

Sportscape factors influencing spectator satisfaction: A case study in professional golf

Keith W. Lambrecht, Loyola University Chicago

Fredrick Kaefer, Loyola University Chicago

Samuel D. Ramenofsky, Loyola University Chicago

Marketing

Abstract 2009-020

May 28, 2009

11:15 AM

25 minute oral

(Lexington B)

While business and industry have long been concerned with customer satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994; Anderson & Mittal, 2000; Bearden & Teel, 1983; Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Day & Bodur, 1978; Spreng, Harrell, & Mackoy, 1995), limited research has been conducted on customer satisfaction in the sport industry, also known as fan or spectator satisfaction (Greenwell, 2007; Madrigal, 1995; Van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002).

Customer satisfaction measures how products and services offered by a company meet or exceed customer expectations. Sport organizations need to focus on product extensions since sport marketers have little or no control over their core product or the game (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2000). Product extensions include the physical environment surrounding the core product which are identified in business and industry as "servicescape" (Bitner, 1992) and have been referred to as "sportscape" in the sport industry (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). There is heightened competition for the consumer in the sport industry due to the growth of action sports, intercollegiate sports, professional sports, and individual sports. More media attention is given to sports programming today than ever before, with free broadcasts, cable television, the Internet and various radio networks individualized to specific sports. Professional golf is a prime example of the heightened competition for the consumer with numerous tournaments scheduled, coupled with alternative ways to consumer golf on Television and the Internet. While professional golf tournaments generated approximately \$954 million in revenue in 2005, reported attendance figures show a decline over the past few years (SRI International, 2008). In addition, there are many additional factors that are not under the control of the PGA tournament directors such as the weather, the quality of golfers in the field of tournament players, prominent golfers who miss the cut to play on the weekend and player injuries. Therefore, the sportscape or physical environment factors that are controllable at a golf tournament include concessions, course accessibility, crowd control, merchandise, parking, personnel (staff or volunteers), restrooms and seating. The question becomes: What can be done to increase spectator satisfaction and counter attendance trends at PGA events

Purpose

This case study was designed to assess the overall level of satisfaction of spectators attending a professional golf tournament. Specifically, the objective was to identify sportscape factors that influence the overall level of satisfaction of golf spectators who attended a PGA TOUR event. Relevant Literature Bitner (1992) coined the term "servicescape" to describe the physical surroundings of a service encounter. Bitner's work established the framework for understanding the role of the servicescape in service consumer settings. Wakefield & Sloan (1995) coined the term "sportscape" and suggested that empirical studies in sport attendance had failed to address practical aspects of the sports encounter that would be of interest to sport administrators wishing to increase or maximize spectator satisfaction and attendance. Wakefield & Blodgett (1994, 1996) applied servicescape factors to sporting and leisure venues and found that perceptions of quality increased spectators' level of satisfaction. Wakefield, Blodgett, & Sloan (1996) created a survey instrument to determine how sports spectators perceive a facility to be employed in further research studies. Recent studies have been completed on sport consumer satisfaction (Caro & Garcia, 2007; Greenwell, Lee & Naeger, 2007; McDonald & Stavros, 2007; Ross, 2007; and Tsuji, Bennett & Zhang, 2007); however the spectators examined in these studies have been in action sports, intercollegiate athletics, and professional team sports and not professional golf.

It is within the context of these sportscape studies that this case study was founded in adapting sportscape factors from fixed venues, like football and basketball to flexible or configurable non-stadia sites, such as golf. This study is the first to analyze how sportscape factors impact spectator satisfaction in a non-stadia venue at a professional golf tournament.

Method and Data Analysis

Data were collected using a survey instrument constructed based on research summarized previously (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994, 1996; Wakefield & Sloan, 1995), to solicit information in three areas about spectators attending a PGA tournament: the spectator's demographics and attendance information, perception of sportscape factors and overall satisfaction. A systematic random sample was taken of spectators entering the PGA tournament. Subjects were assured confidentiality and were 18 years of age or older. Of the 521 surveys collected, 127 surveys were not fully completed, thus 394 surveys were deemed usable. Cluster analysis was employed to investigate if there were homogeneous groups of spectators based on the sportscape factors. The two-step clustering approach in SPSS 15.0 with the Schwarz Bayesian Criteria (BIC) and the log-likelihood measure of

2009 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2009)

distance was used for our analysis. Regression analysis was then used to reveal the impact of sportscape factors on overall satisfaction.

Results and Discussion

Based on preliminary descriptive analysis, spectators appeared to be satisfied with the sportscape factors with an average sportscape rating of 3.90. By using cluster analysis and follow-up discriminant analysis revealed two distinct homogeneous groups of spectators. One group (Cluster 2, n=155) was clearly more satisfied with the sportscape with an average sportscape rating of 4.52 than the second group (Cluster 1, n=239) which was less satisfied with an average sportscape rating of 3.50 at the .05 level of significance.

The Pearson Chi-square results showed that cluster membership was only dependent on the type of ticket held (hospitality or grounds) at the .05 level of significance. As one might expect, spectators with hospitality tickets (complimentary refreshments, easier/closer parking, private seating and use of private restrooms) were more satisfied with the sportscape. It is evident from our study that sportscape factors have a direct impact on spectator's level of satisfaction. Therefore, golf event organizers need to carefully examine sportscape factors to improve spectators' perceptions and thus increase their level of satisfaction. Multiple regression was used to identify the sportscape factors that impacted overall satisfaction. The sportscape factors identified were course accessibility, restrooms and helpfulness of employees/volunteers. These results show that by improving any of these sportscape factors, the level satisfaction for those level satisfied will increase.

Another finding of this case study is that sportscape satisfaction is independent of age, gender, number of years attended and ticket acquisition method. This finding is different than previous research on sportscape for events held at a stadium (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994). One possible explanation for this finding is that golf tournaments are conducted at many different and unique venues where the sportscape is spread out over many acres and can be more easily changed or adjusted for each tournament or tournament site.