weren't serious athletes, didn't understand the game(s)," and "attended or viewed sporting events as appendages to men" (p.9).

Although the role of women dramatically changed after the passage of Title IX, many didn't realize the effect on women as sport consumers until the National Sports Study II in 1993. The study, the largest sports and lifestyle study of its kind, was presented at the 1993 Women's Sports Foundation Annual Conference. It showed that women were "becoming an increasingly significant market segment for spectator sports organizations" (Lavalle, 1993, as cited in Branch, 1995, p. 11). Based on the findings from this study, Branch (1995) concluded that "sport organizations (that) can find the right marketing 'mix' of products and services" to meet the needs of women, "are well on their way to improving their future success and ultimate survival" (p. 12).

In the article, "Communicating with Women In the 1990's: The Role of Sport Marketing," Sutton and Watlington (1994) discuss women's changing role
in society and the potential impact it will have on the sport industry for years to come.

The article also examined the 1972 passage of Title IX, which stipulates:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from ...
any education or program or activity receiving Federal assistance" (as cited in
female participation, spectatorship and spending will continue to grow as the
women who were young enough to reap the benefits of Title IX get older and
increase their role as decision makers in family and corporate settings.

Sutton and Watlington (1994) also noted that although women's
spectatorship and participation have come a long way, there is still much work to
be done. Marketers who remain skeptical of the value of targeting this audience
or lack the understanding necessary to communicate effectively with the
women's market must be willing to invest more time and effort into getting to
know the female audience.

In short, Sutton and Watlington (1994) feel that corporations and sport
organizations that make the greatest strides in reaching and cultivating this
market are going to be the those that show "a progressive outlook and direction
in shaping the future with new and varied opportunities" (p. 13).

Research Question

Are sports marketers doing enough to appeal to their female audience?

With the ever-increasing impact of women's economic power and influences,
their interest in sports, and the growing trend of women as sports spectators, the
topic is worthy of review. This is a study of Major League Baseball and the women who are working in that sport. These women provide a perspective on marketing sports to women.

Subsidiary Questions

1. What effect could women's rising economic power and influence have on the sports industry and its bottom line?

2. What strategies are successful in marketing to women? Why?

3. What is the difference between marketing to men and women – is it worth the time and effort?

4. How do gender differences affect consumer behavior?

5. What current efforts exist to market sports to women?

6. Do women working in sports feel it is necessary to market specifically to women?

7. What is the relationship between the four major sports leagues and their female employees?

8. Are these women informed about the initiatives to reach the female market?

9. Are they being given the opportunity to express their opinion about the most effective methods to reach women?

10. What methods should the four major sports leagues implement to market to women?

The author will attempt to answer these questions through a comprehensive review of the literature related to the impact of women on the
sports industry and through a quantitative survey developed by the author to specifically address the research question of this study. The survey about marketing sports to women is explained in Chapter IV. The literature review looks at marketing the four major league sports to women in general, while the survey focuses only on Major League Baseball.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore why the sports industry should pursue the women's market. The growing impact of women in society and their role as the decision maker for their families has increasingly influenced the marketing of products and services. Yet there are still those marketers who continue to underestimate this audience and their potential on the bottom line. Sport marketers have historically directed their efforts toward men. It wasn't until recent years that they began to realize the importance of the women's market. Women are being taken more seriously as athletes, consumers and, even more importantly, the key to reaching families.

To successfully market to this audience, it is important to understand the need to market to men and women differently. Clearly, gender differences exist between the sexes. Popcorn and Marigold (2000) believe that women have more economic power than ever before and "can not be approached with the same traditional strategies that have worked with men" (p. 8). Myers (1994) asserts that even marketers who don't believe women are a special "niche" must acknowledge they are "unequivocally a different market 'niche' than the male consumer" and create effective campaigns that "recognize her unique
characteristics and respect the dissimilarities as well as similarities" (p. xi-xii) between men and women.

There are many different strategies that are successful in marketing to women. The first step to reaching this market, however, is to get to know women through research and ongoing dialogue. According to Popcorn and Marigold (2000), female employees are a captive audience, and represent a critical constituency that should be marketed to (p. 48). Horwath (1997) suggests that corporations should seek out their female employees, "encourage their opinions" and "value and support them" because they can "provide a set of unique perceptions about women" and how they feel about a product (par. 10).

Based on her own personal experience working for a professional sports team and interest as a sports fan, the author chose to study how the economic power of women and the need to market to them specifically can impact the sports industry. She wanted to take a closer look at what sports leagues are currently doing to market to this audience and how they can better reach the female market. Finally, she chose to speak to female employees throughout baseball and get their opinions and perspectives on marketing sports to women.

Definition of Terms

1. **Cause-related marketing**: Activity by which a company with an image, product, or service to market builds a relationship or partnership with a "cause," or number of "causes," for mutual benefit.

2. **Consumer**: One that utilizes economic goods.

3. **Lifestyle and event marketing**: A strategy used when a company
associates itself with the lifestyles, beliefs, institutions and culture of its target audience.

4. Relationship marketing: Aims to build long-term mutually satisfying relations with key parties -- customers, suppliers, distributors -- in order to earn and retain their long-term preference and business.

5. Spectator: One who looks on or watches.

6. Sports marketing: All activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sports consumers through exchange processes through the marketing of sport products or services directly to consumers of sport or the marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through the use of sports promotions.

Limitations

This study is limited to the perspective of women working in Major League Baseball (MLB). The study will not look at women working in other male-dominated sports leagues such as the National Basketball League (NBA), National Football League (NFL) or National Hockey League (NHL). In addition, only 535 women working at MLB were surveyed.

Another limitation of this study is related to the literature review. The author was only able to find a limited number of articles about marketing sports to women. Additionally, the author selected only a sample of articles related to the economic influence of women, gender differences and marketing to women based on their relevance to the potential impact of women on the sports industry.
Other limitations to the study are related to data collection. Twelve of the surveys sent in the mail were undeliverable and returned.

The author would like to note that the data collection instrument used in this study was not validated as recommended by research scholars. Consequently, the data collected from this survey instrument may not be statistically reliable. Therefore, the findings presented by the author should be treated as initial indications of what women working in sports believe about marketing to women. Considerable research is needed before exact determinations can be made.

Data Collection

The author used SPSS 9.0 for Windows for data collection and analysis. SPSS, headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, offered an easy-to-use system for the author to input the data from her surveys. She created a spreadsheet to enter the data into which she then produced charts and graphs to assist her in analyzing it.

Upon further review, the author chose not to use questions 15-21 of the survey because she found the answers to be skewed and inconclusive. She was unable to show a correlation between the investment of time and money in baseball by these women, as it would relate to all women.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Marketers must know their audience. Never before has understanding the importance of demographics, psychographics, geographic, and product and media usage habits of an audience been so essential to the success of a marketing strategy (Schreiber & Lenson, 1994; Sleight, as cited in Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Sutton & Watlington, 1994). The most effective way to get to know your audience is through research. According to Hofacre and Burman (1992), research has always been considered one of the most important aspects of marketing, but sport marketing is one area that, in the past, has failed to understand the importance of "defining and reaching the multitude of different markets" (par. 36).

Most sports organizations have focused on the traditional sports fans, 18 to 49 year old males, because they were believed to be the ones attending games, watching televised games, and purchasing sport-related products (Hofacre & Burman, 1992). It may surprise people, however, to hear that "close to forty percent of the consumers of men's professional sports are women" (Mosley, 1997, par. 5).

Although women have always been fans, it is only recently that sport marketers and advertisers are beginning to see the importance of this audience and their potential impact on the bottom line (Branch, 1995; Sutton & Watlington,
Sport marketers are beginning to recognize the need to attract this audience and their discretionary income. Increasingly women are being taken into account when determining the way in which sports should be marketed.

Women no longer represent the "nice to have" audience but a "marketing majority" that the sports industry needs to grow (Horwath, 1997, par. 2). Research (Fetto, 2000; Horwath, 1997; MLB, 2000; Steenhuysen, 1998; Sutton & Watlington, 1994; Targeting Venus on the web, 2001) shows that women are increasingly playing the role of decision maker for their families. Therefore by reaching women, sport marketers can influence how families spend their leisure time and entertainment dollars. Another reason sport marketers are taking notice of this audience is their undeniable presence as the fastest growing segment of sports fans. At a time when "sports demographics are undergoing massive changes led by woman" (Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998, par. 40) it makes sense that sports marketers are beginning to pay attention to this audience.

What is sport marketing and how is it used? Based on a general definition of marketing, sport marketing is defined by Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2000) as consisting of "all activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sports consumers through exchange processes ..." (p. 9). This is done through the "marketing of sport products or services" or the "marketing of products or services through the use of sports promotions" (p. 9). As competition for the sports and entertainment dollar grows, so does the need for sport marketing.

Sports organizations are in the "business of trying to attract a large audience/consumer base" (Hofacre & Burman, 1992, par. 31) and companies
that get involved with sports and use sport events as part of their marketing do so in order to reach their targeted audience. To survive, sports organizations must deliver an audience to these companies. Women are a demographic virtually waiting to be tapped. Some marketers resist marketing specifically to women, but others know that although women do not always need to be singled out, they are a different market that responds to strategies other than those that are successful with their male counterparts. Fortunately for sports organizations, women can be influenced, in some cases dramatically, if sport marketing is simply targeted to them and with them in mind.

This literature review provides a perspective on how the differences between men and women affect consumer decisions, women's rising economic power, and as a result, the need to target this lucrative market. This review further looks at the impact women can have on the sports industry. The author chose to focus on literature about women's impact on the sports industry since 1993, when the National Sports Study II was conducted. This study was the first research of its kind to show an increasing interest in sports by women. Since the author was only able to find a scant number of articles specifically related to marketing sports to women, additional research about women's increasing economic power and influence is also included. The author includes this information to indicate the value of women in the consumer marketplace. The author does not wish to imply, however, that all research of this kind has been reviewed. She presents a perspective to allow the reader to understand more about how this demographic can influence the sports industry.
The first thing one must look at to understand the potential impact women can have on any industry is their rising professional and economic status. According to Frankel & Co.'s Frankly Female of Chicago, a marketing unit created specifically for women, 15 million women will enter the workforce by 2005 and will hold close to 50% of Fortune 500 top management jobs ("Women consumers drive economy," 1998). Although on average women still earn only 72% of what their male counterparts earn, they account for nearly 85% of the nation's household income (Fetto, 2000). Fetto (2000) says "by some estimates, that works out to as much as $3.5 trillion in aggregate annual spending" (par. 8). Popcorn (as cited in washingtonpost.com, 2000) believes that each year women are spending $4.4 trillion mostly without getting anyone else's opinion. One reason for this growth is that the fastest growing type of household is families headed by women" (Hofacre & Burman, 1992, p. 32). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2001), women led 30.2 million family households in 1998 with no husband present and 22% of women age 30-34 years old had never been married which was triple the rate of 6% in 1970. In addition, women played an increasing role in traditional family households. Both spouses worked in 51% of married couples with families in 1998 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Women are also making more of the decisions for their families. Frankel & Co. (as cited in Steenhuyzen, 1998) found that in addition to controlling 80% of household spending, women buy 65% of all cars, 53% of all stocks, 51% of all sports equipment, 50% of all personal computers and 40% of all home
improvement projects” (par. 3) ... The agency also points out that if the current
trend persists, “women will control most of the money in the United States by
2020” (par. 2) which shouldn’t be surprising since according to the U.S. Census
Bureau (2001), females outnumber males by 6 million: 140 million to 134 million.

Barletta (as cited in Steenhuysen, 1998) believes that “no marketer can
ignore the female consumer when planning marketing strategies” (par. 3).
Further evidence of the rising economic impact of women is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

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<th>Facts About Women in America Today</th>
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<tr>
<td>Female spending power is $1 trillion annually.</td>
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<td>Women head 40% of households with assets over $500,000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In 22.7% of families where both spouses work, wives out earn their husbands.</td>
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<td>48% of all working women provide at least half of their household’s income.</td>
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<td>The number of working women in the United States has more than doubled in the last 30 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1970, 30 million women were working, by 2005, 70 million will be working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women start businesses at twice the rate of men (every sixty seconds) — 9.1 million (40% of them).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female-owned and female-run businesses generate $3.6 trillion annually and employ 27.5 million people — more than all the Fortune 500 companies in America combined.</td>
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Note: Sources for these facts were Popcorn and Marigold, 2000; Targeting Venus on the web, 2001; Women’s Sports Foundation, 1999
To communicate effectively with women today, marketers must recognize the many roles women are playing and the effect these roles have on their decisions. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (as cited in Fetto, 2000) out of the nearly 35.5 million women with children under the age of 18, more than two-thirds (24.1 million) of them work full or part-time (par. 1). As Sutton and Wallington (1994) suggest "one must understand such interrelated issues as the impact of women in two-income households and their role as decision makers" (p.12).

As women continue to earn more and have greater influence on decisions for their families, "their purchasing clout will have an even greater significance on the marketplace" (Myers, 1994, p. 215). Candeo (1998) feels a growing number of companies are creating marketing strategies aimed directly at women based on the amount of money women are spending because "with the aging of baby boomers comes a generation of women now in their peak earning years, who, more than ever, are making the financial decisions in their households" (par. 7).

If the current trends persist, women will have an increasingly significant influence on corporations and how they market their product for years to come.

Marketing to Women

Some marketers recognize the economic power of women but still do not always know how to successfully market to them. These marketers may try to promote to women by running a single ad or promotion and then give up when they don't get a response. Myers (1994) believes that these marketers, who see this as an indication that there is no reason to market to men and women
differently, should consider the possibility that it is the way they are marketing to women that is ineffective. No matter who your audience is “there is little return in a patronizing message or a one-shot, low budget program” (Lopiano, as cited in Mullin et al., 2000, p.108) but this is especially true when it comes to marketing to women. Although these marketers recognize the impact female consumers can have on their profitability, unless they are willing to acknowledge the trends and change their strategies for marketing to women, they will be unable to tap into this lucrative market.

Myers (1994) recommends that corporations solicit input from women about their wants and needs, “create marketing strategies and advertising campaigns based on what women value” (p.15), and utilize research techniques such as focus groups to effectively communicate with women. Women are more likely to respond to a corporation’s message if it is communicated consistently at all levels. One way to do this is through Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), a strategy defined by Kotler (2001) as “the process of combining a variety of functions that may include advertising, sales promotion, direct response, database marketing, public relations, or direct marketing into a program that has clarity, consistency and maximum impact” (p. 5); all of which is important when communicating with women.

In a review of successful marketing strategies targeted to women, Myers (1994) concluded that women “look for companies that show concern for women’s issues and have programs that support women” (p. 46). One example of a company that understands the importance of supporting women and
women’s issues and the need to target women with their advertising and marketing strategies is JCPenney (Myers, 1994). According to WR Howell, CEO and Chairman of JCPenney, 80% of purchases made at his store are by women (Howell, as cited in Sutton & Watlington, 1994). Howell believes that:

> Companies and sponsors seeking to target and reach the female consumer must demonstrate the ability to not only understand the lifestyles and interests of women but to effectively communicate the image and direction of the company as compatible with that lifestyle and change. (Sutton & Watlington, 1994, p. 10)

Cause-related marketing is one way to appeal to the female audience. For instance, the fight against breast cancer is a cause that is obviously important to women. The 1998 Cone Breast Cancer Awareness Trend Tracker conducted by Cone Communications (as cited in Women’s Sports Foundation, 1999), a marketing and public relations firm in Boston, found that 52% of women said they would be more likely to buy something from a company linked to the fight against breast cancer. The study of 501 men and 500 women also found that 43% of women could easily identify corporations involved with the fight against breast cancer.

Cause-related marketing has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decisions when price and quality are equal. In fact, the Cone study (as cited in Feitelberg, 1997) found that 76% of consumers are likely to switch to a brand associated with a good cause when price and quality are equal and 83% have a more positive image of companies who support a cause they care about (as cited in Women’s Sports Foundation, 1999).
Most important to note is that 84% of women find cause-related marketing an acceptable business practice (Women's Sports Foundation, 1999). Myers points out that women seek companies that "show concern for woman's issues and have programs that support women" (p. 46). Furthermore, Popcorn and Marigold (2000) assert "every passionate marketer should see his or her brand as a cause" (p.122). An article outlining 10 tips to marketing to today's busy women encourages companies to take part in an ongoing cause-related campaign that makes it easy for women to give to others without adding to their own time constraints. For example, a company could donate a percentage of proceeds to a worthy cause or sponsor an event such as a women's 5K race (Leeming & Tripp, 1998).

A method referred to as relational marketing, based on a detailed understanding of the customer, takes marketing one step further than the practice of relationship marketing by using databases and customer segmentation. Relational marketing involves paying close attention to the relationship between the brand and consumer with the idea of developing a lasting bond. Lepler (as cited in Sobottka, 1998) believes "it goes beyond the databases and customer segmentation" (par. 1) that those who use relationship marketing are familiar with and "requires attention to the relationship between consumers and the brand -- at every contact point, in every media -- with the idea of cementing an ongoing bond" (par. 2).

As in relationship marketing, the key to relational marketing is building trust. Tripp (1998) argues that women, not marketers, control the buying
situation. She is the one who buys and uses the product and, if she likes it, spreads the word. For this reason, companies must meet a woman's expectations and take into account how any changes in a brand's image or function affects those expectations (Tripp, 1998). Lepler (as cited in Sobottka, 1998) questions the strategy that many companies use going after new users and forgetting about the customers who are already using and advocating their brand. Based on Lepler's marketing model, the article contends "many marketers are short-changing their brands by failing to make the most of women's consumer and advocacy power" (Lepler, as cited in Sobottka, 1998, par. 1).

Greenwald and Fernandez-Balboa (1998) believe lifestyle and event marketing is the best way to reach fragmented markets. Sutton and Wallington (1994) suggest that lifestyle & event marketing is probably the most effective strategy in marketing sport and sport products to women. Lifestyle and event marketing is a strategy used when a company "associates itself with the lifestyles, beliefs, institutions and culture of its target audience" (Schreiber & Lenson, 1994, p.17). To do this one must identify a target market, get to know that market and the issues important to them and then get involved with programs and events that reach them and send a strong message about the company and its own philosophy.

Any of the above strategies -- Integrated Marketing Communications, Cause-Related Marketing, Relational or Relationship Marketing, and Lifestyle and Event Marketing -- can be successful in marketing to women if given the
amount of time and effort necessary to get to know the target audience.

Schreiber and Lenson (1994) believe “carefully identifying and understanding the
traits of your customer is about 90% of the battle” (p.15).

Gender Differences and Marketing

Gender differences must be considered when determining the most
effective methods to use in marketing a product or service to women. In her
book, Targeting the new professional woman, Myers (1994) concludes that
marketers and advertisers can benefit from certain generalizations about the
differences between men and women. Myers, an expert in marketing and selling
to women, particularly products and services which have been primarily sold by
men to men wrote the book, as she says, to “clearly and concisely demonstrate
the broad differences between male and female consumers and the effect
misjudging or ignoring these differences has had on many industries” (p. 7). She
demonstrates throughout her book the opportunity that exists to reach women by
simply understanding that women must be marketed to differently than men and
further notes that understanding these differences is the “first step to meeting the
needs of female consumers” (p. 8).

While many marketers believe that women do not wish to be marketed to
differently than men because of their desire to be treated as “equal,” most
women want marketers to acknowledge that differences do exist and respect
those differences, as well as the impact women can have on the success of their
product or service. Lori Moskowitz Lepler (as cited in Steenhuysen, 1998),
founder of the Intuition Group, a spinoff of J. Walter Thompson, the New York
advertising agency that targets women, “suggests that gender differences call for
different marketing approaches” (par. 9). Another women’s marketing group,
LeoShe of Chicago, created by Leo Burnett Company to “explore and lead new
thinking on women’s issues,” believes that “every brand and every company
needs to take a long look at the voice and path they use to speak to women”
 LeoShe, 1999, par. 4) because thinking like a woman is the first step to
understanding how a product fits into her life.

To understand women and the differences that exist between the sexes,
marketers must “walk in her shoes for a while” (Myers, 1994, p. 25). Just treating
woman as equal to men is not enough. Faith Popcorn and Lys Marigold, authors
of EVEolution: The eight truths of marketing to women, wrote their book to clarify
the confusion that exists about marketing to women. They believe that marketers
have a difficult time understanding that just because men and women are
different, they need to be marketed to differently. The Women’s Movement of the
last few decades has made many marketers scared to “talk about — or worse,
capitalize on, the differences between men and women” but times have changed
and it is not only acceptable but necessary “to identify, analyze, and celebrate
the distinctions” (Popcorn & Marigold, 2000, p. 9).

Lepler (as cited in Steenhuyse, 1998) argues that research shows the
most important thing to females — and what defines them — is their relationships,
which is not necessarily the case for men. Because of this, she says, “women
remain loyal to brands that reflect their need for relationships” (par. 12). Women
create and maintain relationships through communication, and brands “serve as
a currency allowing them to create dialogues and establish connections" (Lepler, as cited in Relational Marketing, 1998). It takes a long-term commitment by a corporation to build a relationship with its female audience. A marketing strategy needs to be more than a one-time shot; it requires consistency and follow up. However, these efforts are well worth the time and effort.

For one, women are three times more likely than men to recommend brands when they know friends are looking for a particular product or service (Lepler, as cited in Popcorn & Marigold, 2000, p. 22). To put it simply, "women share more things with many more people than men .... Sharing is just part of who she is" (Myers, 1994, p. 7). Marketers can and should take advantage of this fact. A 1998 survey of 200 men and women in the United States by the Intuition Group of New York (as cited in Sobottka, 1998) found that 91% of women aged 18 to 39 advocate brands as opposed to 84% of men the same age. In addition, women recommend brands from a wide range of categories while men stick to just three: cars, technology and sports equipment (Steenhuysen, 1998).

Furthermore, Myers (1994) notes that while "many authorities have said that if a person is happy with the service he receives, he will tell five people, but if he is unhappy he will tell 16" (p. 7), she believes women will tell many more. In addition, statistics show that "ninety-six percent of women never complain; they just never go back" (Smith, as cited in Popcorn & Marigold, 2000, p. 83). Similarly, women are more likely than men to communicate with their network of friends, coworkers and family about the good service they received. Because of
a woman's social network, customer service is important. Companies must make sure she has a positive experience every time.

In addition, corporations must understand that men and women value things differently. For example, Howarth (1997) suggests in her article, "The marketing majority, marketing to women," that women are concerned with more than just the price/value relationship. She believes "they are concerned about the brand's integrity—its quality, reliability and core values" and that women "want a brand that reflects today's relevant values and their families" (par. 4). Marketers need to be mindful of these concerns when creating marketing strategies for women.

Popcorn and Marigold (2000) reflect on the physical differences between men and women in their book. They contend women take information in quickly from many levels, but do not necessarily make quick decisions. They are also more wary of impulsive responses. She attributes these discrepancies to "the level of two key transmitters, or messengers, in the brain: dopamine, which motivates people to action, and serotonin, which discourages impulsive action. Women have less dopamine and more serotonin than men" (p. 107).

Men and women behave differently even when "they're considering buying the same product" (Israelson, 1998, par. 23). In most buying situations, "women tend to take in information, research a product, and consider a variety of factors such as personal recommendations, past experience and trust before committing to purchase" (Bednarski; Sutton, as cited in Sutton & Watlington, 1994, p.11). Women, unlike men, are not afraid to ask questions. Women "take mere into
account" when making decisions, "do their homework" and "are more than willing
to describe what they want, why they want it and how they plan to use it" (Myers,
1994, p. 11).

Myers (1994) fees that women are more loyal customers; talk more about
their feelings and relationships; share information with more people; and are
more sensitive about their treatment. She feels that women also do their
homework better in buying situations; and build relationships on cooperation and
trust while men see money as status; talk about things, gadgets, and tangible
items; are more competitive; and like to negotiate more (p. 5). Men tend to talk
about nonpersonal topics, putting things together and taking them apart while
women focus more on interpersonal topics such as how they are treated or how
they feel about something (p. 9).

Just as "the same traits, innate or learned, make connections between the
sexes difficult on a personal level" (Myers, 1994, p. 4), they affect communication
between men and women in the business environment. "Women tend to focus
on others first" while "men are much more self-focused" ("Targeting Venus on the
web," 2001, par. 7). Women play many roles and therefore their attention shifts
from various people and circumstances. Men and women also relate to others
differently. Men relate in a more hierarchical manner, with status being pre-
eminent. Women, on the other hand, "prefer to connect directly with others"
which "may explain the importance of her network and relationships, not only on
a personal level, but also in determining whom she will do business with"
Popcorn and Marigold's eight truths of marketing to women (see Table 2) "reveal how to understand, reach, motivate and sustain the loyalty of the female consumer" (p.2). According to Popcorn and Marigold (2000), "women do not buy brands they join them" (p. 39). The first truth, "Connecting Your Female Consumers to Each Other Connects Them to Your Brand" (p. 17) is based on bringing female consumers together and helping them to connect with a product and each other. To do this, marketers must rethink what women want from their brand and create a "community of women ... where their brand is a prominent, helpful, active, fully contributing member" (Popcorn & Marigold, 2000, p. 24).

The number of women accessing the web and the success of female-only websites such as ivillage.com is a perfect example of a woman's need to connect. ivillage.com receives over 65 million page views per month and now has 500,000 members and 2.8 million newsletter subscribers ("Women Are expected to spend $3.65 billion online in 2001," 1999). The article, "Targeting Venus on the web" (2000) states that more than half of women (56%) in the United States have Internet access and by 2002 women are expected to outnumber men 60/40 on the web. According to the article, women spend most of their time on the web using e-mail, accessing chat rooms and researching subjects including business and career, personal finance, parenting and family, and health and fitness; all of which support their need to connect to other women, get answers to questions, take care of others and do everything expeditiously (par. 1).
Table 2

The Eight Truths of Marketing to Women

| 1. Connecting Your Female Consumers to Each Other Connects Them to Your Brand |
| 2. If You're Marketing to One of Her Lives, You're Missing All the Others |
| 3. If She Has to Ask, It's Too Late |
| 4. Market to Her Peripheral Vision and She Will See You In a Whole New Light |
| 5. Walk, Run, Go to Her, Secure Her Loyalty Forever |
| 6. This Generation of Women Consumers Will Lead You to the Next |
| 7. Co-Parenting is the Best Way to Raise a Brand |
| 8. Everything Matters - You Can't Hide Behind Your Logo |

One of the eight truths of marketing, "If She Has to Ask, It's Too Late" (Popcorn & Marigold, 2000, p. 79) emphasizes the importance of marketers providing women with the information they need without waiting for them to ask or they risk losing them and their billions of dollars. The key to making sure this does not happen is anticipating a woman's needs instead of reacting to them. Anticipating a woman's needs means to understand your female consumer and create "products, services, and technologies that women may not yet even know they need" (Popcorn & Marigold, 2000, p. 84).

One way to do this is to include women in the decision-making process from the beginning. More and more corporations are realizing the importance of hiring women and relying on their existing female employees for guidance. Popcorn and Marigold (2000) contend that companies that view their female employees as just employees are missing an opportunity to connect with this audience at the "first and best place to get women passionately involved with your brand" (p. 49).
To reach women successfully, a company “can not just take its already established male formula, modify it slightly, and think it will meet a woman’s needs” (Myers, 1994, p. 20). Shelly Hobson (as cited in Myers, 1994, p. 20), the former editor of the newsletter titled, Marketing to Women, now called About Women and Marketing, said that messages “must be tailored to women” (par. 20) and reflect their needs and values. This can only be accomplished by taking the time and effort to get to know what women want and how they feel about important issues.

The women who created Nike’s successful Dialogue Campaign, the campaign about women’s feelings, thoughts, lifestyles and early years -- one of the first sport marketing strategies to speak directly to women, initially met resistance from their male counterparts. “The men just didn’t get it -- they called it the Empathy Campaign” (Bednarski, as cited in Myers, 1995, p. 52). It is clear that men would not have created the same kind of campaign. For one, they didn’t understand the need to market exclusively to the female audience. Not only that but they feared they might lose the male market which they dominated by focusing their efforts on women. In the end, Nike, realizing the importance of the female market, introduced the campaign depicting women “as powerful, capable people” and addressing “the issue of what it feels like to be told you can’t do something solely because you are a woman” (Sutton & Watlington, 1994, p. 11). Women responded to the messages and Nike’s share of the aerobic shoe market increased from a 10% share in 1991 to a 13% share in 1992 (Bednarski, as cited in Sutton & Watlington, 1994, p.11).
The success of the campaign was based on the ability of the women at Nike to create a strategy that communicated with women. In addition to drawing on the ability to understand and think like their audience, they spent time researching the messages women respond to and receive everyday by reading women's publications. According to Charlotte Moore (as cited in Myers, 1994) the art director for the project, they wanted to write copy that they themselves would want to read and that they knew women could relate to. In addition, Nike conducted focus groups, in-home interviews, and direct mail surveys (Myers, 1994). Nike understood the importance of getting to know their audience and then putting that knowledge into action. In short, they were able to do what more marketers must do to be successful with their female audience which is to, as Myers (1994) says, "meet her needs as she sees them" (p. 4).

The sports industry is one that can greatly benefit from targeting the female audience. Sutton and Watlington (1994) believe the women's market as it relates to sport and sport products is one that is "amazingly free from clutter at this time" (p.13). Sport marketers that employ strategies successful in marketing to women can capitalize on the opportunities that exist with this audience. Basically "those who can communicate effectively by demonstrating long-time commitment, loyalty, and the ability to listen as well as speak" (Sutton & Watlington, 1994, p. 13) can win the market.

Sports Marketing to Women

Because of "traditional and stereotypical thinking" (Branch, 1995, p. 9) among sport marketers, promoters, and corporate advertisers, women have often
been ignored as a potential target market. This should not be surprising because, historically, men have controlled these professions. Many of these men didn't think women understood the game since they didn't play and that the only reason they attended or watched a game was because of their husband or boyfriend (Branch, 1995).

One league that has decided to take a closer look at their female fans and the impact they can have on their sport is Major League Baseball (MLB). The Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball, a survey of more than 3,000 women in six major league cities released in July 2000 was conducted to determine "what women knew and believed about the game" and how the sport "could do a better job of courting the female audience" (MLB, 2000, p.1).

The most significant outcome of MLB's research was that 81% of the women surveyed said they have the final say when it comes to consumer purchases, 76% determine the family's merchandise purchases and 58% make the final decision on leisure activities which reaffirmed baseball's feeling that "women are the key to reaching families" (MLB, 2000, p. 1). In order for baseball to reach families, their research shows they must first "connect" with women. Women said that the more they learned about what baseball is doing, the better they would feel about their home team and the more likely they would be to attend a game (MLB, 2000, p. 6). For example, "at least 65% of the women surveyed said they would be more likely to attend a game and buy team merchandise if they knew about discounted tickets or savings packages" (MLB, 2000, p. 7). This finding could increase sales by 10-15%. Nearly half of women
(49%) said they would increase their game attendance and merchandise purchases after learning about a club's charitable and community-based promotions, which could translate into females attending three to five games per season instead of the one to two games they currently attend (MLB, 2000, p. 7). By creating strategies and tactics to inform women of their initiatives, MLB can meet its goal of growing and strengthening their fan base among women and families.

To do this, MLB (2000) identified several key steps in their efforts to reach women. They must tell more of baseball's stories; give women the kind of information they want and need; use people, publications, broadcasts and other outlets that reach women; demonstrate a commitment to women and families at every stage of a ballpark experience; and follow up every time (p. 5). As part of the initiative, MLB offered a comprehensive list of public relations and marketing strategies designed to not only market to women but to attract families and men as well. In the past, their research has shown, "the messages that women respond to do not turn men away" (MLB, 2000, p. 5). The strategies were presented as part of an ongoing, long term integrated marketing effort to reach out to new fans. They included events and promotions such as an MLB "Father's Day Award" or "Mother's Day Celebration;" a section on the MLB website providing fans with easy-to-find game information including ticket prices, promotions, and parking; media outreach activities such as placement of player personality stories in non-sports media and weekly call-ins by players to local
morning radio shows with a large female audience; and alternative placements for advertising (MLB, 2000, p. 16).

The National Football League's (NFL) campaign to attract women consists of promotional and educational initiatives; seminars on pro football's strategies and rules; competition for girls at the high school and collegiate level; corporate tie-ins and advertising (Littman, 1998). In addition, the NFL became a sponsor of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and created a special segment of their website, NFL for Her, for its female fans. Upon finding out that women purchase 70% of NFL-licensed merchandise (Mullin et al., 1993), the NFL also became the first professional league to design a full line of women's apparel.

Football 101, which is offered by a majority of the teams, "was designed to educate women on the fundamentals of the game" (Zimmerman, 2001, par. 2). Approximately 12,000 women attended these "workshops for women" in 2000. Women are taught about life in the NFL, the history of football, strategy, equipment, official signals, and helpful hints on watching the game. In addition, they are given a tour of the stadium, locker room, weight room, and press box. Current and former players teach the class and a portion of the registration fee is donated to a local charity (NFL, 2001).

The reason the NFL has made these efforts is that 43% of their fan base is female (ESPN/Chilton Poll, as cited in NFL, 2000) and when asked, 42% of females said they followed the NFL in 1999. This number showed an increase from 39% in 1997 and 32% in 1993 (Harris Sports Poll-October, as cited in NFL, 2000). Women are watching the NFL on television and attending games in
person. More than 40 million women watched Super Bowl XXXIV and more than 30 million watch on an average weekend (Nielsen, as cited in NFL, 2000). Game-day attendance is 60/40 male/female and 375,000 women attend games on an average weekend (NFL, 2000). In response, the NFL has started to make a concerted effort to reach its female fans and bring new ones to the game. As women continue to become an increasingly important market, sports leagues will undoubtedly compete against each other. In fact the NFL and MLB already both claim that their sport is number one among women.

Another league competing for female fans is the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), now entering its fifth season. Last year, the women's basketball league, started by the National Basketball Association (NBA), averaged 10,000 fans per game, something that took the NBA 30 years to accomplish (Heath, 2001). The success of the WNBA is based on its ability to recognize it must position itself differently than the male leagues. Rather than focusing on “action and conflict – the traditional male perspectives,” the WNBA has promoted its stars as “role models and accessible personalities” (Farhi, 2001, par. 15). The WNBA has achieved this by requiring that at least two players stay after each game and sign autographs and encouraging players to make appearances at local youth leagues and clinics (Farhi, 2001). In addition, the league aggressively seeks a presence in the local community through advertising and televised games. Their latest ad campaign, “Get on Board,” features WNBA players interacting with fans (Heath, 2001). The WNBA recognizes that to be successful, it must sell itself as an entertainment option for
families and connect emotionally with its mostly female fan base, a lesson the four major male sports leagues can learn from.

It is timely that sport marketers, promoters, and advertisers would be searching for ways to reach the female audience. Women have become "an increasingly significant market segment for spectator sport organizations at the same time that men's interest in spectator sports is staggering" (Branch, 1995, p. 9). Among women 18 and older, the National Sports Study II in 1993 (as cited in Branch, 1995) found that the total popularity of the National Basketball Association (NBA) soared 70%, the National Football League (NFL) 45%, and Major League Baseball (MLB) 40%, while the popularity of the NBA rose just 10%, the NFL barely 1%, and MLB 7% among men 18 and older (p. 9). The National Sports Study II, the largest sports and lifestyle study ever conducted in America, was the first research to show sport marketers the changing demographics of sports fans. The study, based on 1,479 respondents to a 64-page questionnaire, suggested that even though women were "becoming fans of men's and women's spectator sports at a rate greater than or equal to men in many age categories" (p. 11), most of the industry, "including advertisers, networks, newspapers, leagues and teams," was not paying attention (Branch, 1995, pp.11-12).

"Everybody believes that the marketplace for men's sports is going to be 50-50 male-female" (Lopiano, as cited in Smith, 2000) which makes it that much more important for sport marketers to concentrate their efforts on women if they want to increase their attendance and fan base. Branch (1995) suggests that
"consumption of sport and sport-related products by men has plateaued" and that "consumption patterns indicate they may be at or near the saturation point - the point at which advertising, promotion, and marketing efforts will not influence them to purchase more" (p. 12). Mullin et al. (2000) feel that "the female sport consumer market will only grow, with more professional leagues, more specialized equipment, more magazines, and television networks that recognize special interests, wants and needs" (p.108), giving women even more of an opportunity to influence the bottom line of sports organizations.

Title IX, passed in 1972, produced the current generation of women with an interest in sports at all levels. These women were given a greater opportunity to compete athletically at the collegiate level and are therefore now playing and spectating at levels higher than ever before. Over the last decade alone, the number of women participating in sports at NCAA colleges increased by 58%, to 145,832 from 92,472. The comparable increase for men was 14%, to 207,592 from 182,833. (Navarro, 2001, par. 25) From this, it would be logical to project that the daughters and granddaughters of this "post-Title IX generation" will participate (and spectate) with even higher frequencies (Sutton & Watlington, 1994).

Research shows time and time again that "she is attending games, watching on television, and purchasing licensed product .... She has been given the chance to play, understands the game and has developed into just as passionate a spectator as her male counterpart" (Women's Sports Foundation, 1997). Sharon Barbano (as cited in Shepard, 1998), publisher of "Women's
Sport Market Report, points out that "every league is marketing to women, not only because they control the family's purchasing power but because now they understand and enjoy the strategy of sports" (par. 21). Women are also more loyal fans who show an interest in more than a team's win/loss record. Sutton (as cited in Precker, 1999) points out that research, including focus groups and surveys, shows that female fans are more loyal and consistent. He says, "when a team has a bad year, they don't drop off as much as men" (par. 13). "For women, it's more than just the outcome of the game. it's the excitement; it's the experience" (Sutton, as cited in Precker, par. 14).

Additionally, Lopiano (as cited in Smith, 2000) points out that "women are interested in a hell of a lot more than (statistics) .... They are interested in the story behind the player, which has created a need for coverage to be more diversified for more market segments, which is healthy" (par. 40). As sports organizations try to attract more of the female viewing audience, the coverage will change to reflect this need. The 1996 Olympics featured more human-interest stories and personality profiles than ever before and women, who comprised 56% of the viewing audience, reacted positively. In fact, there was a 40% increase in the number of 18-34 year old female viewers from the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona to the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta (Smith, 2000). Experts feel that because of this, sports coverage will never be the same. According to Shepard (1996), "even the NFL broadcasts feature more commentary, analysis and high-tech gadgetry to explain and personalize the game" (par. 35). Although no reference is made to the female audience, it is clear that the manner in which
sport is "softening" its core product -- the game -- as well as "humanizing" and "socializing" its sporting events, demonstrates the growing impact of women as consumers in sport (Branch, 1995, p.9).

An ESPN Sports Poll, taken from November 1999 through October 2000, found that 19.7 percent of women say they are avid sports fans, and 81.7 percent of women consider themselves casual sports fans (Smith, 2000). The random telephone survey of 12,424 women, ages 12 and older, found that 88.4% of women had watched football on television during the past year, 79.6% watched baseball, 63.8% tuned in for hockey and 80.4 viewed basketball (Smith, 2000).

In fact, according to the Women's Sport Market Report (Barbano, 1998 as cited in Shepard, 1998), two of every five TV viewers who watch professional football, basketball, or baseball are women. The Women's Sport Market Report, a newsletter for corporations interested in sports marketing to women, also found that 35 - 45% of those who attend a professional sporting event are women (Barbano, as cited in Shepard, 1998). The Women's Sports Foundation (as cited in Smith, 2000) estimates that in the past 25 years the number of 18-to-34-year old women watching sports has also increased 30-40 percent.

Lopiano (1993) feels that "women have been virtually ignored as spectators of men's sports until quite recently .... "assuming that only women watch women's sports is naïve" just like "marketing to only half of the population for the men's or women's sport is unjustifiable" (par. 15).

Even though there are those sport marketers that remain skeptical about the impact women can have on the sports industry, most can no longer deny
what the research and statistics show. While some observers say they are “finally discovering a market that has been there all along” others speculate that marketing to women “is a matter of economic survival—that, with rising advertising costs and ticket prices, they have nearly priced themselves out of a men-only market” (Shepard, 1998, par. 12). In any case, with the rate at which women are “participating, spectating and consuming more sports and sport-related products than ever before” (par. 10) and the increasing share of the sport consumption dollar they account for in many segments of the sport industry, “women have become a market force that can no longer be ignored and must be reckoned with” (Branch, 1995, p.10).

Conclusion

The author’s review of the literature related to marketing sports to women reveals pertinent information for the central question this study seeks to explore: Are sport marketers doing enough to appeal to their female audience? Specifically, the author examined the ever-increasing impact of women’s economic power and influences, the need to market specifically to women, the differences that exist between men and women, women’s interest in sports, and the growing trend of women as sports spectators.

Research has been done to explore the need to market to women, the impact of gender differences on the marketing of a product or service and women’s growing interest in male-dominated sports. The author felt that further research should be conducted to determine the efforts to inform and promote to the women most involved in these sports; the female employees. The author
chose to do this by surveying women working in Major League Baseball. She also interviewed women in key decision-making positions in MLB’s central office. The author provides -- through original research study -- a perspective of how these women feel about marketing sports to women.
Chapter III
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Through this study the author hopes to determine what the sports industry must do to effectively market to women — specifically what the women working in Major League Baseball feel is most important to these efforts. The author feels that by talking to women working in one sport, she will be able to gain a better understanding of what sport marketers in other sports must do to market to the female audience. She feels that the women working in Major League Baseball will offer a perspective on the importance of marketing sports to women and what their role, as female employees, should be in the implementation of these efforts.

In addition, the author analyzes: (a) their familiarity of current initiatives for marketing baseball to women; (b) the likelihood that they would be asked for, and willing to, express their opinion as women; (c) the perceived obstacles of implementing initiatives to market to women; (d) if they consider themselves baseball fans and how their interest and knowledge compares to that of their male counterparts; and (e) what, if any, strategies they feel should be implemented to market sports to women. The author created the Marketing Sports to Women survey to collect data for this study (see Appendix A).

For this study, the author surveyed a population of 535 women working in Major League Baseball (MLB). There are 30 teams in MLB and one central office, the Office of the Commissioner, in New York. The author used a sample
of women from each of the 30 teams by selecting those listed in the 2001 Baseball America Directory. This directory lists portions of each of the 30 club's front office. The total number of women listed in the directory was 504. Although some teams only listed a small part of their front office staff, and therefore few women, while others included a more comprehensive list, the author chose this as an effective sample because women at all levels from all clubs were reached. To reach women in the central office, the author used a sample of a recent staff list. The list included 100 women and the author surveyed 31 of them to bring the total number of participants surveyed to 535.

The author also conducted focused interviews with four women in key decision-making positions at Major League Baseball's Office of the Commissioner and two at the club level. Those women, Katy Feeney, vice president of club relations and scheduling; Kathy Francis, vice president of marketing; Phyllis Merhige, vice president of club relations; and Leslie Sullivan, vice president of broadcasting, were each asked five questions (See Appendix B). The author also spoke informally to Kim Ng, vice president and assistant general manager of the New York Yankees, and Christine Makowski, director of advertising and community relations for the Chicago White Sox, who both submitted surveys as well. The five women who submitted surveys as part of the pilot study were included but the four women who were interviewed were not asked to fill out a survey. The respondents were given 10 days to return the survey.
Survey

The survey was developed for this study with the guidance of the author's thesis advisor, Dr. Michael S. McGraw. The survey included 28 questions with multiple-choice responses.

The author conducted a pilot test of the survey on April 30, 2001 as recommended by research scholars for survey instruments that have not been previously validated. After the pilot test of five women working in Major League Baseball's Office of the Commissioner, the author made final adjustments.

The survey was sent by mail on May 24, 2001. A cover letter (see Appendix C) explaining the author's purpose for the study and her own personal experience in Major League Baseball was included. The cover letter also informed participants that they could receive the survey via e-mail by sending an e-mail to the author.
Chapter IV

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The central focus of this study is to determine if the four major sports leagues are doing enough to market sports to women. This study has the specific intent of determining what women working in Major League Baseball (MLB) feel about marketing sports to women. The author feels that although these women work in a particular sport, their observations about the relationship that exists between women and baseball can be applied to the other three male-dominated sports leagues — the NFL, NBA and NHL — because they have all encountered many of the same problems, including declining attendance, stable or declining male interest and the need to attract new fans. Additionally, all four major sports leagues have traditionally been marketed to the 18 to 34 year old male demographic.

The author wanted to explore if women working in sports, in this case baseball, believe that it is necessary to market sports to women. She also wished to examine female employees familiarity with MLB's Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball and specific initiatives targeted to women by their individual club or MLB and whether or not they were being asked for their opinion as a woman before the implementation of such programs.

The study was based on the primary assumption that an organization interested in marketing to women should rely on its female employees. The
author hoped to find this to be true in baseball because, as research shows, female employees are the key to understanding the market and spreading the word to other women. This primary assumption was based on the work of Popcorn and Marigold (2000) who contend that companies who view their female employees as just employees are missing an opportunity to connect with this audience at the “first and best place to get women passionately involved with your brand” (p.49). The assumption was also based on the work of Myers (1994) who feels that it is difficult for most people to put themselves in someone else’s shoes, especially when that individual is as “diametrically different as is with men and women” and that corporations must “seek to gain the lifelong experience from the only credible source—women” (p. xii).

In this study, the author also hoped to examine the amount of time and money these women spend following sports, whether or not they attended games as a child and whom they attend games with now and use this data to represent other women. She also tried to prove that as women are exposed to the sport, they become more of a fan. In addition, the author felt that these women would have a clear understanding of what strategies would be most effective in reaching this market and that their ideas would match those found in her literature review. Lastly, the author wanted to ask women working in Major League Baseball how they felt about the balance of men and women in decision-making positions, how they felt their knowledge and interest in the game compared to their male colleagues and their overall opinion of the state of the sports industry as it relates to marketing to women.
Data Review

A total of 255 surveys were completed, representing a response rate of 49%. The most significant outcome from this study was the number of women who chose to participate. The author feels that this is an indication of the interest that exists about the topic. In addition, 40 participants requested an executive summary of the findings from the study, which further indicates an astounding interest in the author's research. As shown in Table 3, women from all departments and levels participated in the study. The author feels she was able to gain a broad perspective of how women working in different capacities for Major League Baseball feel about marketing sports to women.

Table 3

Demographics of Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioner's Office</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Operations</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance/Accounting</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Relations</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballpark Operations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcasting</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket Office/Operations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Relations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Executive</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account Executive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Coordinator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Director</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 43% of the women who responded to the survey were familiar with the Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball while 57% said they were not. Some of those familiar with the initiative were not impressed with the efforts of MLB thus far to market to women. As one participant said, "I wish MLB would actually step up more on this front. They seem to lack interest in their own study and have yet to show women a reason to support baseball." Other participants felt that there was a lot to be learned from the initiative. One respondent said, "I found the Commissioner's initiative very interesting. I learned that when offering discounts, women want all the information — date, time, location, how to redeem, etc. — right in front of them. I also learned that the use of billboards and radios are a strong advertising vehicle because many women spend a lot of time in their car." The author would like to note that these are just two of the significant findings of the initiative.
The author also discovered that 73.7% of the women surveyed have never been asked for their opinion as a woman even though 86.7% of the women have either given their opinion (whether or not they were asked) or are willing to give it if asked. Several participants indicated that the lack of women in decision-making positions might account for the lack of interest in the opinions of female employees. "There are no women in our upper management positions," said one participant. "I feel this needs to be changed as I think it affects our advertising initiatives. The club said they were going to focus our ad efforts to target mostly women. I don't see this being done and the club never even asked for the input of any of its female staff on their advertising efforts."

One reason the author felt that women should be asked for their opinion was because of the risk that females might find a strategy implemented to target women offensive. The study showed that it was a rare occasion that women working in baseball found that to be true. The author thought this number may be higher but was encouraged that only a small percentage of women surveyed have found any of the initiatives in Table 4 offensive.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies Found Offensive</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertisement</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the Above</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If so, did you express your opinion?

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In determining if Major League Baseball has done its part in educating their female employees about the initiative, the author sought to determine if any of the items listed in Table 5 were made available for review. It is the contention of the author that female employees — and all employees for that matter — should have been made more aware of the initiative if MLB was serious about its intention to market to women. The initiative is filled with interesting research findings about how women feel about the game, ideas, and strategies for teams to implement and further plans for the future. The author feels that it is essential that female employees at all levels be familiar with these findings and believe in them in order for MLB to be successful in their implementation. She found it most surprising that of the women surveyed, only 15.7% of them had seen internal correspondence about the initiative. The author feels that MLB or the individual clubs should have at least distributed a memo about the initiative and made more information, including the contents of the entire study, available for those interested. Unbelievably, there were women from marketing departments and at the director and vice president level who were unfamiliar with the initiative.

It is encouraging that many respondents were familiar with at least one of the initiatives mentioned in Table 6. On the other hand, the author thought that since respondents could select all initiatives that apply, percentages would be higher for each option. The author was unable to determine whether this is an
indication of baseball’s lack of initiatives targeting women or efforts to inform female employees about them.

Table 5

**Familiarity with Major League Baseball Commissioner’s Initiative on Women and Baseball**

Have you read it or anything about it? Please check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press Release/Executive Summary</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire Study</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles/Clips</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Correspondence</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

**Familiarity with Efforts to Market Sports to Women**

Are you familiar with any initiatives in the following areas targeted specifically to women by your club or Major League Baseball as a whole? Please check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballpark Operations</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Relations</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the Above</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows the potential obstacles women working in baseball felt their organization would face in trying to implement strategies to women. Again,
respondents were allowed to check all the responses they felt would apply. The author expected more respondents to indicate a lack of understanding of the need and resistance from upper management as potential obstacles.

Table 7

Potential Obstacles

What potential obstacles do you feel your organization would face in trying to implement such initiatives? Please check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Understanding of the Audience</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Understanding of the Need</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance from Upper Management</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The author found it difficult to use women working in baseball to determine the amount of time and effort female fans invest in sports. At the beginning of her study, she thought that these women would support the data showing more women are attending games, purchasing merchandise, and watching on television, but the results showed that the answers to these questions were skewed heavily because these women work in sports. Although the author realized that this would have a direct effect on their responses, she felt there would be enough women who show an interest in the game outside of the fact that they work there. In the end, she found this hard to prove. For example, it is difficult to compare how much money these women spend on baseball because
as an employee, they receive many perks such as complimentary tickets to games and discounted merchandise. It is also hard to determine how many games they attend as a fan because many of them have game day responsibilities for some or all home games. However, the author did conclude that exposure to the game does make one more of a fan. The survey found that 57.3% of women working in baseball said they are more of a fan now that they work for MLB. “Prior to working at MLB, I was not a fan,” one respondent pointed out but “since being here I’ve learned more about the game and enjoy/appreciate it more.”

The author also found it interesting that 26.7% of women surveyed went to work for baseball after being referred by a friend or a colleague (second response only to desire to work in sports: 34.5%). The author feels that this shows MLB can and should reach out to women through its current employees if they want to include more women in the decision-making process. As one interviewee indicated, “there needs to be more women and diversity throughout the game. There is always a need for greater representation of the audience you’re trying to reach.”

Another interesting finding as noted in Table 8 was that, contrary to popular belief, women do not consider ice skating or gymnastics their favorite sport (only 3.1%). Instead, 87.4% indicated that one of the four major male sports — baseball, football, basketball or hockey — is their favorite sport.
Table 8

Favorite sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Male Sports)</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics or Ice Skating</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not surprising that women working in baseball — 66% of them — feel there is an unacceptable balance of male and female executives in decision-making positions in their organization. Of the respondents, 22.9% felt there was an acceptable balance and 11.1% had no opinion. While 65.6% also agreed that there was not an acceptable balance of male and female executives in decision-making positions in Major League Baseball in general, only 7.5% felt there was an acceptable balance and 26.9% had no opinion.

The author wonders what these women would think if they knew that two of the four women in key decision-making roles in the commissioner’s office who were interviewed for this study, have since resigned. Many respondents echoed the thoughts of one who said, there is “definitely not enough female executives/decision makers. Unfortunately, it is still a ‘Boy’s Club’ in many respects.” Many felt it would make a difference for them if there were more females in executive positions. For example, one participant commented that “it would help to have leadership that is respectful of women and that believes
women can know enough, as much or more about the game than male employees."

When it comes to comparing how women feel their knowledge of the game compares to their male colleagues, 87.4% concede that they are not as or almost as knowledgeable. On the other hand, when looking at a comparison of the level of interest in the game, only 56.5% said they were not as or almost as interested while 35.2% – the number one response – felt their level of interest was exactly the same. Of those women who said they were not as knowledgeable as the male counterparts about the game, they cited knowledge of the history of the game or statistics as the only difference. One interviewee felt that basically "the only difference between men and women in regard to their knowledge of the sport is that men are more interested in the statistics of the game and its individual players but stats are not always an indication of if you’re a fan or not. You can know stats but have no clue about the game and how it’s played."

The author listed 10 strategies that may be used to market sports to women and asked the participants to rank them. The list shown in Table 9 was compiled by determining which strategy was named at each ranking the highest number of times. For example, 52 women ranked "Educate Women About the Game" as their number one method, which was more times than any other strategy. The author expected "Traditional Advertising" and "Through Marketing Efforts to Men" to be listed among the lowest. She also believed that "Educate Women About the Game" would be the number one strategy.
Table 9

Most Effective Strategies to Market Sports to Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Educate Women About the Game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Through Marketing Efforts To Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ticket Discounts and Promotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Target Women's Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promote Community Relations Efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. On the Web</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hire More Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. More Feminine Merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Traditional Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Through Marketing Efforts to Men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One interviewee said she believes that "clearly the number one way to market sports to women is educating them about the game. There are a lot of things that baseball can and should be doing like holding seminars, talking to girls/women's organizations and showing videos." Other participants agreed that education is the key but felt it should start at an even earlier age.

One respondent reflected on her own upbringing when she said, "I think targeting young girls is the key to bringing women into the sport in the future. I grew up on NASCAR when it was not a mainstream popular sport. Today, I am still a huge fan because I understand it and I have been a fan since I was a child. Men have traditionally built this type of loyalty while growing up playing and watching baseball. More women could be drawn to the sport if they were exposed regularly at a young age." Another participant said, "it is important to capture their (girls) interest at a young age and educate them so when they are on their own or when they have a family they will continue to be a fan and pass it along to their kids. It's difficult to get an adult excited about something that they
don't have an interest in because they were never introduced to it while they were young."

Based on her literature review and professional experience, the author felt that "Through Marketing Efforts to Kids," "Ticket Discounts and Promotions," "Target Women's Publications" and "Promote Community Relations Activities" would also be among the top responses. She also believed that "Hire More Women" would be highly ranked but agrees with the women surveyed that the methods ranked higher are also effective methods to market to women.

Many participants cited marketing to women as an effective method to reach kids and families and ultimately increase attendance. Below are just some of the comments made by participants about reaching women and families:

"When targeting women, the target should be on family as well, since women make most of the family entertainment decisions. We should recognize moms/women more for their contributions to baseball."

"MLB has an opportunity to bring women into the game – as employees or fans. Baseball has a feel of a family-friendly activity – one to be enjoyed by all members of the family."

"I think the best way to introduce the game to women is through marketing efforts to kids. I have many girlfriends who aren't that interested in sports, but will do anything for their kids. If their kids wanted to go to baseball games, then the moms might take them and develop their own interest in the game."

"As the mother of two boys who play ball, I know how important it is for the moms to believe and support baseball as they are the ones that will pack up the kids and take them to a game."

"Many women are involved in baseball at the amateur level through their kids (Little League, etc.) so their knowledge and appreciation of baseball can be extended to the professional level. Plus, going to a game can be a family activity."

"I think that women and children often determine how family entertainment dollars are spent. In this age where single parent families are the norm with most
being led by women, initiatives directed specifically towards women would only benefit MLB."

"Ticket Promotions and Discounts" are an effective way to attract women and their families to the game. Many women pointed to the expense of bringing a family to a game. "Baseball is expensive to take a group of kids to the game, one woman said. "While the MasterCard 'Priceless' commercials are great, somehow an advertisement about a package deal sponsored by MasterCard would have been better and felt like a bargain."

The other methods listed in the top 10, "Target Women's Publications" and "Promote Community Relations Efforts," address the importance of speaking directly to women about the things that matter most to them. One interviewee stressed the importance of this by saying "what it is going to take is an integrated marketing effort to women where women are - women's magazines, online, newspapers (Lifestyle Section) - and not just one ad in one publication. If women are not reading the sports pages, then they are not going to see ads there." Another interviewee said, "It's important to act, say and do things at all levels that represent what we believe in. MLB needs to be loyal to its fans, provide value and role models for kids, reinforce goodwill and be cognizant of the impact women are making."

The data included in this study as well as the comments submitted by its participants and the interviewees proves that women working in baseball are willing to express their opinions when asked. The author also feels the study shows that their input is worthy of review. Many women were able to draw on
their own experience – both within and outside the sport – to offer a perspective of the most effective strategies to reach women successfully.
Conclusions

At the start of her research study, the author sought to explore the growing impact of women and their influence on the sports industry. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature related to the marketing of sports to women, and the creation and implementation of the Marketing Sports to Women Survey, the author learned several insights into the impact of women on the sports industry and a greater understanding of an overall need to market specifically to women.

Both the data and literature reveal that women have a greater economic impact in society than ever before. Both the data and literature also expose that women influence 80% of household decisions. In addition, the author showed that it is necessary to consider the gender differences that exist between men and women when creating marketing strategies. She also provided evidence to show that these efforts are worth the time and effort because women are loyal advocates of a brand. The research shows that if women believe in a product, they will share it with their network of friends.

The literature and data also show that women are increasingly becoming more involved as spectators and consumers of sport. Research shows that women are more likely to respond to sport marketing efforts directed toward them.
and with them in mind at a time when men's interest in sports is stagnant or even declining. The author believes that for the sports industry to survive, they must reach out to this audience.

The research further revealed that women working in Major League Baseball are very interested in expressing their opinion about marketing sports to women. Their ideas for marketing sports to women were found to be consistent with those found in the literature review. The research found in this study supports the findings of Major League Baseball's Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball. However, the author feels that in order for the initiative to be successful, its finding must be shared with MLB's female employees. The research shows that these women are willing to give their opinion when asked. The author strongly believes that these women can add value to MLB's marketing efforts to reach women.

Overall, the research produced in this study should provide significant contributions to the understanding of marketing sports to women.

Recommendations

The primary recommendation of this study is for the professional sports leagues to solicit the advice of their female employees in determining the most effective methods to reach the women's market. There is a lot to be learned from these women. The author suggests that female employees of sports organizations, when utilized effectively, can be the industry's biggest advocates.

The author feels an association should be formed for women by each individual sport. For example, Major League Baseball should sponsor an
organization for its female employees. This organization would allow women who work in the sport to come together and form one collective voice. As one respondent indicated, "Women need a voice so they can be taken seriously. Women need to work twice as hard as men in sports. Huge efforts need to be made in promoting and valuing women's efforts in sports."

The author feels an organization that offered women an opportunity to network with other women in baseball would lead to a stronger voice for women, who together could do a lot to help each other and benefit their sport. The organization should include a mentoring program, where female executives throughout baseball offer advice and counsel to women in the early stages of their career in baseball. The author agrees with a respondent who indicated, "I feel that any organization could be improved by implementing a mentoring program for those who desire to learn more about the game and other areas to achieve more personal success (i.e., promotions, personal job satisfaction)."

In addition to the mentoring program, the author believes that the women in the organization could help to bring more women into the game by assisting other women who have a desire to work in sports. They can do this by going to colleges to speak to students about sport management as a major or explaining how to get an internship in the field. These same women could speak to women's organizations about the benefits of attending a game.

Finally, the organization could provide a forum to recognize those women who are making a difference in baseball as well as the organizations who are
stepping up their efforts. This could be accomplished by producing a newsletter and the presentation of such awards as "Woman of the Year."

The author would like to note that the efforts by the National Football League (NFL) and MLB at this time are a good start to reaching its female fans. Although each league has a slightly different approach to reaching women, both can be successful if they are consistent in their efforts and follow up. Both leagues, as well as the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the National Hockey League (NHL), need to do further research to understand the women's market and its potential impact on sports. The leagues should learn from each other and their female employees and expand on the other's ideas as it fits to their individual sport.

In summary, the author would like to offer an example of why the most talked about method throughout her study to appeal to the female sports fan should be used. The number one method identified by the women surveyed, "Educate Women About the Game," can and should be implemented in each sport. The author believes that it is imperative that women not only understand the strategy of each sport but more about ballpark (or stadium) attractions, the organization's community involvement, the stories behind the players and how this all fits into her life. As indicated in the Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball, the sports industry needs to promote itself as an entertainment option for families and the best way to do this is through women.

In closing, the author would like to reiterate how important it is for the sports industry to reach out to female employees. These women offer concrete
suggestions to reaching the female market. Based on the author's professional experience in the sports industry and the overwhelming response and support she received in her research, she firmly believes that these women are the key to the overall survival of sports.

Future Study

The author believes that her literature review and empirical research gathered by her survey contribute to the growing body of information related to marketing to women, specifically sports. However, more research is needed on this subject before definitive conclusions can be drawn about the success of these efforts. Specifically, the author recommends that research be conducted as a follow up to the implementation of strategies targeted specifically to the women's market. Most importantly the author believes that more research should be done to examine the relationship that exists between sports leagues and their female employees and how it can be improved.


LeoShe. (1999, November 17). LeoShe web study predicts women are the future of e-commerce; to tap the potential, LeoShe tells marketers to “Think like a woman, not like a company” [Press Release] [Online]. Available: http://www.leoburnett.com/content/news/1999/pr19991117-141633.htm


Smith, M. C. (2000, December 17). What women watch media: the networks are scrambling to keep up as women show an increased appetite for the sweaty as well as the sweet [Electronic version]. The Orange County Register. Retrieved February 7, 2001, from https://www.nexis.com/research.


Appendix A

Survey
Marketing Sports to Women Survey

1. Do you work for:
   - Club
   - Commissioner's Office

2. What area do you work in?
   - Marketing
   - Community Relations
   - Publications
   - Public Relations
   - Finance/Accounting
   - Ballpark Operations
   - Other (Please indicate)

3. Is your area considered part of the marketing department?
   - Yes
   - No

4. What is your title?
   - Administrative/Executive Assistant
   - Coordinator
   - Manager
   - Director
   - Vice President
   - Other (Please indicate)

5. Are you familiar with Major League Baseball's Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball? If not, proceed to question 7.
   - Yes
   - No

6. Have you read it or anything about it? Check all that apply.
   - Press Release/Executive Summary
   - Entire Study
   - Articles (Clips)
   - Internal Correspondence
   - Other (Please indicate)

7. Are you familiar with any initiatives in the following areas targeted specifically for women by your club or major league baseball as a whole? Please check all that apply.
   - Advertising (radio, television or print ads)
   - Marketing (promotions, sponsorships, ticket packages, merchandise)
   - Public Relations (PR campaigns, editorial content, publications)
   - Ballpark Operations
   - Community Relations (charitable programs)
   - None of the Above

8. Do you feel that major league baseball should implement initiatives directed specifically to women? Why or why not?
   - Yes
   - No
9. What potential obstacles do you feel your organization would face in trying to implement such initiatives? Please check all that apply.

- Time
- Money
- Lack of Understanding of the Audience
- Lack of Understanding of the Need
- Resistance from Upper Management
- Other (Please Indicate) ___________________________________

10. Have you ever been asked for your opinion, as a woman, on a campaign your organization was creating to target to women?

- Yes
- No

11. Are you willing to give your opinion if asked?

- Yes and I have
- Yes, if I was asked
- No
- Depends on the Situation
- Depends on Who is Asking

12. Have you ever found any of the following initiatives by your organization offensive for females? If so, did you express your opinion?

- Advertisement
- Marketing Strategy
- Promotion
- Other (Please Indicate)
- None of the Above

If so, did you express your opinion?  __Yes__  __No__

13. Did you consider yourself a baseball fan before working for major league baseball?

- Yes
- No

14. Are you more of a fan now that you work for major league baseball?

- Yes
- No
- About the Same

15. Why did you decide to go to work for major league baseball?

- Baseball Fan
- Sports Fan
- Desire to Work in Sports (any sport)
- Responded to Advertised Position
- Referred by Friend or Colleague
- Just Wanted Position in My Field (i.e. Public Relations)
- Other (Please Indicate) __________________________
16. On average, how many baseball games do you attend as a fan per season?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 20 or more
- Depends on Local Team's Win/Loss Record
- None, I have game day responsibilities for every game
- Other

17. Who do you attend the majority of the games with?

- Male Family Member(s)
- Female Family Member(s)
- Kids
- Female Friends
- Male Friends
- Boyfriend/Spouse
- Other

18. Did you attend baseball games as a child? If so, with whom?

- No
- Yes, with my father
- Yes, with my mother
- Yes, with my mother and father
- Yes, with a male adult
- Yes, with a female adult
- Yes, with someone other than those mentioned here

19. On average, how many hours per week do you spend watching baseball on television?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 20 or more
- Depends on Local Team's Win/Loss Record
- Other

20. Do you follow baseball on a regular basis? If so, how? Please check all that apply.

- Read Daily Newspaper
- Read Daily Clips
- Read Sports Magazines
- Watch Television Coverage (Local, ESPN, FOX)
- Check Boxscores
- Visit Sports-Related Websites (MLB, Club, ESPN)

21. How much money do you spend on baseball or baseball-related items (tickets, merchandise, publications, etc.) for yourself or others per year?

- None
- Under $100
- $101-$500
- $501-$1,000
- Over $1,000
22. Do you feel there is an acceptable balance of male and female executives in decision-making positions in your organization?

   — Yes
   — No
   — No opinion

23. Do you feel there is an acceptable balance of male and female executives in decision-making positions in major league baseball in general?

   — Yes
   — No
   — No opinion

24. How do you feel your knowledge of the game compares to your male colleagues?

   — Not as knowledgeable
   — Almost as knowledgeable
   — Exactly the Same
   — More Knowledgeable
   — Not Sure

25. How do you feel your interest in the game compares to your male colleagues?

   — Not as Interested
   — Almost as Interested
   — Exactly the Same
   — More Interested
   — Not Sure

26. What is your favorite sport?

   — Baseball
   — Football
   — Basketball
   — Hockey
   — Ice Skating or Gymnastics
   — Other (Please Indicate) _________________________

27. Please rank the following 1-10 by indicating what methods you think would be most effective in marketing sports to women.

   — Traditional Advertising
   — Through Marketing Efforts to Men
   — More Feminine Merchandise
   — Promote Community Relations Efforts
   — Targeting Women’s Publications
   — Ticket Discounts and Promotions
   — Through Marketing Efforts to Kids
   — Educating Women About the Game
   — On the Web
   — Hire More Women

28. Additional comments about any of these topics above. I am interested in your opinion!
Appendix B

Focused Interview Questions
Focused Interview Questions

1. Should major league baseball implement strategies to market exclusively to women? If not, why not? If so, what do you perceive are the biggest obstacles to such a marketing program?

2. Are you familiar with MLB’s Commissioner’s initiative on Women and Baseball? In your opinion, what was the most significant finding from that research?

3. What do you think is the most effective strategy to market sports to women? If it were up to you, what would you like to see all the clubs do to market to this audience?

4. Do you think there are enough women working in baseball? Are there enough women in decision-making positions? Are women working in baseball asked for their opinion about marketing to women? Should they be? Why or why not?

5. How do you think women compare to men in regard to their interest/knowledge of the game?
Appendix C

Survey Cover Letter
Dear Participant:

Your name has been chosen from the Baseball America 2001 Directory to participate in a survey about marketing sports to women. My name is Jennifer Sloan and I'm working on my master's degree in communications with a concentration in sports management. In partial fulfillment of my degree, I'm conducting original research for my thesis.

Prior to returning to school in January 2000, I worked in the public relations department of the Chicago White Sox. Because of my prior experience in baseball and my current area of study, I am interested in doing my research involving the topic of marketing sports to women. I am working to show how the economic power of women and their interest in sports, mainly baseball, has grown and what impact this will have on the industry.

In order to do this, I would like to determine what women who work in major league baseball feel are the most effective strategies for marketing to this target market. Your participation in this survey is vital to the successful completion of this project. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and return it in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If you would like to receive the survey via e-mail, please e-mail me at sloanjena@aol.com.

Please respond by Tuesday, June 5. All entries are confidential and anonymous. If you would like to receive an executive summary of the research findings in August 2001, please submit your e-mail address.

Thank you for your participation.

Regards,

Jennifer Sloan
Appendix D

Executive Summary
Executive Summary

Research Question: Are sports marketers doing enough to appeal to their female audience? With the ever-increasing impact of women’s economic power and influences, their interest in sports, and the growing trend of women as sports spectators, the topic is worthy of review. This is a study of Major League Baseball and the women who are working in that sport. These women provide a perspective on marketing sports to women.

Reason for Study
The purpose of the study is to explore why the sports industry should pursue the women’s market. The growing impact of women in society and their role as the decision maker for their families has increasingly influenced the marketing of products and services. Yet there are still those marketers who continue to underestimate this audience and their potential on the bottom line. Sport marketers have historically directed their efforts toward men. It wasn’t until recent years that they began to realize the importance of the women’s market. Women are being taken more seriously as athletes, consumers and, even more importantly, the key to reaching families.

Project Objectives
The main objectives of this study include:
1. Explore why the lucrative women’s market is worth pursuing.
2. Explain why women need to be marketed to differently than men.
3. Show the impact women can and are having on the marketing of products and services.
4. Examine what sports marketers are currently doing to market to women.
5. Research what women working in MLB think should be done to market sports to women.

Steps Taken
- Reviewed literature about marketing products and services to women
- Studied the relationship between women and sports, particularly their interest and impact on marketing strategies and bottom line.
- Researched current efforts to market to women in sports industry.
- Surveyed women working in Major League Baseball.
- Interviewed women in key executive roles within Major League Baseball.
- Analyzed data and offered perspective on marketing sports to women.

Lessons Learned
The research indicates that
- Nearly 40% of the consumers of men’s professional sports—fans who attend games, watch games on television and buy licensed products—are women.
- The NFL and MLB both estimate that 43% of their fan base and 45% of their television audience are made up of women and the NBA claims 40% of their attendance and television audience are women.

The surveys revealed that:
- Women working in baseball are interested in the topic of marketing sports to women and willing to give their opinions. Of the 535 surveys sent out, 255 were returned, representing a response rate of 46% (30% is acceptable in most cases and 20% for mailed surveys).
- Of the 255 respondents, 81.5% believe there is a need for baseball to implement marketing strategies specifically directed to women.
- Only 43% of the respondents were familiar with the Commissioner’s initiative on Women and Baseball, while 57% said they were not.
- Only 28.6% said they were unfamiliar with any initiative by their organization and MLB to market to women.
73.7% of the women surveyed have never been asked for their opinion as a woman even though 86.7% have either given their opinion (whether or not they were asked) or are willing to give it if asked.

87.4% indicated that one of the four major male sports—baseball, football, basketball or hockey—was their favorite sport.

86% feel there is an unacceptable balance of male and female executives in decision-making positions in their organization (22.9% acceptable, 11.1% no opinion) and 65.6% feel there is an unacceptable balance of male and female executives in decision-making positions in MLB (7.5% acceptable, 26.9% no opinion).

The following is a list of the ten strategies respondents ranked in order of effectiveness to market to women (compiled by determining which strategy was named at each ranking the highest number of times):

1. Educate Women About the Game
2. Through Marketing Efforts to Kids
3. Ticket Discounts and Promotions
4. Target Women's Publications
5. Promote Community Relations Efforts
6. On the Web
7. Hire More Women
8. More Feminine Merchandise
9. Traditional Advertising
10. Through Marketing Efforts to Men

This list is consistent with the findings of the literature review and research.

The author concluded that:

- The research found in this study supports the findings of the Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball. However, in order for the initiative to be successful, its findings must be shared with MLB's female employees. The research shows that these women are willing to give their opinion when asked. These women can add value to MLB's marketing efforts to reach women.

- Four marketing strategies that can be successful in marketing to women are Integrated Marketing Communications, Cause-Related Marketing, Relational or Relationship Marketing and Lifestyle and Event Marketing.

- One way to gain a better understanding of how to market to women is to include women in the decision-making process from the beginning. Corporations are realizing the importance of hiring women and relying on their existing female employees for guidance.

- Gender differences that exist between men and women should be considered when creating marketing strategies. Research shows that these efforts are worth their time and effort for the following reasons:
  - Women are the key to reaching families.
  - Women are loyal advocates of a brand and they share their experiences with a vast network of family and friends.
  - Women are impacting the bottom line of many products and services because of their rising professional and economic status.

- The sports industry is one that can greatly benefit from targeting the female audience.
  - For example, according to the Commissioner's Initiative on Women and Baseball, 65% of women surveyed said they would attend more games and buy team merchandise if they knew about discounted tickets and savings packages; and 49% would after learning about a club's charitable activities.

- Research shows that women can be influenced, in some cases dramatically, if sport marketing is simply targeted to them and with them in mind.