
ECONOMICS

Gusev A. Digital Media as PR-Tool in Sport

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Abstract. This article discusses modern sport as a profitable industry, which needs appropriate PR software. It is alleged that at the moment it is a huge and diverse industry that involves a huge number of people, sports clubs, federations, political associations and businesses. That is modern sport – it's a massive product having their marketing, branding and PR.

Keywords: sports, industry, marketing, branding, PR, football club, image, reputation, infrastructure

Introduction: Modern sport is a kind of product, because it requires marketing and PR. PR solves the problem of communication of society in all. PR in today's media space has received increasing attention of modern researchers. For example, G. Pocheptsov considers that PR is the placement of the object at the right side and at the right time. According to him, PR should not be regarded as a variant of generating of false information. You cannot move infinitely with the help profiles because such chain sooner or later can burst. No PR techniques will help to overcome the reality [4]. And what are the specific characteristics of public relations in the field of sports and sporting events? "Sport PR functions as a part of management and allows us to identify key audiences of sports organizations and their interaction" [1, p. 24]. The main feature of PR-support of sporting events is just sports specificity. Without high sports results it is almost impossible for any object of the sports industry to achieve high popularity, and hence profits. It is the digital media which gives future to sports PR, which is described in this article. Therefore, **the goal of the article** - review of modern sports PR using digital media.

Digital and New Media – a term that in the late XX century was used for interactive electronic media and new forms of communication content producers with consumers to denote differences from traditional media, for example, such as newspapers, thus, this term refers to the process of digitalization, network technology and communication . The dissemination of information on a great number of devices and platforms gives people more choice and access to news when it is convenient. Now there is the opportunity to choose from a larger number of information flows. As it was noted by S. Kvit, "Internet makes it possible to introduce a range of services which are impossible or extremely difficult for the consumer beyond it" [3, p. 155]. This means that everything becomes easier: consumers no longer expect news or programs that should start at a certain time on TV or with the issue of newspaper. Now the need for information can be satisfied instantly, just by using new media in a form that is most convenient for the consumer. Structure of information on the Internet is very convenient. The consumer tends to short news alerts, headlines, footnotes. Clicking what is interesting for him, he will get extensive information, analytical articles, videos, etc. For example, on the site football.ua site where the news headlines and articles are located according to the importance and date when you click on the title you can go directly to the material.

The most popular sports editions have their own sites, where you can buy an electronic copy of the newspaper or magazine. In addition, there are sports online portals where you can watch videos from sports, read original articles and reviews of the matches ... These new "internet aggregators are not related to journalism in the narrow sense of the word. However, in general like digests or abstracts, they are an important part of the media industry, helping the audience to structure and consume information "[5, p. 29].

Football clubs that still earned money with the help of sale of tickets and sports paraphernalia, granting of rights to broadcast matches and sponsorship are also beginning to work with digital media. There are three target groups of PR in sport – sponsors, fans and the media. They, ultimately, are the basis of financial welfare, and welfare of sports club or athlete. In sports the fan has two basic desires. Firstly, your team should achieve the best athletic performance. It helps the fan, associating himself with the club or athlete, to feel his own importance to others in everyday life. Secondly, the fan wants to have a good time. That is, supporting his team or athlete to get positive emotions. The audience is a key figure for sport PR, so that effective work with the audience – the key to the success of the club or athlete in an individual sport. "In football brand development there is the ultimate goal: to bring fans to the stadium – said the executive director of "Shakhtar" strategy, commerce and marketing Joe Palmer. – This leads to an increase in advertising and sponsorship revenue, sales of attributes" [7]. The ideal audience – a fan, loyal to the brand (sportsman, club), that is why his behavior depends on the results of the team and it is more or less predictable. In developed countries the fans bring the lion's share of revenue to the organizers of the event, because they buy tickets, subscriptions, subscribe to TV channels which broadcast matches and buy fan paraphernalia. Instead, they want a show and the better and brighter the quality of the show is, the more each fan will spend money.

That is why football clubs should look for means of drawing new fans: "...the necessary financial resources come from the modern media-sport complex that was developed in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, and which took its present form in the 1990s" [2, p. 105–119]. There is a direct link: usually the main income of football clubs – it proceeds from the sale of tickets for the match, club paraphernalia, the rights to broadcast games on television and radio stations. Therefore, focusing on the fans it is

important to establish and properly position the sports brand, i.e., focusing on sponsors to create the desired reputation. This can be achieved using wide opportunities of digital media. Thus, image and reputation – are absolutely necessary elements for success in any business, including sports.

Modern websites of large football clubs have a huge amount of services for the fans. That you can follow all club news through its online resource almost in real time, no one is surprised. The fact that you can chat with friends on the football interests on forum and chat, too, has become a standard (and familiar!) case. But the progress does not stand still: developing Internet technology and the websites of football teams. Usually during registration the fans are offered a form, containing about 10 mandatory fields. Typically, a block must specify full name, email address, gender, birth date, city and country of residence, address and index. And address, phone number and e-mail provide access to the various channels of communication with the fans. To be able to conduct targeted marketing activities that are much more effective than mass, club fans need to segment according to various criteria: location of fan, his age, sex, social status, professional activity, and more.

The same situation is with the clubs of Ukrainian Premier League, they have their own websites and use them primarily as a source of information for fans of the team. There are sites of leading teams in the country, where there are signs of real Internet portals. For example, the site of FC "Dnipro" which is made in the colors of the club. Here you can find the news section, history of the team, forum, module of feedback. The site "Dnipro" offers to sign up for the official newsletter of the club, take the opportunity to download "wallpapers", updated calendar of club paraphernalia on the desktop. Moreover, a unique feature of the portal is that fans of the club may conduct their own blogs with any issues related to the team directly on the official website. In addition to traditional galleries there are online video galleries of the best moments of matches, interviews with players reporting on the club, there is an interesting section of "Hero of the Season" [6], where fans can put estimates on players who played in matches. These points are displayed on the homepage. At the end of the season and

according to the fans the best player who receives the award is elected. In addition, football clubs are beginning to grip the commercial potential of social networks. This is understandable: few sports fans compared with football fans love their idols, and social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube – allow the fans to maintain contact with the masters of leather ball. Already well-known football clubs such as "Barcelona", "Manchester United" and "Real Madrid", together with more than 43.5 million subscribers exist in the network Facebook.

Besides recording games and various videos, on the pages of the top football giants in social networking there is built-in e-commerce, which gives fans the opportunity to buy anything, from tickets to T-shirts with numbers with their idols. These additions bring good profit. The head of SoSocial (social media agency, which is working with football clubs in the UK) Atiri Al-Salim said that recently one of his friend "hooked" on Facebook application I Am Player, allowing fans to "live life stars of professional football". "During the evening my friend spent £10000 – says Al-Salim. – If the same amount of money will be spent by each of the 150 thousand users of I Am Player, then it will be in total half a million pounds" [8].

Conclusions: digital media because of its features, such as speed, convenience, efficiency and flexibility, develop fast and penetrate into all spheres of human activity. Information about sports competitions transfers to the network and goes to a global audience, the widest circle of recipients. Abroad, football clubs use digital media as educational and entertaining PR-technologies. And it is good that local clubs are catching up with European developments of Internet sites and the quality of the fans. The need for PR and advertising occurs when in front of the club or athlete there is an issue about relationship with certain social groups whose decisions may contribute to the electronic media. Of course, PR cannot help directly to affect the profit, but it is able to create public opinion through which it is easier to make both in professional and mass sport. The use of new media such as websites and social network allows the club to increase significantly the effectiveness of their marketing activities and sales of the entire system as a whole.

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Гусев А.В. Цифровые медиа как PR-инструмент в спорте

Аннотация. Рассматривается современный спорт как прибыльная индустрия, которая нуждается в соответствующем PR-обеспечении. Утверждается, что в настоящее время он представляет собой огромную и разнообразную индустрию, в которую вовлечено огромное количество людей, спортивных клубов, федераций, общественно-политических объединений и бизнес-структур. То есть современный спорт – это массовый продукт, имеющий свой маркетинг, брендинг и PR эффективных инструментов которого и являются цифровые медиа.

Ключевые слова: спорт, индустрия, маркетинг, брендинг, PR, футбольный клуб, имидж, репутация, инфраструктура