
Editorial

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1 Introduction

Enjoying multibillion-dollar annual revenues and global popularity, there is no question that motorsports is big business. In particular, motorsports has captivated corporate sponsors so that, for example, sponsorship revenues of NASCAR exceed that of the NFL in the USA. The aim of this special issue was to concentrate research about motorsports in order provide an overview of the global motorsports marketplace. The breadth and scope of submissions are evidence of a small but growing body of literature about motorsports that provides a firm foundation for future research. Papers in this issue includes both theoretical and applied research from both empirical results and non-empirical perspectives, representing both academic and practitioner perspectives.

2 Sanctioning bodies

Perhaps one of the most under-researched area in motorsports marketing and management is marketing channels. Joyce Young considered IndyCar as a services provider in 'The IndyCar Series: a marketing channels perspective'. This paper details the challenges that the motorsport sanctioning body faces as a services provider in order to secure and motivate the 'retailers' of the service, notably the racetracks hosting the IndyCar events. Sheila Nguyen and Jane Menzies use a modified version of a six-step multi-stakeholder assessment tool developed by Preble (2005) to examine the Lexmark Indy 300/Champ Car Event. Their research conducted in 'Event effectiveness: analysing the perceptions of key stakeholders of the Lexmark Indy 300/Champ Car Event, Gold Coast ', provides a 360 degree view to the perceptions of its constituents as related to the event's management.

The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) has enjoyed rapid growth during the past decade. Research included in this issue examines the spectator phenomenon as a reflection of economic and cultural forces that drive the growth of popularity for the NEXTEL Cup. In 'Winston/NEXTEL Cup: the triumph of the spectacle', William McTeer and Philip White research how the social class background of the observer and the characteristics of the event influence the lives of the racing followers. Fan loyalty is extremely important to any sporting endeavours. As Christine Amato, Charles Bodkin and Cara Peters examine in 'Building a fan community through the folklore of NASCAR', NASCAR increased its fan base by almost 25% when other sporting organisations saw a decline during the same time period. The authors use a qualitative analysis to examine and identify folklore as the findings suggest fans use stories to connect with individual drivers who share the same values.

3 Diversity in motorsports

Typically, motorsport is not seen as a very diverse sport. This viewpoint is inspected in 'A demographic and behavioural profile and comparison of customers attending Grand-Am, IndyCar and NASCAR weekends at Watkins Glen International'. Daniel DePerno, Kevin Heisey, Peter Han and Chang-Ki Bahng compare the spectators at a single racetrack in Upstate New York from three different motorsport sanctioning bodies. This examination would highlight demographic and behavioural patterns in order to better support marketing and sales efforts.

4 Ticket sales and event management

In the crowded sport marketplace and declining economy, it is extremely important for motorsport marketers to understand the behaviour of their consumers. The central theme of 'Influences on event attendance decisions for stock car automobile racing fans', investigates the distinctive motivations on the auto racing spectators' decisions to attend races across 17 attendance motivation variables. Donald Roy, Benjamin Goss and Colby Jubenville utilise this information to provide a base for marketing strategies to solidify existing customer relationships and identify new customer segments.

5 Motorsports sponsorship

Financially, sponsorships are the lifeblood of motorsports, so it is vital for racing teams and sponsors alike to understand the conditions under which motorsports sponsorships are successful. J. Brian O'Roak, William Wood, and Larry DeGaris explored the relationship between on track performance and brand awareness. In 'What have you done for me lately? Performance and brand identification in NASCAR', the authors found consistent finishes and not necessarily wins increased brand identification for the sponsors. Sponsorship activation is a vital tool to leverage the sponsorship effectiveness. However, as 'Show car activation: a practitioner's recommendation for increasing brand

equity' explains a show car activation is often under-optimised by not involving strategic planning, advertising and public relations or sales promotion. Too often, sponsorship activation is only used for the entertainment of the consumer without thought to increasing brand equity.

6 Motorsports and culture

Darcy Plymire takes a different spin on fan identification and celebrity in her inspection of the hit television show 'Dancing with the stars' phenomenon and its impact on dancer/IndyCar driver Helio Castoneves in 'How Indy got its groove back? Celebrity culture and Indy Racing League'. In the paper, Plymire examines the relationship between motorsports and the broader culture, demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between motorsports organisations and the media. This study is important because marketing scholars and practitioners need to understand the global ramifications of celebrity in the greater world of sport and how sport relies on celebrity to generate an audience.

7 Future growth for motorsports

While motorsports has enjoyed rapid growth during, there is no guarantee of future prosperity. Larry DeGaris' article 'The benefits grid: translating motorsports sponsorship features into sponsor benefits' suggests that racing teams limit their sponsorship opportunities by adopting a product-based approach to sponsorships and suggests changing the focus of sponsorships from the product features to the marketing benefits. Companies buy sponsorships because of the value it brings to their brands and profits. *the benefits grid* outlines a customer-oriented approach to motorsports sponsorships with the hope of assisting motorsports properties in developing more effective sales and marketing strategies. Michael Edwards, Derek Alderman and Steve Estes took a different approach to the management of NASCAR. Using the theory of flexible accumulation (Harvey, 1989), Edwards considers how NASCAR might be in a better position to exploit emerging markets but be more vulnerable to future crises than other North American spectator sports.

8 Future research

The editors are greatly appreciative of the number and quality of submissions for this special issue. We recognise, however, that this special issue represents a beginning, albeit a good one. Despite the lack of a Formula 1 race in North America at this time, motorsports remains a global phenomenon. Future research could address the international aspects of the sport. Academic researchers and practitioners would both benefit from working together more closely: academics could add rigor to practitioners' decision-making and practitioners could help academics maintain a focus on issues of strategic and tactical importance.

References

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