



## UNIT 4 – CASE STUDY

# The Cleveland Cavaliers Social Marketing Platform



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

### **\*\* Digital Marketing Strategies: A SEM Case Study \*\***

*With such options as sports talk radio, blogs, and instant messaging, fans have no shortage of ways to communicate their feelings about their favorite team or player. Organizing the chaos is another matter.*

*That's the philosophy behind Cavfanatic.com, an interactive site for fans of the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers. Jeff Lillibridge, the Cavaliers' Director of Web Services, envisions the site as "the place to interact with anything Cavaliers."*

*The team has provided message boards for the team's fans for several years, and blogs have long allowed the team's fans (and those of its opponents!) to vent their frustrations with or sing the praises of their favorite team, player, or member of the front office.*

*However, Cavfanatic.com carries "social networking" to another level. Launched during the spring of 2008, the web 2.0 platform encourages expanded user-generated content, including uploading of photos and videos. There is also a video blog. Podcasting is not currently available, but the site's technology allows for it. While players do not interact directly with the site's participants, radio broadcasters, such as Austin Carr and Campy Russell, do. Fans can join one or more of over 50 groups, including those for other Cleveland sports teams. Chat rooms are open for real-time interactions.*

*The Cavaliers work to make the site user-friendly by keeping interactions simple. More complex tasks, such as buying tickets, happen elsewhere on the team's main web site. Fans who participate are rewarded with points that can be accumulated and cashed in for such benefits as discounts on merchandise from the team store.*

*Initial reaction has been enthusiastic. Multiple forums attract responses at any given time, resulting in heavy traffic volumes to the site. One general thread established in the early months generated over 15,000 posts.*

### **\*\* Case Study Questions \*\***

1. What do you think is the most important thing the Cleveland Cavaliers hope to accomplish by establishing Cavfanatic.com?
2. How will peaks and valleys in the team's performance or news about the team's activities affect traffic on the site?
3. Can the team monetize the site to pay for such costs as web hosting and site management? What specific things can they do?
4. From a social marketing perspective, how can the team use the responses of fans to address public relations issues?
5. What other areas of the business might benefit from the forum social network provides?
6. Does the Cavs effort to launch Cavfanatic.com indicate a level of recognition by the sports and entertainment industry that social marketing can be a powerful medium? Why or why not?

Source: Jeff Lillibridge, Director of Web Services for the Cleveland Cavaliers