Roundtable: Writing Case Studies in Sport Management

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Since 1959, Earle F. Zeigler has been advocating for the use of case studies in teaching students within the field of sport management. According Mauffette-Leenders, Erskine, & Leenders (2005), "a case [study] is a description of an actual situation, commonly involving a decision, a challenge, an opportunity, a problem or an issue faced by a person (or persons) in an organization" (p. 2) that requires students to identify and address these problems in a manner consistent with those faced by sport managers on a daily basis (Corey, 1996; Ellet, 2007). The benefits of case pedagogy are plentiful and have been well-documented in the literature (e.g., Clawson & Haskins, 2006; Corey, 1996; Ellet, 2007; Mauffette-Leenders et al., 2005). While case pedagogy has formed the basis of several presentations and roundtable discussions at previous NASSM Conferences (e.g., Dixon & McDonald, 2006; McDonald, 1999), noticeably absent from the discussion has been the benefits of and need for quality case submissions within the field of sport management. This roundtable intends to build on these earlier presentations and workshops by educating members of the sport management academy about the merits and value of case writing, and sharing practical experiences and tips for navigating this unique scholarly endeavor.

The case study approach has its origins in schools of law and medicine, where vast public records of 'cases' can be drawn upon for the purposes of educating future lawyers and physicians (Garvin, 2003). Arguably, one of the greatest obstacles standing in the way of more sport management educators employing this form of experiential learning in their own classrooms is a catalogue of cases specific to our discipline (Dixon, 2008). Despite some evidence of case studies being bundled together in the form of textbooks (e.g., Chadwick & Arthur, 2007; Foster, Greyser, & Walsh, 2006; McDonald & Milne, 1999; Pitts, 1998; Zeigler, 1959; 1982) and appearing sporadically in some of our journals (e.g., Sport Management Education Journal; Sport Marketing Quarterly; Sport Management Review), until recently there have been relatively few outlets for sport management educators and researchers to publish case studies. As the number of textbooks and journals publishing teaching cases in our field continues to grow, there is an increased demand being placed on the professoriate to publish quality case studies that can serve as the basis for educating future generations of sport management students.

At the same time, there is increasing pressure on academics in all fields to be proficient at both research and teaching. Traditionally, academic currency has resided in the form of peer-reviewed research publications, with preference being given to those appearing in top-tier journals. However, as the competition for students in the global marketplace intensifies, institutions of higher learning are placing greater value on the importance of teaching. Research-based teaching cases provide academics with the unique opportunity to "...straddle the supposed divide of research and teaching" (European Case Clearing House, 2011). While most perceive case studies to relate more to teaching, they are also an effective way of bringing empirical research into the classroom. According to data compiled by the European Case Clearing House (2011), "no fewer than 76% of the ECCH all-time best-selling cases are based on field research, as have been 76% of the overall winners of the annual ECCH case awards since their inception." Particularly with the launch of a new peer-reviewed journal entirely dedicated to the publishing of teaching cases (i.e., Case Studies in Sport Management), the time is ripe for sport management academics to explore case writing as a viable complement to the traditional modes of publishing.

Case writing is a complex endeavor, requiring just as much time and effort as publishing empirical research. Primarily geared toward novice and intermediate case writers and teachers, this roundtable will feature experienced case teachers and writers who will share practical tips on how to go about developing, writing, and publishing case studies and accompanying teaching notes. Topics to be explored throughout this roundtable discussion will include, but will certainly not be limited to: a) identifying and capitalizing on case-writing opportunities; b) initiating contact and obtaining the cooperation and/or permission of the focal firm(s) and/or industry professional(s); c) defining the case focus and/or problem(s); d) selecting, collecting, and presenting case-related data; e) organizing and formatting
the written case study; f) formatting and selecting content for the accompanying teaching note; g) testing the case in a classroom setting, and finally; h) getting your case published.

Complementing this discussion will be a brief analysis of the existing sport management-related case literature in order to identify where the greatest opportunities are for new case studies to be written. Specifically, this analysis will include an exploration of the following attributes: a) COSMA Common Professional Component (CPC) topical areas; b) industry segmentation (based on Li, Hofacre, & Mahony's (2001) two-sector model of the sport industry), and; c) global context. In addition, detailed information will be shared with attendees about the opportunities and requirements for getting their case studies published in peer-reviewed journals within the field of sport management.

"New cases are as essential to the case method as new blood to a donor clinic" (Leenders, Mauffette-Leenders, & Erskine, 2001). With increasing numbers of sport management educators employing the case method, there is a corresponding demand for exciting new cases to be published within the field. In the same way that case teaching can bring undergraduate and graduate classrooms to 'life' by bridging the gap between theory and practice (Clawson & Haskins, 2006; Ellet, 2007; Mauffette-Leenders, et al., 2005), case writing has the power to 'transfuse' the classroom with exciting new knowledge and theories that emerge as a consequence of the research being conducted within the field of sport management. Strong teaching with the case method is predicated upon possessing quality cases with which to teach, and our session will attempt to explore best practices in writing cases.