

Commercial Operation and Marketing Strategies of Sporting Events

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Abstract: As globalization continues to deepen, sporting events are not only economic competitions but also intersections of culture and commerce. The commercial operations and marketing strategies of sporting events directly affect the success of the events and can even promote the development of the sports industry and urban economies. Currently, with the increasing demand from audiences for viewing sporting events, coupled with the widespread use of new media and big data technologies, higher requirements are set for the commercial operations and marketing strategies of these events. To some extent, as bridges of cultural exchange, sporting events possess unique charm and can bring substantial economic benefits to host cities. Therefore, how to effectively manage commercial operations and develop comprehensive marketing strategies deserves significant attention. This paper aims to delve into the commercial operations and marketing strategies of sporting events, analyze the current market environment and audience demands, and propose targeted strategic recommendations to support the sustainable development of sporting events.

Keywords: Sporting Events, Commercial Operations, Marketing Strategies

1. Introduction

With the robust development of the sports industry and intensifying market competition, the commercial operations and marketing strategies of sporting events play a pivotal role in promoting the industry's sustainable growth. Sporting events, as a crucial part of the sports industry, not only possess competitive and entertainment value but also serve as intersections of culture, entertainment, and commerce. Therefore, in the context of globalization, the commercial operation modes of sporting events should follow the development of the era and enhance innovation, adopting diversified marketing strategies to adapt to the rapidly changing market environment and meet the personalized demands of audiences. From initial commercial sponsorships to ticket sales, every aspect requires careful planning and efficient execution to continuously innovate and develop the commercial operations and marketing strategies of sporting events[1-3].

2. The Development History of Sporting Events

The development history of sporting events is long and storied, bearing the relentless human pursuit of competition, honor, and unity. As early as ancient Greece, the Olympic Games, as the earliest sporting events, demonstrated human respect for physical and intellectual prowess through sacred and solemn rituals. As time progressed, sporting events evolved from singular competitive activities into global cultural festivals. Entering the 20th century, rapid industrialization and urbanization laid a solid foundation for the prosperity of sporting events. The rise of international competitions like the Olympic Games, the World Cup, and Formula 1 racing attracted countless viewers and became significant platforms for countries to display national strength and foster friendships. Sporting events gradually integrated into people's lives, becoming an important form of leisure and entertainment for many. In the 21st century, with the rapid development of the internet and digital technologies, the dissemination of sporting events underwent revolutionary changes. Audiences can now watch competitions in real-time through various channels and participate interactively, further expanding the influence of sporting events. Simultaneously, sporting events have also placed greater emphasis on environmental protection, fairness, and sustainability, reflecting the civilized progress of human society[4-5].

3. Types of Commercial Operations in Sporting Events

3.1. Competitive Sports

In the current era of accelerating globalization, competitive sporting events like the Olympic Games and the World Cup, with their unique charm, have become global focal points. These events represent the highest level of sports competition in various countries and are exemplary integrations of culture, technology, and economics. Their high competitiveness and spectator appeal allow them to transcend national borders and attract billions of global viewers. For competitive sporting events, the success of commercial operations directly relates to the quality and impact of the events. Sponsorship support and the sale of broadcasting rights are two main pillars of commercial operations for these events. Sponsors gain brand exposure and build deep emotional connections with audiences through event sponsorship; meanwhile, the sale of broadcasting rights allows the events to reach a broader audience, further enhancing their impact.

3.2. Mass Participation Sports

In today's society, mass participation sports like marathons and cycling races are popular. These events, with their low entry barriers and broad base of participants, have become a significant force in the sports field, providing platforms for participants to showcase themselves and challenge personal limits, while offering unique viewing experiences to a wide audience[6-7]. The commercial operations of mass participation sports are distinctive due to the large number of participants, with ticket sales being a major source of revenue. Additionally, brand collaborations are an important part of the commercial operations of these events. Through partnerships with well-known brands, events can gain financial support and use the brand's influence to enhance the event's visibility and attractiveness.

3.3. Entertainment Sports

In the digital age, entertainment sporting events like the NBA All-Star Game and esports competitions, with their unique entertainment and interactivity, attract the attention of a large number of young viewers. These events break the traditional boundaries of sporting events, tightly integrating sports with entertainment and technology, offering audiences a novel viewing experience. The commercial operation modes of entertainment sporting events differ from traditional events. Social media promotion has become an important marketing tool; through well-planned online activities and interactions, events can quickly spread among young audiences, generating widespread attention. Additionally, online ticket sales have become a significant revenue source, with convenient and quick ticket purchasing methods allowing more people to participate easily.

4. Models of Commercial Operations in Sporting Events

4.1. Sponsorship-Based

The sponsorship-based commercial operation of sporting events, as a key part of the sports industry, is undeniably important. Brands can effectively enhance their visibility and reputation through sponsoring sporting events, deeply aligning with the values of passion and vitality represented by the events, and establishing a positive and upward brand image in the consumers' minds. There are various forms of sponsorship, as shown in Figure 1. Brands can flexibly choose the most suitable form of sponsorship based on their marketing strategies and budget situations. These forms provide brands with opportunities for advertising and market promotion, allowing brand messages to reach a broader audience through the wide dissemination of the event. Taking football matches as an example, billboards on the field, brand logos on players, and team sponsor logos are vivid representations of brand sponsorship. These elements are continuously presented during the match, allowing audiences to deeply feel the brand's allure while enjoying the game.

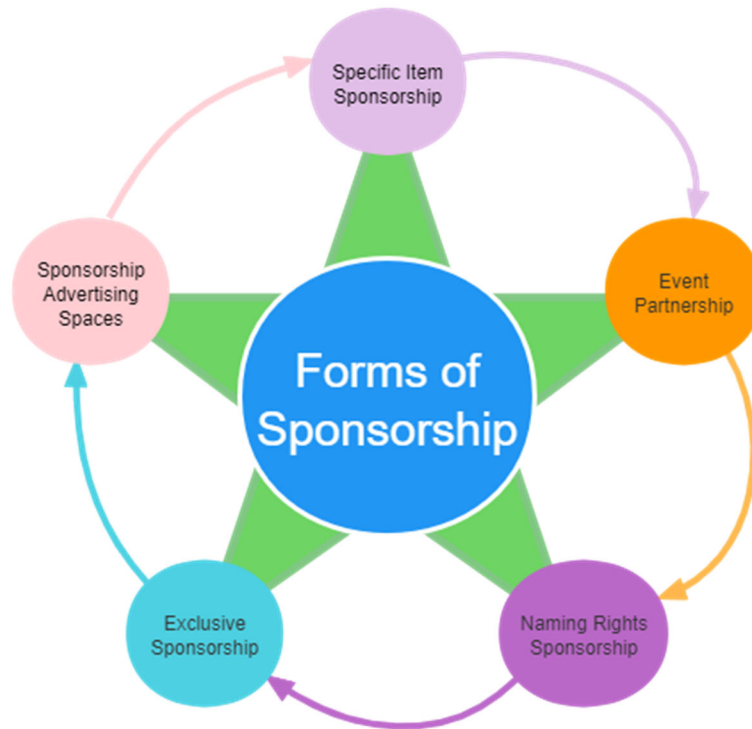


Figure 1: Forms of Sponsorship

4.2. Ticket-based Model

As the sports industry continues to develop, ticket sales have become an important indicator of the success of sporting events. After careful planning, the pricing and types of tickets are determined, taking into account factors such as the level, scale, and audience demands of the event. For example, at the Chengdu Universiade, organizers offered a variety of ticket options including opening and closing ceremony tickets, as well as tickets for various sports competitions, with prices ranging from 30 to 580 yuan, to meet the needs of different audience groups as much as possible[8-10]. This diversity in ticket offerings increases the choices available to audiences and brings more substantial economic benefits to the organizers. In the process of ticket sales, organizers usually employ various marketing strategies such as advance pre-sales, time-limited discounts, and package deals to attract more spectators to purchase tickets and further boost ticket sales.

4.3. Media Model

With the advancement of technology, the sale of media broadcasting rights has become an important channel for event organizers to generate economic benefits. By selling broadcasting rights, organizers can ensure widespread dissemination of the competition and also generate significant broadcasting fees. Media organizations, after acquiring broadcasting rights through purchase or bidding, use their platforms to live or rebroadcast the events, attracting a large audience. During this process, media organizations can enhance their brand influence and market share through the growth in advertising revenue. Additionally, the operation of online media plays an increasingly important role in the promotion and marketing of events. By establishing official event websites and social media platforms, media organizations can timely communicate event information to audiences, increase interaction with the audience, and further enhance the event's popularity and impact.

4.4. Integrated Model

The integrated model of commercial operation in sporting events is a sophisticated and mature approach within the sports industry. It combines sponsorship, ticket-based, and media models to construct an all-encompassing commercial operation system. In this model, event organizers not only gain direct economic benefits through sponsorship cooperation, ticket sales, and the sale of media rights but also further explore and expand the commercial value of the event through carefully planned activities, efficient execution, and the development of a rich array of derivatives. The integrated model requires organizers to have strong resource integration and innovation capabilities, considering all aspects of the event, from planning to execution, from brand cooperation to market promotion, all needing meticulous planning and efficient implementation. Only by doing so can the smooth progress of the event be ensured while maximizing its commercial value.

5. Marketing Strategies for Sporting Events

5.1. Identifying the Target Audience

Before developing marketing strategies for sporting events, it is essential to clearly identify the target audience. Only by deeply understanding the needs, preferences, and behavior patterns of the target audience can truly effective marketing strategies be formulated, thus achieving more effective brand promotion and market coverage. This can be accomplished through research to understand the levels of interest, participation, and consumption habits of audiences of different ages, genders, geographical locations, and cultural backgrounds. This information helps to pinpoint the specific characteristics of the target audience and reveals their potential needs and expectations. Based on these research results, further segment the target audience and develop personalized marketing strategies for each subgroup. For instance, for younger audiences, interactive marketing through social media and online platforms can be used, engaging them with online events and interesting content; for older audiences, advertising through television and traditional media can emphasize the spectatorship and cultural value of the events[11].

5.2. Building a Brand Image

A unique and strong brand image not only attracts the attention of spectators but also wins the favor of sponsors. Carefully designed event logos and promotional graphics are crucial for shaping the brand image, carrying the core values and cultural connotations of the event and conveying them to the audience through visual elements. For example, the Olympic rings and the motto "Faster, Higher, Stronger" have become indelible memories for sports fans worldwide. Beyond visual design, the transmission and promotion of brand culture are equally important. The brand culture is the spiritual core of the event, a link connecting the audience with the event emotionally. By telling the stories behind the events and promoting the spirit of sports, the cohesion and influence of the brand can be enhanced. For example, the FIFA World Cup is not just a football feast but also a global cultural exchange event, where fans from different countries enhance their understanding and friendship through their shared love of football.

5.3. Focusing on Audience Experience

The audience, as the core recipient of sporting events, directly determines the success of the events. When devising marketing strategies, it is crucial to prioritize the audience's experience. First, providing convenient ticket purchasing channels and a comfortable viewing environment are basic requirements. Enabling the audience to easily purchase tickets, enter the venue smoothly, and watch the competition in a comfortable environment are prerequisites for them to enjoy the event. Second, optimizing the schedule and venue layout is key to enhancing the audience's experience. A well-planned schedule can reduce waiting times for the audience, while a well-thought-out venue layout can offer better viewing angles and atmosphere. Third, enhancing audience service and interaction is also an important means to improve the audience experience. Event organizers should ensure timely

and effective service support for the audience during the event and strengthen interaction with the audience through various means, such as hosting interactive activities and setting up suggestion boxes, making the audience feel their participation and contribution are valued.

5.4. Innovating Marketing Methods

With the rapid development of technology and the ever-changing market environment, traditional marketing methods for sporting events are no longer sufficient. Innovating marketing methods has become crucial to more effectively attract spectators, enhance brand visibility, and participation, as outlined in Table 1. First, promoting events through social media platforms. By carefully planning topics on Weibo, TikTok challenges, and other social media campaigns, event organizers can quickly attract the attention and participation of a large number of netizens, achieving rapid dissemination and spread of information. Second, hosting online and offline interactive activities. Online activities such as online voting and Q&A sessions can overcome geographical limitations, allowing a broader audience to participate; offline activities such as viewing parties and fan meet-ups can enhance the live experience and sense of belonging for the audience. Lastly, using big data analysis for precise marketing provides event organizers with a more scientific and accurate basis for market decisions. By analyzing data on the audience's viewing habits, ticket purchasing behavior, and social media interactions, organizers can more accurately grasp audience needs and develop more targeted marketing strategies.

Table 1: Innovative Marketing Methods

Innovative marketing methods	Detail
Promotion on social media platforms	Social media platforms such as Weibo, wechat, and Douyin were used to release event information, interactive topics, and challenges to attract users to participate and share, and expand the influence and scope of communication of the event.
Online and offline interactive activities	We will organize online voting, Q&A, live interaction and other activities, as well as offline viewing parties, fan meetings, theme activities, etc., to improve audience participation and on-site experience, and enhance the interaction and connection between brands and audiences.
Big Data Analytics and Precision Marketing	Big data analysis tools and technologies are used to collect and analyze audience watching habits, ticketing behavior, social media interaction and other data, gain insights into market demand and audience preferences, provide scientific basis for the development of marketing strategies, and realize accurate promotion and personalized services.

6. Conclusion

As audience demand for viewing sporting events continues to rise, coupled with the widespread use of new media and big data technologies, higher demands are placed on the commercial operations and marketing strategies of sporting events. At its core, the commercial operation and marketing strategies of sporting events must keep pace with the times and continuously innovate. Only by deeply understanding audience needs, fully utilizing modern technological means, and building a comprehensive commercial operation system can the commercial value of sporting events be effectively enhanced, promoting the prosperous development of the sports industry.

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