Engaging Partners and Managing a Large-Scale Research Project

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Method - Design (Other) virtual synchronous
60-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop
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Session: Symposia/Workshops I

Purpose of this Symposium: This research was to test the Revised Model of Sport Consumer Behavior (R-MSCB; Trail, 2019). However, the purpose of this symposium is to provide a ‘how-to primer’ on (1) recruiting researchers to participate, (2) obtaining clients, (3) collecting data, (4) analyzing data, (5) communicating with clients (teams/clubs), and (6) creating deliverables for publication and for clients. Each section will have a discussion of issues and solutions, with a Q&A.

Overview of the Model: The R-MSCB has two components. The first is the Consumer Pathway for Sport Fandom and the second is the Environmental Insight Framework (EIF). The first five stages of the consumer pathway are cognitive stages: Lack of Awareness, Awareness, Interest, Active Consideration, and Intention to Consume. The pathway then has two parallel tracks starting at the next stage: one is behavioral (Initial Purchase/Consumption, Infrequent Consumption, and Regular Repatronage), and the second is attitudinal (Low-level Fandom, Moderate Fandom, and Attitudinally Loyal Fan). At this point, the two tracks merge again into the final stage (Lifestyle Change), which is where the fan’s whole life revolves around the team: cognitively, affectively, conatively (intentions), and behaviorally. The second component, the EIF, impacts progression (or regression) along the pathway. The EIF consists of the external environment, the internal organizational environment (the environment within the sport organization), and the customer environment (the potential sport consumer; Trail, 2019). The R-MSCB is based on the hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow 1943); values theory (Rokeach 1973); self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2008); value-belief-norm model (Stern et al. 1999); constraints theory (Crawford & Godbey 1987); theory of planned behavior (Ajzen & Madden 1986); and satisfaction theory (Oliver, 1990). The objectives of this research were to test the model across multiple sports, teams, continents and time (pre- and post-survey). In addition, we wanted to provide the clients (teams/organizations) with actionable results and recommendations that would meet their needs.

Discussion of the Process: We discuss how researchers were recruited to participate in the research project (19 researchers responded, with 10 participating). We also discuss the issues and solutions regarding obtaining clients (teams) using market research proposals and other methods. In Section 3 we discuss the issues and solutions relative to different methods of data collection (over 5000 spectators/fans across 15 teams and 4 continents from the pre-survey, and a yet-unknown number from the post-survey, as we are still collecting data), considering the length of the survey (over 150 items). In Section 4 we provide the rationale for using different analytic techniques when presenting the data and results to the clients, versus the techniques used for academic papers. In Section 5 we discuss the interactions and communications with the clients during the process and the issues faced. In Section 6 we discuss client-focused output (e.g., reports & presentations) versus academic output (journal articles, presentations, books,
and book chapters). Finally, we finish with a summary of the project and future steps detailing the potential for impact on sport management research.