Corporate Social Responsibility and Minor League Baseball: The Pacific Association

Rachel Blackman
Dominican University of California

Survey: Let us know how this paper benefits you.


This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Dominican Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scholarly and Creative Works Conference 2020 by an authorized administrator of Dominican Scholar. For more information, please contact michael.pujals@dominican.edu.
Corporate Social Responsibility and Minor League Baseball: The Pacific Association and Community Engagement

Rachel Blackman
Dominican University of California
Honors Thesis
April 17th 2019
Roadmap

- Introduction
- The Topic
- Background
- Definitions
- Existing Literature
- Methods & Data Collection
- Results & Implications
Why CSR and the Pacific Association?

● Worked for San Rafael Pacifics for 3 years
  ○ Community Relations Manager (Part Time Intern)
  ○ Community Relations and Fan Engagement (Full Time Intern)
  ○ Director of Events (Staff)

● Career goal to work in Community Relations for an MLB team
  ○ CSR Engagement

● First hand knowledge of the power of CSR

● Attendance is down across the sport
The Topic

- The relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and attendance
- Case Study involving three teams from the Pacific Association
  - San Rafael Pacifics
  - Sonoma Stompers
  - Pittsburg Diamonds (formerly Mettle)
Background

- The Pacific Association began in 2013
- Professional Baseball
- Independent Minor League
- San Rafael joined in 2013
- Sonoma and Pittsburg joined in 2014
- 80 game season, 40 played at home
- The goal of Minor League Baseball
  - Unique game promotions
  - “Butts in a seat”
Research Question

To what extent does employing CSR help minor-league baseball teams attract support?
Baseball

- **Affiliated Minor League Baseball**
  - Professional baseball that is played at a lower level and feeds into a MLB team

- **Independent Minor League Baseball**
  - Professional baseball played at a lower level than affiliated minor league that is not affiliated with an MLB team
Corporate Social Responsibility

- CSR is a form of corporate PR (Peters, 2005) that consists of actions undertaken to better local society using a company’s specific toolset. This is the kind of CSR that builds social capital.
Social Capital

- "the connections among individuals' social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them," (Putnam, 2000, P.19).
Existing Literature

- **CSR Literature**
  - No formal definition

- **CSR and Sport**
  - Key Relationship - Sport and Community

- **Social Capital**
  - Decline of Social Capital
  - Sports role “social inventiveness”

- **Sport and Attendance**
  - Difficult to isolate variables

- **Gap**
  - Lack of literature on CSR & Attendance
Hypothesis

Teams that engage in more CSR will have higher attendance levels.
The Methods

- Case Study
  - Pacifics
  - Stompers
  - Diamonds

- Content Analysis
  - Instagram
  - Newspaper
Data Collection

- Conducted from 2014-2018
- Newspapers
  - Marin IJ
  - Press Democrat
  - Mercury News
- Instagram
  - Number of total posts
  - Number of CSR posts
Appendix B

Sample Code Sheet for Newspapers

Team: __________________________
Newspaper Title: __________________________
Date of Publication: __________________________
Title of Article: __________________________
Length of Article in Paragraphs: ______________

Article Content/Focus:

Elements of CSR Mentioned:

___Library ___Free Tickets
___School ___Autographs Signing
___Career Day ___Player appearance
___Camp/Clinic ___Mascot Appearance
___Parade ___Staff Appearance
___Homerun Derby ___Other:
___Fundraising
___Hospital

# Of Sentences:

Notes:

Appendix A

Sample Code Sheet for Instagram

Team: __________________________

Type of Social Media: __________________________

Month & Year: __________________________

Total posts:

CSR posts:

Notes:
Results

- Limited newspaper articles
- Number of CSR posts does not affect seasonal attendance
- Most CSR related Instagram posts, best attendance
- Least CSR related Instagram posts, worst attendance
San Rafael Pacifics Average Attendance and CSR Posts

Sonoma Stompers Average Attendance and CSR Posts

Pittsburg Diamonds Average Attendance and CSR Posts
Implications

● Social Capital Increase
  ○ Civic Engagement
  ○ Trust
  ○ Community Engagement

● Increased attendance and revenue

● Study Limits
  ○ Other factors on attendance
  ○ Access to teams

● Future Studies
  ○ Individual game attendance
  ○ Level of engagement on posts