Marketing Strategies

The next step in our Marketing plan is on the strategies and tactics we will use to accomplish the objectives. Our strategies will be based on data, and the marketing mix of the LA Galaxy product.

Before going over promotional tactics to meet each objective, we will briefly go through three other ‘P’s of the marketing mix.

When looking at the product being offered, the LA Galaxy is professional soccer team in the MLS. They offer soccer to the Los Angeles area. In addition to games, the Galaxy have a community built online at their website, as well as youth camps, fan pages, and players appearances (LA Galaxy). The LA Galaxy provide an alternative entertainment to other sports in the area, such as the LA Dodgers, Anaheim Ducks, and other forms of entertainment in movies, music, and plays.

Price must account for several things the Galaxy offer. Being accounted for are concession prices, parking prices, merchandise prices, and ticket prices. Ticket prices range from $14 to $200 for a single game (LA Galaxy). Parking at LA Galaxy venues currently cost anywhere between $15 and $45 (LA Galaxy). Merchandise price depends on whether it is a jersey, hat, keychain, and other small or large items. Concessions prices are not listed, but are perceived as expensive according Rozlynn Avila.

Place or distribution is throughout the area of Los Angeles. Currently the Galaxy play at the Home Depot Center. They promote throughout Los Angeles community from youth camps
to Easter Egg Hunts. In implementing our promotions, we will be distributing through various Hispanic communities, youth events, and at games to current customers.

Now for promotions, we took the time to come up with new ideas that the LA Galaxy do not currently implement. The strategies will address key issues we outlined in our SWOT analysis and objectives.

The first objective is to create and communicate values regarding the key issues. These issues include parking, long lines, concession prices and customer service. Our strategies will attempt to change perception the customers has of these elements and create a sense of urgency and exclusivity.

The first element has to do with the length of time it takes to get in and out of the parking lot. When its time consuming to get anywhere in a parking lot, stress is created and thus customer satisfaction drops. In changing the consumer's perception about parking it might be ideal to breaking up the parking areas. Different prices can be put on a parking spot dependent on where it is located. Some customers will park in the far parking spaces, for a minimum price, while those whom wish to pay a premium for parking can park in the designated area. This not only adds some value to parking, but it will help separate where customers are parking, thus decreasing traffic. Also, it may be an interesting idea to have designated time of arrival times for customers. It would be based on when they bought their ticket. Both pre-sale box office and online ticket purchases would state a specific time in which the customer is to arrive and park. To make it even more exclusive, the game ticket will also include an exact parking space for the customer park in once they arrive. It adds exclusivity because the customer already has a designated spot to park because they choose to buy their tickets ahead of time.
Another reason why it takes so long to park is because the Galaxy share the land with CSU Domingo Hills. When classes are in session, finding a parking becomes competitive. In accordance with this, the Galaxy also don’t have their own stadium. They pay rent to play games at the Home Depot Center. If the Galaxy have enough funds to at least build their own parking lot, the time it takes to park will decrease greatly. The Galaxy should eventually look to building their own stadium and parking lot.

Moving on to long waiting lines, we have the same goal of changing perception of the line. We want customers to feel as though waiting in line is a positive aspect of coming to the game. Following off of what we have decided to do for the parking area, customers would be coming in at a certain time. Because the Galaxy will know the exact customers arriving at a certain time, it would be interesting to have a more personal greeting. Some possible promotions could be having a raffle based on the ticket numbers of customers in line, and greeting the customers by name as they enter the ball park. The goal is to make line waiting an enjoyable experience.

Concession prices are viewed as too expensive at the LA Galaxy. Taking a look at their concessions one can see that they have variety in what they offer. They offer a couple types of nachos, tacos, cheeseburgers, and even a bacon-wrapped hot dog (Concessions). Customers may be associating the price as being too expensive because of the food quality. It would be beneficial to try partner with gourmet meat brands to increase the quality of the food to help justify the price.

Also another idea would be to have a signature food. In the show Man vs. Food, Adam visited three ball parks around the U.S.A. Each of those parks had created a signature food that
customers from around the country come to try out. These signature foods ranged from the Fifth Third Burger Challenge in West Michigan to a burger served between two donuts at CGS Ballpark (Baseball). It would be a good idea to put together a 'dish' that is delicious, yet strange that would intrigue customers to give it a shot. This could mean making a huge burger and giving it a name. Los Angeles could call the burger “the Galaxy”, and everyone customer that finishes the meal will receive a shirt stating “I traveled the galaxy” or possibly have their picture taken. Because of the Hispanic market in the Los Angeles area, instead of massive burger, the signature food could be a humungous taco or burrito. The point is to make an event from the concessions to improve the perception overall.

Finally, changing the perception of customer service needs to be addressed. It would be good to start by training employees on how to treat customers with a sense of urgency and respect. Next, sending out fliers or other forms of signage that express how important customer service is to the LA Galaxy would be important.

The second objective addresses the price of tickets, concessions, and other club related products based on the economy at this time. Right now several families are tight on money. Because of this we have want to be able to offer fun and entertainment at a reasonable price. Customers have less money, and competition with other alternatives of entertainment has increased. We need to convince customers why they should spend their income at LA Galaxy games and not somewhere else.

Ticket prices will be the main way to address the economic issues. We will need to be more specific with each customer based on where they are at on Mullin's Attendance/Participation Frequency Escalator. When targeting unaware consumers, we are going to need to increase promotions and other communications. (Stotlar) Word-of-mouth recruiting
will be good for this. Promotions can include “bring a friend” coupons, “buy one ticket, get one free”, “bring five friends, receive a discount at concessions”, and other similar ideas.

As customers move up the escalator, highlighting the benefits of attending a Galaxy game, product giveaways, theme promotions, and contingent promotions will be used more often.

Finally, medium to heavy consumers show more loyalty towards the team. For their strong interest in the Galaxy, the team should show an interest in them. (Stotlar) This can be done by offering customers mini ticket plans at a price that would save them money compared to buying individually priced tickets. The plans can include a certain number of games, at different price values. Also, inviting heavy consumers to “hall of fame clubs” or “Meet the Players” events will help will the organization's gratitude to these fans. (Stotlar)

When looking at concession prices, there can be several things done to lower the price for customers. There can loyalty cards that add reward points for every dollar the customer spends at concessions, merchandise, or anything else club related. Once customers have accumulated enough points they may redeem them on concession foods, team merchandise, tickets, and other club offerings. Also there can be coupons on tickets that give a discount at a number of different inside concessions or outside restaurants.

The third objective deals with creating an interest in the LA Galaxy among children and their parents. Currently in the USA, youth soccer is growing in popularity. According to US Youth Soccer Association, they currently register over 3.2 million players annually, ages 5-19 through 55 US Youth Soccer State Associations (History). As an organization the Galaxy have an interesting opportunity to capture the hearts of these young soccer players. By becoming more involved with the youth, the Galaxy will be able to capitalize on a large market.

As of right now the LA Galaxy does offer some youth oriented programs (LA Galaxy).
One of the highlighted programs is the Youth Fantasy Camp. It gives the children an opportunity to know what it is like to be a professional soccer player. It covers everything from Press Conferences to training. It is a great experience. The Galaxy also offer skill training camps for youth as well. Some of the camps are more beginner-oriented while others are extremely competitive.

The Galaxy also has the Reading Challenge Garden, player appearances, Kicks for Kids, Star Student Program, and an Annual Easter Egg Hunt (LA Galaxy). All these events are either orientated or could be orientated toward the youth of Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles Galaxy could do a couple things other things to market toward the youth. First off, they could get more involved with the youth soccer leagues in the Los Angeles Area. Galaxy Players could volunteer their time to go attend youth soccer team's practices, or even coach a team.

Also, in attracting more youth, the Galaxy could have promotions offered to the young soccer players through the league. One promotion could be giving free tickets to the youth soccer teams and dedicating a game to them. The kids could run out in the field during half time and have their names announced to fans. Also at this game, promotional giveaways could be handed out. It could be part of a six game promotion. At each game the kids would get one piece of a uniform to the Los Angeles Galaxy.

The final objective to design a strategy for is promoting and advertising toward the Hispanic Market. This market has a love for soccer, and is evident through the ad spending in 2008. “Ad spending for Spanish-language TV soccer programming rose 59.6% last year to $249.8 million, per Nielsen Monitor-Plus” (De Lafuente). This can be due in part in to loyalty Hispanics will show in brands. According to sports marketer Brad Rothenberg, “If you can gain
the trust of a Hispanic consumer through soccer, you can translate that brand trust to anything” (De Lafuente). Once the Galaxy is able get Hispanics to trust their organization, selling team merchandise, sponsors, and other licensed products will be much easier.

In addition to the increase in ad spending toward Hispanics, the population has increased. “Today, the U.S. Hispanic population is estimated at 46.9 million people. That is 15 percent of the total U.S. population, according to a September 2009 Census report. The 201g Census is expected to confirm rising numbers of Hispanics throughout the nation, including in the strongholds of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Miami and Texas” (Westlund). The amount of Hispanics in the U.S. Rises every year, and Los Angeles is one of the strongholds. Furthermore, the Census Bureau projects the economic clout of U.S. Hispanics will rise from $862 billion in 2007 to more than $1.2 trillion in 2012 (Westlund). That is quite a bit of buying power that can't be ignored.

Based on the information above, there are a couple things to account for in our strategies. First off we must be able to build trust with the Hispanic community. And second, we must understand the buying power this community has in Los Angeles.

Our first strategy is to build trust with the Hispanics through a few different ways the Galaxy do not already implement. This can be accomplished by getting involved in heavily populated Hispanic areas of Los Angeles. One of the most populated areas is East Los Angeles. According to City-Data.com, 96.8% of the population in East Los Angeles is Hispanic (East). Getting involved with the schools and the community will help get the LA Galaxy name out to a large Hispanic-based city. Some ways the Galaxy could get involved include having some of the Hispanic and well-known Galaxy players volunteer some of their time in the classroom. Having Hispanic players of the Galaxy involved with the community would be ideal. It brings awareness
to the Hispanic community that the Galaxy can appeal to their culture as well. Some Hispanic players such as A.J. DeLaGarza, Omar Gonzalez, Juninho, and Alex Cazumba are a good base to use in the community events (LA Galaxy). The actual events in the Hispanic community can include the Galaxy players teaching some soccer skills to children, players handing out awards at the schools, players having meet and greets in the heart of the community, and players attending Hispanic Chamber of Commerce events in Los Angeles. Also the Galaxy can take part in Hispanic Heritage parades, festivals, and other events along those lines. We want to create a stronger awareness to Hispanics. The goal is to associate the LA Galaxy players as people with good values who are trying to help them out.

Hispanics have a few people from their community that they look up to. Associating the LA Galaxy with the celebrities Hispanics admire most will be beneficial. One of the most celebrated athletes of the Hispanic community is Julio Cesar Chavez. “For Mexicans and other Latinos, Julio is not just a champion, he is the Champion” (Julio). Because of his work-ethic and the success he had in boxing, Julio Cesar Chavez has mass appeal to Hispanics. The Los Angeles Galaxy can associate itself with Julio Cesar Chavez in a number of ways. The Los Angeles Galaxy could sponsor Chavez and have him be a spokesperson for the through his own business. Also, the Galaxy could try to get Chavez to be one of the sponsors of the LA Galaxy. If fans of Julio Cesar Chavez see that he supports the Los Angeles Galaxy, there is a chance they will too. There could also be promotional events in which Julio Cesar Chavez attends a LA Galaxy match to sign autographs, and be a guest speaker during the half-time.

Another Hispanic icon to associate with is El Piolin. This icon is the host of a very popular morning radio show called, “Piolin por la Manana”. El Piolin is celebrated among Hispanics for active involvement with political issues. On May 1st, 2010, Piolin walked with
other Hispanics in a march against the recent Immigration Bill in Arizona (Piolin). Piolin is a voice for his people. Having the opportunity to have LA Galaxy members as guest on “Piolin por la Manana” will greatly increase the awareness of the team towards Hispanics. Also in the eye of the Hispanics the Galaxy will be associated with one of their most celebrated Radio Show Hosts. It’s important to have Hispanic and more popular Galaxy players be guest on the show. It brings awareness to the Hispanics that LA Galaxy have a Hispanic presence on the team. Also, like with Julio Cesar Chavez, the Los Angeles Galaxy could also invite Piolin to come to a game as a promotion, where Hispanic fans will have the opportunity to meet him and enjoy the game. Something a little more creative would be to have Piolin even announce the commentary for LA Galaxy game on Spanish TV Networks, or radio.

The last Hispanic icon the Galaxy should associate with is George Lopez. Lopez now has his own talk show on TBS. The name of the show is “George Lopez Tonight”. TBS in itself is watched largely by Hispanics. It is basic cable's top-rated network among young Hispanic adults (Bauder). The Los Angeles Galaxy could have their star players, and Hispanic players be guests on “George Lopez Tonight”. It is great exposure to a large audience of both Hispanics and non-Hispanics. Also, because George Lopez is well-known by Hispanics, it is another great association. George Lopez could also be invited to a Los Angeles Galaxy game to speak during half-time, sign autographs, and commentary during the soccer game.

Another strategy could be by placing the Los Angeles Galaxy players, and logo on products/services Hispanics already consume. The Galaxy could work out a deal with certain popular Mexican chip brands, and have the Galaxy image on it. Also, the Galaxy could put their logo or player images on popular beverages among Hispanics.

Finally, more broadcasting on Spanish TV Networks such as Univision would be great.
Univision has a large Hispanic audience, and broadcasting Galaxy Games at times Mexico games aren't being played could create a fan base from home.

**Implementation and Control**

In this portion of the marketing plan, we will be outlining how much of our budget will go towards our strategies at the offset and at the mid-point. We will go over what are strategies are and in what order we will implement them. Each strategy will have a specific time-frame and members of our marketing team measuring results. This portion will also go over when information will be measured and how it will be evaluated.

First, our strategy for increasing overall attendance by ten percent is to strongly promote and advertise toward the Hispanic market through television, print, and radio. Hispanics account for a large portion of soccer fans, and they also account for a large portion of the California population. Our strategies have several plans in mind when marketing to Hispanics. We want to reach Hispanics through community events, game day promotions with Hispanic Icons, and appearances on popular Hispanic radio shows. Because Hispanics are an important part of our marketing strategy, a large amount of our budget will go towards the strategies we have in place for Hispanics. As of right now, we are figuring that approximately forty percent of our budget should go towards marketing towards Hispanics if we wish to reach our objective.

In implementing the strategy of marketing to Hispanics, we will need to do so in a timely matter. Overall we will assign a time frame of eighteen months to increase attendance by ten percent. The first six months will be focused on community events, such as visiting schools, attending Hispanic Chamber Events, and volunteering throughout heavily populated Hispanic neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Our goal is to build trust in the community before we begin to implement our other strategies. We want to make sure we do not waste any of our advertising
budget by not effectively making a presence in the community. After the first six months are up, we would like to reach a target increase in attendance by at least four percent. If we don’t reach this goal, we will spend an additional month on community events before moving onto other strategies.

Between the months of six through twelve, we will begin our radio and TV appearances. During this time we will be making appearances on numerous Spanish talk show radios, especially “Piolin Por la Manana”. Also at the same time we will have players be guests on “George Lopez Tonight”. We choose to have more media involvement the second portion of our implementation because we wanted to already have a personal connection with the people who listen and watch these shows. At this point, we have a goal of increasing Hispanic attendance at games at least to seven percent. If we don’t reach this goal, we will go back and spend more time with building the trust of the community.

In the final six months of our strategy, we will continue appearances on Spanish talk show radios, and other late night talk shows. At this time however, our main focus will be game day promotions. This is the point where we will bring in Hispanic Heroes such as George Lopez, Julio Cesar Chavez, and Piolin. Each icon will have their own day to be at the game and sign autographs, meet LA Galaxy fans, and present themselves to all Hispanics as LA Galaxy supporters. Our goal is to reach ten percent attendance at this point. If that is not the case, we will have to go back to more Hispanic community events. The guests’ appearances will be every two months over the six month period.

Measuring the results at each point will be done internally by marketing research specialists in three month intervals. We will measure the results by giving out survey asking how the customer was influenced to attend the game and if they have met/seen Galaxy players in
their community, on TV, and/or radio. It is important to make sure in the analysis of the results, that goals are met for the time periods assigned. Also, while measuring results we want to also take into account which strategy has been the most effective, whether its community volunteering, talk shows, or the game day promotions.

In implementing our marketing objective to offer a product at an affordable price, LA galaxy must adopt a pricing strategy that represents current economic conditions. Making the LA Galaxy an affordable form of entertainment will account for approximately twenty percent of our marketing budget. The time frame for this objective is approximately one year, and it must begin one year prior to the start of the next season and can continue throughout the season. There are three main sectors to affordability. It has to do with whether the customers are new, medium purchasers, or heavy consumers. As the consumer moves up they will qualify for the other promotions.

Breaking it down, over this time want to sell two for one tickets, buy one get one free tickets, and bring a friend to the game for free tickets. Also for medium users, mini-plans will be offered to the customers to offer additional discounts. Finally, meet and greet events and other game day promotions will be offered to heavy consumers. Also for all of the customers, they have the option to save money in the concessions by using their rewards cards to accumulate points to save on merchandise, food, and tickets. Measuring the success of our plans will be based on attendance of each game. We would like to increase attendance of each month during the season by at least two percent. To make sure the affordability is a factor in why attendance is increasing, we will distribute surveys asking if the price to attend the game is affordable, and also through focus groups. Results will be evaluated with the goal of customer perception being
that the LA Galaxy offer an affordable entertainment. Also, results will be measured through the amount of customers that have moved up the escalator from one season to the other.

Another objective that must be addressed is the changing of customer perception of our parking troubles, concession prices, long lines, and customer service. Approximately twenty percent of our marketing budget will go towards this strategy. In implementing our strategies for these elements, we will begin the process six months in advance to the beginning of the season and continue advertising and word of mouth throughout the season. Prior to the season beginning, in months one through six, our main focus will be on informing customers of our new procedures for parking, and the new food and signature meals offered at the concessions. We will spread this information through word of mouth, internet marketing, contacting last season ticket purchasers, and through the other marketing strategies we will be going on simultaneously. In these first six months, results will be measured each month. Results will be acquired through surveys, focus groups, fans made on social networks, and overall ticket sales in advance. In evaluating the first six months, we merely would like to see an increase in buzz about the upcoming season. Evaluations will be primarily based on five percent increase in ticket sales to the prior year.

During the season, the changing of perception about customer service will be our main goal. Results will be measured through surveys and focus groups throughout the season on a monthly basis. We want to see an increase of five percent customer approval each month, and at least 40 percent increase overall by the end of the season. If evaluations find this is not what is going on, we will go back and come up with a new strategy after the first month.
We will increase awareness of Galaxy games to students/young adults by promoting games in school newspapers, mass emails and by passing out flyers in LA county. We also believe that offering inexpensive/free tickets to the youth, who participate in soccer programs or camps, could generate revenue from the adults that bring their kids through ticket sales, concessions, programs and apparel. In order to attract children you would first have to understand them. When kids see something they want immediate gratification and their parents have the disposable income.

In implementing our plan to attract youth to the games by twenty percent we will have a time frame of two years. Results will be measured on a quarterly basis during the off-season and on a monthly basis during the season. Approximately twenty percent of our budget will go towards marketing to the youth.

During the seasons we will implement our strategies of the ‘complete soccer uniform’, and during the off season discounted tickets will be offered to participants in youth programs and camps. Also in all months, we will implement having LA Galaxy members attend youth soccer league practices, picture days, and other events.

In measuring results, we will be looking at the amount of families attending the games. Surveys will go out to fans to see if they attend games with their children. Also, we measure through the amount of youth-size merchandise sold at games and other retail points. During our ‘complete soccer uniform’ promotion, we want to see an increase of ten percent among youth and family attendance.

In evaluating youth attendance, there must be a five percent increase in attendance every six months. By the end of the two years, we will have reached our goal of twenty percent.
If we could complete these objectives it would create a devoted following for the program that would eliminate most of the threats that face the soccer team, such as loss of revenue due to the shortage of fans in attendance. These are all threats the program faces because of a lack of demand to see the team in action. Generating exposure through these strategies could begin the cycle of building a loyal fan base that could generate revenue and develop a loyal following, which would anchor the program for the years to come and give the Galaxy the income to purchase their own stadium. By acquiring their own stadium Galaxy can eliminate bad parking, long lines, high concession prices, and terrible customer service. Thus generating more income and keeping state of the art facilities which would eventually lead to the development of a competitive team and eventually build an LA powerhouse.

http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/aboutus/History.asp

http://www.travelchannel.com/TV_Shows/Man_V_Food/Episodes_Travel_Guides/ci.Episode_Baseball.map#map

lagalaxy.com


http://www.juliocesarchavez.net/development.htm

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/03/24/george-lopez-to-host-late_n_178481.html

http://www.univision.com/content/channel.jhtmlj?chid=9450&schid=23519