

THE CONVERGENCE OF SPORT MARKETING AND SPORT DEVELOPMENT: ADDRESSING DECLINING PARTICIPATION IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.

A CASE STUDY OF THE AUCKLAND CRICKET ASSOCIATION.



Trevor Meiklejohn and Katie Bruffy
Unitec Institute of Technology

Introduction

- ◆ This case study highlights the **product development strategy** of a large regional sport organisation of a traditional sport facing considerable challenges as a result of significant environmental change.
- ◆ This opportunity was presented to us by the Auckland Cricket Association who sought Unitec staff and student input into their planning and valued the prospect of **on-going research** linked to their new strategy.
- ◆ The case has subsequently been integrated into **teaching and learning** within sport management programmes at Unitec.
- ◆ This research is very much in its infancy and our goal is to present our initial thinking with the view to receiving much valued feedback and expressions of interest in future collaboration.

Case study organisation: Auckland Cricket Association

- **One of the six major associations In New Zealand**
- **125+ years in existence**
- **400+ junior and secondary school teams**
- **500+ adult teams**
- **50+ staff**

“Auckland Cricket is charged with a broad responsibility for the game of Cricket. From the production of elite international athletes and teams through to recruitment of kids picking up a bat for the first time – it really does cover everything” (Auckland Cricket, 2014a, p. 8).

Sport Development in a Changing Environment

“Sport development is about helping people from all backgrounds to start playing a sport, to stay in their chosen sport, and to succeed at it”

Sotiriadou, 2013, p. 514

Theme 1: Future patterns of sport delivery within a sport development context in light of the changing environment

Theme 2: Sport participation to achieve wider sport marketing objectives.

Shilbury, Sotiriadou, & Green, 2008



The Changing Sport and Recreational Landscape



While some findings highlight that well established teams sports are still central to young peoples lives.

Some traditional sports are experiencing decline in participating numbers.

Growth of participation and interest in individualised sport and fitness activities that people can fit into their busy and time fragmented lifestyles.

Rise of lifestyle, adventure and alternative sports such as skateboarding, BMX, Moto X and surfing.

The Product Life Cycle Dean, 1950

Product Life Cycle Stages



Strategic Product Management Principles

A company has to be good at developing and managing products in the face of changing tastes, technologies and competition.

Marketing-mix planning begins with **formulating a product offering that brings value** to target customers.

Kotler & Armstrong, 2006

New Zealand Cricket's assessment of the environment

NZ Cricket's introduction to its Strategic plan (2012-2015)

“The cricketing landscape has changed significantly...There are many new issues facing cricket and we need to be smart about how we continue to develop the game and maximise our opportunities.”



NEW ZEALAND
CRICKET

Auckland Cricket's assessment of the environment and key issues

Non traditional sports are now easily accessible and enjoyed.

Sports are crossing over traditional seasons with preseasons programmes for winter sports commencing at the beginning of the calendar year...i.e. Summer.

Cricket is largely delivered by clubs whereas most sports are now delivered by schools and kids like playing for their school.

Traditional Saturday Cricket is perceived by many to take too long and be boring.

The impact on Auckland Cricket

Significant decline in playing numbers at Junior and Secondary School Level in the last 5 years

19% decline in Junior (years 6-8) club numbers

22% decline in secondary school (years 9-13) numbers

This situation has forced Auckland Cricket to review their product management strategy



Common Product Development Strategies in Sport

i) Modify the existing product

ii) Product line extensions

Auckland Cricket's response?

- ◆ A modified form of the cricket targeting years 5/6 – years 11/13
- ◆ 8-a-side with players who bat in pairs for 4 hours each regardless of the amount of times someone gets out.
- ◆ Everyone bowls 2 overs
- ◆ Weekday afternoons for 6 weeks in term 1
- ◆ Free with all gear provided
- ◆ Year one managed and support by Auckland Cricket
- ◆ Year two all support provided by the clubs

Key themes...New...fun...easy to play and get involved!



The link to Auckland Cricket's Strategic Plan

Strategic priority 1. Sustainable Growth

Alternative formats:

Increase participation and grow the profile of the game through the development of new and existing alternative game formats which recognize the desire for shorter, more social leisure options.



So what...isn't this just another modified version of a sport?

- ◆ Increase TV and/or live spectator audience
 - ◆ e.g. one day and 20 -20 Cricket
- ◆ Increase participation by providing social options for adult participants
 - ◆ e.g. Golden Oldies Rugby, social twilight cricket etc.
- ◆ Increase youth participation within the standard sport delivery pathway in a traditional linear fashion
 - ◆ e.g. shorter wickets, lower hoops, no tackling etc.

Sport product development outcomes

Cricket Blitz is development at the youth level and runs parallel to the traditional cricket delivery pathway...

- ♦ It provides a participation 'on ramp' to the sport at any stage up until completing secondary school.
- ♦ It provides an 'off ramp' destination from the traditional cricket delivery pathway for those no longer interested in the traditional form of the game.
- ♦ It may provide an avenue to the traditional form of the game from Cricket Blitz for those who want to take up the traditional form of the game after sampling this modified product.



Sport product development outcomes

It is also designed to achieve wider marketing objectives

- ◆ Increase cricket consumers...
 - ◆ Increase funding based on player numbers!
 - ◆ Increase cricket's critical mass today and in the future
 - Future coaches, managers, volunteers, and fans



This product development is ticking several boxes



Where to from here:

Contribution to sport management

- ◆ Measure the impact of the new product on the sport of cricket
 - ◆ Participation numbers
 - ◆ Sport pathways (Development of sport or through sport)
 - ◆ Link between new participation and spectatorship
(Shilbury et al, 2008; Warner, Chalip, & Woolf 2008)
- ◆ Explore other sport delivery products/models in the light of the changing sport environment

References

Auckland Cricket (2014a) *Cricket Blitz: Plan of Attack August 2014*.

Auckland Cricket (2014b) Auckland Cricket Strategic Plan 2012-2016. Retrieved from http://aucklandcricket.co.nz/Uploads/Strategic_Plan/ACA_Strategic_Plan12_16_final_draft_19_mar_20132.pdf

Auckland Council (2013) *Sport and Recreation in the Lives of Young Aucklanders*. Auckland, New Zealand.

Dean, J. (1950). Pricing policies for new products. *Harvard Business Review*, 26 (6) 45-53.

Hajkowicz, S.A., Cook, H., Wilhelmseder, L., Boughen, N. (2013). The Future of Australian Sport: Megatrends shaping the sports sector over coming decades. *A Consultancy Report for the Australian Sports Commission*. CSIRO, Australia.

Kellet, P. and Russell, R. (2009). A comparison between mainstream and action sport industries in Australia: A case study of the skateboarding cluster. *Sport Management Review* 12, 66-78.

Kotler, P. and Armstrong, G. (2006). *Principles of Marketing*, 11th Edn, Pearson, New Jersey.

References

- NZ Cricket (2014). New Zealand Cricket Strategic Plan 2012-2015. Retrieved from [http://blackcaps.co.nz/uploadGallery/2013%20strat%20plan%20\[low%20res\].pdf](http://blackcaps.co.nz/uploadGallery/2013%20strat%20plan%20[low%20res].pdf)
- Sotiriadou, P. (2013). Sport development planning: The Sunny Golf Club. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 514-523.
- Shilbury, D., Sotiriadou, P. and Green, C. (2008). Sport development. Systems, policies and pathways: An introduction to the special issue. *Sport Management Review*, 11, 217-223.
- Shilbury, D., Quick, S., Westerbeek, H. & Funk, D., Karg, A. (2014). *Strategic Sport Marketing (4th ed.)*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Reddy, S.R., Holak, S.L., and Bhat, S. (1994). To extend or not to extend. Success determinants of line extensions. *Journal of Marketing Research*. May, 243-262.
- Warner, S., Chalip, L., & Woolf, J. (2008). Fan development strategy: The Austin Wranglers' game plan. *Sport Management Review*, 11, 309-330.