

SCC's "SPORTSBIZ MADNESS" CASE STUDY COMPETITION



CASE STUDY #2: NICHE SPORTS MARKETING

DUE DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 30TH, 2018 by 4:00 PST

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) Read/review the case study with your team (student group or class)
- 2) Review the evaluation criteria
- 3) Create a response to case study
- 4) Email your response with "CASE STUDY CHALLENGE ENTRY" in the subject line to chris@sportscareerconsulting.com.
- 5) Be sure to include a team name, the names of team members (or class period if an entire class is participating), school and teacher name.
- 6) Reminder: Your entries are limited to no more than two pages!

IMPORTANT: If you send something via Google Docs, please remember to make sure you turn on permission to review/edit the document!

CASE STUDY #2: BACKGROUND

One of the best success stories of a niche sport trying to survive in a cluttered marketplace is Spikeball. The company's CEO and founder, Chris Ruder, has successfully demonstrated an ability to implement some of the most critical sports business principles to create an authentic, viable sports brand that continues to gain momentum every year. His appearance (and subsequent "win" of \$500,000 in startup capital) on the popular TV series 'Shark Tank' provided the necessary funding and publicity to put the sport on the map, while his sales and marketing prowess has helped Spikeball to gain a legion of loyal followers. Today, over 1 million people play the sport in the U.S. alone, over 1,500 competitions are held annually across the globe and the company does over \$13 million sales.

Yet, for Spikeball to continue to thrive, the sport must continue to gain new fans, both as participants and spectators. Your job is to help the brand to do just that.

CASE STUDY #2: YOUR CHALLENGE

You own a small sports marketing agency. The CEO of Spikeball has contracted your firm to create a strategic growth plan for helping expand the sport's popularity, specifically building brand awareness, increasing levels of participation, and engaging the fanbase. Your plan must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- Explain the concept of a *niche* sport
- Create a situation (SWOT) analysis describing Spikeball's current market position
- Develop a marketing strategy for (including specific, measurable goals) for growing the popularity of Spikeball to include:
 - Event marketing idea(s)
 - Digital marketing / social media plan
 - Brand position / brand building strategy
 - Sales / promotion / publicity plan for increasing the sport's popularity
- Describe how your strategic plan will, ultimately, result in the increase of sales of Spikeball game

BEFORE YOU BEGIN...

We would recommend a brief review of units 2, 4, 6, 7 and 11 in SCC's textbook to make sure you have a firm grasp on the sports business concepts most applicable to this case study. Specifically, you may want to consider the topics of event marketing/management, digital marketing/social media, branding, sales/promotion and publicity.

For more on the sport, consider reviewing the following links:

<https://www.inc.com/skyler-inman/2016-inc5000-how-spikeball-became-a-great-american-sport.html>

http://abc.go.com/shows/shark-tank/video/vdka0_ri20u7je

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2017/04/07/what-happened-when-spikeballs-500000-shark-tank-deal-fell-apart>

GOOD LUCK!

