Sports Marketing Essay, Research Paper

The Grand Rapids Hoops and their marketing team are obviously in some serious trouble. Let me start out by commenting and some of the game we saw last week. When I first walked into the arena I didn’t know what to expect, I had never been to a hoops game before. I had gotten there a little bit early so I figured that was the reason for the low attendance. As I waited until the game started only a few hundred more people had shown up. It was at this point when I realized that the Hoops were in some serious trouble.

One of the first things I did when I got into the arena was to take a look at all the advertisements that were posted. Some of the backlit signs are saw were for the following: Budweiser, Bank 1, Voice Stream, Comerica, and News 3, there were also a few others that I did not mention. There were also some removable signs as well, but not nearly as many. A couple of the removable signs that I saw were for Franklin Express, and WXSP. In addition to those there were also signs about the shot clock for enterprise rent a car. I had never seen an add on the shot clock before and I don’t think I really liked it there; it was too much into the game. The Hoops didn’t have a wide variety of advertisements, it seemed like two or three companies were doing all of the advertising. And those companies that were doing all the advertising were getting advertisements put everywhere. There were even adds running on the projection television throughout the National Anthem.

I think the main problem with their lack of attendance, is what we have said in class already. That problem is the Hoops arena, Van Andel is just way to big of an arena for the Hoops to be using. From there it just gets worse, it’s like the trickle down effect. The arena is way to big to be filled, and since it isn’t filled no one wants to pay to advertise there. This only hurts the way they market their product as well. In the Hoops brochures, they say there is a phenomenal atmosphere, combined with intense fan fun. When I was there it didn’t seem like the atmosphere was too phenomenal. If you are going to put a motto on your brochures and ads, you better make sure that you can provide what you are promising. If you can’t supply what you promise, people will be disappointed no matter what happens at the game. I’m sure that the motto would have been great back at the old arena, but not at Van Andel. I think the only thing that can really help the Hoops, is a smaller arena. People visit Hoops games because of the fun and excitement that is provided, and Van Andel arena can’t supply the correct environment.

The way I see it, a lot of the things that went on throughout the game were very good ideas. I particularly like the idea of letting the little kids shoot around on the court before the game, this builds tremendous fan interaction. Another thing I thought was interesting was the play area, this seems like a really good idea. One of the other idea I really liked, was how the players stay around after the game to sign autographs. This idea is great, it builds a kind of bond between the player and the kids. Hopefully the kids will really enjoy that experience and ask their parents to take them back. Besides that, the basketball itself is really pretty good. I thought it was entertaining just watching the game, but it felt kind of like I was at home watching it because of all the silence.

I think if the Hoop can get a smaller arena, it will solve a large amount of their problems. By doing this, it will intensify the atmosphere in the arena by providing more of a packed arena. By doing this it will also make the Hoops tickets seem more valuable, because there won’t be as many to go around. It seems like everyone wants to go to something they can’t, and no one wants to go to something they can. This idea makes the Hoops seem more exclusive, which is really what they need right now. It seems like no one really wants to go to their games, but if people can’t get tickets I really feel that the demand will rise. Then if the Hoops can fill the arena, they probably won’t have a problem finding people to advertise in it. You could go as far as to say people might even be asking to put advertisements in the arena.

Overall, it seems like the Hoops have some really good ideas about what they want to do with their product. It just seems like they are at the wrong place. It would be a big jump for the Hoops to move out of Van Andel, but I think it’s something they definitely need to do to get back on top.