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Corporate Social Responsibility and Minor League Baseball: The Pacific Association

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Corporate Social Responsibility and Minor League Baseball: The Pacific Association and Community Engagement

Rachel Blackman
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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

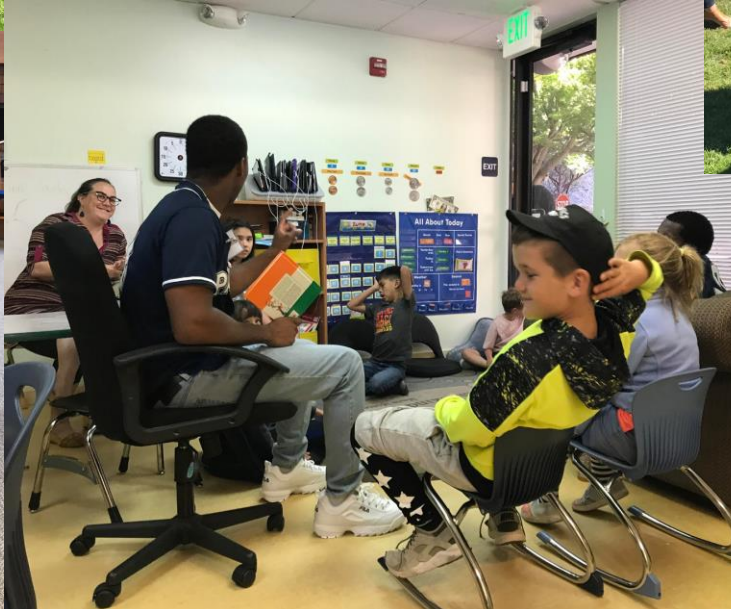
- Affiliated Minor League Baseball
 - Professional baseball that is played at a lower level and feeds into a MLB team
- Independent Minor League Baseball
 - Professional baseball played at a lower level than affiliated minor league that is not affiliated with an MLB team



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:

<input type="checkbox"/> Library	<input type="checkbox"/> Free Tickets
<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Autographs Signing
<input type="checkbox"/> Career Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Player appearance
<input type="checkbox"/> Camp/Clinic	<input type="checkbox"/> Mascot Appearance
<input type="checkbox"/> Parade	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Appearance
<input type="checkbox"/> Homerun Derby	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital	

Of Sentences:

Notes:

Appendix A

Sample Code Sheet for Instagram

Team: _____

Type of Social Media: _____

Month & Year: _____

Total posts:

CSR posts:

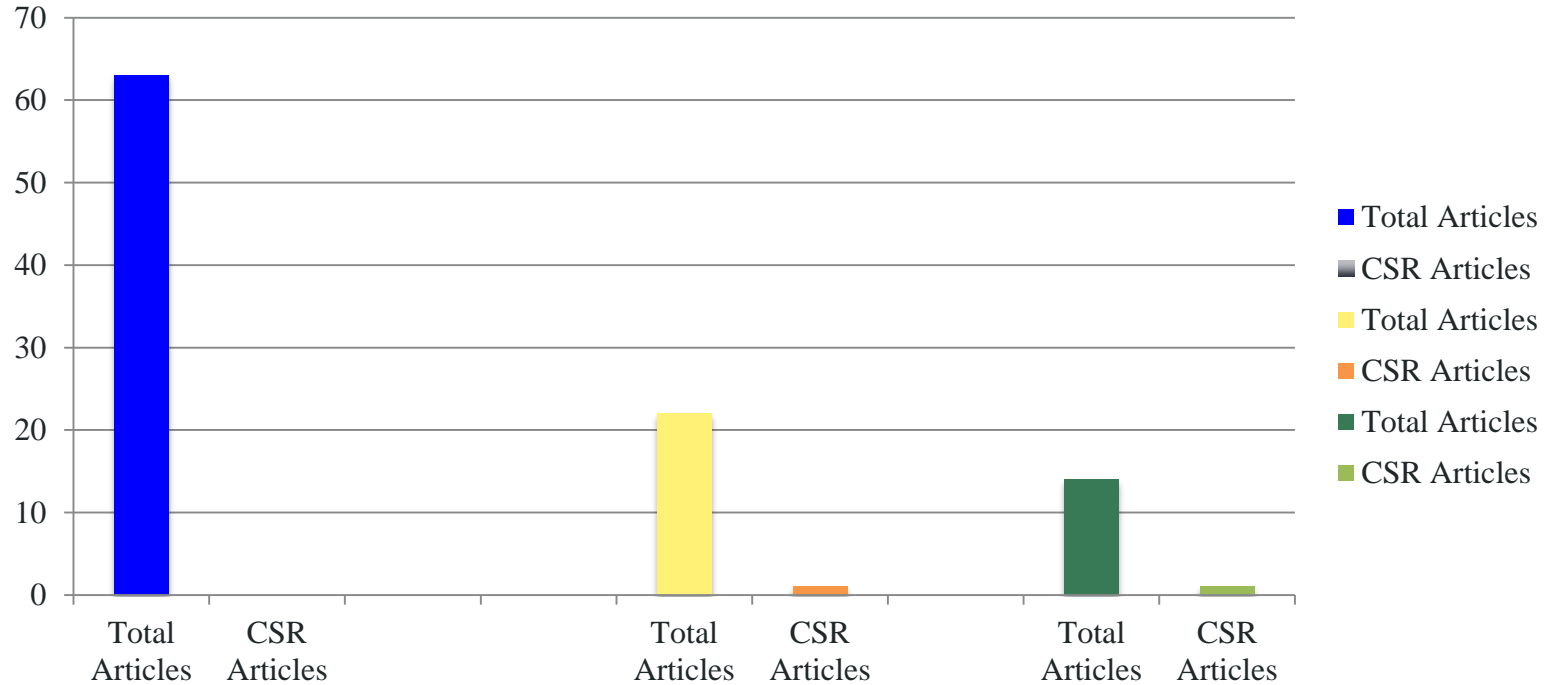
Notes:

Results

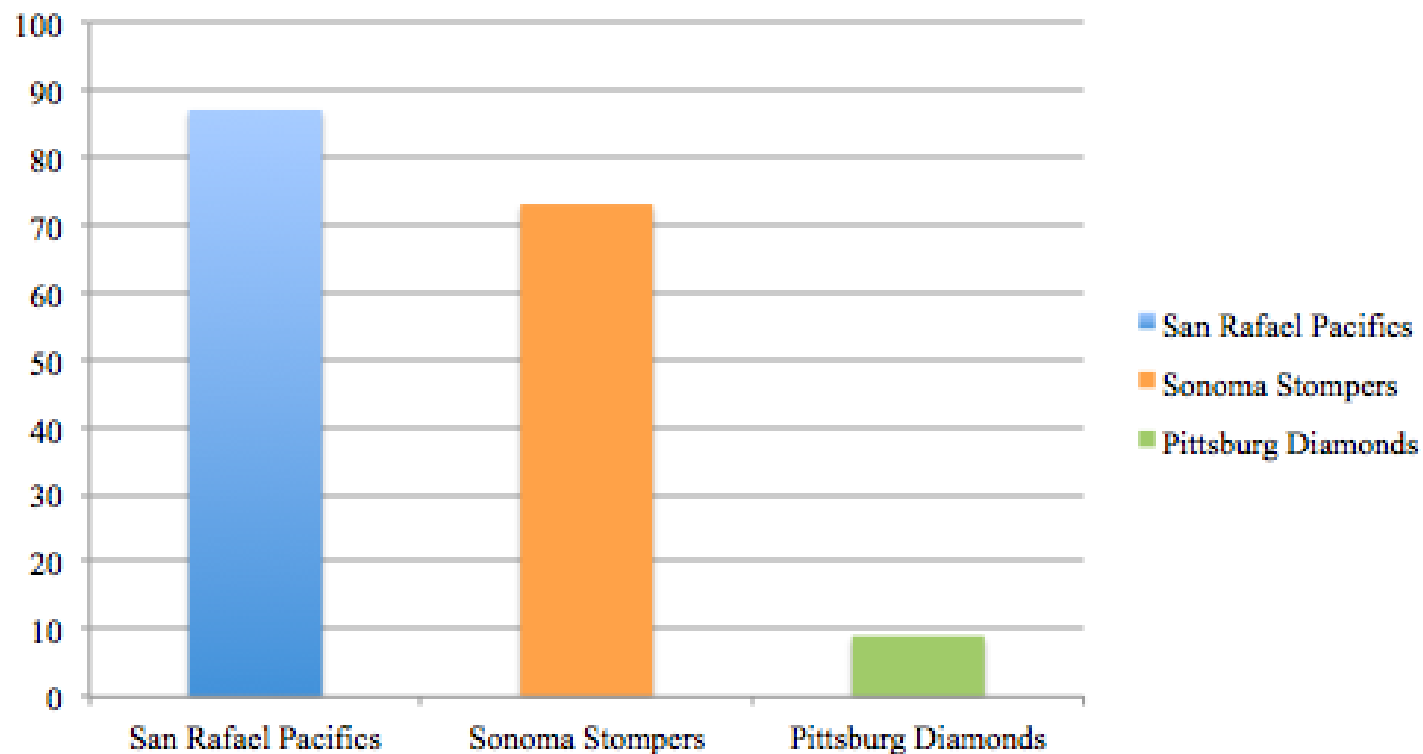
- Limited newspaper articles
- Number of CSR posts does not affect seasonal attendance
- Most CSR related Instagram posts, best attendance
- Least CSR related Instagram posts, worst attendance



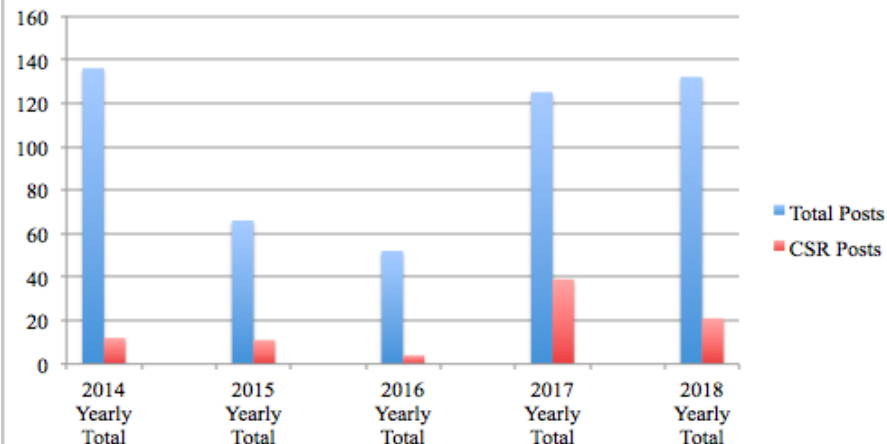
Newspaper Article Total Posts 2014-2018



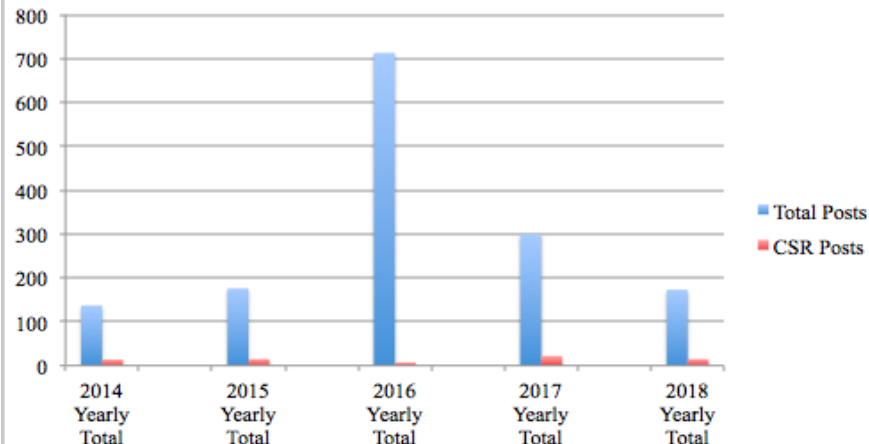
Total CSR Posts 2014-2018



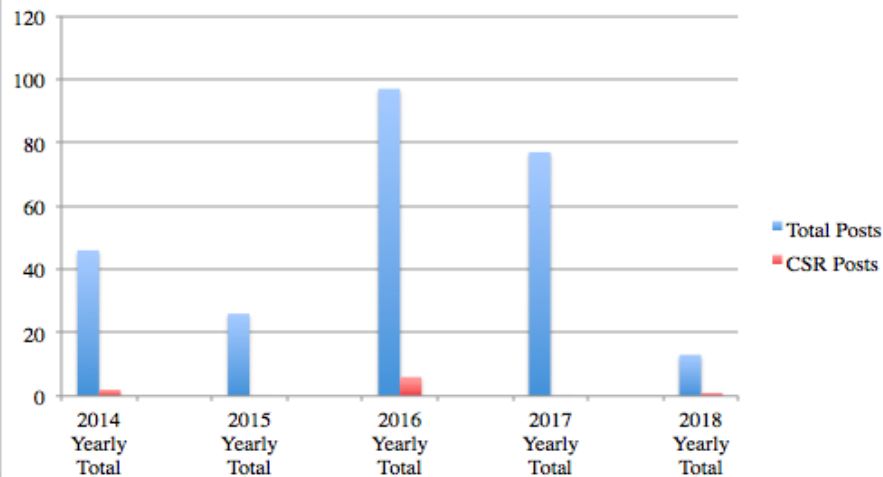
San Rafael Pacifics Yearly Total Instagram Posts



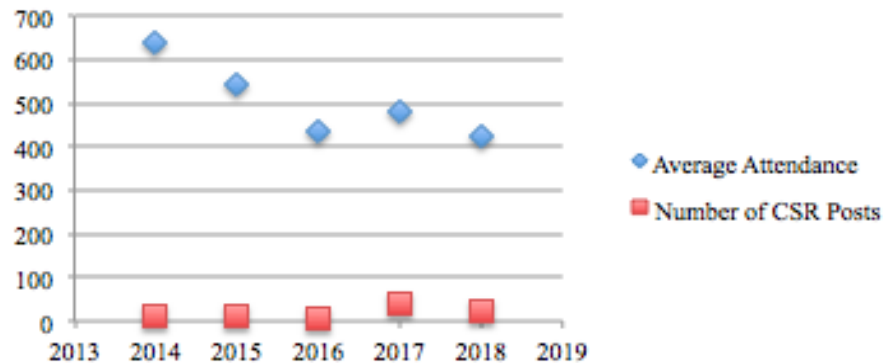
Sonoma Stompers Yearly Total Instagram Posts



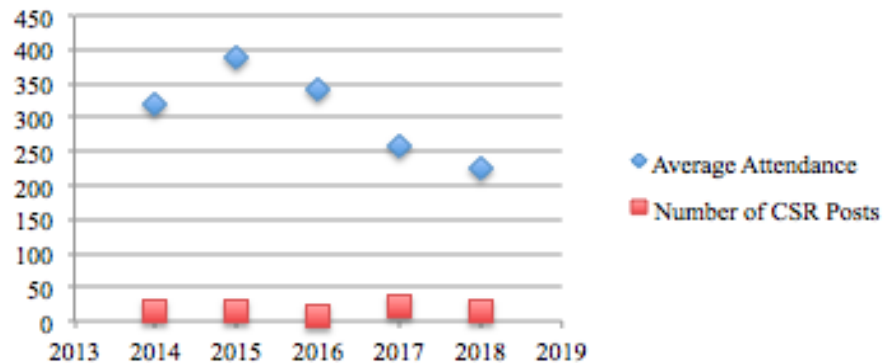
Pittsburg Diamonds Yearly Total Instagram Posts



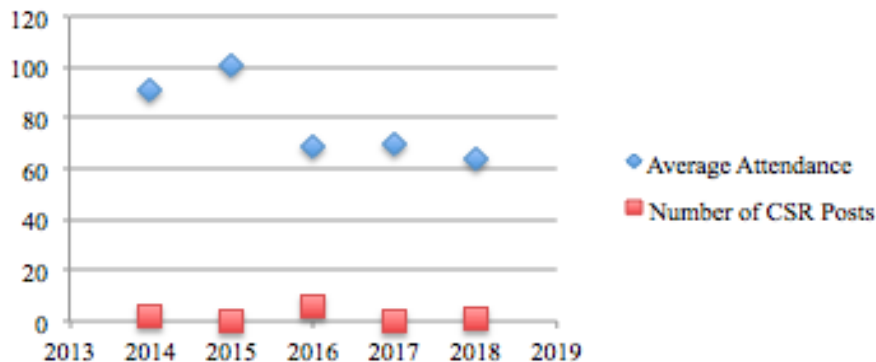
San Rafael Pacifics Average Attendance and CSR Posts



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





Questions?