

Unit 12

Sports & Entertainment Careers

OVERVIEW

Unit twelve focuses on the broad range of career opportunities in the sports and entertainment industry. In this section, it is important to distinguish the difference between potential careers in operations and those careers in business. The incredible growth of the sports and entertainment marketing field provides increased opportunities for business careers within the industry.

KEY TERMS

Career Development

Cover Letter

Resume

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the four primary career segments available in the sports industry
2. Identify career opportunities specific to entertainment
3. Discuss the future of the SEM job market
4. Discuss the preparation required for a career in SEM
5. Explain why a cover letter and resume are important

LESSONS

- LESSON 12.1** [Careers in Sports](#)
- LESSON 12.2** [Careers in Entertainment](#)
- LESSON 12.3** [Preparing for Sports & Entertainment Marketing Careers](#)
- LESSON 12.4** [Cover Letters & Resumes](#)
- LESSON 12.5** [The Job Market](#)

Careers in Sports

INDUSTRY SIZE AND SCOPE

The sports industry accounts for over 3 million jobs in the U.S. alone.

- There are 12,660 professional US athletes.¹
- Florida's [golf industry](#) creates nearly 167,000 jobs.
- Under Armour employs nearly 13,000 people.
- The Walt Disney Co. has more than 200,000 full-time employees.
- ESPN [employs](#) more than 6,000 employees.
- Globally, Nike employs more than 75,000 people.

The inevitable incorporation of new growth areas such as e-commerce, gaming and new technologies points to a broader field with multiple new career opportunities.

Sports Operations Careers

Sports operations careers are actively involved with what happens on the court or field and less involved with the business aspect of the field.

Potential career paths include:

- Scouting
- Coaching
- Athletic training
- Video coordinator
- Equipment manager
- General manager
- Player development
- Operations
- Strength and conditioning
- Travel and accommodations management
- Performance Analytics

Sports operations career profile:

- The Video Coordinator for the Portland Trailblazers is responsible for providing video for basketball staff. The basketball staff uses the film to break down games and for scouting purposes. This position is extremely important, as video enables a team to gain an inside edge on competitors as they study opponent strategies and player tendencies. The job becomes increasingly demanding during the season, as the team plays many games and he is required to provide video on short notice.²

Corporate Sports Marketing Careers

Many major corporations like Pepsi, Coca Cola, Visa, American Express, and Federal Express employ individuals to manage their promotional campaigns, domestic and global sponsorship efforts as well as domestic and international sporting events and entertainment.

Potential positions in corporate sports marketing:

- Sports Media Coordinator
- Suite Ticket Manager
- VP of Sports and Entertainment Marketing
- Director of Event and Sponsorship Marketing

¹ <http://www.top-business-degrees.net/sports>

² http://www.nba.com/blazers/community/Learn_More_About_Raman_Sposato-100949-41.html

- Corporate Communications Manager
 - Helps develop the organization's brand and marketing activities
- Business Analytics
- Social Media Manager

Corporate sports marketing career profile:

- The Sports Partnership Marketing Manager for a Fortune 500 company (Coca-Cola for example) might be responsible for overseeing a \$200 million sports and entertainment marketing budget. He or she might be responsible for all media planning and advertising purchasing for the company's related brands. He or she might also be the company's representation in sponsorship negotiations and/or supervising any events the company is participating in.³

Sports Business Careers

Careers in sports business focus on helping the organization achieve its financial goals in some way, shape or form:

- Major league sports (NBA, MLB, NFL, NHL, PGA, MLS)
 - Tennis, lacrosse, beach volleyball, bowling
- Collegiate sports
- Motor sports
- Action sports
- Minor league sports
- Contact sports (Boxing, MMA)
- Horse racing
- Rodeo

Potential sports business career paths:

- Ticket sales
- Sponsorship sales
- Marketing
- PR & Communications
- Legal
- Finance and accounting
- Information technologies
- Graphics design
- Box office
- Broadcast and journalism
- Publications
- Customer service
- Game operations

Sports business career profile:

- The Vice President Public Relations, Madison Square Garden Sports oversees all of MSG Sports business public relations activity relating to the trade, business, consumer media, internal communications and industry relations. The position works closely with all divisions to ensure integrated activities and communication and also works closely with MSG Sports management to create targeted, impactful public relations plans that meet short and long term business objectives, support critical marketing partnerships, and powerfully deliver key messages to target audiences.⁴

³ <http://www.onlinesports.com/sportstrust/sports10.html>

⁴ <http://sportsprblog.com/blog/2009/07/03/job-opening-vp-public-relations-msg-sports>

Recreation And Fitness Careers

Because of the broad range of industry segments covered, recreation and fitness careers offer many different career opportunities.

Potential careers:

- Athletic Director
- Parks and Recreation Director/Manager
- Exercise Physiologist
- Corporate Fitness Director
- Fitness Program Coordinator
- Personal Trainer
- Physical Therapist
- Sports Nutritionist
- Wellness Coordinator
- Recreation Center Director
- Park Planner
- Marketing and Sales Directors
- Finance/Accounting
- Sales Representative

Recreation and fitness career profile:

- The Group Fitness Director for the Hawthorn Farm Athletic Club in Portland, Oregon is responsible for managing over 90 hours of classes per week ranging from cycling to aquatics and Pilates and everything in between. He or she might be an ACE and AFFA certified group fitness instructor with additional certifications in BODYPUMP, BODYCOMBAT and Cycling.⁵

Additional Sports Related Career Fields

Sports agencies and professional services

- Specialty services
- Sports law
- Advertising
- Accounting
- Sports medicine
- Event management and marketing
- Sponsorship
- Collegiate multi-media rights management
 - Learfield Sports, ISP Sports, IMG College
- Sports agents
- “Super” agents such as Scott Boras and Drew Rosenhaus
- Athlete representation agencies such as IMG
- Celebrity Speakers Bureau

Facility management

- Manage facilities such as stadiums, arenas, golf courses etc.
- Comcast-Spectacor and Global Spectrum
- Concessionaires
- Manage the food and beverage service for stadiums, venues and other sports or entertainment related facilities
 - Aramark, Levy Restaurants, Centerplate, Sportservice

Sports associations

- International Olympic Committee (IOC)
- United States Golf Association (USGA)
- United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA)

⁵ <http://www.hfac.com/programs/fitstaff.htm>

Sports corporations

- Colorado Springs Sports Corporation
- Oregon Sports Authority
- Florida Sports Foundation
- St. Louis Sports Commission

Sporting goods, footwear and apparel

- Manufacturers
- Nike, Adidas, Under Armour, Reebok, Puma
- Burton, O'Neill
- Rawlings, Spalding, Wilson
- Wholesalers
- Distribute to retailers from manufacturers
- Retailers
- Champs
- Foot Locker
- Dick's Sporting Goods

Careers in Entertainment

ENTERTAINMENT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Potential career paths within segments of the entertainment industry span a wide variety of industry segments:

Gaming

- Video games
- Computer games
- Board games

Music

- Songwriting
- Performing

Acting

- Television
- Film
- Screenwriting
- Script writing (television)

Comedy

- Stand up performer
- Writer

Theme Parks

- Theme park engineer
- Theme park management; event planner; coordinator

Travel

- Travel director
- Local, domestic, international tours and cruises

Writing

- Magazines
- Fiction
- Non fiction

Arts

- Painting
- Sculpting
- Illustration

Entertainment Job Functions

Like sports, there are opportunities for employment in entertainment catering to a wide variety of skill sets and interests. Specific job functions within the entertainment industry could include:⁶

- Sales
- Marketing
- Financial management
- Legal work or consulting
- Negotiations
- Personnel management
- General maintenance
- Distribution

Entertainment business career profile:

- The Senior Vice President of Marketing for Six Flags Amusement Park in St. Louis directs the worldwide strategic marketing initiative for the company. He oversees advertising, public relations, research, sponsorships, promotions and group sales, and works closely with the company's regional vice presidents of marketing, the corporate vice president of public relations and marketing directors at the parks worldwide.⁷

⁶ http://www.entertainmentcareers.co/encar/business_careers/business_careers_index.htm

⁷ http://www.sixflags.com/investor_exe_bios.asp

Preparing for Sports & Entertainment Marketing Careers

CAREER PREP

Although securing a job in the competitive field of sports and entertainment marketing is challenging, young professionals can begin preparing themselves now.

Consider the following to help prepare for a career in SEM:

1. Personal skills and passion assessment
2. Matching skills with interests
3. Self-preparation
 - Researching
 - Learning about the industry
 - Becoming an expert in the field
4. Networking
5. Gaining experience
6. Initiating contact and an aggressive job/internship/volunteer search

Employment Tools

- Cover letters
- The resume provides background information about a prospective employee.
- Quality professional and personal references
- Online profile(s) – LinkedIn, Facebook
- Employers often request documentation to be submitted electronically via email or via an online website.
- Cover letters, job interviews and resumes are all valuable employment tools for both the employer and prospective employee.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development refers to the process of gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for, in the short term, beginning a career in a desired field and, in the long term, creating opportunities for career advancement.

Personal Brand

Athletes and celebrities aren't the only ones who should be developing a personal brand. From the Montreal Gazette: *"Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You. You're every bit as much a brand as Nike, Coke, Pepsi, or the Body Shop."*

The career development process includes building your personal brand to become more marketable to prospective employers.

In addition to creating an effective cover letter and resume, there are a number of ways to build your personal brand:

- Reading as much about the industry as you can
- Talking with industry professionals to learn more about the business
- Networking
- Volunteering, participating in an internship opportunity
- Online presence: LinkedIn, blogs, self-branded websites, etc.
 - Careful consideration of posts on social media channels is critical to developing your personal brand
 - Hiring managers will review social media accounts when evaluating whether a potential employee is a good fit with the company
 - Think before you post!

Interviews

Careful preparation for the interview is essential.

Some tips for interview prep:

- Learn as much as possible about the company and the products and/or services they provide prior to the interview.
- The individual should bring a copy of the resume and references for the interviewer.
- The interviewee must understand what the employer is looking for in prospective employees and tailor their skill sets, cover letter and resume to fit those needs.
- Interviewee should dress appropriately.
- Interviewee must offer a firm handshake during the introduction and look the interviewer in the eye.

After the interview, the interviewee should send the interviewer a note thanking them for the opportunity and for their time as quickly as possible. The prospective employee should place a follow up call to the employer within one week following the interview.

Cover Letters & Resumes

Cover Letters

The **cover letter** (also known as a letter of introduction or letter of application) tells the employer the type of position the individual is seeking and specifically how the applicant is qualified to fill the job opening.

An effective cover letter will:

- Draw the attention of the reader
- Encourage careful review of the resume
- Successfully highlight key personal achievements
- Explain why the candidate's skill set is an effective match for the position

Cover letters should:

- Be addressed to prospective employer
- Specifically identify the position being offered
- Include a description of skill matches (qualifications)
- Highlight specific, applicable achievements
- Reaffirm interest in position
- State willingness and desire to meet face to face (interview)

Resumes

A quality **resume** will help the individual reach the interview process, resumes that are not well prepared will likely be discarded.

An effective resume will include:

Contact information

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- E-mail address

Experience and employment history

- Description of duties and responsibilities
- Traditionally listed in reverse chronological order

Education

- List of schools attended and degrees earned
- Should include dates attended and related coursework
- Include list of certificates, training, and/or licenses obtained

Personal achievements

- List of affiliations with personal or professional organizations including volunteer or charitable organizations
- Include personal and professional awards or recognition

Reference list

- List of people prospective employers may contact for more information regarding an applicant
- Include the name, title, name and location of business, telephone and fax number, and e-mail address
- Avoid using family members as references
- Portfolio (collection of relevant work) might be requested by some employers

The Job Market

Although the competition for careers in sports and entertainment business is fierce, the field has experienced and will continue to experience rapid growth. The expansion of major league sports, growth of minor league sports and rapid expansion of sports related ventures by corporate giants like Disney, Warner and Fox indicate continued growth in job opportunities. Introduction of new entertainment and the increase in popularity of existing entertainment opportunities (action sports, rodeos, fishing, e-sports, gaming) will only expand the employment options in the future.

Making oneself more marketable as an individual becomes increasingly important as the pool of prospective employees becomes more crowded. How can you make yourself more marketable and continue to build your personal brand?

- Gain experience
- Become knowledgeable
- Have a desire to learn (anyone is willing to learn, not everyone truly wants to learn)
- Network
- Strong references
 - Job seekers in sports and entertainment must perform well when given the opportunity to gain the confidence of employers.
 - Strong performance will result in positive recommendations for future positions, either within the existing organization or with another company.

NETWORKING

It is often said that “it isn’t what you know but rather who you know.” That couldn’t be more accurate when it comes to the business of sports and entertainment and the employment process. The development of a strong network and ability to impress employers with hard work, dedication and effective job performance are paramount in building a career in the sports and entertainment industry.

Use of social media can influence the employment process, both positively and negatively. It can be a very useful networking tool. However, while enabling people to easily connect with potential employers, it also presents certain risks. Inappropriate or controversial social media posts will result in losing out on potential employment opportunities. Employers do check social media platforms, both current and old posts!

CAREER EXPECTATIONS

Careers in the sports and entertainment industry are in extremely high demand. Because of that demand, employers are in a position to offer lower salaries than similar positions in other industries. The reality is there are thousands of people seeking work in sports and many are willing to work for less money than they might earn in a different field.

Job seekers must recognize the level of commitment required by professionals in the sports and entertainment industry. Most jobs require long hours on a pretty consistent basis.

Competition for jobs in sports and entertainment is very high. As such, a positive attitude, strong work ethic and track record of success on-the-job are all essential characteristics for distinguishing candidates from one another.

General manager of the Atlanta Braves, John Coppolella, offers the following sports industry career advice to young fans: "Look for internships. Don't worry about the money. Work hard & don't have expectations beyond being part of a team. Assume nothing." Click [here](#) for more career advice from Mr. Coppolella at cnbc.com.

Although sports and entertainment professionals often make less money and work longer hours than a similar position outside of the industry, one thing remains constant: most sports and entertainment industry professionals enjoy going to work every day.

Realistic expectations of a sports or entertainment career is perhaps the most important consideration for anyone hoping to break into the industry. Just because someone works for the Dallas Cowboys does not necessarily mean they will be watching games every Sunday from a luxury suite. Working for Warner Brothers Studios does not mean an employee will be hanging out with Natalie Portman or Dwayne Johnson on weekends. Many times, regardless of degree, job seekers must start with entry level positions just to get a foot in the door.

Career Related Resources

Sports Career Consulting's Certification Programs

Industry books, magazines, periodicals and trade journals

- Newspapers
- Guidance counselor
- School career centers

Online resources

- Social media
- [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)
- [Monster.com](https://www.monster.com)
- <http://www.nikebiz.com>
- <http://www.corporate.disney.go.com/careers>
- <http://www.teamworkonline.com>
- <http://www2.ncaa.org/portal/employment>
- <http://www.warnerbroscareers.com>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/>

Additional sources for job leads⁸

- Company personnel offices
- Cooperative education experiences
- Employment agencies
- Family and friends
- Former employers
- Internships
- Job fairs
- Newspaper ads
- Placement agencies
- School personnel, such as career development coordinators, counselors and teachers

UNIT 12: KEY TERMS DEFINED

Career Development: Refers to the process of gaining the skills and knowledge necessary for, in the short term, beginning a career in a desired field and, in the long term, creating opportunities for career advancement.

Cover Letter: A cover letter tells the employer the type of position you're seeking and specifically how the applicant is qualified to fill the job opening.

Resume: Provides background information about a prospective employee.

⁸ NC Education Center, Objective 9.02