

# Teaching undergraduate Sport Marketing Management through learning by doing ~ 4 years of assessments

## Contact details

Name author(s): Yang Hsu

Institution(s) or organisation(s): Department of Sport Management, Aletheia University

City and country: Damshui, Taiwan

Email address for correspondence: moah@ms25.hinet.net

## Aim of paper and research questions

Management education emphasises the training of concept building and decision making, and it therefore can be effective for working adults to learn in the workplace (Seetos, 1998). Undergraduate students without practical working experience in the organisations cannot easily perceive the genuine meaning and construct of management subjects like business strategy, organisational behaviour, marketing, and human resource management (Lin, 2002). The research questions are:

1. What is the essence of undergraduate sport marketing management education?
2. What is the best way to teach SMM?

More than 400 students in an undergraduate course, entitled "Sport Marketing Management" experienced learning by doing style of education from 2006 to 2009. The purpose of the study was to review the process of the four-year period, and especially to compare the results of the fourth year with previous three years. Rather than a teacher based education, learning by doing is a method that puts the learner in the centre (Simpson, Jackson & Aycock, 2004). Built on the philosophy of "learning by doing", service learning creates opportunities for students to learn something from the process they serve, which is the same as Dewey's learning by doing (Yen, 2005).

## Literature review

In marketing and management literature, "on the job" or "learning by doing" were the most recommended teaching methods (Hu, 1996; Huang & Hsieh, 1995; Lin, 2002; Sanchis, 2007; Seetos, 2002; 2004; Smolianov & Shilbury, 1996; Tsai & Chen, 2006). On-the-job experience was considered the most important source to gain sport marketing competencies (Smolianov & Shilbury, 1996). Similar research in Taiwan also discovered that "practical participation in the marketing work of sports event" was considered the most important source to gain competencies (Hsu, 2002). Practice, or learning "how to do something," needs theory as the base, equally; theory must be tested and tailored in practice (Pitts, 2002). Jackowski & Gullion (1998) in an undergraduate course of "Writing in Sport Management" conducted service learning through an outreach program with local sport organisations. Student logs, class presentation, student memorandum, and interviews with agency personnel and students were used to evaluate the results. The findings indicated that service learning improved learning and supported the idea that the teaching technique can provide field experiences and the process can be monitored (Jackowski & Gullion, 1998). However, there is almost no literature associating learning by doing or service learning style of education with sport marketing teaching.

### Research design and proposed data analysis

The project placed students in different groups to think, survey, plan, and to implement their own proposals into real sport events starting from scratch without any resources or money. That's why a name of "Out of Nothing" was given to the project, and the instructor served as a facilitator who provided necessary theories and encouragement to students during the project period of 9 months spanning two semesters.

Students' performances were evaluated through the quality of their marketing proposal writings and class presentations. During the event, the peer reviews, and achieving the marketing objectives previously set in their own proposal were traced. Students evaluated the effectiveness of this project through questionnaire and written feedback.

### Discussion of progress

Findings indicated that the project improved students' competencies in planning, team work, and people skills. Students engaged more time in the project automatically than in the conventional classes. Questionnaires showed improvement of students' understanding of the subject. The author was satisfied with students' performances, and they ended up receiving higher grades. More than 10,000 spectators came to the event sites and 94 news stories were covered by the media in the first 3 years. Our school and the department enjoyed huge publicity by the project as well. Data of the fourth year is still in processing and will be reported.

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