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Sports and Social Media

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 It has come to context that social media and the sports industry go hand and hand, as one of the largest marketing tools in today's modernized society. In most of today's technology one can find various social media attractions already programmed in the device prior to purchase. These programs include, but are not limited to, Foursquare, Facebook, Twitter, and a current trending favorite Instagram. From home televisions, to advertisements within local retail stores, and even many standard digital cellular devices; sports and social media has become a World Wide trend in the promotion of self selling and product sales within the sports industry.

 For example, users from Twitter are able to follow organizations such as "Lakerholicz", which is an Los Angeles Lakers basketball organizations that keeps fans updated with the team functions. Another example is how users can follow an organization such as the Pittsburgh Steelers on Instagram, which is an photo sharing application that allows viewers to see photos that are posted on a bulletin from a cellular device. With this, the viewers are able to see visuals of the team practice, or even what the players do as citizens. Sports and social media have become a worldwide connection because of the free easy access to fans and people that want to see their favorite sport organizations and keep them up to date with activities.

 Social media today is used for connection with family, friends, businesses, or even interaction with their favorite celebrities or organizations. Social media began in the 1950's, websites were being identifying them as social network analysis or sociometry (Valente, 2010). The most popular social network today is Facebook, which is responsible for 57 % of US internet traffic ("Harnessing social media"). The growth of social media has grown to a large number because of the easy access and the free networking. Consumers can easily use these from their hand held devices, computer, or even an I-Pad ("Harnessing social media"). It has become a way of everyday life to use some type of social networking, either by using a cellular device, the internet, or even by email (Valente, 2010).

 With the advancement of today's technology, the social media growth has increased with the easy access to free networking from electronically devices (Valente, 2010). The more that technology advances the more ideas and better social networks will come about to society. With the impact of Facebook, which was created in 2004 (Raice, 2012). It has grown to over 500 million users since 2010. Users are spending over 700 billion minutes a month on the social network (Raice, 2012). With the growth of sports and the growth of social media, these two highly engaged with each other because of the popularity and internet user's passion for sports today.

 Before our generation, social networks were not a large impact on the society like today. Today’s youth is increasing the popularity with sports and social networks. About 100 million people were using Facebook as their source of social network over any other type of social network. As of today in 2012, Facebook has grabbed about 71% of all 221 million users in the USA. Facebook is being used more than any other website (Raice, 2012). Sports and social media will continue to grow and become more popular in the future because of the new generation‘s exposure to social media and the improvement of technology.

 The impact of social networking and sports can be visualized in everyday life. For example, whenever there is a sporting event on such the previous USA Olympic Basketball game, people on social networks are raving about what is happening. Consumers and fans are able to see what is said on the message boards. This brings attention to the sport and more consumers will tune in to watch. On twitter, consumers can even see hash tags that lead to what each person has said about a particular subject on a large message board such as #TeamUSA. Fans can communicate and connect with others about the sport and it is a way of expressing themselves and their own opinions.

 Networking can be done from computers, laptops, and even hand held electronic devices and it can be done from any location at anytime. When fans are passionate about their favorite sport team, they talk about them on these social networks because of their fan loyalty for the sport. Americans are most likely to use online social networks ("Harnessing social media,"). With this, organizations can take advantage of this popularity by creating social networks for their own organizations. This is a great way of promoting their team and it is a great marketing strategy.

 When consumers rave about a certain subject or organization, everyone is able to see the popularity and the connection between other fans. Organizations can use this as a marketing tool to observe and take control of by seeing what consumers are saying about their company. This goes into the marketing mix that is taught about in the marketing classes at Tiffin University. Fans eventually become a part of a data base, which is organized collection of data that deals with a certain product or organization. As an organization, they can take this as feedback and make progress for their product by knowing their consumers opinions and thoughts.

 Sport organizations and even professional athletes can even promote themselves or use social networking as their way of marketing. It is important to engage with consumers to keep that connection and long term loyalty. Companies can even market tickets, or have give always on social networks to keep their consumers connected with them. For example, former Woodland Hills football player Steve Breaston, now playing for the Kansas City Chiefs has his own way of connecting and interacting with his fans. Steve will time to time post trivia questions about himself and his fans are able to try to get them right. He would sometimes give out a free pair of shoes if one of his fans got the question right. This engagement with his fans is letting them know that he cares about them. Making himself better as a role model for his fans and keeping that loyalty between them.

 Sport organizations and social networks can work together as a marketing tool for the world to see. Another example of this is the large amount of popularity from the MLB all-star games. Fans and organizations are able to follow their favorite stars during the exhibition with a new rule that the players can use social media before or after the game (Hiestand, 2012). Fans at home can see what their favorite athletes are talking about on the television as their posts or tweets are projected on the screen. This is a way of connection with the players and also their fans. This all adds to marketing because the channel stations mention to the fans that the players will use social media and post their thoughts on their station. This attracts fans to tune in and watch their station.

 According to Fox’s coverage, the MLB players that were using social media throughout the game had an increase of more than 120,000 followers on Twitter (Hiestand, 2012). By the players posting and it appearing on the television, fans can see this and know what is going on with their favorite athletes. This goes for any type of exhibition game on television (Hiestand, 2012). Since fans like to rave about what is occurring other people will want to tune in to find see the game. All of these ways are marketing for the sport and also the organization or athlete.

 Marketing classes teach about many different ways of marketing and social media. One of the ways of networking is blogging. People are able to create profiles on social media networks and post blogs about anything on a bulletin. People are able to read these blogs at anytime to keep themselves updated with what is happening. Chatting is also another way of marketing, by the fans spreading the word of the sport others hear this and want to tune into the exhibition.

 The Olympics is also another large sport and marketing event that fans are also involved in with in social media. The Olympics, an international event where people from all over the world compete at different sports is watched by people all over the world. Many fans are tuned in into the event and are raving about it on their social networks. The athletes are using social media to keep consumers connected with their thoughts and feelings. Over 1 billion people were tuned in to the Olympics from televisions, smart phones, and even tablets (Branson, 2012). US volleyball player Misty May quoted "Nothing like marching in behind your country's flag at Opening Ceremonies really proud” (May, 2012). Her fans are able to see this on their social networks and know what their favorite athletes are thinking. Fans engaging with others of the same interest or values put them in the same group and they become connected giving them an identity (Branson, 2012).

. With sports and social media there are always positive and negative sides to this subject. With the negative side of social media it can become a distraction to organizations or the athletes using the social networks. For example, former Bengals wide receiver Chad Ochocinco was fined by the NFL for using social networking during a football game. Players are not allowed to use social networks during the game and he received a fine for the act. The media is always watching the stars because they are famous and waiting for them for find a story to talk about. Another negative thing is that these athletes are role models to many people and they must always to keep a professional manner at all times because they can get into trouble.

 Some positive things about sports and social media are that overall marketing that is done that promote that organization or athlete. Everyone is able to interact and talk about their favorite athletes or organizations with others around the world. People can find their same values and interest and build relationships as well. Sports is benefiting from social media because as events are occurring, people are raving about it, which is bringing more attention to the event. With social media, while events are taking place people want to rave and express their feelings about it and use social media to do this. It is like a cycle and everything is working together to build itself it for a large marketing and promotion event.

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