

## Marketing Sport to Consumers of Color: Multicultural Imperatives

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### Session 3: Marketing Presentation (25-minute)

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10:30 AM - 10:55 AM

Schreiber and Lenson (2001) reported that people of color (those of African, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Island, and Native American descent) are collectively increasing in population seven times as fast as 'nonethnic' individuals. Moreover, the economic clout of Consumers of Color is noteworthy, as they are estimated to have a combined buying power that will exceed \$1.7 trillion (representing a gain of 268%) in 2010 (Humphrey, 2005). The sociodemographic shifts in America represent critical moments for American businesses in that it has required them to increase their understanding of the subtleties and cultural manifestations of race/ethnicity on human behavior, and consequently, business practices.

Sport organizations are not exempt from responding to consumer diversity. The contemporary 'face' of sport consumers of American sports is beginning to reflect a mosaic highlighted with a multicultural hue. Moreover, as Pons, Larouche, Nyeck, and Perreault (2001) revealed, sport events are imbued with ethnocultural emblems that may differ in the manner in which they influence attendance decision among different ethnic groups. Consumers of Color have long expressed an interest in sports and have exhibited sport consumption patterns that are often selective and differ from those of White consumers (Armstrong & Strata, 2004; Cooper, 2004; McCarthy & Stillman, 1998; Clark & Mannion, 2006; Zhang, Pease, Hui, & Michaud, 1995). In some instances 'mainstream' marketing practices are effective in reaching Consumers of Color; whereas, in other instances more culturally-targeted strategies are required.

As the cultural and ethnic profiles of sport consumers become increasingly complex, so will understanding the complexity of responding to the cultural nuances that underlie the effectiveness of the sport marketing exchange process. While cultural influences may be singularly identified in some instances, the challenge lies in discerning and disentangling the web of cultural influences that underlie the dynamics of sport consumption. This is one of the more daunting tasks contemporary sport marketers may face in response to a multiethnic and multinational market of sport consumers.

This presentation focuses on a preliminary study comparing the sport attitudes, level of sport fanship, factors influencing sport attendance decision (such as marketing/promotional factors, team-related factors, and event accessibility factors), and sport consumption frequencies of Consumers of Color (n=128) and White Consumers (n=179). The data were ascertained in a self-report questionnaire. The results revealed no significant differences in the consumers' attitudes about the importance of sports for the well-being of society or their perception of sport as a source of satisfaction in their lives. No significant differences were revealed in the level in which the consumers were sports fans, nor were there differences in their predominant sport consumption patterns. However, significant differences were revealed such that promotional factors were more influential to the sport attendance decisions of Consumers of Color than they were for those of the White consumers.

This presentation will discuss the results of this study in the context of multicultural sport marketing. More specifically, it will address the role of promotions and advertisements in communicating cultural meaning and creating multicultural sport consumption experiences.