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**PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
PROFESSIONAL SPORTS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS****ALIAKSANDR MATVIENKA**
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The article is devoted to marketing in the industry of professional sports. The author identifies a number of problems in the development of marketing communications professional sports of the Republic of Belarus. In the article marketing and consumer behavior fans of football clubs in the top League of the Republic of Belarus are analyzed. The ways of the development marketing activities of professional sports organizations are offered.

Marketing plays an important role today in the world of sport. Marketing in the modern world, including that of professional sports, is developing dynamically. It is recognized that the marketing and marketing techniques are fully applicable to the field of professional sports.

In the field of sports marketing includes the issues of finding and working with sponsors, sale of sponsorship rights, the interaction between the government and sports organizations, work with media coverage of sports events, research status and prospects of development of individual sports, analysis, marketing communications, sporting events and much more. This area today is very important. Because without marketing there won't be any sponsors, and without sponsors there will be no funds for the training of athletes, for creating an effective team, and therefore there will be no victories, which all fans of professional sports await.

Roger Enrico, the President of Pepsi-Cola said: "Marketing is not aimed at a free show on television, and sales growth". This idea is continued in the statement of Michael Payne, marketing Director of the International Olympic Committee (IOC): "... the days of charity passed. Business leaders increasingly need to justify marketing expenses to their shareholders; now it is not enough to say that the support at the Olympic games is good for the company – you must prove it with real facts" [8].

Marcel Hussam considering marketing activities in the Olympic sport of positions of the system approach, determines the nature of the relationship between the different structural parts of the marketing system [6].

In today's market the main instrument for achieving the goals of economic activity of the participants of the Olympic sports are marketing activities, specifically the following programs: business cooperation with the television companies for the sale of the rights on the implementation of the broadcasts of the competitions of the Olympic games; TOP Sponsor Programmes; IOC Licensing; Olympic Philatelic Programmes; IOC Suppliers; IOC Coin Programmes [1, p. 10-12].

Thus, marketing in the sphere of physical culture and sports is not so much a commercial as a social character, is a special kind of social outreach, technology, socio-cultural innovations aimed, in a broad sense, the reproduction of the nation's human capital. In addition, marketing is the theory and practice of management activities, the philosophy of the market industry "physical culture and sport" [3, p. 122].

Sports marketing in Belarus is a new, but very promising and rapidly developing area. National school of marketers in this area of management is only beginning to emerge. A.J. White and M.E. Karpacka in the article "The Role of marketing in the development of sports industry" consider some aspects of the financing of sport in the Republic of Belarus and suggested measures to improve marketing, by activation of organizations in the conduct of promotional activities, but rather suggested strengthening the role of sponsorship in sport events [2, p. 224-229].

Target spending on the marketing budget is not provided, in this regard, sport organizations decide how much money are spent on advertising. Many professional clubs in the Republic of Belarus does not employ marketers, because these duties are executed by managers. For a more detailed illustration we will analyze the marketing activities of football clubs in the top League of the Republic of Belarus (Table 1).

Economics

In a difference from Belarus and CIS countries in the Western market the market of sports marketing has already existed. Also it is developing successfully. For example, the annual turnover of this market in the U.S. is more than 200 billion dollars. The distribution of the sponsorship payments in the countries of Western Europe depends primarily on the popularity of the sport. The more popular the sport, the greater the audience gather competitions, respectively, and attention from sponsors in this case will increase.

Table 1 – Marketing activities of football clubs in the top League of the Republic of Belarus

Club	The presence of marketing specialist	Who is responsible for marketing	Events at the stadium and work to attract fans	Branded products	Future plans
Minsk	No	general Director	Available not on a regular basis, active assistance to people with disabilities.	Scarves, t-shirts with the logo, ice cream logo.	A search for a good marketing specialist.
Naftan	Yes	Leading specialist	No promotions, performances for the entertainment of fans there.	The stadium appeared tent with the paraphernalia of the club.	There are enough events in the plans.
Neman	No	Head of public relations	Activities during breaks, cooperation with FM radio, live broadcasts, online video broadcasts.	No, because the club has long been no significant progress.	Lots of unrealized ideas.
Torpedo-BelAZ	No	Press-attache	Penalty second goalkeeper from fans, 7 years is a sponsor of the urban school Comedy tournament.	Cooperation with entrepreneurs, manufacturing products and selling on every game.	There are enough events in the plans.
Shakhtar	Yes	Deputy Director	Action "In school with Shakhtar", among holders of season tickets, the number of planned PR activities is constantly increasing.	At the stadium there is a tent, with a variety of Souvenirs, spread it through the stores and shops.	Addressed to 4 target audience: the viewers, the club, the sponsors and the Mass media.
BATE	Yes	Head of development Department	At the stadium the growth figures of players, three large companies that sell products.	Chips under the brand, a joint project with "Coca-Cola", cooperation with enterprises of the region.	All hopes and projects are associated with the new stadium.
Belshina	Yes	Head of Department	No promotions, performances for the entertainment of fans there.	It is planned to go on the way BATE in cooperation with enterprises.	Selling merchandise through the website.
Brest	No	Specialist with fans	At the stadium there is a café, various actions.	Do not activate any editions of the product with the brand.	The future development of the brand.
Gomel	No	general Director	Belarusian speaker, speech freestylers, advertising on monitors in all the malls of the city, the stadium 5-6 point of sale food service.	While the sale of merchandise are entrepreneurs, running trolley with club logo.	A wide range of products, then the opening of the club museum.
Dynamo	Yes	Specialist	Competitions during the break, the sponsor company "Leyzan Computers", before matches operates the fan zone with sports attractions.	The stadium operates specialty store with a large assortment of the club.	Having more advertising.

Source: own elaboration based on data [9, 10].

According to research by Western marketers, the greatest amount of money is invested in football, which is the most popular sport. On the second place by this indicator is the Association of the names of sports facilities with the brand. Examples are the Emirates in London, Allianz Arena in Munich, the Volkswagen Arena in Wolfsburg, Nordbank Arena in Hamburg. In third place is Formula 1, and in the fourth is American football.

Sponsorship programs in the West are nothing more than elaborate advertising campaigns, integrated into the overall advertising strategy of the sponsor, while in the Republic of Belarus they are in the nature of patronage or lump-sum promotion.

A distinctive feature of sports marketing is that sports organizations vary by product. Consequently the main role in the life of sports organizations is not played by fans and or consumers, but it is played by the players and sports teams, which are, respectively, have a determining effect on marketing [2, p. 224-229].

According to I. Rein, Ph. Kotler and B. Shields athletes, owners, coaches, sports development programs, professional leagues, sports products, sports events, sports television programs, and sports teams could become a sports brand [5, p. 264-289].

Sports brand is a strategic asset and the only component of the property which can remain unchanged for several years maintaining its exchange value. It is also one of the nonmaterial assets. Strong brand is like a magnet attracting sponsors and helping to enter new areas of activity. For the license given the brand is the money making element through the development of merchandising, for selling the rights to the symbol, club colors, to the name, sports event, or sportsman's image for the use by the licensee in its marketing activities [5, p. 264-289].

Let us consider some of the most expensive brands in the field of professional sports.

Manchester United brand value is estimated at the level of 351 million dollars which amounts to 24 % of the company's value. The brand value includes also the annual receipts from sponsors at the level of 94 million dollars and fees for media rights at the level of 70 million dollars [11].

In spite of the fact that Real Madrid and Bayern Munich are only worth, respectively, 1 billion dollars and 838 million dollars, the baseball team New York Yankees is worth 1.2 billion dollars. European clubs have a higher brand value than American ones. This is the case because Real and Bayern have revenues from sources which they do not have to split (share) with other teams from their countries (sports merchandising), or from the sources which in lesser degree sponsor their rivals. It is different from the case of Yankees (television) [11].

Business brands are evaluated on the basis of how much their market value exceeds the book value in comparison with the standard for the sector [4, p. 163-167].

Financial opportunities of professional sports are constantly growing, and there are fans. They are involved in it in different ways: buying tickets, watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, magazines and brochures, collecting a variety of souvenirs related to professional sports. Together they annually spend 6 billion dollars on visits to various competitions.

With regard to the Republic of Belarus, sports marketing is in its infancy. There are problems with the transition of the Republic of Belarus from the sports competitions financing at the state expense to independent profit from sports organization resources. Here is the big problem of finding a sponsor for the organization, advertising and conducting sports competitions. In the Republic of Belarus due to the lack of funding 26.4% of sports organizations are unprofitable. Companies and firms do not have a benefit to sponsor the sport, because of the relatively small sponsorship money in a difference from the advertising costs which often give much more tangible result. But at the same time the interest of the sponsor emerges when a large number of people are watching a sporting event, but attendance at sporting events in the Republic of Belarus is very low.

If we consider the promotion of sports competitions, we can see some problems here. Indeed, in the Republic of Belarus the tickets for all home games of the football club are not common for example. The football club BATE Borisov which has the correct vector of development has some achievements. This is the step sent to a new stadium in Borisov to which families would go and in this way the number of viewers will increase. Consequently, the advertising contracts will increase, this know-how is absolutely new for the CIS, even none of the clubs in the Russian Federation come to this.

To get more information about the development of professional sports in the Republic of Belarus, concerning the possibility to develop sports marketing, you should analyze the attendance of sports teams and organizations. You can analyze the attendance of football clubs in the top League of the Republic of Belarus. For better understanding we will construct a chart that shows the percentage of average attendance home games clubs to maximize the possible fallibility of their stadiums (Fig. 1).

As you can see from the chart, the football clubs BATE, Gomel and Slutsk have the best levels of occupancy of their stadiums, the high indicator of the football club Slutsk is characterized by low capacity of domestic arena and high interest among fans, due to debut in the Premier League. Other clubs are much inferior, filling their arena only by a third or a quarter, and sometimes even less.

The clubs together with the ABFF should work together to engage in the promotion and advocacy visits to football matches, running simultaneously with new marketing initiatives in stadiums appropriate advertising campaign promoting football in the framework of various social marketing programmes. They should make a

Economics

visit of football matches and any sport competition a fashionable pastime instead of visiting shopping malls and other entertainment. It is necessary to develop competent marketing policy and make a visit to fashionable among residents of the city and surrounding areas, the European examples are not leading the championship is sufficient, when the inhabitants of much smaller cities populate the arena 10-12 thousand people during the matches of their team.

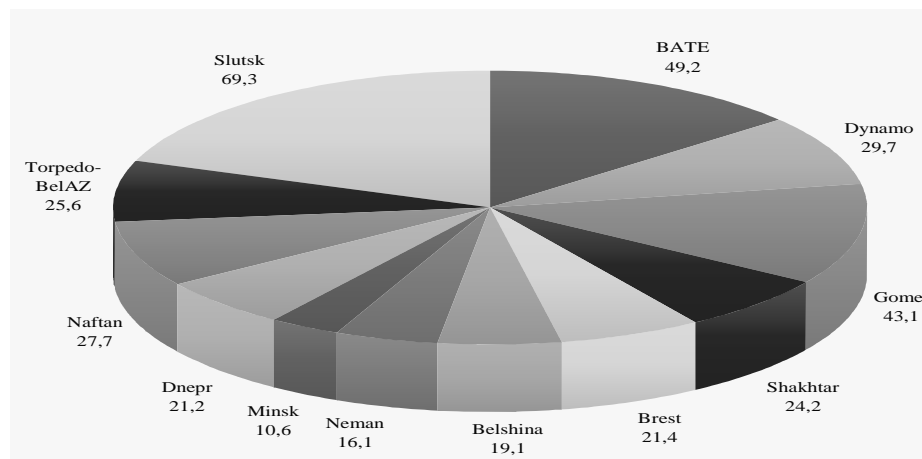


Fig. 1. The average attendance at home games of the top division clubs of the Republic of Belarus football to the highest possible occupancy of their stadiums in 2014, %

Source: own elaboration based on data [7].

Today marketing in the sphere of physical culture and sport is a very powerful and well-integrated technology social and cultural innovation, an important component of the overall culture and spiritual life of modern society. As you know, physical culture and sports belong to the socio-cultural sphere, with the main purpose of the reproduction of national human potential.

The industry of professional sports is one of the most important business sectors in the world. The most important thing for marketing in professional sports is to increase sports audience and expand sports market to keep the public, but valuable sports subject in a way of growing globalization, we need to search for solutions to expand audience and market in the process of sports integration.

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