

**Appropriate management practices for excellence in the sport and recreation industry**

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Abstract 305**

Since readmission into the global sport arena, South African medal winning performances happen less frequently than projected, and seem to decrease in comparison with an increase in international participation. Media reporting of problematic and scandalous sport management appears to have risen coupled with increased government intervention into disputes (Burger and Goslin, 2004). Media headline reporting and government criticism on sport governance and administration matters including monetary issues, managerial intervention in team selections, coaches' appointments, and player reprimands. Furthermore, the proposed new amendment to sport legislation in South Africa empowers the minister of sport and recreation to intervene in various matters traditionally the sole domain of the sport governing body, including team selection, dispute resolution, and auditory investigations. This has come about as a direct result of the inability of sport governing bodies to cope with the demands of the current local sport environment. The reality seem to be that South African sport managers are ill-equipped to navigate the greater sport landscape, and tertiary preparation for this profession does not deliver on the promise to produce sport managers who can position sport organisations optimally in the sport business environment.

Because South Africa was isolated from the international sporting world through political boycotts, the national sport industry seems to have stagnated. As a result, specialised sport management courses only gained momentum after South Africa's readmission into global sport. This is evidenced in the appearance of formal sport management degree courses in the first half of the 1990's. Nonetheless, the scenario remains where former players and coaches, mainly, are deployed in sport management positions, based more on former athletic prowess, than managerial acumen and formal preparation. Career preferences in the South African sport management industry also seem to gravitate towards the natural sciences rather than the management sciences. Nearly all South African universities offer formal sport and exercise related qualifications, yet less than 15% of these offer formal sport management degrees. In 2005 a single institution had accreditation for a professional post-graduate sport management qualification, i.e. MBA in Sport Management.

The latent need for formal sport management can further be seen in increased formal requests made to academic institutions for training and education in general sport management and specialised areas of sport management, which include sport governance, facility management and event management, including requests from national and regional sport governing bodies, state departments and national sport councils of other African countries.

Reversal of this paradigm may require current sport management degree programmes to be accredited and learning content benchmarked against international and national standards that comply with the need for local relevance and international competitiveness. Future sport managers may therefore need to be equipped with knowledge and skills to instil principles and practises deemed as current global best practices to navigate an ever growing, globalising, and more competitive sport landscape.

This qualitative study contemplates the possible future make-up, behaviour, interactions and idiosyncrasies of the South African sport industry against the backdrop of the global sport business environment. Consideration is given to future industry trends in the form of the theoretical framework of Westerbeek and Smith (Smith & Westerbeek, 2004; Westerbeek & Smith, 2003); identification of benchmarks for management practices appropriate for the South African market to align with national policy frameworks and legislation. From this the implications for sport and recreation management degree curricula in South Africa is deduced, which include aspects of the adoption of a stronger corporate orientation towards strategic intent and strategic management principles; compliance with principles of good governance; the monitoring and evaluation of claimed benefits of sport and recreation programmes; ethical management; equity audits; and compliance with criteria for organisational effectiveness (Kluka, Stiers & Schilling, 2005; Shilbury and Moore, 2006).

In the absence of a national or regional scientific body for sport management, this paper challenges the current content of sport management curricula in South Africa, which emphasises exercise and training mainly aimed towards improved on the field performance as apposed to management sciences. It further identifies appropriate management practices needed for excellence in the South African Sport and Recreation industry, and future competitiveness in a global sport industry.

References:

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