Marketing and Environmental Sustainability in the Sport Sector: A Gameplan for Action in the Coming Years.

Cheryl Mallen, Brock University
Chris Chard, Brock University
Cheri Bradish, Brock University

Abstract 2011-219
Saturday, June 4, 2011
4:05 PM
20-minute oral presentation
(Room 240)

The world’s natural environment is under duress. Saha and Darnton (2005) indicate that the situation involves: “extensive environmental damage [that] has been caused by continuous consumption, marketing, manufacturing, processing, discarding, and pollution, along with several environmental disasters” (p. 117). It has been determined that “ignoring climate change will eventually damage economic growth” (Turner, 2007, p. 305). Hope is pinned on what has been called an emerging megatrend (Lubin & Esty, 2010) that includes developing sustainability innovations and strategies to steer through this contemporary challenge (Andrews & DeVault, 2009). To meet the challenge, it has been noted that management must reconsider what they do to benefit from the value of ES (Lubin & Esty). Indeed, marketing-ES strategies are seen “as a management function that analyses how to incorporate the environmental factor into the firm’s commercial decisions and policies” (Chamorro et al., 2009, p. 224) within the micro and macro marketplace.

Sport management discourse indicates a realization that sport impacts the natural environment (Cachay, 1993; Lenskyj, 1998) and that ES in sport is emerging as a topic of concern. Sport management research has encompassed a variety of ES topics, such as environmental impacts of sport (Weiss et al., 1998), greening the Olympics (Cantelon & Letters, 2000; Lenskyj, 1998; Loland, 2006; Preuss, 2007), along with golf and the environment (Wheeler & Naught, 2006). However, a content analysis of sport research on ES deemed the body of knowledge to be disappointing and in the infancy stage (Mallen, Stevens & Adams (upcoming). Even in the area of sport marketing, which has the majority of the sport research (Mahoney, 2008) there is a lack of ES research.

This study sought to encourage research and discourse on sport marketing and ES. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to complete a content analysis of the mainstream management organizational and natural environment journals on ES marketing literature for application to develop a sport marketing-ES research agenda. This research topic was derived from Humberstone’s (1998) position that sport can be utilized as a catalyst for rethinking how we impact the natural environment and by Mahoney’s (2008) statement that “we need more conversations about where research is going in certain areas and a plan for how we can get there” (p. 4). Therefore, this study examined the mainstream management organization and natural environment manuscripts in marketing-ES and utilized the data to underscore a sport marketing-ES research agenda. The steps in the content analysis were provided by Krippendorff (1980) and enhanced by Weber (1985). A total of 21 journals were selected based on Cohen’s (2007) ratings and in over 4,600 manuscripts there were 26 management marketing-ES manuscripts, n=26. The examination gave rise to two key marketing-ES concepts: the consumer perspective and the corporate perspective, along with multiple themes and sub-themes that were applied to generate 29 research questions to guide a sport marketing-ES research agenda.