

Andy Brooks
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Assignment 3

[Finding #1] Fan Classification Models

Around us we see many types of fans: season ticket holders adorned in jerseys, people in bars cheering on their team with friends, and individuals reading the out of town scores in their print newspaper. In order to offer a valuable service to fans and teams we must understand the many of types of sports fans. Sutton (1997) and Hunt (1999) propose to fan classification models worthy of consideration for our service offering. We should consider these models to identify our service offering's target customers. What may be most compelling to one fan type may be of less interest to another fan type.

Sutton et al. propose a three-level model of fan identification: low, medium, and high. *Low identification* represents a "relatively passive long-term relationship with the sport." (Sutton 1997). Sutton et al. characterize these as "social fans", who are often attracted by the sport's entertainment aspects and are less concerned with the outcome of the sporting event. *Medium identification* fans are "focused fans" with an emotional relationship with the sport or team, often in proportion to the success of the sport or team. When the team wins, the "focused fan" is more interested. *High identification* fans are "vested fans" and are considered most loyal and have long-term relationships, which grew from significant time and money investment. "Vested fans" find strong personal identity with the team.

Hunt et al. offer a more nuanced model of fan types, with the following classifications: temporary, local, devoted, fanatical, and dysfunctional. *Temporary* corresponds with Sutton's *low* fan type, while *local* proposes a greater level of interest due to the fan's close proximity to the team. *Devoted* fans exhibit sport and team interest beyond time and place, such as through watching sporting events on television not featuring their favorite team(s). *Fanatical* fans are similar to Sutton's *high* fan type, where the fan has a long-term relationship with the team and/or sport, and that loyalty is unwavering. Hunt's *dysfunctional* fan type extends the *fanatical* type, where the fan assumes the team and/or sport as part of their core identity as a person, often with destructive results Hunt cites the role of the soccer/football hooligan in Europe, where team fanaticism crosses the line into violence towards other fans.

Looking to our project concept, we must thoughtfully consider which types of fans we wish to target with our service. We could propose a local sports news-type service with scores and other statistical information, however we may not find much success offering such a service to Sutton's *low* fan type. If we change the information conveyed through the service, such as by offering entertainment-oriented options (e.g., social events pre-and/or post-game), this service may better appeal to the *low* fan type.

Hunt, K. et al. A conceptual approach to classifying sports fans. *Journal of Services Marketing*. Volume 13, Number 6. 1999. Pages 439-452.

Sutton, W. et al. Creating and Fostering Fan Identification in Professional Sports. *Sports Marketing Quarterly*. Volume, Number 1. 1997. Pages 15-22.

[Finding #2] Contextually Relevant Integrated Services

Offering fans contextually relevant and integrated services is key to the fan experience. We can readily create services to improve the fan experience; however we must be mindful of how those services are viewed collectively by fans. For guidance in this space we turn to Lapio et al (2000), who explored the relationship across fan-focused service offerings in NASCAR auto racing. Over the past decade NASCAR has introduced a number of services to improve the fan experience, from in-car cameras on national television broadcasts to rich multimedia experiences on the NASCAR web site. Lapio cites the sport's success offering the "right products at the right time and in the right integrated packages" to bring fans "into the NASCAR family". (Lapio 2000) These many services offer fans a "total quality entertainment experience", fostering a long-term relationship with fans. (Ibid.)

Looking to our project concept, we could offer fans a service that tells them when discount tickets are available for their favorite team, such as this evening's game. However that service is not relevant to the fan if they are not near the venue, such as by being out of town on a business trip. Or if the fan has already purchased tickets, now telling them that discount tickets are available may harm our relationship. Through knowing this information we can provide our fan a more contextually relevant service.

Lapio, Jr., R, et al. NASCAR: A Lesson in Integrated Relationship Marketing. *Sports Marketing Quarterly*. Volume 9, Number 2. 2000. Pages 85-95.

[Finding #3] Focus Service Offering on the Fan, not the Event

Throughout the literature in this review authors cite the importance of offering services focusing on the fan, rather than simply on the event. In 1976 Roone Arledge, senior sports producer for ABC Sports, stated in an interview "that television should 'take the fan to the game, not the game to the fan.'" (Lever 1993) Developments in pervasive computing have brought technology to fans in order to complement the at-game experience (Dollarhide 2007). Many major league baseball teams now offer services where fans can order concessions from their seats, thus freeing them from missing the on-field action. (Ibid.) Lynn et al. (2009) designed *Time Warp Football*, a system that offers television viewers an interactive means to control their viewing experience.

In considering our project concept, we must be aware of how our service offering(s) integrate with the holistic fan experience. For example, we could offer at-race NASCAR fans a service that allows them to more readily follow their driver, such as by listening-in on the driver's radio communication with his or her pit crew of mechanics. [Note, this is a real service offered by NASCAR.] However given the loud noise at race events, the service would likely have to be delivered through a headset, which may make it difficult

for fans to verbally communicate with one another. We could enhance the service by adding airline pilot type microphones to the headsets, thus allowing fans to communicate with one another similar to the drivers and the pit crews. For example, a group of three fans could each tune into their respective drivers, as well as "chat" with one another on a private audio channel. These two audio feeds could be split between ears (left and right), or the fan could manually switch between the two.

Dollarhide, M. Pervasive Computing Helps Fans Get into the Game. *Pervasive Computing*. July-September 2007. Pages 7-10.

Lever, J. and Wheeler, S. Mass Media and the Emergency of Sport. *Communications Research*. 20, 125. 1993. Pages 125-143.

Lynn, S. G., Olsen, D. R., and Partridge, B. G. 2009. Time warp football. In *Proceedings of the Seventh European Conference on European interactive Television Conference* (Leuven, Belgium, June 03 - 05, 2009). EuroITV '09. ACM, New York, NY, 77-86.