CREATING THE 2015 BUSINESS PLAN OF THE GREEK PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE

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Abstract

1. Aim of the abstract/paper
The Hellenic Basketball Association (HEBA) is the governing body of the Greek Professional Basketball League (A1). Founded by the top basketball clubs in 1991, it was formulated to change the league from amateur to professional. It is a private law legal entity consisting of fourteen (14) clubs that participate in A1 each year, whose owners are the members of HEBA's board.

HEBA has recently (January 2011) undertaken a project to re-access its functions and to create a long term business plan. The purpose of the plan is to improve the governance of A1 and to secure its feasibility against the financial turmoil in the Greek economy.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the steps followed in order to create and implement the 2015 HEBA business plan.

2. Practice description
The success of any business plan is usually determined by how satisfied stakeholders are (Eden & Ackerman 1998, Abramson & Kamensky 2001, Bryson et all 2001, Bryson and Crosby 1992, Baumgartner & Jones 1993, Roberts & King 1996, Jacobs & Shapiro 2000, Van Schendelen 2002). However, satisfying stakeholders is often a controversial task, because of the conflicts of interest or the sources of influence (Allen 2008) that might exist/arise. Therefore, before starting planning, it is very important to identify and analyze all stakeholders. In literature, stakeholders are described as groups or individuals with strong interdependent relationship with their organizations and the power to directly affect organizations' future (Freeman 1984, Nutt & Backoff 1992, Bryson 1995, Eden & Ackermann 1998, Johnson & Scholes 2002, Mitchel et all 1997, Jones & Wicks 1999).

At the beginning, stakeholders' identification can not be a fully participatory exercise, because one of its purposes is precisely to determine who should eventually become part of the planning process (Renard 2004). Thus the process started by asking some of the most obvious participants to identify other stakeholders. Through this process numerous of potential stakeholders related to HEBA came up (more than 40) and thus it was of great importance to break them up in segments in order to be able to extract conclusions Therefore, the Eden and Ackerman (1998) grid was utilized, according to which the stakeholders are segmented based on the basis of their influence and interest in the organization.

3. Context description, actors involved
Following that grid, the stakeholders were segmented into four categories; subjects, players, context setters and crowd. The Athletes (Hellenic Association of Professional Basketball Players), the Coaches (Hellenic Association of Basketball Coaches), the Owners of the clubs and the Press (Hellenic Association of Sport Journalists) were classified as subjects (or key stakeholders) because their power and interest are so great that their satisfaction could even prevent the failure of the business plan (Huntington 1996; Friedman 2000). Athletes and Coaches constitute the core "product" of HEBA. Owners of the clubs experience huge difficulties in their businesses due to the economic crisis, so HEBA needs to retain them incentivized. Accordingly, Sports Journalists represent the media rights' point of view, a utility that holds an important potential for profits and promotion.

The method used to measure the subjects' satisfaction, was a quantitative questionnaire, consisting of eight (8) questions with regards to four (4) segments. The qualitative approach was adopted to let participants expand their views as much as possible. As this was the first satisfaction survey ever conducted by HEBA, it was essential to give space for the parties to elaborate.

Among players, context setters and crowd are the Referees Association, the Greek Basketball Federation, the Facilities Operators, the Police, the Employees, the Providers, and the Sponsors etc. The tools to measure these stakeholders' satisfaction will be either one to one interviews (for small groups or individuals) or qualitative surveys based on the existed bibliography (i.e. customers and sponsors' satisfaction etc). These stakeholders' analysis will follow the subjects' analysis in order to exploit any information given by subjects.

4. Implications and learning

Having all stakeholders analysed, HEBA aspires that it will be able to create and implement a business plan for the long term feasibility of the organisation. Currently HEBA has to face various threats that undermine its prospects, but “a wise use of stakeholders’ analysis can help frame issues that are solvable in ways that are technically feasible…” (Bryson 2004: 1).

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