

Unit 7

Introduction to Promotions & Sales

OVERVIEW

Unit seven provides a basic introduction to sales and emphasizes its importance to sports and entertainment business. A basis for a fundamental understanding of promotion is also explored. Students will be able to identify steps within the sales process, recognize the role of customer service and identify various forms of promotion. Students are encouraged to work through related class activities, particularly role plays or simulation exercises, to gain a clear comprehension of the sales process.

OBJECTIVES

1. Define and give examples of sales
2. Identify three personal selling categories
3. Identify four sales methods
4. Name at least five steps in the sales process
5. Detail why customer service is important
6. Recognize some common characteristics of successful sales professionals
7. Define promotion
8. Identify the elements of the promotion mix
9. Describe and offer an example of five forms of promotion

LESSONS

<u>LESSON 7.1</u>	<u>Understanding Sales</u>
<u>LESSON 7.2</u>	<u>The Sales Process</u>
<u>LESSON 7.3</u>	<u>Sales Strategies, Skills & Techniques</u>
<u>LESSON 7.4</u>	<u>Importance of Customer Service</u>
<u>LESSON 7.5</u>	<u>Sales Professionals</u>
<u>LESSON 7.6</u>	<u>Promotion</u>

KEY TERMS

Business-to-business (B2B) marketing
Cold Calling
Collaborative Selling
Customer Benefits
Customer Retention
Customer Service
E-Commerce
Event promotions
Feature-Benefit Selling
Full Menu Marketing
Full season promotions
In-game promotions
In-venue promotions
Media promotion
Networking
Objections
Offsite promotions
Onsite promotion
Personal Selling
Product attributes
Promotion
Promotion Mix
Proposal
Prospecting
Referrals
Sales
Sales promotion
Team Selling
Transactional Selling
Upselling

Understanding Sales

SALES

Sales is the process of determining customer needs and wants through planned, personalized communication intended to influence purchase decisions and ensure satisfaction.

Sales activities in the sports and entertainment field includes:

- Selling group tickets to a play
- Negotiating an event contract with a facility or venue
- Soliciting donations from alumni to fund scholarship opportunities
- Selling an event sponsorship package

Why is selling important?

- Selling is the revenue-producing element of the marketing process
- Sales is the only true revenue-producing function for an organization
- Selling helps customers make informed buying decisions
- Can result in customer satisfaction and repeat business

A general rule of thumb among sports and entertainment companies is that everyone employed by the organization represents a salesperson on some level. If someone who works in accounting knows a friend interested in purchasing tickets, they would be expected to refer that friend to someone on the sales staff who can help them with their purchase.

TYPES OF SALES

Personal Selling

Personal selling entails any person-to-person communication in which the seller has an opportunity to influence the consumer's buying decisions. The personal selling process is a two-way communication between a sales professional representing an organization and a prospective customer.

Example:

In a non-traditional example of personal selling, members of the Western Kentucky University football team went door-to-door selling football tickets. That season, players sold 300 season tickets and the Hilltoppers enjoyed the second-highest average attendance figures in school history. Since the introduction of the door-to-door selling effort, student attendance increased more than 80 percent.¹

What Makes Personal Selling Effective?

Benefits to personal selling:²

- The salesperson can immediately tailor the message he or she is communicating based on the prospective customer's response, feedback and buying signals.
- It allows for the communication of more information specifically relating to the customer needs than any other form of promotion.
- Potentially confusing or complex information can be explained, and the salesperson can be assured that the prospective customer has a complete understanding of the information being conveyed.
- The likelihood of the customer paying attention to the information being shared is greatly increased because the communication is face-to-face.
- Personal selling provides the best opportunity to establish solid working relationships, enhancing the probability of developing long term relationships with consumers.

¹ <http://myespn.go.com/blogs/ncfnation/0-9-296/Western-Kentucky-goes-door-to-door----again.html>

² Sports Marketing: A Strategic Perspective, M. Shank, p. 249



Personal Selling Categories

Inside Sales

Inside sales professionals typically sell company products and services over the phone, online, or other means of communication from inside the company's office. They either make outgoing calls to prospective customers or receive incoming orders or phone calls pertaining to company products or services.

- In team sports, an inside sales staff is often utilized for products and services that require minimal investment levels, such as mini ticket packages.
- In most instances, an inside sales staff consists primarily of telemarketers.
 - Telemarketers are sales professionals that make outbound telephone calls to prospective customers in order to sell company products and services.

Inside sales examples:

- According to a [report](#) from two Illinois State University researchers, the most successful collegiate athletic departments make as many as 3,500 outgoing phone calls each week to try to sell more tickets, an effort that their research suggests can generate \$1 million or more in additional revenue for the school's athletics program.
- [The Buffalo News](#) reported that the Buffalo Bandits professional lacrosse team has enjoyed the benefits provided by an effective inside sales staff. Prior to the start of the 2023 season, the franchise hired a staff to make outbound calls to sell tickets, resulting in an increase in attendance and revenue. Ticket sales are the primary source of revenue for National Lacrosse League teams.

Outside Sales

Outside sales professionals primarily communicate with potential customers in person, either onsite or at the prospect's place of business. Outside sales positions include ticket sales and sponsorship sales. Outside sales is sometimes referred to as "field sales" or "external sales".

Box Office Sales

Box office sales are located on site at a venue or facility and are sold to customers in person at the event or to future events.

- Movie theaters sell most of their tickets through box office sales, although more and more consumers are buying movie tickets in advance online through services like Fandango.

Sales Methods

Feature-Benefit Selling

The **feature-benefit selling** process involves matching specific product attributes to a customer's needs and wants.

- A company may have purchased club seats to entertain clients and would want to reward them for their business by allowing them to sit in the most comfortable seats possible at the game or event.

Product attributes (or features) are the basic, physical, and extended characteristics of an item.³

- Many professional sports teams sell tickets in club seating levels where the seats often have distinct product attributes that set them apart from general seating, such as wider seats, taller seat backs or video screens on the seats in front of them.

Customer benefits are the advantages or personal satisfaction a customer will get from a good or service.

- Comfort, convenience, and space are benefits of club seating.

Full Menu Marketing

Full menu marketing is the selling of a variety of products or services that meet virtually any customer needs and/or wants.

- A sales professional working for a minor league sports team may meet with a company and have the ability to offer a small sponsorship, a major sponsorship featuring exclusivity benefits, season tickets, group tickets, VIP tickets, parking or a combination of those options.

E-Commerce

E-commerce is the buying and selling of goods and services on the Internet or other digital platforms.

- Any consumer who is a fan of Disney may go online and purchase DVDs, plush toys, action figures, watches, ornaments or many other products.
- Sports teams, arena management companies and touring bands sell everything from merchandise to tickets online.
 - To encourage fans to purchase season tickets, the Portland Trail Blazers [website](#) outlined the benefits to being a season ticket holder and also featured a short video featuring exciting game highlights throughout the team's history as they prepared to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the franchise in 2019-20.

Direct Mail

Direct mail is a sales effort conducted exclusively by mail.

- Characteristically sent to large numbers of prospective customers soliciting orders for company products and services.
- To be effective, the direct mail approach must be:
 - Targeted
 - Personal
 - Measurable
 - Testable
 - Flexible
- Direct mail examples:
 - Ticket brochures
 - Pocket schedules and team posters
 - Solicitation (sales) letters
 - Fliers, postcards and additional print media
- In an effort to leverage the team's accomplishment of earning a playoff berth, the NHL's Tampa Bay Lightning utilized a direct mail strategy to boost ticket sales by sending 30,000 specially designed postcards to area businesses (the postcards featured each recipient's company name on the name plate above a player's locker in the Lightning locker room).
- As a result, the team generated over \$500,000 in new ticket revenue through their direct mailing campaigns. Said Lynn Wittenburg, VP of Marketing for the Lightning in an interview with the National Sports Forum, "The direct mail campaign was a quick and effective way for us to make the phones ring."⁴
- To communicate the team's decision to drop concessions prices at their new stadium, the Atlanta Falcons sent direct mail pieces to potential ticket buyers that included a \$2 bill (many of the new concessions items will be offered at a \$2 price point, including stadium staples like hot dogs).⁵
- A creative spin on traditional direct mail
 - Under the guidance of sports marketing guru Jon Spoelstra, the New Jersey Nets basketball team sent rubber chickens wearing tank tops featuring a special message to season ticket holders who had not yet renewed for the upcoming season. The tank tops read: "You're about to foul out! However, you can avoid the bench and keep on playing. Just read the attached." Included in the package was a renewal letter. The result of the campaign was a 93 percent renewal rate, up from an average of around 80% in the years before Spoelstra took over as team president.⁶

⁴ "Tampa Bay Lightning and Full House Turn Emotional Playoff Run Into New Sales." (7 March 2012). National

⁵ <http://money.cnn.com/2016/05/17/news/nfl-atlanta-falcons-concessions/>

⁶ *Marketing Outrageously: How To Market A Product Nobody Wants*, Spoelstra, p. 214-217



Digital/Electronic Sales And Marketing

- E-mail marketing and other digital strategies can be incredibly productive for a sports or entertainment property.
- Social media platforms are increasingly providing value for sports and entertainment properties as an additional avenue for generating sales.
 - For example, the Atlanta Hawks made a limited number of playoff tickets available [exclusively](#) on Twitter for a playoff run several years ago, becoming one of the first teams in professional sports to sell tickets through a social media platform
 - A number of collegiate athletic programs, such as Ohio University, have a Twitter handle dedicated specifically to ticketing (@OhioTicketSales).
 - The University of North Carolina actually has a Twitter handle devoted to service and another dedicated to sales (@UNCTix and @UNCTicketSales).

THE SALES PROCESS

Steps in the sales process:

1. Understand the product or service
2. Identify prospective customers and develop leads
3. Qualify and gather information about a prospective customer
4. Contact prospective customers (the sales call)
5. Establish credibility, rapport and a reason to communicate with the customer
6. Identify and confirm a customer's needs
7. Presentation and proposal
8. Ask prospective customers to act on an interest in company products or services
9. Handle objections
10. Close
11. Follow-up
12. Fulfillment and service
13. Evaluation

1. Understand The Product Or Service

- What inventory (seat locations etc.) is available to be sold?
- How much does the product or service cost?
- What are the features and benefits to your product or service?

2. Identify Prospective Customers And Develop Leads

- Leads are the names of individuals and companies who could become future customers.
- This step is often referred to as prospecting.

3. Qualify And Gather Information About A Prospective Customer

- Do they have experience with your team, venue, or event?
- What influence do they have over the purchasing decision?

4. Contact Prospective Customers (The Sales Call)

- The sales call is the initial form of communication in which the salesperson makes contact with the prospective customer.
- Sales calls can take place via telephone, e-mail or in person.
- Utilized by both inside sales and outside sales representatives.
- Often salespeople will use a pre-written script to help guide them with a telephone sales call.

5. Establish Credibility, Rapport, And A Reason To Communicate With The Customer

- Secure a sale or schedule a face-to-face appointment.
- The face-to-face appointment provides a valuable opportunity for the sales professional to build rapport and establish a relationship with the customer.

6. Identify And Confirm A Customer's Needs

- Sales people often conduct a "needs analysis" to determine where company products and services may be able to assist a prospective customer in meeting their organization's goals and objectives.



7. Presentation & Proposal

- In this step, the sales professional will increase customer awareness and interest in company products and services.
- This communication takes place in some form of a presentation.
- This information can be presented in the form of a proposal.
- A **proposal** is a written recommendation of products or services his or her organization may offer to meet those customer needs uncovered in the needs analysis.
- Each proposal is customized to meet specific customer needs.

8. Ask Prospective Customers To Act On An Interest In Company Products Or Services

- Asking for acceptance of the proposal or for a purchase decision.
- The sales professional must be prepared for any hesitation from the potential customer.

9. Handle Objections

- **Objections** are a prospective customer's concerns or hesitations in making a purchase decision.
- Objections occur when there is lingering doubt or unanswered questions in the mind of the prospect.
- The prospective customer may be favorably inclined to make a purchase but needs clarification, more concessions, or approval by another party.
- It is the responsibility of the sales professional to uncover and overcome each objection to the customer's satisfaction.

Objection examples include:

- "I'm not a sports fan"
- "I don't have time to attend games"
- "We don't have a budget for sponsorship..."
- "I need to discuss this with my boss..."
- "I can get the same results for less money by doing something else..."
- "Tickets are too expensive..." (19.1% of respondents to ESPN's "State of Sports" survey indicated that ticket prices were the "biggest rip-off" in sports)

10. Close

- The close is the stage of the sales cycle where the prospective customer and the sales professional come to an agreement on pricing and services, in which the customer typically commits to a purchase of some kind.
- The close is when the prospective customer becomes an official client.
- Sales professionals often make the mistake of thinking this is the last step of the sales process.

11. Follow Up

- The follow up stage is critical to ensure a satisfied and happy customer
- The organization is responsible for ensuring all services agreed upon throughout the sales process are fulfilled
- Much new business for any organization comes from existing business

12. Fulfillment & Service

- Fulfillment is the process of following through and delivering on all promised services to the customer.
- Meeting and exceeding customer expectations is integral to retaining their business in the future
 - In a [Wall Street Journal story](#), Jay Fishman, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Travelers explained why Travelers decided to extend its sponsorship of a PGA Tour event through 2024: "The tournament has grown tremendously in the last seven years and has exceeded our expectations. With this agreement, we will continue to build on this world-class event for the fans, the players, our employees and our community."
- Renewal is the agreement between the organization and customer to continue the business relationship for a predetermined, often contractual, period of time.
 - In addition to sponsorship and media rights, renewals also occur between ticket holders and an organization.
 - As season tickets are a key revenue driver for many sports teams, renewing these customers is often a top priority.
 - Teams offer incentives to entice season ticket holders to renew seats.
 - Incentives typically include benefits available exclusive to season ticket packages.

- include: such incentives as private autograph sessions, early entry into games, additional ticket discounts, flexible payment plans, concession and merchandise credits, better seating locations, access to team practices and private events, etc.
- Columbia University rolled out a unique season ticket benefit with the announcement of “[Zip Pass](#)”, a private concessions line accessible only to season ticket holders (a trend that has caught on with many sports teams and venues).
- The NHL’s Dallas Stars and Washington Capitals treat season ticket holders to a day at the local six flags amusement park, while the NBA’s LA Clippers spent a day with season ticket holders at Universal Studios.
- Many organizations are turning to more creative and unique benefit offers to help retain customers.
 - In 2019, the Minnesota Timberwolves offered season ticket holders a once-in-a-lifetime [experience](#) by inviting them to Paisley Park, a private concert, and the chance to interact with the team’s players as the franchise unveiled their Prince-inspired “city edition” Nike uniforms.
 - In 2020, the LA Galaxy enlisted the help of their international star player, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, to help encourage season ticket holders to renew.
 - The team [emailed](#) season ticket holders with a pre-recorded message from the famously brash soccer star that simply stated “Dear (Season Ticket Holder), You will renew now. – Zlatan”.
 - Click [here](#) to see a video of Zlatan in action on the phone on the Galaxy’s YouTube page.

13. Evaluation

- Measuring the results of a promotional investment (season tickets, luxury suites, sponsorships, endorsement agreements) help an organization determine its effectiveness.
- Evaluations are typically objective (sales fluctuations) but can also be subjective (increased media attention or public awareness).
- It is important for the sales professional to be involved in this step of the process to gain a better understanding of whether or not they are meeting client needs.
- Many sports and entertainment organizations set ticket, merchandise, and concessions sales objectives with daily, weekly, and monthly targets. The sales data is then compared with information from the same date for the previous year.
 - Disneyland might set a daily guest target of 50,000 visitors during the winter months based on sales results during that period in previous years, then establish similar goals for weekly merchandise sales and monthly concessions sales.
 - For example, the addition of “Rule 40” (a new rule that allows individual athletes to partner with non-Olympic sponsors) could potentially hinder the value of McDonald’s current deal with the International Olympics Committee.
 - John Lewicki, who oversees McDonald’s global Olympic sponsorship program, says the company will use these games to evaluate whether to continue future Olympic deals.
 - Said Lewicki in a recent [Reuters](#) story: “If we find rule 40 impacts the value of our sponsorship, we could always go back and renegotiate for the future.”⁷

⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-rio-under-armour-insight-idUSKCN0ZF1NI>

Sales Strategies, Skills & Techniques

SALES STRATEGIES

Personal Sales

Collaborative Selling

In **collaborative selling** the salesperson and client take time to understand one another and develop a relationship according to the salesperson's offer and the client's needs.

Transactional Selling

In **transactional selling** the salesperson and client have limited interaction and the sale is based mostly on price or a specific element.

Team Selling

Team selling is a variation of collaborative selling that includes multiple people from the selling or buying organization, or both.

SALES SKILLS & TECHNIQUES

Basic sales skills and techniques used in sports and entertainment include:

- Prospecting
- Referrals
- Networking
- Cold calling

Prospecting

Prospecting is the process of consistently researching for and seeking out new customers for an organization's products and services. This is a very detail-oriented process requiring careful research and analysis.

Sales professionals may explore several avenues when prospecting to develop quality sales leads:

- Trade Shows
- Industry Events
- Networking Events
- Consumer Lists
- Directories
- Industry Publications

Referrals

Referrals occur when an existing customer recommends another organization or individual to a sales professional as a potential customer. Referrals provide an extremely effective means for generating new sales. Between 60% and 70% of all fitness industry sales are the direct result of referrals.¹¹

- According to a Bleacher Report [study](#), 36% of U.S. soccer fans aged 26-39 became soccer fans due to influence from their friends.
- To encourage referrals, the Vancouver Whitecaps offered a 12% discount on season ticket packages and a 6% "commission" (credited to their account) for fans who refer friends to purchase season tickets.
 - Click [here](#) for an in-depth look at the Whitecaps' referral program from the National Sports Forum.



- According to the [Nashville Post](#), Tennessee State launched a 'Drive for Five' campaign with the goal to increase season ticket sales to 5,000 by the start of the 2019 football season, leaning heavily on referral business to help them reach that goal.
- To incentivize referrals, the program offered 50 percent off TSU merchandise at a home game to anyone who referred someone to purchase a season ticket package.

Networking

Networking occurs when a group of like-minded business professionals gather to help each other to cultivate sales.

Business-to-business (also known as B2B) marketing involves activities one business makes in effort to sell their products and services to another business, rather than to the individual consumer.

Sales people often involve themselves in local organizations and functions to connect with as many new people as possible. Organizations like the Chamber of Commerce provide an exceptional means for meeting other business professionals who could become future customers or offer referrals. For example, ticket sales staff for the Portland Trail Blazers are likely to network at events with business professionals involved with organizations like Portland Executives Association, Portland Business Alliance, Oregon Executives Association, Portland Area Networking Group, and Women Entrepreneurs of Oregon.

Cold Calling

Cold calling refers to a sales professional's effort to generate new business through outgoing telephone calls without any previous communication with the prospective customer. This technique is generally a less productive means for generating sales than other techniques (networking and referrals) because the personal relationship element is non-existent.

Importance of Customer Service

WHY IS CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPORTANT?

Customer service is the action taken by the seller to make the relationship between the organization and its customers satisfactory. Many organizations strive to meet and exceed customer expectations, often integrating service goals with company mission statements. Service represents a critical step in the sales process and is ultimately about gaining and retaining the customer base.

It is much harder to find new customers than to keep the ones you already have, and exceeding customer expectations is critical to the success of any sports organization.

It is the role of the customer service professional to help customers enjoy and value their relationship with the sports or entertainment organization.

Who are the Customers?

In sport, a customer is anyone who purchases a product or service. This is the end user for whatever product is being manufactured or service that is being provided.

Examples of sport customers include:

- Season ticket holders
- Runners registering for a marathon
- Businesses sponsoring an event
- High school athletes purchasing equipment
- A fan purchasing a jersey of their favorite player online

Customer Service Benefits

A sports or entertainment organization that provides excellent customer service and benefit in a variety of ways:

- Increased levels of customer retention and cost reduction
- Decline in negative associations with organization via word-of-mouth advertising
- An opportunity to provide a source of differentiation
- Amplified levels of profitability
- Creation of brand loyalty
- New sales opportunities through positive word-of-mouth associations

Customer Retention

Sales professionals work hard to connect with customers. Once an organization gains a new customer, it is important to build loyalty and trust to maintain a solid base of core customers. **Customer retention** (renewal) is crucial to any sports team as season ticket and sponsorship revenue is a vital piece of the organizations' financial viability.

Some interesting statistics to consider:

- According to the Customer Service Institute, it can cost up to five times as much to acquire a new customer than it does to service an existing one.
- According to the same institution, customers tell twice as many people about a bad experience over a good one.
- 68% of all customers will eventually switch service providers (entertainment options, advertising outlets etc.)
- It takes twelve positive service incidents to make up for one negative incident.

Sport organizations recognize the importance of customer service. Companies invest significant time and money in customer service training programs to make sure they have staff that can and will provide customers with the best possible experience. Providing fans with exceptional service is a top priority.



Jim Bathey, Vice President of Ticket Sales for the Milwaukee Brewers, once told the National Sports Forum (e-newsletter) that the key to retaining new customers and attracting new ones is to provide “over the top” customer service, saying “We have been successful at selling tickets over the last couple of years because our focus is to provide over the top customer service and because our (sales staff) develops personal relationships with our (customers).”

Service is a priority, but that does not mean getting it right is easy. Understanding the customer becomes incredibly important, especially in sport where there are so many aspects to the consumer experience where frustration can occur. Organizations must learn when and where these frustrations could arise and develop a plan accordingly for how best to satisfy the customer.

To illustrate this point, Turnkey Sports & Entertainment (a marketing research company) published a report suggesting a season ticket holder’s overall satisfaction was negatively impacted by a simple lack of knowing who to contact when they had a concern.

Turning Service Into Sales

An effective customer service plan can help an organization to turn service into sales:

- For most segments of the sports industry, 70% of consumers are referred by word of mouth from existing customers.⁸
- Sports and entertainment marketing professionals have a responsibility to retain those customers to grow the fan base

Many organizations create marketing strategies that cater to both existing and new customers with an emphasis shifting toward existing customers.

Positive relationships with an organization’s customer base enable them to effectively implement and utilize referral programs:

- The minor league hockey franchise Corpus Christi Hooks offered a free, personalized team jersey to any ticket holder who referred up to three people to purchase Hooks season tickets.⁹
- DirecTV, a longtime leader in delivering sports programming to fans, offers its customers \$100 in credit toward their cable bill for every new customer they refer while providing a significant “new subscriber” discount.¹⁰

Upselling

Upselling opportunities become more frequent with happy customers. **Upselling** is the process of selling additional products to a customer at the time of the order. For example, a theater fan might call to purchase tickets to an upcoming performance. During the conversation, the sales representative may suggest group tickets to that event or additional tickets to another upcoming play.

- The NHL’s Phoenix Coyotes created up-selling opportunities when they advertised seats with a partially obstructed view for only eight dollars, then turned those seats into 12 game mini plans, and then sold those same fans seats with better views of the ice (at an additional cost).¹¹

Empathetic Approach to Sales and Service (listening to fans)

By recognizing the day-to-day challenges facing most consumers (fans) and understanding what consumers want, some organizations take an empathetic approach to sales and service.

- The Seattle Sounders soccer franchise gives season-ticket holders the opportunity to vote out the team’s GM every four years if they are disappointed in team performance, an approach that has helped cultivate one of the most loyal fan bases in American sports.
- Per game, the Sounders outdraw the Mariners almost 2 to 1, their attendance of nearly 39,000 would place eighth in the English Premier League, merchandise sales are on a par with the Seahawks, and NBA commissioner David Stern called the Sounders “the most successful expansion team in the history of sports.”¹²
- The [Review Journal](#) reported when UFC fighter Jon Jones was taken off the main event at UFC 200 for a doping violation, the organization offered fans an opportunity to receive a refund for their tickets.

⁸ *Sales Success in Sports Marketing*, Miller, Shaad, Burch, Turner, p.94

⁹ <http://www.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t482>

¹⁰ <http://www.directvreferral.com>

¹¹ <http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2016/03/14/Facilities/Coyotes-seating.aspx?hl=upsell&sc=0>

¹² http://espn.go.com/sports/soccer/story/_/id/7929299/soccer-seattle-sounders-prove-mls-put-fans-seats-espn-magazine



Soliciting Feedback

Many sports and entertainment organizations proactively solicit feedback to help improve anything from customer relations and fan experience to the product itself.

- NBA Commissioner Adam Silver encouraged fans to email him directly (Adam@NBA.com) with any ideas they had to improve the quality of the NBA All-Star Game.
- Fans were also encouraged to share ideas through Facebook and Twitter.
- When the NLL announced that the city of New York would be getting a new franchise, the front office decided to let fans determine the new team name.
 - The team asked fans to vote on the franchise website, and overwhelmingly the community [selected](#) “Riptide” as the new name for the team.
- When the Minor League Baseball Kannapolis Intimidators sought to rebrand the franchise as part of its “Branded by You” campaign, the team penned an open letter to fans requesting feedback on a new name.
 - Click [here](#) to read the letter in its entirety.
- When developing a branding strategy and determining a nickname for its expansion NHL franchise, the Seattle Kraken leaned heavily on feedback from fans.
 - Said Tod Leiweke, the team’s CEO, in a [statement](#): “The Kraken is a name born of the fans. It was suggested and championed by the fans.”
 - In the team’s inaugural season in 2022, the Kraken lowered the price on several concessions items midway through the season based on feedback from fans, with Mr. Leiweke telling mynorthwest.com in an interview, “We listen every day. We listen to every game...(and) we’ve heard the fans and we know that they want some family priced items.”
- To add more perceived value for season ticket holders, the NHL’s Ottawa Senators’ solicited the opinions of its season ticket customers on a potential change to the team’s logo.
- Click [here](#) to see some of the new logo ideas shared with ticket holders from Chris Creamer’s SportsLogos.Net website.
- The Baltimore Ravens added 16 new escalators in the stadium in response to fans who had been [complaining](#) for years about the challenges in reaching the venue’s 500 level.
- When the new owners of the Denver Broncos took over the franchise, one of the first orders of business was to prioritize the solicitation of feedback from its fans. According to [Denver 7 News](#), the team sent surveys to its season ticket holders asking for feedback on a range of fan experience topics, such as:
 - Ranking the importance of Broncos traditions, like Miles the mascot standing above the scoreboard before the fourth quarter, the IN-COM-PLETE chant and Thunder running the field after touchdowns.
 - Ranking the tailgate experience, preferred method of travel to games
 - Their preferred location of a new stadium with current location, downtown, northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest as choices.
 - How would the presence of a mixed-use development — retail stores, etc — impact when they arrive and leave the stadium.

HOW CAN CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVE?

According to a “State of the Industry” poll conducted by the Sports Business Journal, 20% of sports business executives think the sports industry is behind the rest of the business world when it comes to customer service. So how can organizations improve levels of customer service?¹³

¹³ <https://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2017/11/27/Reader-Survey/State-of-Industry.aspx>



Overall, levels of customer service can be improved when organizations proactively take the steps necessary to meet and exceed the expectations of the customer:

1. Create and maintain an open line of communication with fans.
2. Exceeding levels of customer expectation.
3. Provide a comfortable environment for fans.
4. Listen and respond to customer feedback (includes suggestions, criticism, compliments and complaints).
5. Incorporate the customer service element into the organization's mission statement
6. Respond quickly to customer complaints.
7. Take a proactive approach in making sure the stakeholders (ticket holders, sponsors, donors etc.) know the organization appreciates their support.
8. Determine appropriate staff size dedicated to customer service.
9. Effectively utilize technology.

1. Create And Maintain An Open Line Of Communication With Fans

- [Turnkey](#) Sports & Entertainment published a report (and subsequent infographic) suggesting a season ticket holder's overall satisfaction was negatively impacted by a simple lack of knowing who to contact when they had a concern.
 - Click [here](#) to view the infographic

2. Exceeding Levels Of Customer Expectation

The best sports and entertainment organizations make exceeding levels of customer expectation the rule, not the exception throughout the entire organization (establishing a service culture).

- To improve their level of customer satisfaction, Michigan International Speedway front office staff attended customer service training at the Disney Institute, according to a [Sports Business Journal](#) report.¹⁴
- One young football fan from Oklahoma (where no NFL team currently calls home) sent a letter to every NFL team asking why he should root for them...click [here](#) to read how the Carolina Panthers (as the only NFL team to respond) probably earned a loyal fan for life.

3. Provide A Comfortable Environment For Fans

- Venues and facilities should be clean, music volume should not be too loud, and temperature should be comfortable (indoor events).

4. Listen And Respond To Customer Feedback (Includes Suggestions, Criticism, Compliments And Complaints)

- The owner of the Washington Capitals, Ted Leonsis, took a proactive approach to encouraging valuable fan feedback. To engage the consumer to maximize the organization's level of customer service, he turned to the web and used an online message board. He asked, "If you could change one thing about your experience with the Caps, what would it be?" His staff reviewed the fan input and created a response forum called "You Asked for It." The most popular suggestions were listed with the team's response which included the Caps' plans for changes, new developments and ideas for new programs.¹⁵
- The Executive Chef at Miller Park (home of the Milwaukee Brewers) took to the [Brewers' blog page](#) to interact with fans and address questions and concerns on the message board relating to concessions items after a review of the stadium food was posted online.
- According to the [Oregonian](#), the Oregon State Beavers basketball program ranked first in overall season ticket holder satisfaction and by polling fans to find out what suggestions they had to improve the overall game experience, they are sure to maintain high levels of brand loyalty and customer retention.
 - According to the news story, the most common suggestions for the program were a better sound system, improved concessions and cheaper parking. As a result, the Beavers contracted a new concessionaire to offer new food items and more concession locations for home games next season.
- Soliciting fan feedback isn't only important in the context of season ticket and sponsorship renewal, but also every other aspect of running a successful organization.
 - According to [Sports Business Journal](#), Major League Soccer conducted market research to study the characteristics and consumer behavior of soccer fans in the U.S.

¹⁴ The 2001-02 NBA Marketing Plan, distributed by the NBA league office to each NBA franchise

¹⁵ <http://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/article/65044>

- The data collected helped the league to create “internal report card(s)” for each individual franchise to measure how well the team is meeting the needs of its fanbase.
- In 2023, New York Mets fans voiced their frustration with the team’s jerseys, including the color and the size of the jersey sponsor patch on the sleeve. After listening to fan feedback and discussing the matter with the sponsor (NewYork-Presbyterian), the franchise announced plans to [tweak the design](#) by updating colors and shrinking the size of the jersey patch.

5. Incorporate The Customer Service Element Into The Organization’s Mission Statement

- For example, the Chicago Bulls place an emphasis on service in their mission statement as part of their organizational philosophy.
 - “The Chicago Bulls organization is a sports entertainment company dedicated to winning NBA Championships, growing new basketball fans, and providing superior entertainment, value and service.”
 - Click [here](#) to read the team’s mission statement in its entirety.

6. Respond Quickly To Customer Complaints

Successful sports and entertainment organizations take a proactive approach in making sure the stakeholders (ticket holders, sponsors, donors etc.) know the organization appreciates their support.

- Many athletic programs, the California Men’s Basketball team, make annual [phone calls](#) to personally thank ticket holders for their support.
- When student-athletes representing all 20 of the University of California, Santa Barbara intercollegiate athletics teams called donors to the Gaucho Fund during the annual Thank-a-Thon, raising \$2.2 million, the second highest single year of funds since the launch of the Campaign for UC Santa Barbara in 2005.
 - The University also received a record single gift to athletics of over \$2 million for scholarship support for both tennis programs that year.¹⁶
- One of the biggest challenges facing sports and entertainment marketing professionals during the pandemic was determining ways to “make good” relationships with team partners when seasons were canceled and postponed.
 - Without games being played in front of fans or on television, sponsors were not receiving the exposure and connection with fans that they had paid for and teams were forced to consider “make good” strategies to keep partners happy.

7. Determine Appropriate Staff Size Dedicated To Customer Service

- [Sports Business Journal](#) reports the Philadelphia Union set records in renewal percentage and revenue after beefing up their customer service staff.
 - The staff increase meant instead of just 1 service rep available per 1,400 ticket holders, the team would provide 1 rep for every 500 ticket holders.
 - In large part to the increased attention to service, the team’s 86% renewal rate far exceeded the league average of 80%.

8. Effectively Utilizing Technology

- The Atlanta Braves integrated a customer service “bot” into their ballpark app, allowing the team to collect fan feedback and provide answers to basic questions about parking, concessions, ticketing and other stadium-related topics.
- Last season, Minor League Baseball signed a deal to create bilingual chatbots that will provide in-venue, real-time customer service for its partner ball clubs.
 - According to Kurt Hunzeker, former MiLB vice president of marketing strategy and research, in an interview with the [New York Business Journal](#): “It’s all about using technology to help our clubs be more responsive and better serve our fans and allow them to have a more personalized experience at the ballpark.”
- According to [Sports Business Journal](#), seven different NBA teams had enlisted the services of chatbots by 2023. The chatbots were added to team apps and websites to help answer fan questions relating to ticket and merchandise purchases, along with gameday logistics.
 - Fans can interact with the chatbot with prompts like:
 - “Show me (Atlanta star) Trae Young highlights”
 - “Best lot to park at”
 - “I want to buy a ticket to the next game”

¹⁶ <http://ucsbgauchos.com/genrel/spec-rel/Giving-Release-2014>

Sales Professionals

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SALES PROFESSIONAL?

A good sales professional typically embodies some combination of the following traits and characteristics:

- Belief in the product
- Good listener
- Sense of humor
- Self-motivated and self-disciplined
- Strong work ethic
- Personable
- Knowledgeable
- Someone who asks questions and listens
- Self-confident (not to be confused with arrogant!)
- Strong ability to build relationships
- Capable of handling the inevitable frequent rejection
- Effective time management skills

Sales Skills

In addition to a common set of personality traits and characteristics, successful sales professionals develop and hone their sales skills over time. For example, good salespeople will never lose contact with prospective customers.

Other skills that successful sales professionals develop include:

- Consistently ask for the sale
- Follow up with customers after the sale with the same dedication they demonstrated before the sale (building strong relationships)
- Developing a “game plan” to devise a sales strategy that best caters to their strengths
 - A quality game plan includes gaining knowledge not only of company products and services, but of the backgrounds of prospective customers
- Devise and implement effective time management plans

What Characteristics do Employers Look for in Sales Professionals?

Rick Campbell, former Vice-President of Premium Seating for Comcast-Spectacor (Philadelphia Flyers and Philadelphia 76ers), offers insight on characteristics that shape an effective sales professional: *“We look for salespeople who are self-driven with a desire to learn, along with a sense of self confidence, knowledgeable about the industry, and a likable personality. Building, maintaining and nurturing relationships are incredibly important to the sales cycle, so we want someone we know can be effective in that area. Finally, we want someone who can display a track record of excellence and can show how a strong work ethic led to those previous successes.”*¹⁷

¹⁷ Campbell, R. (2005) Telephone interview. Jan. 6



WHAT IS PROMOTION?

Promotion is any form of communication used to inform, persuade, or remind people about company products or services. It plays a significant role in the creation and maintenance of the levels of commitment and emotional involvement consumers have with the brand. Effective promotions can help generate sales while creating opportunities to engage and connect with consumers. They can also help to create or maintain a positive image for a sports organization or brand.

The Promotion Mix

The **promotion mix** consists of any combination of advertising, sales promotion, publicity, direct marketing, and personal selling. It could also include trade shows and other exhibition events.

Key factors that affect decisions regarding the promotions mix:¹⁸

- Stage of product life cycle
- Distribution channels
- Competitor strategies
- The product or service being promoted
- Organization resources
- Accessibility of various promotional methods

FORMS OF PROMOTION

In traditional marketing, there are four basic types of promotion:

- Advertising
- Sales Promotion
- Personal Selling
- Publicity

Sport organizations, however, often include a variety of unique forms of promotion, with the most common being sales promotion.

Other forms of promotion seen frequently as part of a sports organization's marketing strategy include:

- Onsite promotions
- Event promotions
- Offsite promotions
- Media promotions

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion involves activities or communications that encourage consumers to purchase products or services. These promotions are usually short-term, encouraging consumers to act quickly. For example, a local health or fitness club may run a sales promotion offering "limited-time" membership opportunities.

¹⁸ Fundamentals of Sport Marketing, Pitts, Stottlar, Auxiliary Materials, PowerPoint Presentation, Slide #123

Forms of Sales Promotion:

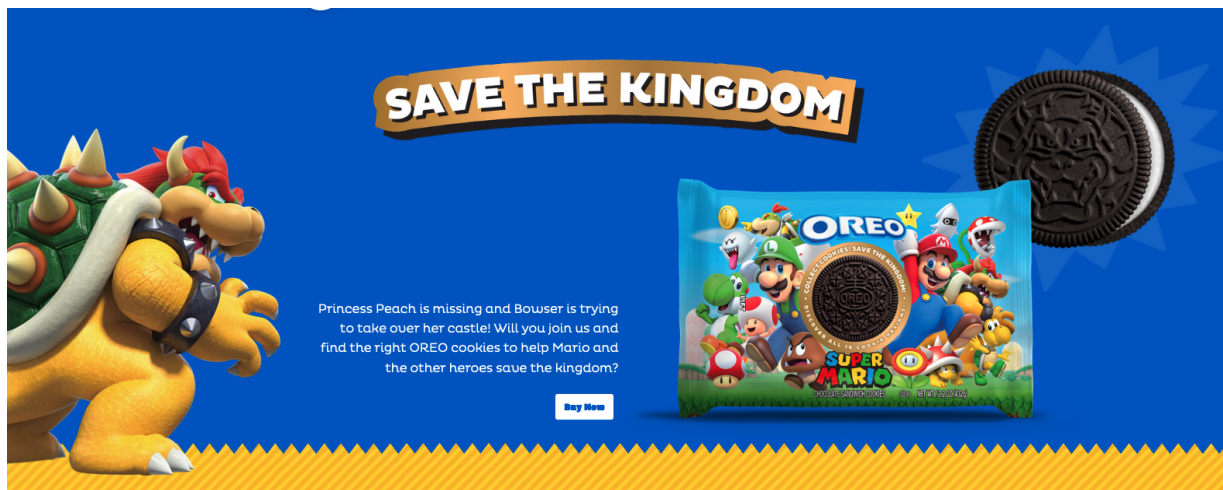
- Limited or Special Editions
- Giveaways
- Contests and sweepstakes
- Sampling
- Point of purchase
- Discounts and couponing



Limited or Special Edition Promotions

Another popular example of sales promotion includes the offer of “limited” or “special” edition products (or “for a limited time only”).

For example, Oreo [partnered](#) with Nintendo prior to the release of the 2023 blockbuster film ‘The Super Mario Bros. Movie’ for a limited edition promotion featuring ‘Super Mario’ themed packaging on Oreo cookies with 16 different designs and different characters in each package.



Apparel and footwear brands often engage in sales promotion featuring limited or special edition products to align with the Boston Marathon.

- For the Boston Marathon, brands often offer special edition versions of running shoes (such as Adidas’ customizable sneakers that let runners print up to 10 characters — or their personal record post-race — on the side of the shoe).¹⁹
 - Brooks Running Company introduced a limited edition Boston-themed variation of one of its popular running shoes featuring a [lobster](#) design while New Balance made a few thousand special edition pairs of running shoes available with the word “[Fastah](#)” emblazoned on the sole and the city’s skyline printed on the insole.
 - In 2019, Dunkin’ and Saucony, two iconic Boston-based brands, collaborated on a limited-edition shoe release to celebrate the Boston Marathon that came in a shoe box that resembled a Dunkin’ doughnut box.
 - The shoes quickly sold out, generating not only sales but publicity and brand awareness for two companies that were not official sponsors of the race.
 - Last year, Dunkin’ [revived](#) the promotion, this time collaborating with Puma as a footwear brand partner, donating pairs of shoes to hospitals around the country along with offering limited supplies available for sale at Puma’s website, its retail locations, and at Dick’s Sporting Goods.



Giveaway Promotions

Sports teams love giveaway promotions to help boost attendance. Popular giveaways include replica jerseys, bobbleheads, posters, magnetic schedules and hats.

- Examples of premium giveaways include free bats to the first 2000 fans through the gate at Yankee Stadium, or “swag bag” giveaways containing cosmetics and other gifts given out to attendees at the Cannes Film Festival.
- [Promotions](#) range from traditional (like the aforementioned “bat day” promotion) to the wacky and bizarre (such as the 2014 Charleston RiverDogs’ “[Disco Demolition 2: You better believ it](#)” event where fans were offered \$1 tickets for bringing in Miley Cyrus or Justin Bieber music and merchandise to be blown up after the game)
- Last year, the Chicago White Sox giveaway promotion schedule [included](#) a crew neck shirt, hockey jersey, soccer jersey, pennant, Hawaiian shirt and bobbleheads.

SAVE the DATE

		
CREWNECK April 2 vs MIN Coca-Cola	HOCKEY JERSEY April 30 vs LAA Guaranteed Rate	SOCCER JERSEY Sept 4 vs MIN Coca-Cola

			
A.L. CENTRAL CHAMPS PENNANT BMO	HAWAIIAN SHIRT Beggars Pizza	BOBBLEHEADS	ELVIS NIGHT Beggars Pizza

CHECK OUT THE FULL PROMO SCHEDULE:

[**whitesox.com/promos**](https://whitesox.com/promos)

¹⁹ <http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/2015/04/14/special-edition-sneakers-hit-street-before-boston-marathon/Uo3HpVvNjJ0FOU8hP0ML8H/story.html>

Contests And Sweepstakes

- In keeping with the trend of creating unique fan experiences for consumers, Jack's Links rolled out a Major League Fishing “[Ultimate Dream](#)” sweepstakes providing a chance for 30 fans to go fishing with a MLF pro.²⁰
- Denny's launched a sweepstakes as part of a “Solo: A Star Wars Story” movie tie-in promotion that encouraged Star Wars fans to come to a local restaurant and play a virtual dice game for a chance to win prizes including movie tickets and autographed movie posters.
- Nestle Waters teamed up with WWE for a co-branded “Choose Water” campaign that featured a sweepstakes offering a trip for four to the WWE SummerSlam event in Toronto in 2019.
 - According to [Media Post](#), fans just needed to follow WWE on Twitter or Instagram and post using a branded hashtag about how they were making healthier beverage, food or lifestyle decisions to enter the sweepstakes.
- In 2022, Wonderful Pistachios' teamed up with Marvel, aligning with “Groot”, a popular character from the ‘Guardians of the Galaxy’ films, for a sweepstakes promotion
 - Fans who entered the [sweepstakes](#) had a chance to win a grand prize trip to Las Vegas to visit Marvel's Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N., along with a one year's supply of Wonderful Pistachios. Thirty additional winners received limited-edition “I Am Groot” and Wonderful Pistachios dual-branded gift box including a t-shirt, reusable water bottle and pistachios.
- In 2023, NASCAR celebrated its 75th with a wide ranging “[Thank You, Fans](#)” marketing campaign that featured a sweepstakes promotion that encouraged fans to share their fandom stories for a chance to win an all-expenses-paid, premium experience at NASCAR's Championship Weekend at Phoenix Raceway.

Sampling

- RockTape, a brand of athletic tape, sponsored the 2017 Reebok CrossFit Games and one of the components of the sponsorship enables the brand to distribute samples at CrossFit events.
- As part of their three-year deal with U.S. Ski & Snowboarding, Clif Bar (the energy bar), will not only be available to athletes in abundance, but samples will be provided to fans attending the various USSA events.²¹
- Every year during the college football season, Texas Pete Hot Sauce sponsors a tailgate tour, providing tailgating fans at ACC, Big Ten, Big 12 and Pac-10 schools with samples of its products.²²
- As presenting sponsor of the Dew Tour, Mountain Dew provides product samples at all participating event venues.²³
- As part of La Roche-Posay's sponsorship of the 2021 Australian Open as the official sunscreen [partner](#) of the event, the company set up Sunscreen Stations at the venue offering free samples for tennis fans in attendance.
- To promote the release of the EA Sports video game [F1 22](#) in 2023, Xbox introduced “[Free Play Weekend](#)”, providing opportunities for fans to play the game for free by taking the wheel and creating their own racing destiny, play with friends in the multiplayer mode, and immerse themselves in F1 life.

Point Of Purchase (Also Known As Point Of Sale)

- Each year, grocery stores around the country often feature creative point of purchase displays featuring a Super Bowl or March Madness theme.
- According to [Hollywood Reporter](#), Mtime (Warcraft's exclusive merchandising partner in China) credited their use of POP displays for helping them sell over \$10 million in merchandise prior to the Warcraft film's release.
 - In addition to 20 large-scale interactive exhibitions in upscale shopping malls, Mtime created 130 movie specialty stores in Chinese cinemas and then brought in another 150 pop-up stands during the movie's first week.
 - Moviegoers were given a 15% discount if they presented a Warcraft ticket stub.

Discounts & Couponing

- The latest fan engagement study (conducted by Catalyst) revealed that 44% of soccer fans “liked” or “followed” a brand on social media as a result of the brand posting a coupon or discount offer online.²⁴
- After Damian Lillard dropped 71 points in a regular season game in 2023, Adidas [launched](#) a sales promotion by dropping the price of the “Dame 8” sneakers to \$71, a discount of nearly 50%.

²⁰ http://www.majorleaguefishing.com/news_details.aspx?id=15570

²¹ <http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Daily/Issues/2016/06/23/Marketing-and-Sponsorship/USSA.aspx?hl=sample&sc=0>

²² <http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2010/10/20101011/SBJ-In-Depth/Sponsors-Become-Part-Of-Tailgate-Experience.aspx?hl=texas%20pete%20hot%20sauce&sc=0>

²³ <http://business.transworld.net/news/dew-tour-announces-partners-2016-summer-skateboard-competition-weekend/#VQRHELJcPaFUhmE0.99>

²⁴ <http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2014/10/13/Research-and-Ratings/Sports-Fan-Engagement-Study.aspx>

- Two seasons ago, the Minnesota Twins experienced one of the biggest attendance drops in Major League Baseball to start the season, according to [USA Today](#). To combat the decline in ticket sales, the Twins launched a discounted ticket program, reducing ticket prices to \$5 for select tickets to all the team's home games for the month of May. As a result of the "flash sale" promotion, the team [sold](#) all 34,000 seats that were available in less than 48 hours.



Onsite Promotions

Onsite promotions take place at or around a venue on game or event days.

In-Game Promotion

In-game promotions take place on the playing field and typically occur when there is a break in the action, like half-time. Many sports organizations consider the on-field promotions to be one of their most valuable and profitable pieces of sponsorship inventory.

Fan engagement promotion examples:

- The New York Mets host a "Family Sundays" promotion which allows fans 12 and under to run the bases following the conclusion of the game.
- Half-court shot promotions
 - A VCU student once made a half-court shot at half time of a VCU home basketball game to win a free Papa John's pizza for every fan in attendance that night (the retail value of the 7,248 pizzas was around \$100,000).²⁵
- Races
 - The Milwaukee Brewers feature a wildly popular "Sausage Race" at Miller Park home games. Four people in sausage costumes race around the infield warning track between the sixth and seventh innings at Brewers' games to entertain fans.²⁶
 - After a video of the Atlanta Braves' popular "Beat the Freeze" race promotion went viral, it quickly became one of the most talked about (and popular) promotions in sports.
 - Click [here](#) for an ESPN story describing how the Braves landed the "hottest promotion in sports".
 - The Atlanta Hawks found success with a similar promotion.
 - While it wasn't a "race", the concept was the same when the team challenged a fan pulled from the audience to try to stop local And1 Mixtape streetball legend 'Hot Sauce' from scoring for 24 seconds.
 - According to the [Atlanta Business Journal](#), the premise was simple: stop Hot Sauce from scoring, and the fan would win a set of tires from team sponsor, Kumho Tire Co. Inc. However, it took nearly the entire season before someone did score, but the team enjoyed tons of publicity locally and nationally from the promotion.

In-Venue Promotions

In-venue promotions take place at areas within a facility not directly associated with the playing field.

Examples:

- MasterCard might have a booth set up somewhere on the concourse of an NBA arena offering a free t-shirt bearing the name of the home team for those willing to sign up for a credit card.
- The Bridgeport Bluefish minor league baseball team partnered with Citibank on a special ticket promotion where all purchases made at a predetermined game at the ballpark using a Citi credit or debit card received a \$2.00 ticket discount. Fans were also eligible to receive the same discount on advance tickets purchased that day for any remaining home games this season by using their Citi card.²⁷

²⁵ www2.timesdispatch.com/business/2010/feb/24/b-papa24_20100223-214807-ar-6175/

²⁶ <http://www.thebaseballpage.com/features/2002/wiener.htm>

²⁷ Veritix Sports Marketing Newsletter - July 29, 2010. Volume 9, Issue 27.

Other onsite promotions include:

- Contest giveaways
- Lucky game program or lucky seat
- Giveaways at the door
 - Like any other promotions, giveaways range from the traditional (such as bobblehead nights) to the bizarre (the San Antonio Missions once gave away a dozen used cars to randomly selected fans including a 1991 Jaguar and a 1990 Cadillac during a “Used Car Night” promotion).²⁸
 - From team jerseys and replica championship rings to garden gnomes and bobbleheads, finding the next “hot” giveaway item can have a significant impact on game day attendance.
 - Bobbleheads
 - Bobblehead promotions have run the gamut of traditional giveaways featuring the likeness of popular players to more unconventional variations like the Lake Elsinore Storm’s promotion of an Arnold Schwarzenegger bobble-biceps and Washington Nationals Jayson Werth bobble beard.
 - Click [here](#) for an ESPN story, “How the Sharks Reinvented the Hockey Bobblehead” with their creative twist on the popular stadium giveaway promotion in 2018.
 - 2012 marked the revival of the bobblehead craze as Major League Baseball teams offered bobblehead giveaways more than any other promotional giveaways for the first time since 2005.²⁹
 - According to [Beckett](#), there were nearly 200 bobblehead giveaway promotions at MLB ballparks scheduled for the 2023 season, up from 150 in 2022 and 130 in 2018.
 - The Chicago Cubs [found that](#) 71 percent more fans entered the stadium in the hour before first pitch on bobblehead days, helping boost sales of food, beverage and merchandise.
 - Garden Gnomes
 - A garden gnome giveaway that resembled the New York Mets’ star pitcher, Noah Syndergaard, helped the team attract the largest crowd in Citi Field history.
 - Several highlights from MLB’s 2023 giveaway promotions include:
 - Cleveland Guardians: A Larry Doby 1948 cap giveaway, commemorating the 75th anniversary of Doby becoming the first Black player in the American League
 - Kansas City Royals: MJ Melendez “[Build Your Own](#)” bobblehead with replaceable arms that allows fans to change his position from batting to playing catcher or outfield
 - Atlanta Braves: Bobblehead giveaway featuring iconic Atlanta-area hip-hop duo, OutKast
 - New York Mets: Neon sunglasses giveaway inspired by the team’s star first baseman, Pete Alonso
 - Los Angeles Dodgers: The team honored legendary announcer Vin Scully with a jersey giveaway featuring his likeness, including his [signature microphone](#) in place of a jersey number

Event Promotion

Event promotions focus on a single event, as opposed to multiple events. Events include: things like fireworks displays, movie nights, entertainment acts and special appearances.

Event promotions have the potential for an enormous impact on attendance:

- In an effort to boost attendance at a men’s basketball game, the New Mexico State Athletics Department staged a “[pajama party](#)” which later erupted into a pillow fight. The event generated a lot of excitement among students, ultimately resulting in over 1800 students attending, a 125% increase over the per game average.³⁰
- According to a presentation on the Lake County Captains’ website, the team’s “Fireworks night” game promotions attract the largest crowds of the season, typically resulting in a sellout.
 - Many teams offer extravagant event promotions in celebration of 4th of July weekend, one of the reasons minor league baseball has enjoyed so much success from an attendance perspective over the last few years
 - 2017 marked the second time in three years that MiLB teams drew more than one million fans over the two-day span surrounding July 4th. In 2017, 10% of MiLB teams set franchise records for single-game attendance during the holiday.
 - Click [here](#) to read more from ballparkdigest.com.

²⁸ <http://bleacherreport.com/articles/41967-minor-league-baseball-crazy-promotions-continue-to-bring-in-fans>

²⁹ <http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2012/11/12/Research-and-Ratings/Bobbleheads.aspx>

³⁰ http://www.sports-forum.com/newsletter/previous/index.html?article_id=418



- In the last season before the pandemic hit, MiLB teams drew just shy of 1 million fans, with 994,983 baseball fans going to the park, not a bad draw considering the 4th of July fell on a Wednesday
 - Additionally, MiLB teams attracted nearly 2.4 million fans for the week, marking the third-highest attendance total for a single week in the last 11 seasons
- MiLB's Fort Wayne TinCaps broke the franchise attendance [record](#) at their 4th of July game in 2019, surpassing the mark set on July 4th five years earlier
- MiLB's Akron RubberDucks typically stack their promotional schedule to help attract more fans to their games, including fireworks event dates, pop culture themed bobblehead giveaways (like Shooter McGavin from the film 'Happy Gilmore' or Willie Mays Hayes "bobble-legs" from the film 'Major League'), theme nights for kids (superhero nights and princess nights), a 5K event at the ballpark and national entertainment acts like the popular ZOOperstars and Myron Noodleman.
- Two years ago, the Bowie Baysox drew 2,000 fans to the ballpark for their popular Star Wars night promotion even though the game was canceled due to rain.³¹
- According to [Custom Ink](#), there were over 1,800 special event promos across Major League Baseball in 2018, with the San Diego Padres leading the league with 166 different special event promotions.
 - Click [here](#) for a graphic illustrating which MLB teams offered the most special event promos during the 2018 season.
 - Following a May home game in 2019, the Baltimore Orioles hosted a "League of Their Own" movie night at the ballpark, including a [giveaway](#) that featured "There's no crying in baseball" t-shirts to the first 20,000 fans.
- According to [wtop.com](#), the West Michigan Whitecaps typically draw between 5,500 and 5,800 fans per game over the last four seasons. That figure increases by about 60% when the team hosts their annual "Star Wars Night" promotion, when they average more than 9,000 fans per game.
- In 2023, the Philadelphia Phillies hosted a [post game concert](#) featuring Diesel, aka Shaquille O'Neal, playing a DJ set on the field at Citizens Bank Park

Offsite Promotion

Offsite promotions refer to any promotional activities that occur away from an organization's facility, venue, or offices. Clinics, camps, school functions (assemblies etc.) could all represent examples of an offsite promotion. Research indicates offsite promotions enhance fan identification (the emotional attachment an individual fan has toward a particular team or athlete). Exhibition games are another popular form of off site promotion as they can provide valuable exposure to the product to an audience who has not been exposed in the past.

Exhibition games:

- An exhibition game between global soccer powers Manchester United and Real Madrid in 2014 at the University of Michigan's football stadium sold out in less than a day and set a U.S. soccer attendance record with 109,318 fans, providing exposure for the growing sport of soccer and two global European soccer franchises looking to expand a fan base in new markets.³²
- In 2017, the city of Miami played host to "El Clasico", an exhibition match between two of the most popular soccer clubs in the World (Real Madrid vs. FC Barcelona).
 - The event not only attracted a sell-out crowd at Hard Rock Stadium (with upper level seats selling for over \$500 on the secondary market), but also drew thousands of fans in the days leading up to the game just to watch the team's practice.
- In 2018, a sold-out [NBA exhibition](#) game in Africa was broadcast live in the U.S. and in Africa in an effort to build excitement for the league throughout the country (and promoted through a number of social channels like nba.com/africa; Facebook.com/Africa and Twitter @NBA_Africa using the hashtag #NBAAfricaGame).
- Recognizing an opportunity to gain out-of-market fans on the heels of one of the most improbable seasons in sports history, the Las Vegas Golden Knights [hosted](#) a hockey camp for children in Boise, Idaho.
- In 2023, the WNBA played its first-ever game in [Canada](#) in front of a sold-out crowd of nearly 20,000 fans in Toronto's Scotiabank Arena, helping to establish Toronto as a viable expansion market in the future. It was just the third time the WNBA had ever played outside of the United States.

³¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/express/wp/2016/05/26/for-the-bowie-baysox-minor-league-baseball-goes-best-with-majorly-weird-promotions/>

³² http://www.mlive.com/sports/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2014/08/manchester_united_and_real_mad_1.html



Off-site promotions also help build relationships between properties and sponsors by helping to drive traffic to a sponsor's place of business:

- When the Minnesota Vikings and sponsor Buffalo Wild Wings teamed for a “[Back to Football Week at Buffalo Wings Wings](#)” promotion, they scheduled a number of player and “street team” appearances at BWB locations throughout the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area.

Full Season Promotions

Unlike event promotions, **full season promotions** take place at every game, match or event throughout an entire season. Full season promotions are effective because of the increase in the number of impressions and an elevated level of fan/consumer awareness. Higher frequency equates to increased exposure, resulting in an increased likelihood of the message having an impact with fans.

- Washington Wizards home games used to feature a “Fowl Shot” promotion where, if a player on the opposing team misses two free throws in a row, the crowd would win a free sandwich compliments of Chick-fil-A (team sponsor).³³

Restaurant Partnership Examples:

One popular sports promotion features a restaurant partnership with a team or league that offers a free food item if its partner team reaches a certain milestone at any point during the season.

- For example, as part of its “Bloomin’ Monday” promotion, NASCAR fans could visit any Outback Steakhouse for a free bloomin’ onion appetizer whenever Kevin Harvick finished in the top 10 in a race..
- Taco Bell promised fans a free Doritos Locos tacos as part of their “Steal a Game, Steal a Taco” and “Steal a Base, Steal a Taco” promotions that coincided with the 2022 MLB World Series.
 - According to [QSR Magazine](#), the World Series promotion helped provide a 12% increase to its restaurants.
- Last college basketball season, the upstart burger chain “Burgers Grilled Right” [launched](#) a “Bricks for Burgers” full season promotion with a unique spin. Rather than celebrating a highlight or milestone for the home team, they wanted to create a disadvantage for the opponent. Thus, “Bricks for Burgers” was born, where every fan in attendance would win a free burger if a player on the visiting team missed two free throws in a row at any point in the last eight minutes of the game.

Media Promotion

Media promotion refers to any promotional activities that involve a media sponsor or tie-in. The presence of media promotion allows an organization to maximize attendance and event support throughout the community, ultimately helping the organization meet its goals and objectives.

- Portland, Oregon’s annual Blues Festival is sponsored by the local newspaper (Oregonian), local radio stations (Kink FM and KBOO), local television station (KOIN 6) and a local online news provider (OregonLive.com).
- Every year, Blues Festival attendees donate thousands of pounds of food (translating to more than 2 million meals) while typically raising \$1 million or more to benefit the homeless.³⁴

³³ Rovell, Darren (@darrenrovell). “New favorite promotion: The Chick-fil-A Fowl Shot Promotion at Wizards game. If opponent misses 2 FT’s in a row crowd gets free sandwiches.” 4 Dec 2012, 6:25 p.m. Tweet.

³⁴ <http://www.waterfrontbluesfest.com/News/2013-Waterfront-Blues-Festival-a-sensational-success>

UNIT 7: KEY TERMS DEFINED

Business-to-business (B2B) marketing: Involves activities one business makes in effort to sell their products and services to another business, rather than to the individual consumer.

Cold Calling: a sales professional's effort to generate new business through outgoing telephone calls without any previous communication with the prospective customer.

Collaborative Selling: where the salesperson and client take time to understand one another and develop a relationship according to the salesperson's offer and the client's needs.

Customer Benefits: the advantages or personal satisfaction a customer will get from a good or service.

Customer Retention: the process of building loyalty and trust to maintain a solid base of core customers.

Customer Service: The action taken by the seller to make the relationship between the organization and its customers satisfactory.

E-Commerce: the buying and selling of goods and services on the Internet or other digital platforms.

Event promotions: promotions that focus on a single event, as opposed to multiple events.

Feature-Benefit Selling: Involves matching specific product attributes to a customer's needs and wants.

Full Menu Marketing: the selling of a variety of products or services that meet virtually any customer needs and/or wants.

Full season promotions: promotions that take place at every game, match or event throughout an entire season.

In-game promotions: promotions that take place on the playing field and typically occur when there is a break in the action, like half-time.

In-venue promotions: promotions that take place at areas within a facility not directly associated with the playing field.

Media promotion: any promotional activities that involve a media sponsor or tie-in.

Networking: when a group of like-minded business professionals gather to help each other to cultivate sales.

Objections: A prospective customer's concerns or hesitations in making a purchase decision.

Offsite promotions: any promotional activities that occur away from an organization's facility, venue, or offices.

Onsite promotion: promotions that take place at or around a venue on game or event days.

Personal Selling: Any person-to-person communication in which the seller has an opportunity to influence the consumer's buying decisions.

Product Attributes: (or features) are the basic, physical, and extended characteristics of an item.

Promotion Mix: Any combination of advertising, sales promotion, publicity, direct marketing, and personal selling.

Promotion: Any form of communication used to inform, persuade, or remind people about company products or services.

Proposal: A written recommendation of products or services his or her organization may offer to meet those customer needs uncovered in the needs analysis.

Prospecting: the process of consistently researching for and seeking out new customers for an organization's products and services. This is a very detail-oriented process requiring careful research and analysis.

Referrals: when an existing customer recommends another organization or individual to a sales professional as a potential customer.

Sales promotion: activities or communications that encourage consumers to purchase products or services.

Sales: The process of determining customer needs and wants through planned, personalized communication intended to influence purchase decisions and ensure satisfaction.

Team Selling: a variation of collaborative selling that includes multiple people from the selling or buying organization, or both.

Transactional Selling: where the salesperson and client have limited interaction and the sale is based mostly on price or a specific element.

Upselling: The process of selling additional products to a customer at the time of the order.