

## ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

# Holistic Marketing Approach in Media Communications of Sports Organizations

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## Abstract

This paper will give theoretical and practical approaches to media communications in sport organizations. The first part of the paper presents theoretical aspects of media communications in sport organizations in history, by leading authors in the field of sport management. Modern sport communications range from traditional forms of experiences to an integrated, holistic approach, which includes information technology platforms, modern presentations of sport events, interactive discussion with audiences, by using social media. The second part of the paper will present theoretical aspects of sport journalism in the era of modern media communications. It is emphasised that all aspects of media communications have an impact on the leading of sport organizations and events. This paper emphasises that the new generation of sport audiences need integrated, modern approaches, based on both traditional and modern media communications, as well as a new approach to sport journalism.

**Key words:** *media communications, sports organizations, social media, integrated marketing communications, share of sports experiences*

## Introduction

This paper will give a theoretical and practical approach to the challenges of media communications in sport organizations. Modern media communications have a great task to educate and inspire young generations. Media communications are changing and need to be present in both traditional and new social media. Today, media communications range from traditional forms of presenting sport organizations to integrated media communication, which includes modern approaches to presenting sport organizations, sport news and sport lifestyles through social media. Modern media communications include interactive discussions with audiences, the use of sport portals, mobile platforms, and new concepts of relationship with newer sport organizations, based on dialogue.

Furthermore, the modern media environment has changed and has impacted sport news, sport lifestyles, and the presentation of sport organizations. The changing media environment

bring to sport events new topics and new professions. Media fields now have new professions, such as sport portal journalist, YouTube influencers, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages of sport organizations and various events. It is emphasized that the new generation needs an integrated, modern approach to sport journalism, based on both traditional media communications and social media communications. New generations need traditional media information, but also dialogue with sports journalists, sports managers, sports influencers and athletes. New generations look for fast information on the internet, such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, sports channels, such as Sports Club. New generations look for fast information on the internet, such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and sports channels, such as BBC sport, CNN sport. In Serbia one of the favourite sports channel is Sport Club, where target audience looking for sports information, events and interviews. Young generations love to share sports experiences and have strong feeling



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for connection with others, to learn more, to travel, to have experiences. They are mobile and looking for knowledge, experiences, and non-traditional professions. They use social media for sharing sport information and experiences, and love to do this. Sports managers and journalists have to follow these media communications changes. The young generation's behaviour has changed modern media communications processes.

Sport managers and sport journalists have to follow their audiences' needs, desires, and new approaches to sport media communications.

### Challenge of Sport Media Communications in the Modern Environment

The challenge of sport media communications in the modern environment is that it must be innovative and creative. A holistic marketing approach is one way to modernize media communications.

A holistic marketing approach has the challenge of improving the planning process of media communications. All parts of holistic marketing approaches are important: internal marketing, integrated marketing, relationship marketing, and socially responsible marketing. Internal marketing strategies improve media and sport organizational structures and communications with their audience and the sport public. Strategies of integrated marketing improve the consistency of media communications. A socially responsible approach is the basis of every form of media communication. The key message of media communications is informing, sharing, success, and social changes. Strategies of relationship marketing make platforms for clear and direct communications with target sport audiences. In all these ways, a holistic marke-

ting approach is the foundation for the realization of modern sport media communications and the presentation of sport organizations, news, and experiences. The elements of the holistic marketing approach are present in Figure 1 (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The implementation of the holistic marketing approach in media communications is challenging, because target audiences are sophisticated, the process of planning and organizing of sports events is demanding, as are those of social responsibility.

Strategies of relationship marketing and modern media give opportunities for direct communication with target audiences. It is essential to make good connections with the audiences of sport organizations and events, based on truth and the openness of journalists and management staff. The key strategies in media communications are those of innovations, adaptation, relationship marketing, social responsibility, and communications with target audiences (Kennet, 2008).

Media communications include journalists, sport managers, focus group discussion, and social media discussion and other forms of interactive communications with the sport public. Sport media communications have always had a socially responsible impact on social development, on raising awareness about social problems. Sport media communications have an impact on social movements, as well as improving awareness about social problems. Sport is part of the development of modern society.

Modern society needs interactive communications through modern media about sport. Sport organizations send messages to audiences but also listen to the needs and desires of target audiences. One specific opportunities of social media are that sport organizations can impact the awareness and attitude of public audiences about social problems.



Figure 1. Elements of holistic marketing approach

A holistic marketing approach has integrated marketing communication with target audiences, which present opportunities for the research needs and desires of the sport public, as well as social movements. It is imperative that integrated marketing communications of sport organizations have consistent storytelling with target audiences (Terence, 2008). Sport sends social impulses to the public and calls people to think about social problems, attitude, young people, the future, civilization, life, life stories, history, and sociology. In that way, sport drives

people to react, to have certain attitudes, to communicate with other people and to create a better world. Sport projects are creative and drive the public to think and feel in a certain way (Larry, 2008).

Creative sport ideas that motivate the public have original imaginative approaches. Creative ideas have to be clear, simple, and inspirational (G. Belch & M. Belch, 2012). Strategies of public relations are essential in sport media communications. These strategies improve communications and connections

between sport organizations and their target audiences (Pel-smacker, Geuens, & Bergh, 2007). Strategies of public relations develop and improve communications between sport organizations and their target audiences. Socially responsible approaches give platforms for sport projects, as well as purpose and messages to target audiences. Strategies of relationship marketing have specific impacts in leading sport projects. They give opportunities for interactive communications with the sport public, through traditional ways of communication and modern, social media. Two-way communications give opportunities for listening to the wants and needs of the public, which indicates needs for future development (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Media communications are part of sport projects. Media culture is also a culture of high technology, which gives opportunities for better communications and gives to sport's projects global dimension (Larry, 2008).

### Social Media and Sports

Social media gives great opportunities for sport media communications. The sport public can be informed and inspired to learn about sport events, sport organizations, sport clubs, to follow their sport interests, through many social media channels. The public can follow their favourite sports on Instagram and be inspired. They can follow YouTube channels and learn about every interesting and inspiring sport topic, or they can share their sports experiences about sport events and experiences.

Young people are developing physically and mentally, and by being engaged with such healthy activity, they avoid unhealthy habits and addictions. Additionally, sport activities from the earliest days are the best way to recognize talents that later can professionally be engaged with a particular sport and become part of the national representation of a country (Maros, 2018).

Young people believe that it is important to practice sport, to share sport experiences, in order to inspire each other. Sport today is based on innovation, motivation, digital media, communications, and sharing of sports experiences (Janicic, 2018).

Insufficient physical activity in youth damages development and contributes to poor socialization and lack of recognition of sport talents (Maros, 2018).

In this new digital environment, it is important that sport managers and journalists accept technology as a modern approach to informing audiences. Furthermore, it is important that sport journalists and managers improve their communications skills to improve the understanding of the sport public.

The use of sport in modern business communication has influenced significant changes in the general attitude of consumers regarding advertising, and recognizing the attractiveness of sport has enabled business organizations to approach sport consumers. Regarding the general attitudes of the respondents towards advertising in sport in relation to observing sporting events during the day, Masanovic (2018) found differences in attitudes among respondents who have different habits of watching sporting events over course of the day. The general opinion is that advertising in sport is good.

Today, advertising activities are more than ever overwhelmed by ethical dilemmas; given the increasing competition of advertising on the market, it becomes harder to think about unique advertising messages that will not provoke the feeling of being cheated and manipulated. Accordingly, ethical problems are concerned with questions, situations, and opportunities that require individuals or organizations to choose between a few advertising actions which should be evaluated as good or bad (e.g., ethical or non-ethical), which will not allow consumers to feel cheated on manipulated, regardless the legitimacy of the advertising (Bjelica, Gardasevic, Vasiljevic, & Popovic, 2016).

There are so many ways to inform the public, to inspire them, and to motivate them. The present environment requires a media approach and new style of writing. Many sport organizations have portals on the internet, such as Sport Club. Many sport organizations have portals on the internet, such as Manchester United Football Club, which present good example of communication with target audience. In that way, the public can read news, see videos, but also can ask journalists for additional information. The landscape of social media is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Landscape of social media (Janičić, 2018)

Sport has long been known to raise awareness about social problems. Sport journalists have to follow new technological trends, but also have to have objective attitudes with audiences in new environments. Journalists have to implement responsible media practices (Janicic, 2018).

A focus group was organized with six journalists from sport media. The conclusions of the group are that the sport public need all information's online, so that they can both read it online and in traditional ways (e.g., in a newspaper); the focus group was organized with Serbian and Montenegrin

sport journalist on meeting in Podgorica, Montenegro. They was asked to explain their opinion about information in sport media, about impact of social media on target audience, about strategies of communications on new social media, about opportunities to be interactive with target audience on social media, about behavior of sport audience whose looking for information about sport events. The journalist gave us answers about all questions and there was organized discussion about all of topics. The result of focus group present that the audience wants communications with athletes on sport portals, and they need inspiration and motivation from new inspiring sport persons, such as managers of sport's clubs. The conclusion of focus group is that journalists have to be more flexible in media communications, that they have to accept information te-

chnologies in media communications, the journalists emphasize that media communications has to be modern, innovative, and inspirational. The future work on this topic will include focus groups with sportists, sports managers and audience that follow sports informations and sevents.

### Good Examples of Media Communications in Sport

One good example of holistic marketing approach in sports media communications is Sport Club, which has a great impact on sport information. Sport Club informs audience about all sports events in the traditional way on television, but also on its internet portal and social media platforms, which give opportunities for interactive communications with audience. The Sport Club portal is present in Figure 3.

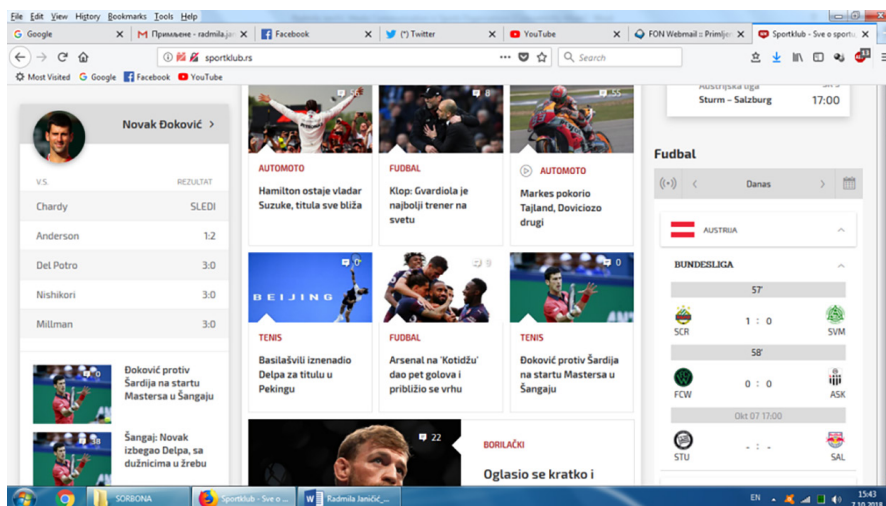


Figure 3. Sport Club Portal

The Sport Club Portal has all the information, in one place, about sports events, sports clubs, athletes, their trainers, their opinions about social problems, about life in sport, even about their personal stories that inspire the public. The most important feature for the public is that Sport Club gives 24-hour live streams of all sport events on their television channel and via online streams. The public have opportunities to write comments about events, team members, and results, and to share happiness about sport events. Sport Club is favourite offline and online channel for sports enthusiasts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. In this medium, journalists give fast, factual, inspirational information. They are real sport lovers and committed professionals, led by qualified journalists and profes-

sional sport media managers. The atmosphere in Sport Club is enthusiastic, inspirational and can be described as "all sports in one place". The managers of Sport Club use strategies of holistic marketing approaches, including strategies of internal marketing to motivate their journalists, and to inspire journalists to provide accurately and timely inform public about sporting events. Managers use strategies of integrated marketing communications with an all-media approach. They also use strategies of relationship marketing with the public. Via the online portal the public have dialogue with journalists and, also, they can share their experiences about sport events. Sports Club is highly socially responsible media, which supports young athletes and raises awareness about sport.

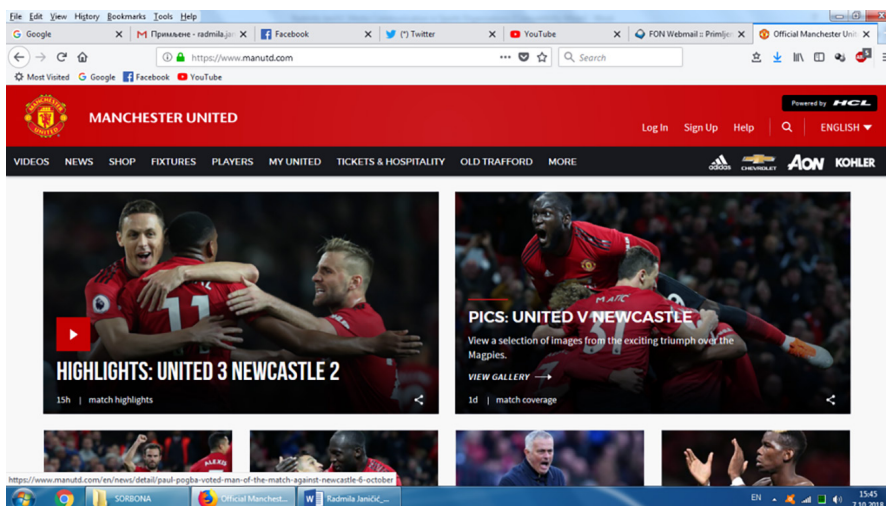


Figure 4. Manchester United Football Club



The Manchester United club uses a holistic marketing approach. The managers of this club use strategies of social responsibility to help solve social problems locally and globally. They use internal marketing strategies to motivate football players, to raise good atmosphere in team, to inspire players. They use integrated marketing strategies to send messages about sport atmosphere and good sport attitude. They use strategies of relationship marketing to be in communication with the public, to listen their comments and to build dialogue with them. Manchester United is good example of the implementation of the holistic marketing approach in sports media communications. Their internet portal is presented in Figure 4.

## Conclusion

According to theoretical and empirical research, media communications in sport organizations have to be clear, fast, and inspirational. Furthermore, the results emphasize that sports messages have great impact in behaviour of sport public. In that way, the media communications of sport organizations have great social responsibility in their communications. From theoretical aspects, it is essential to be transparent and open in when communicating; they must be socially responsible and inspire the public. Journalists have the task of improving media communications with audience through social media. Empirical research emphasizes that future of media communication in sports lie in integrated media communications through social media. Theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, examples from practice, and focus groups with journalists about challenges of holistic marketing approach in sports media communications conclude that it is necessary to be innovative in sport media specifically through social media.

The conclusion is that holistic marketing approach has impact on sport media communications. Through strategies of internal marketing, integrated marketing, socially responsible marketing, social marketing, and relationship marketing improve sport media communications.

Journalists, as members of a focus group, emphasize that it is important that sports journalists improve their social media skills, so that audiences can be more informed. They emphasize that it is necessary to make connection between

athletes all over the world and sports public to improve sport awareness. Modern sport media communications include multimedia digital approaches, as well as holistic marketing approaches. Good traditional ways of media communications have to stay, but should be accompanied by with modern, multimedia, digital approaches. The conclusion of focus group is that sport managers and journalists have to be more flexible with digital media, that they have to accept information technologies in media communications, that they have to follow public needs, new information habits, as well as follow new information technology platforms for communications. They emphasize that sports media communications have to be modern, innovative, and inspirational.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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