

# Strategic Marketing Planning in Greek Professional Sports

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## Abstract

### Theoretical Background

The business sector has long recognized the contribution of marketing planning in company's success. Much of the recent literature acknowledges that marketing planning can improve the ability of business organizations to handle the complicated business environment in which it operates and consequently to deliver high economic benefits [3, 2]. Sports and especially professional teams, which operate in an extremely competitive environment, have recognized the usefulness of strategic marketing planning as well. Many researchers have argued that without the improvement of strategic marketing planning, sport will not survive to the competitive environment of the modern sport industry [6, 5, 7]. Strategic marketing planning, as McDonald [4] stated, is the planned application of marketing resources to achieve marketing objectives. The process of strategic marketing planning involves the following principal stages:

The situation review (market analysis).

The formulation of fundamental assumptions about the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the opportunities and threats posed by the business environment.

The determination of marketing objectives.

The formulation of strategies and tactics for achieving these objectives.

The allocation of actions (budgets and schedules) necessary for the implementation and control.

The primary purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which the strategic marketing planning process is being used in Greek professional sports. The research questions to be tested are: (1) to what extent is the strategic marketing planning process being used in the Greek sport sector? (2) what are the key factors that discourage Greek sport sector from engaging in strategic marketing planning? (3) is it possible to develop a generic strategic marketing planning process model, which can be implemented by the Greek sport sector? The hypotheses to be tested are: (1) the extent of strategic marketing planning model used by the Greek sport sector is

independent of the performance of the sport club, (2) the extent of strategic marketing planning model used by the Greek sport sector is independent of the type of the club and (3) the extent of strategic marketing planning model used by the Greek sport sector is independent of the background of the sport directors.

## Methodology

**Instrument development:** The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the reviewed literature on marketing planning and on recommendations and suggestions offered by a panel of experts. The questionnaire intends to collect specific information regarding marketing planning process in the professional sport sector in Greece. The content validity was assessed by a panel of experts in the fields of management, marketing and sport professionals. The reliability of the instrument was determined through Cronbach's coefficient alpha. **Sample:** the population of the study is 111 professional sport clubs from three different sports in Greece. Analytically, these are: 69 professional football clubs, 30 basketball clubs and 12 volleyball clubs. **Data analysis:** the author will analyze the results using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Research questions one and two will be answered by using descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation and percentages. Hypotheses will be tested using chi-square.

## Expected Results – Discussion

This study will identify the extent to which the strategic marketing planning process is being used in the Greek professional sport sector as well as differences in the development and implementation of this process between planners and non planners. The paper will discuss good practices of marketing planners and possible reasons why non planners do not apply such approach. The research will also clarify if marketing planning leads to improved performance. It is expected that the extent of marketing planning will be positively related to business performance. Finally, the author will develop and recommend a generic strategic marketing planning model and will provide an analysis of its several components. The development of such model will be based on the review of literature and the recommendations from a selected number of sport clubs that will be identified as strategic marketing planners. However, as the strategic marketing planning process is a constantly evolving process [1], there is no perfect model for each organizations and needs adapting before use.

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