

Mission Statements In Professional Sport: An Assessment Of Orientation, Communication And Benefits

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The interest among both academics and practitioners in the mission statement has evolved to give rise to a large body of research that has attempted to determine the core elements that a successful mission statement needs to incorporate. The content and character of these statements matter for organizational effectiveness (David, David, & David, 2016). Research has shown that firms who develop and systematically revisit their mission statement and consider them to be an integral part of the firm's culture, realize great benefits (David et. al., 2016; Rarick & Vitton, 1995). Benefits include: articulating a firm's purpose or reason for being; aiding prioritization and strategy; providing a basis for allocation of resources; organizing work, departments, activities and segments around a common purpose; aligning an organization's customers, products, services and markets; and defining concerns for growth, image, philosophy and survival (King & Cleland, 1979).

A good mission statement allows for the generation and consideration of a range of feasible alternative objectives and strategies without unduly stifling management creativity (David et. al, 2016). Sometimes called a creed statement, a statement of purpose, a statement of philosophy, a statement of beliefs, a statement of business principles, or a statement of "defining our business," a mission statement reveals what an organization wants to be and whom it wants to serve (David et. al, 2016). Campbell and Young (1991) emphasize that the process of developing a mission statement should create an 'emotional bond' and "sense of mission" between the organization and its employees. Practitioners and academicians of strategic management have articulated that in order for a mission statement to be effective, it should include reference to the following nine components: customers; products or services; markets; technology; survival, growth and profitability; philosophy; self-concept/distinct competence; public image and concerns for employees (David et al., 2016).

The importance of mission statements to effective strategic management is well documented in the literature (David et. al, 2016). Kosmutsky and Krucken's (2015), research provided empirical evidence that a well-articulated mission statements afford opportunities for companies to position themselves in particular niches and among competitive groups in which group similarities are highlighted vis-à-vis other group differences. A mission statement, often noted as an essential first step in the strategic management process, should define what an organization is and aspires to be, distinguishing one business from others of its type. It should be limited enough to exclude some ventures, but be broad enough to allow creative growth. The statement should be vague, for vagueness has its virtues, however, it should be enduring and distinguish an organization.

Developing and communicating a clear mission is a commonly overlooked task in strategic sport management and as David et al. (2016) noted, without clear mission statement, a firm's short-term action can be counterproductive to long-term interests. Numerous studies outside the sport environment have explored the relationship between mission statements and organizational specificities however, relatively few have explored these relationships in a sport context. Therefore, this study sought to identify the core elements of mission statements as they relate to sport, specifically the National Basketball Association (NBA). The study includes a content analysis, to assess the structure and quality, and assessment of parameters of use as they relate to organizational performance, communication, identity, deployment, effectiveness and strategic outcomes.

This empirical study included a content analysis of mission and vision statements of all NBA teams. The inventory was secured through search of league and team websites. The study included and assessment of orientation, communication, and benefits. A communication analysis assessing both denotative and connotative meanings was conducted. The denotative analysis utilized the Fog Index to measure readability. Connotative measures utilized recommendations put forth by Cochran, David & Gibson (2008). Additional characteristics, components and benefit analysis were conducted utilizing coefficient applied to David et al. (2016) measures. A follow-up inquiry was conducted with representatives of each of the NBA teams to ensure that information obtain was current and to identify potential future Delphi study participants. Executives of each team were targeted to ensure reliable consensus of opinion among respondents.

The investigation will provide valuable information specific to mission and vision core standards and their integration/use as it relates to industry practice. Defining these parameters and the strategic application to sport will provide a better understanding of core components and the relationship/influence of other intervening variables which may act as a mediator in the aforementioned relationship between items such as core development, deployment, commitment, identity and practice.

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