A MULTI-STAGE EXPLORATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY IN PROFESSIONAL SPORT

Katie Bruffy
Olan Scott
Michael Naylor
A multi-faceted partnership since 2011
Purpose is to address current and relevant industry issues
Mutually beneficial relationship
  ◦ Student opportunities
  ◦ Informed teaching
  ◦ Informed marketing practices
  ◦ Cost efficient research
Social media is everywhere in sport, how do we (the Breakers) get better?
Formulating a Social Media Strategy through Action Research

**STAGE 1**
- **RECONNAISSANCE & REPORTING**
  1/ Content analyse 2012-2013 season NZB Twitter and Facebook activity
  2/ Review social media activity of selected professional sports teams:
    - Key NWBL Competitor Perth Wildcats
    - Key NZ/AUCKLAND Competitors Blues, Phoenix & Warriors
    - Key External Franchises Los Angeles Lakers & New York Knicks
  3/ Review scholarly literature and industry/market/popular press material
  4/ Report findings to NZB Marketing team

**STAGE 2**
- **STRATEGY FORMULATION**
  Strategy identified, recorded and implementation plan set for 2013-14

**STAGE 3**
- **STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**
  Strategy implementation through various social media platforms

**STAGE 4**
- **STRATEGY EVALUATION & FAN FEEDBACK**
  Ongoing tracking and analysis of activity
  Fan questionnaire - attitudes, perceptions, motivations
  Interviews with key stakeholders (sponsors / Breakers staff / fans)
## Stage 1: Social Media in Australasia

### TOP 15 SOCIAL MEDIA SITES JANUARY 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Percentage of Australia's Population (22,905,450)</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Percentage of New Zealand's Population (4,454,300)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>11,784,460</td>
<td>51.45%</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>2,284,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>10,790,715</td>
<td>47.11%</td>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>2,267,575</td>
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<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>3,924,421</td>
<td>17.13%</td>
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<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>2,992,048</td>
<td>12.76%</td>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>594,137</td>
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<td>Twitter</td>
<td>2,925,383</td>
<td>12.77%</td>
<td>Wordpress</td>
<td>524,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wordpress</td>
<td>2,735,586</td>
<td>11.94%</td>
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**Google+ insufficient data**
# Social Media in Australasian Sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Warriors</td>
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<td>Wellington</td>
<td>56,210</td>
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<td>Blues</td>
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<td>Wildcats</td>
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<td>Breakers</td>
<td>29,690</td>
<td>10,885</td>
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</table>

5 August 2013
Stage 1: Motives for Online Consumption

- **Information sharing**
  - Learn new things, share one’s life

- **Interactivity**
  - Keeping in touch, making new connections, reconnecting

- **Self-expression**
  - Ability to articulate one’s personality online and share these aspects with connections

Johnson & Yang, 2009; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009
Stage 1: Recent Research

Designated times when athletes should monitor SM and engage with fans (Witkemper et al., 2012)

Mixed evidence about age and ease of use (Eagleman, 2013)

Encourage players to form a deeper bond with fans (Frederick et al., 2012)
Stage 1: Scholarly Findings
Categories of Social Media Content

Brand attributes
Marketing strategy
Brand awareness & associations
Relationship building

Bauer, Stockburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008; Pegoraro, 2010; Wallace, Wilson, Miloch, 2011; Kwon & Sung, 2011
Stage 1: Breakers Content Analysis

Tactics that have gone...

DID YOU KNOW: Kirk Penney is the highest points scorer in NZ Breakers history?

He scored a total of 2511 points in his career.

GAME OVER! What a finish!! You can't get much better than 16 W's in a row which equals the team's best ever in the NBL!!!! Final Score 125-109. Thank you Maxigesic for sponsoring tonight and all our awesome fans!!!
What fans ignore

- Community engagement postings and messages from sponsors, except when it involved pictures of benefactors
- Ticket sale announcements, except for the finals
Stage 1: Best Practices

- Form a strategy
- Set a goal
- Be authentic
- Be positive
- Allow comments
- Serve customers and prospects
- Jump in
  - Be an active user. Listen to conversations, engage with comments, answer questions, and keep your account fresh with regular posts

Colorado State University, 2012; Evans, 2010; Solis, 2010; Newman, Peck, Harris & Wilhide; 2013
Stage 2: Strategy Formulation

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Stage 4
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  Ongoing tracking and analysis of activity
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  Interviews with key stakeholders (sponsors / Breakers staff / fans)
Stage 2: Strategy Formation

- Reconnaissance review and discussion with the Breakers over two strategy brainstorming sessions

- Strategy:
  - Goals
  - Audience
  - Social media platforms
  - Who is involved (i.e. players, coaches, marketing)
  - Resources
  - Editorial calendar
Stage 3 & 4: Strategy Implementation & Evaluation

**Stage 1: Reconnaissance & Reporting**
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**Stage 4: Strategy Evaluation & Fan Feedback**
- Ongoing tracking and analysis of activity
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>Monthly Change</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>Monthly Change</th>
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</table>

**Date** | **14/09/2013** | **2/10/2013** | **2/10/2013** | **28/10/2013** | **28/10/2013** | **28/10/2013**
Twitter and FB Analytics

Page Likes
- **37,570** Total Page Likes
  - **1.2%** from last week
- **457** New Page Likes
  - **40.3%**

Post Reach
- **63,143** Total Reach
  - **8.9%** from last week
- **32,868** Post Reach
  - **8.7%**

Engagement
- **4,938** People Engaged
  - **8.8%** from last week
- **1,752** Likes
- **508** Comments
- **71** Shares
- **10,125** Post Clicks
Stage 4: Strategy Evaluation and Feedback

- Questionnaire:
  - Items: behaviour, social media information, Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)
  - Participants: NZ Breakers social media followers and engagers

- End of season content analysis
Questions?