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Marketing communications plan for the UC-Santa Cruz Volleyball Program

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MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
FOR THE UC-SANTA CRUZ VOLLEYBALL PROGRAM

A Creative Project

Presented to

The Faculty of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Lorien R. Reckmeyer

May 2006

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ABSTRACT

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR THE UC-SANTA CRUZ VOLLEYBALL PROGRAM

By Lorien R. Reckmeyer

This report summarizes the results of a graduate creative project to develop a Marketing Communications Plan for the University of California-Santa Cruz (UCSC) Volleyball Program, which was conducted from January 2004-August 2004.

The Plan addresses three major objectives identified by Jay Hosack, who was the UCSC Volleyball Coach at the time: [1] to double attendance at home games (from 50 to 100 fans per game), [2] to raise at least \$8,000 for the Volleyball Program on an annual basis, and [3] to increase awareness of the Program and its players among UCSC students and the broader public in Santa Cruz County.

The Plan suggests targeting specific markets and focusing more attention on grass-roots efforts. It has been adopted by the current UCSC Volleyball Coach, Selene Teitelbaum, and is currently being used to guide the substantial expansion of marketing efforts by the UCSC Volleyball Program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This creative project is the culmination of a dream I have been working on since my first undergrad class in Public Relations at Fresno State University six years ago. I knew immediately that PR was the field I wanted to pursue, but it wasn't until meeting my department advisor that I knew what my plan was going to be. He helped me realize that I would be truly happy if I was to combine PR/Marketing with my passion – sports. Sports Communication is a fairly narrow field and landing my dream job requires more than work experience, so I decided to go back to school to earn my graduate degree. Because I knew what my goal was, I wanted a program that was tailored to my interests. I found such a program at San Jose State University – where I was able to custom-design an Interdisciplinary Master of Arts in Sports Communication with the help of three faculty members from different academic departments who were willing to work with me on this project.

I would sincerely like to thank those faculty members here for all of their support, guidance, and encouragement during the past three years: Dr. Dennis Wilcox (Journalism and Mass Communication); Dr. Greg Payne (Kinesiology); and Dr. Kate Sullivan (Hospitality Management). They each helped in different ways, and did so above and beyond their normal departmental duties, but without each one of them I would never have completed this project. I would also like to thank Jay Hosack (previous UC-Santa Cruz Volleyball coach) and Selene Teitelbaum (current UC-Santa Cruz Volleyball coach)

for their time and energy during this project. If they had not been willing to work with me, I would not have been able to focus on my favorite sport for this project.

I would also like to thank Dr. Paul Adams, a faculty member in the Department of Public Relations at Fresno State University, for initially helping me develop my dream and encouraging me to pursue my passions 100%.

There are many more people I could thank as well – and the important people in my life know who they are – but I would like to close with one more thank-you. There is absolutely no way I would be where I am today without the help of my dad, Dr. William J. Reckmeyer. Not only has he always believed in me and supported my efforts to excel, but he has served as my hidden committee member – giving objective advice and making sure I never gave up on my dream. Seems fitting that he will hood me at graduation.

Thanks to all!

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Brief Overview

The University of California - Santa Cruz (UCSC) is a Division III-affiliated school of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). As with other D-III institutions, UCSC offers a number of varsity sports programs but provides substantially less financial support for their operation than typically occurs at Division I and Division II institutions of higher education. As acknowledged by Jay Hosack, who was the UCSC Volleyball Head Coach during this project, “the University has limited money for Intercollegiate Athletics, so the [teams’] coaches are responsible for the majority of marketing and communications activities in addition to coaching, recruiting, and fundraising.”

The UCSC Volleyball Program includes men’s and women’s teams that are known as the “Banana Slugs,” like all other UCSC teams. “We [the Volleyball Program] struggle to fill seats at home games and want to improve in this area of operations to show more support for our volleyball players,” said Hosack. This MA project developed a Marketing Communications Plan to address this need, as originally proposed to San Jose State (Appendix A) and approved by Coach Hosack and his successor, Coach Selene Teielbaum (Appendix B), which is anticipated to help the Volleyball Program achieve its objectives of doubling attendance at home games (from 50 to 100 fans per game), raising at least \$8,000 for the Program on an annual basis, and increasing awareness of the Program and its players among UCSC students and the public in Santa Cruz County.

Background of UCSC Volleyball Program

The Volleyball Program (men's and women's teams) is one of 13 Intercollegiate Athletic Programs at UCSC that exist under the 'OPERS (Office of Physical Education, Recreation and Sports) Umbrella' on campus. The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, Greg Harshaw, works under the OPERS Head, Dan Wood. At the time of this project, Jay Hosack was the head coach of both volleyball teams that made up the Volleyball Program. "Like most UCSC coaches, I work alone and am in charge of all public relations, communications, outreach, marketing, recruiting, and fundraising efforts," said Hosack. During the 2003-2004 season, the Program was allocated a \$6,000 budget by OPERS, the distribution of which was entirely up to the coach (Table 1). OPERS also agreed to match donations raised by the Volleyball Program dollar for dollar - up to an additional \$8,000. Hosack has spent approximately \$250-\$300 on marketing and communications efforts each season, which was taken out of the money allocated to the Volleyball Program (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

**Table 1: UCSC Volleyball Program Budget
(2003-2004)**

Marketing/Communication efforts	\$250
Equipment (approx.)	\$1,500
Uniforms (approx.)	\$1,000
Travel Expenses (approx.)	\$3,000
Misc.	\$250
Total	\$6,000

“The Intercollegiate Athletics Department is not viewed as an important priority by the University,” said Hosack and a handful of UCSC students, “but its coaches care about their programs and work hard to build support for their teams.” The Volleyball Program has a difficult time building awareness for its teams and players because the university prohibits its athletic programs from selling merchandise in the college bookstore, so Hosack and the volleyball players occasionally sell merchandise elsewhere (for example, at tournaments and at car wash fundraisers) as an avenue to increase funds.

The women’s volleyball season starts in August and lasts through December, while the men’s season starts in January and lasts through May. The Volleyball Program’s primary public includes UCSC students who live on campus (approximately 7,000), students who live off campus (approximately 8,000), and volleyball fans living in Santa Cruz County – youth players and their families, beach players, etc. “The demographics for each game are fairly consistent: at least 25% of the attendees are family, with the remaining being friends, other students, and beach volleyball players,” said Hosack.

UCSC has two Sports Information (SI) Assistants who take care of the website (www.goslugs.com) by updating it with information from Hosack, who provided them with statistics and articles to be added to the website. A prior Sports Information Director (SID) designed a poster that has a picture and the game schedule displayed, which Hosack updated every year. This poster was handed out to each player and posted around campus, although it has not been distributed in the community yet. That same SID also

designed the team media guides for each season, which are not fancy but display team photos, statistics for each player, and the team schedules. No brochures have been made to date (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

UCSC currently allows fans free entry to its home games, gives a few media guides to each player for free, and holds several fundraisers. “Last year our fundraisers included a car wash, selling athletic merchandise at tournaments, and sending a letter home with each player asking for donations,” stated Hosack. A total of \$2,000 was raised during the 2003-2004 season, for example, with the majority (approximately 95%) being generated by the letter that was sent out to family and friends of the volleyball players.

Hosack says there are important marketing and communication factors that affect UCSC volleyball, including the following: game information is posted around campus (posters); UCSC used to host a grass tournament every year to raise funds, but the \$500-\$750 that was typically raised did not justify the time and effort expended; and UCSC usually holds summer volleyball camps on campus – three beginner/intermediate camps run by US Sports Nike Camps. “Even though the camps are held at UCSC, the Volleyball Program does not receive any of the money raised because Nike does all the marketing for the camps and they are run by an ex-coach,” stated Hosack.

Situation Analysis

UC–Santa Cruz does not spend as much money and provide as many resources for its Intercollegiate Athletics Department as other universities do. The annual marketing and communications expenses (\$250-\$300) for both volleyball teams at UCSC each year, for example, is roughly 10% of the comparable budget item (\$2,000-\$3,000) for Women’s Volleyball alone at Stanford University (J. Thiel, Marketing Director for Stanford University Women’s Volleyball). Because of UCSC’s limited financial support for its athletic teams, most UCSC coaches not only coach the sport and recruit players, but are also forced to carry out other tasks that athletic departments at better-funded institutions are often responsible for (such as marketing, communications, and fundraising).

As noted earlier, the UCSC Volleyball Program is allocated a \$6,000 budget to cover all traveling expenses, uniforms, equipment, and marketing/communications efforts. Since OPERS will match any additional donations up to a total of \$8,000, UCSC needs to focus on raising money so it can increase its budget by an additional \$16,000. Combined with the \$6,000 already allocated to the Volleyball Program, a potential budget of \$22,000 would allow the Program to allocate more money for marketing and communications efforts, which would help achieve its broader strategic objectives.

The same goes for coaching. Most Division I NCAA volleyball programs have 4 coaches per team (8 total for men’s and women’s teams) while many Division III NCAA programs have 2 coaches per team (4 total), but UCSC has only one person who coaches

both teams. Because of its limited budget and lack of qualified personnel to handle the marketing and communications efforts, UCSC's Volleyball Program needed some help to achieve its top three objectives: [1] increasing attendance at home games, [2] raising money to cover expenses, and [3] increasing awareness of the Program.

Coach Hosack estimated that at least 25% of the attendees at home matches are family members of the players. Since approximately 50 people usually attend each match, this means that family members comprise about 12-13 of the fans. They are likely to attend matches because they want to watch someone in their family play volleyball. Therefore, UCSC really needs to increase efforts to attract more UCSC students and Santa Cruz County residents so they can expand the number of attendees at their home volleyball matches. This is not as easy as it might seem, despite the local interest in volleyball, because there are many competing options that UCSC students and Santa Cruz County residents can choose from – such as walking around downtown Santa Cruz, going to movie theaters, dining out at local restaurants, relaxing at the beach, or heading “over the hill” to San Jose or San Francisco. This means that a grass-roots effort is needed to identify ways that attending a UCSC volleyball match can be more of an “outing.”

UCSC volleyball games create a different environment than other alternatives in the area, including other college volleyball games and community activities, which UCSC needs to use to its advantage. San Jose State University, Santa Clara University, and Stanford University all have Division I volleyball programs, so the level of play is higher

and the number of fans at home games is increased. But their games are also held in bigger gyms so the fans are not as close to the action. At UCSC games, however, every fan has a great seat because they are close to the court and can feel like they are involved in the game. UCSC's Main Gym has two long bleacher sections and some standing room, which can hold approximately 150-200 people.

A couple of decades ago Santa Cruz was considered by some as the beach volleyball capital of the world; people would go to the beach on weekends and play pick-up games, which eventually led to real volleyball tournaments. These pick-up games are still held at the Main Beach Volleyball Courts in Santa Cruz and clinics are now a common site there as well (November 2004, Volume 15, Issue 2, NCVA NewsNet). An estimated 100 of these former players are still living in Santa Cruz County and the surrounding region, continuing to play volleyball at the beach on weekends, so UCSC has a natural group of "volleyball lovers" that they can pursue.

An important technological trend that can likely enhance this expanded marketing focus is the increasing power of the Internet to attract and educate fans. UCSC's athletic website (www.goslugs.com) is a small website that only provides the "basics" – it gives the volleyball teams' schedules, rosters, some game highlights and the team photos – but it could definitely use improvement, according to Hosack.

Project Research Results

The major source of research for this project included a taped interview of Coach Hosack by the UCSC campus radio station. On February 11, 2004, Hosack completed a 30-minute interview on “Slug Talk” – KZSC radio. He spent the first half of the interview discussing the current men’s season (who was playing well, how the team had reached a top-ten ranking in the country at the time, and what it needed to do to continue playing competitively for the rest of the season). He also spoke about the upcoming women’s season and used the latter half of the interview to inform students and other listeners about the Volleyball Program and what it needed to do to improve (Slug Talk, 2004).

Hosack stated that he thought the Volleyball Program needed to recruit more local players because it is inexpensive to travel to watch them play and the teams would naturally draw more local family and friends to the games. He also mentioned that the Program needed to improve the facilities on campus so UCSC is a more desirable venue for volleyball and increase the budget provided by Intercollegiate Athletics (in terms of using the ‘matching of funds from OPERS’ to its advantage). Hosack concluded by mentioning that the Program also needed to focus on the Santa Cruz community, for support from the local fan base and for sponsorships from local businesses (Slug Talk, 2004).

Project Goals

The focus of this project was to help the UCSC Volleyball Program address its three principal objectives: [1] increase attendance at home games (from 50 to 100 fans per match), [2] raise at least \$8,000 for the Volleyball Program on an annual basis through more fundraisers and sponsorships, and [3] broaden awareness about the Program and its players among its potential base of fans on and off campus.

Relying on a grass-roots effort and resources that are easily accessible, then moving outward, the project developed a marketing communications plan and materials to focus intentionally on reaching more UCSC students, the players' family members, and fans in the Santa Cruz County community. Targeting these specific groups of people offers the greatest leverage for making sustained progress towards the three objectives, all of which are interdependent: increasing awareness helps fill seats and attract money, while improving resources helps expand the Program's marketing and communications efforts. Both of these results mutually reinforce each other, triggering a self-sustaining cycle of on-going enhancements that should enable the Program to significantly improve its long-term viability.

The researcher spent 2004 researching the Program's needs and developing ideas for this marketing plan. A local university's volleyball team shared its marketing plan, which was used as a basic model for this UCSC plan, but it was modified because the UCSC

Volleyball Program's budget is markedly smaller than those of comparable programs at other major universities in the region (Stanford, Santa Clara, and San Jose State).

Target Audiences

There are three major audiences for the UCSC Volleyball Program to target. The primary audience includes students who attend UC-Santa Cruz. There are approximately 15,000 students at UCSC; however, only a relatively small percentage of its students are interested in attending a volleyball match. UCSC needs to focus on those students who play on Intramural volleyball teams, compete in other Intercollegiate sports, are former volleyball players themselves, are friends of current and/or ex-players, or are enrolled in Physical Education classes,. These students could range in age because students can start as early as 17 years old and return to school at any age, but the students and friends contacted during the research phase of this study who were interested in attending volleyball matches were between 18-25 years old. The Program needs to focus on what the matches offer fans – a loud action-packed environment - and why they should attend. If the UCSC Volleyball Program can create an inexpensive environment that is fun, exciting, a place you want to be, and affordable, more students will hopefully choose to attend matches rather than having to drive further away and spend more money.

The second audience includes the family members and close friends of the UCSC volleyball players. Family members who live nearby are likely to attend as many home matches as possible because they have a personal interest in the team and because it is easy for them to do so, while family members who live outside the region are also highly interested in attending matches despite additional travel difficulties. Parents of players

are the majority of family members that attend matches, but so do siblings and other family members. The Program should make a special effort to ensure that every family member receives posters that display the teams' schedule/roster and directs people to the Program's website (www.goslugs.com) where they can read updates about the teams and their players. Hopefully this information will remind family members about the matches and motivate them to attend.

The third audience includes residents of Santa Cruz County that are potential fans. Primary attention should be focused on those groups of people who have some sort of direct connection with volleyball – the beach volleyball players; local business owners that trade in volleyball merchandise; and high school, junior college, or club volleyball players and their families. Secondary attention should be focused on other publics that might be interested on a peripheral basis – kids participating in Park & Recreation activities, Girl/Boy Scouts, etc; their families; and alumni and other UCSC supporters who still live in the area. All of these people are involved in the community in some way: they play volleyball themselves or support someone who does; participate in community activities; know and support UCSC through alumni donations or word-of-mouth; or by posting and distributing UCSC marketing material, such as posters in store windows or setting out stacks of flyers with the teams' schedule displayed. If UCSC uses more avenues to reach members of its broader community, the Volleyball Program will have a better shot at enticing some of them to attend the matches. Currently, not many people

outside the UCSC campus know about the teams and their home schedules, so few people in this audience attend the matches.

Strategies and Tactics

The difficulties that Coach Hosack identified are interconnected. The Program's lack of resources leads directly to poor attendance at home matches and limited awareness about UCSC Volleyball at large. If more resources can be generated, then Program staff can undertake more actions to attract fans and increase awareness. This highlights why the Program's initial priority should be to improve its resource base for marketing and communications efforts.

Since there are no immediate sources of funding that can be dedicated to this initial priority, the first recommendation of this Marketing Communications Plan is that UCSC should recruit a junior or senior majoring in Business Management or Sociology (the most appropriate majors at UCSC) to serve as an intern for the Volleyball Program. This intern could earn credit for a class and be responsible for such tasks as contacting local newspapers for regular coverage of the Program; distributing posters to high school and junior college athletic departments; contacting the Girl/Boy Scouts, other youth teams, and the Park and Recreation Department; as well as probing local businesses for sponsorships.

Many of the recommendations included in this Plan are fairly standard ideas in the marketing/communications profession, but were fundamental here because UCSC had no marketing plan at all before this project was undertaken on its behalf. Specific strategies to achieve each of the principal objectives include the following.

Objective #1 – Double Attendance at Home Matches

The first strategy for achieving this objective is to increase coverage of the UCSC volleyball teams in local newspapers by expanding the Program's public relations efforts. Program staff should send press releases – like local high school teams do – to the major local newspapers (*Santa Cruz Sentinel* and *San Jose Mercury News*) that announce the start of the season, summarize the seasons' schedule, report the results of team matches, and suggest ideas for feature stories.

The second strategy for this objective is to create group nights that are designed to attract a specific new fan base. Program staff should add Girl/Boy Scouts Night and Youth Night to its schedule, for example, to attract broader groups of people – children who come to the match in their uniform get in FREE. The Program should also arrange for players to attend Girl/Boy Scout community meetings, where they can talk to the kids and get them excited about watching them play volleyball, and also send information to the Park & Recreation Department to promote Youth Night.

The third strategy is to increase promotion on campus. Program staff should place publicity boards around campus (in front of the bookstore and outside the gym would be great locations, for example) announcing "Volleyball Game Tonight," provide stories on a different volleyball player each week in the UCSC campus newspaper and on the UCSC campus radio station, and encourage players to wear part of their uniform on game days to draw attention.

Objective #2 –Raise at least \$8,000 for the Program

The Program will be hard-pressed to raise \$8,000 on an annual basis right from the start and should adopt a marketing strategy that reflects a progressive annual approach to fundraising. During the first year of implementation (2005-2006), therefore, UCSC should strive to raise \$2,000 more than it did in 2004-2005 (improve from \$2,000 to \$4,000). This would increase its total budget from \$10,000 (\$6,000 in UCSC allocations + \$2,000 in raised funds + \$2,000 in matching funds) to \$14,000 (\$6,000 + \$4,000 + \$4,000) – which would be a 40% increase over its current revenues. The Volleyball Program should conduct the following kinds of targeted fundraising activities during the first year of implementation:

- Hold a 50/50 raffle at each home match – sell raffle tickets to fans and split the pot proceeds with one lucky fan who stays until the end of the match (the Volleyball Program would earn half of the proceeds);
- Sell concessions (soda, water, Gatorade, candy, popcorn, etc) and UCSC merchandise (short-sleeved t-shirts, long-sleeved t-shirts, sweatshirts, beanies) at home games and tournaments, with net profits going to the Volleyball Program;
- Charge a reasonable entry fee to home games, preferably on a sliding scale (such as UCSC students with ID card get in free, children pay only \$1, and all others pay \$3);
- Hold mini-clinics before selected home matches (offer a chance for local high school players to attend an hour-long clinic run by the head coach and current players for \$20, notifying local high school coaches and/or club coaches to let them know about the opportunity).

During the second year, UCSC should once again strive to raise an additional \$2,000 over the previous year (improve from \$4,000 to \$6,000). This would increase its total budget to \$18,000 (\$6,000 in UCSC allocations + \$6,000 in raised funds + \$6,000 in matching funds) – which would be an 80% increase over its current revenues. UCSC

could do this by incorporating sponsorships into its plan. Some sponsorship opportunities to consider are:

- Add a contest between games for kids in the audience (the first ten people who line up behind the service line can serve three balls for a chance to win a free pizza). UCSC could solicit sponsorship of this event from a local pizza company whose name would be used in announcing the contest over the loud speaker. The pizza company would provide one gift certificate for a free pizza to each person who hits a pizza box during their serving time;
- Solicit donations from local sporting goods or volleyball equipment stores, such as mini-volleyballs or t-shirts that can be signed by UCSC Volleyball team members and thrown into the stands at home games by the mascot. Each store would have its name on the merchandise, in addition to having it announced during the game.

During the third year, as in the first two years of the Plan, UCSC should concentrate on increasing its fundraising by yet another \$2,000 (improve from \$6,000 to \$8,000).

This would increase its total budget to the maximum amount possible for matching funds - \$22,000 (\$6,000 in UCSC allocations + \$8,000 in raised funds + \$8,000 in matching funds), which would be a substantial 120% increase over its current revenues. To do this UCSC should add more and different kinds of fundraisers, such as:

- Hold a spike-a-thon or serve-a-thon (get pledges from friends and family to support as many spikes or serves a player can successfully complete in a specified amount of time, with small donations for each spike/serve in that allotted time period, which could be held on one Saturday in the UCSC gym);
- Generate more school loyalty by having barbeques before selected home matches, especially those involving major rivals. Ask local restaurants to donate food and beverages for the barbeque in exchange for advertisements at the event.

In addition to these progressive fundraising activities, the Volleyball Program could also improve the use of existing resources by minimizing the need to hire staff for match-related duties. Since it is mandatory for each volleyball team to attend all of the home

matches for its counterpart in the Volleyball Program (women players attend the men's matches and vice versa), the players can work the concession stand and merchandise table, sell game tickets, and walk around the bleachers selling 50/50 raffle tickets in addition to doing lines (refereeing duties). This way there are capable people who can "man the stations" for free.

Objective #3 – Increase Awareness of the Program and its Players

The first strategy to achieve this objective is to expand coverage in the community. The Program should post flyers with the teams' schedule in prominent locales that are frequented by its potential fan base – in local business windows, at local high schools, and in junior college athletic departments. Volleyball staff and volunteers should also place stacks of mini-schedules at the County Parks & Recreation Department.

The second strategy should focus on raising awareness in the volleyball community, locally and in nearby regions since the University attracts interest from students, families, and other interested parties beyond Santa Cruz County. The Program should include the volleyball teams' schedules in the Northern California Volleyball Association's (NCVA) publication – *NCVA NewsNet* – and place mini-schedules at all local volleyball clinics and every UCSC home volleyball match.

The third strategy should be to create an electronic UCSC Volleyball newsletter that the intern or coach would update on a regular basis so interested fans can automatically receive current information about the Volleyball Program via email. It would help to use

a catchy title (such as the UCSC Slug-Fest), and logo for the newsletter so that recipients would look forward to receiving their electronic updates about the University's volleyball activities. Program staff should post newsletter sign-up sheets in prime spots around Santa Cruz (such as home matches, beach pick-up games during weekends, and local volleyball clinics), develop a data base of email addresses for every player and/or person who has made any kind of a donation to the Program; and establish linkages with other noted volleyball websites. This would enable the Program to generate a large base of interested subscribers, which could be maintained with minimal effort and maximum impact.

Timeline

The researcher met with the head coach several times during 2004-2005 to discuss the recommendations that were made in the Marketing Communications Plan for the UCSC Volleyball Program. She also talked with the coach about the letter that needs to be included in this final project report (Appendix F). Discussing the project in detail ensured that the new coach will be “on board” with the ideas and recommended actions contained in the Plan, especially with respect to having sufficient lead time to understand and incorporate them by the start of the 2005-2006 volleyball season.

Using the women’s volleyball season (Fall 2005) as the “guinea-pig” for testing this new Plan will probably be more successful than starting with the men’s volleyball season, primarily because there are many more women’s teams than men’s teams nationally at both the high school and the collegiate levels. As such, it should be easier to market a women’s team than a men’s team. This should help the Program reach its youth targets and their families who are used to following the sport on television – especially in light of the success achieved by the two women’s beach volleyball teams who took the gold and bronze medals at the 2004 summer Olympic Games. (Kerri Walsh, a volleyball standout at Archbishop Mitty High School and then at Stanford University in Santa Clara County, is well-known to volleyball aficionados as well as the public at large.)

Implementing this Marketing and Communications Plan will require the Volleyball Program to conduct a series of specific tasks, organized in terms of addressing each of the

desired objectives. These tasks cannot be carried out at one time, however, but should be done on a phased basis over a year that requires coordinated actions across all three of the objectives. For this reason, the Program should use a planning tool like a Gantt chart to keep track of the critical tasks and timelines for the Plan (Table 2). The tasks and related timelines for this Plan include the following:

Objective #1 – Double Attendance at Home Matches

- Press Releases – these should be distributed throughout the women’s season (August – December) and the men’s season (January – May) to announce the start of the season, after every home match, and every month for feature stories.
- Girl/Boy Scouts & Youth Nights – these “special” nights should take place at the beginning of the season so children and parents can attend other matches during the season; the Girl/Boy Scouts and Parks & Recreation Department should be contacted in early August for their annual schedules of meetings to arrange times for players to hand out information, talk to people, and get them excited about coming to the UCSC volleyball matches.
- Campus Promotion – these tasks (“volleyball game tonight” signs posted around the campus and talking to the campus radio station/newspaper every Monday morning to recap the previous week’s events and anticipate the next week’s activities) should be implemented on a regular basis throughout the women’s season (August – December) and the men’s season (January – May).

Objective #2 –Raise at least \$8,000 for the Program

- 50/50 Raffle – these should be held at every home match during the women’s and men’s seasons (approximately 15 total).
- Concessions – these should be sold at every UCSC tournament (approximately 1 each season for both teams) plus every home match.
- Entry Fee –these should be charged at every home match.
- Mini-Clinics – these should be held one day per month (September, October, November, February, March, April) prior to a UCSC home match; local high school coaches should be notified in August (for the women’s season) and in January (for the men’s season), to give them a heads-up about clinic dates, and enrolled at least two weeks in advance of their respective clinics.

Table 2: Marketing Communications Plan

	UCSC Volleyball Marketing Plan	Responsibility	Start Date	End Date	2005					2006								
					J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J
1	Objective #1 - Double Attendance at Home Matches																	
2	Press Releases																	
3	- Prepare & Distribute Season Start Press Releases (Women)	Intern	8/1/05	8/31/05									▲▼					
4	- Prepare & Distribute Weekly Press Releases (Women)	Intern	8/15/05	11/30/05									▲	—————	▼			
5	- Prepare & Distribute Monthly Press Releases (Women)	Intern	8/1/05	12/1/05									▲	—————	▼			
6	- Prepare & Distribute Season Start Press Releases (Men)	Intern	1/1/06	1/31/06												▲▼		
7	- Prepare & Distribute Weekly Press Releases (Men)	Intern	1/15/06	4/30/06												▲	—————	▼
8	- Prepare & Distribute Monthly Press Releases (Men)	Intern	1/1/06	5/1/06												▲	—————	▼
9	Girl/Boy Scouts & Youth Nights																	
10	- Send Letter to Local Girl Scout and Boy Scout Troops	Coach	8/1/05	1/1/06									▲	—————	▼			
11	- Attend Monthly Meetings of Girl Scout and Boy Scout Troops	Coach/ Players	8/1/05	4/1/06									▲	—————	▼			
12	- Send Letters to High School and Club Teams	Coach	8/1/05	1/1/06									▲	—————	▼			
13	- Place Info about Youth Nights at Park & Recreation Department	Intern	8/1/05	1/1/06									▲	—————	▼			
14	Campus Promotion																	
15	- Place Information in OPERS Publication	Intern	8/1/05	5/1/06									▲	—————	▼			
16	- Hang Posters With Schedule Around Campus	Intern/ Players	8/1/05	4/1/06									▲	—————	▼			
17	- Run Stories in Campus Newspaper	Intern/ Coach	8/1/05	5/1/06									▲	—————	▼			
18	- Interviews on Campus Radio Station	Coach/ Players	8/1/05	4/1/06									▲	—————	▼			

Table 2 (cont): Marketing Communications Plan

	UCSC Volleyball Marketing Plan	Respon sibility	Start Date	End Date	2005					2006								
					J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J
19	Objective #2 - Raise \$8,000 for the Volleyball Program																	
20	50/50 Raffle																	
21	- Buy Supplies to Run Raffle	Coach	8/1/05	8/15/05	△													
22	- Hold Raffles at Home Matches (Women)	Players	8/1/05	11/30/05	△	→												
23	- Hold Raffles at Home Matches (Men)	Players	1/1/06	4/30/06								△	→					
24	Concessions																	
25	- Buy Food, Drinks, Candy, Etc.	Coach	8/1/05	4/1/06	△	→												
26	- Buy Volleyball Merchandise	Coach	8/1/05	1/1/06	△	→												
27	- Sell Concessions at Home Matches (Women)	Players	8/1/05	11/30/05	△	→												
28	- Sell Concessions at Home Matches (Men)	Players	1/1/06	4/30/06								△	→					
29	Entry Fees																	
30	- Charge Entry Fee at Home Matches (Women)	Players	8/1/05	11/30/05	△	→												
31	- Charge entry fee at Home Matches (Men)	Players	1/1/06	4/30/06								△	→					
32	Mini-Clinics																	
33	- Send Letter to High School and Junior College Coaches	Coach	8/1/05	1/1/06	△	→												
34	- Hold Mini-Clinics Once a Month (Sept., Oct., Nov., Feb., Mar., Apr.)	Coach/ Players	9/1/05	4/30/06	△	→												
35	Game Contests																	
36	- Contact Local Companies to Ask For Donations	Coach/ Intern	8/1/05	1/1/06	△	→												

Table 2 (cont): Marketing Communications Plan

	UCSC Volleyball Marketing Plan	Responsibility	Start Date	End Date	2005	2006
					J J A S O N D J F M A M J J	J J A S O N D J F M A M J J
37	- Run Contest During Home Matches (Women)	Players	8/15/05	11/30/05	△ → ▽	
38	- Run Contest During Home Matches (Men)	Players	1/15/06	4/30/06		△ → ▽
39	Spike-a-Thons / Serve-a-Thons					
40	- Collect Pledges from Aug.-Sept. (Women) & Jan.-Feb. (Men)	Players	8/1/05	3/31/06	△ → ▽	
41	- Hold Spike/Serve - a - Thons in Oct. (Women) and Mar. (Men)	Coach/ Players	10/1/05	3/31/06	△ → ▽	
42	- Collect Money Through Nov. (Women) & Apr. (Men)	Players	11/30/05	4/30/06		△ → ▽
43	Barbeques					
44	- Contact Local Restaurant to Ask For Donations	Coach/ Intern	8/1/05	8/31/05	△ ▽	
45	- Have Barbeques Once a Month During the Seasons	Coach/ AD	8/1/05	4/30/06	△ → ▽	
46	- Arrange For Company's Information to Get in Gym	Coach/ Intern	8/1/05	1/31/06	△ → ▽	
47	Objective #3 - Increase Awareness of Program and Players					
48	Flyers / Posters					
49	- Hang Posters in Local Business Windows	Intern/ Players	8/1/05	1/31/06	△ → ▽	
50	- Place Stack of Flyers at Park & Recreation Department	Intern/ Players	8/1/05	1/31/06	△ → ▽	
51	- Hang Posters at Local High School & Junior Colleges	Intern/ Players	8/1/05	1/31/06	△ → ▽	
52	NCVA NewsNet					
53	- Contact NCVA NewsNet About Running Schedules in Publication	Coach	7/1/05	1/1/06	△ → ▽	
54	- Run Schedule in Monthly Issues	Coach	8/1/05	4/1/06	△ → ▽	

Table 2 (cont): Marketing Communications Plan

	UCSC Volleyball Marketing Plan	Respon sibility	Start Date	End Date	2005					2006								
					J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J
55	Local NCVA Beach Clinics																	
56	- Check NCVA Website For Current Year Clinic Dates	Intern	8/1/05	1/1/06														
57	- Bring Flyers With Schedule to Every Beach Clinic Event	Coach/ Players	7/1/05	6/30/06														
58	UCSC Newsletter																	
59	- Put Newsletter Section Up on Website	Coach/ SID	7/1/05	6/30/06														
60	- Have Newsletter Sign-up Sheet Available	Coach/ Players	7/1/05	6/30/06														
61	- Capture Email Addresses of Ex-players	Intern	7/1/05	6/30/06														
62	- Add Email Address Section to Donation Letter	Coach	8/1/05	1/1/06														
63																		
64																		
65																		
66																		
67																		
68																		
69																		
70																		
71																		
72																		
73																		
		Untitled																
						36		2		7		0						

- Pizza-Serving Contest & Ball/Shirt Toss – these should be held at every home match during both the women’s and men’s seasons; the pizza company and sporting goods stores should be contacted in August to secure donations for the current year and then coordinated on a timely basis during the women’s and men’s seasons;
- Spike-a-Thon/Serve-a-Thon – these should be held during October and March, with the women players collecting pledges through the end of September and the men players collecting pledges through the end of February.
- Barbeques – these should be held before one home match each month during the women’s and men’s seasons; sponsoring restaurants should be lined up for donations in August for the current year and then coordinated on a timely basis during the women’s and men’s seasons.

Objective #3 – Increase Awareness of the Program and its Players

- Flyers – these tasks (posters in local business windows, high school and junior college physical education offices/athletic departments, and other prominent public locales; mini-schedules in the Parks & Recreation Department) should be implemented at the beginning of both seasons (August for the women’s team and January for the men’s team).
- NCVA NewsNet: Contact the Northern California Volleyball Association in August to see about putting UCSC’s schedules in the NewsNet publication in each month’s issue through the month of May.
- Local NCVA Beach Clinics – posters and other information about the UCSC Volleyball Program should be distributed at all of the current years’ events (March 5, April 16, June 23, July 18-20, and July 24 – 2005 dates).
- UCSC Newsletter – these tasks should be continuously carried out on a regular basis throughout the year (on the website, at every home match, at local clinics – see list from NCVA, capture email addresses for every ex-player, and add a spot for email addresses on the donation letter that goes out to family and friends).

Budget

Table 3: Marketing Communications Budget

UCSC Volleyball Marketing Budget	2005- 2006	2006- 2007	2007- 2008
Objective #1 Double Attendance at Home Volleyball Matches			
- Press Releases (sent electronically)	\$0	\$0	\$0
- Youth Nights	\$15	\$25	\$50
- Campus Promotion	\$25	\$50	\$75
Objective #2 Raise \$8,000 a Year for Volleyball Program			
- 50/50 Raffles	\$40	\$75	\$150
- Concessions	\$75	\$100	\$150
- Entry Fees	\$0	\$0	\$0
- Mini-Clinics	\$10	\$25	\$50
- Game Contests	Donated	Donated	Donated
- Spike-a-Thons/Serve-a-Thons	\$0	\$0	\$25
- Barbeques	Donated	Donated	Donated
Objective #3 Increase Awareness of Volleyball Program and Volleyball Players			
- Flyers/Posters	\$50	\$100	\$200
- NCVA NewsNet	\$0	\$0	\$0
- Local NCVA Beach Clinics	\$10	\$25	\$50
- UCSC Newsletter	\$0	\$0	\$0
Labor (Intern)	\$0	\$100	\$250
Total Annual Budget	\$225	\$500	\$1,000

The UCSC Volleyball Program needs to raise more money so it can increase the amount of funding that is allocated towards its marketing and communication efforts. If it can raise an additional \$6,000 annually, as is being recommended in this Marketing Communications Plan, then it should be able to commit a \$1,000 a year or more towards these efforts and dramatically improve its chances of maintaining the ability to achieve the Plan's three principal objectives. In particular, the Program needs to focus on finding a way to accomplish all of these recommended strategies. Unfortunately, given its very limited resources, UCSC does not currently have anyone on staff who can devote the time and effort that is needed to follow through on the recommendations in this Plan. To do so as quickly as possible, the Program should hire an unpaid student intern whose primary responsibilities will be to work on implementing the first-year strategies of this Plan.

The Program's best overall strategy should be to focus on different forms of market penetration around campus to current UCSC students (articles in the campus newspaper, interviews on the campus radio station, write-ups in the OPERS recreation publication, and an online newsletter) because these tasks do not require any money. The Sports Information Assistants pay for the printing of the posters that are given to each player and posted around campus, while OPERS pays for its publication. The coach or intern should talk to the campus newspaper and radio station to secure regular coverage and provide written information for the recreation publication. The new volleyball newsletter will be online, so there will not be any printing costs and the templates for the sign-up sheet (Appendix C) and newsletter (Appendix B) were developed as part of this project

Printing posters at Kinko's is another expense – it charges about \$200 to print 100 11x17 color posters. These posters would be used in addition to the posters that the Sports Information Assistants prints for the team and would be used in the community.

An additional cost is the purchase of raffle tickets and a raffle bin to use at the matches, as well as a popcorn machine and cooler for drinks to use in the small snack shack. This would cost money to buy, but would generate a profit from the fans. The same would go for tickets. A 50-50 raffle is very inexpensive to run – have the other teams' players go around the stands asking who would like to buy raffle tickets to win half the pot – but it can raise money for the Program. Another cost is the purchase of volleyball t-shirts, sweatshirts, and beanies. The Volleyball Program charges approximately \$5-10 more than they cost to purchase, so it makes money.

Promoting the Youth Nights, Girl/Boy Scout Nights, and the mini-clinics will also cost money – printing of letters and flyers, and postage sent in packets to local high schools and junior colleges, the Santa Cruz County Parks & Recreation Department, and the Girl/Boy Scouts. Public Relations efforts just take time but should not incur any costs because the press releases would be sent electronically and followed up with a phone call. And securing sponsorships for the serving contest, ball/shirt toss, and barbeques, as well as pledges for the Spike/Serve-A-Thon, do not cost any out-of-pocket expenses.

Products

This project led to the development of various marketing materials to help the UCSC Volleyball Program implement this Marketing Communications Plan. These included a sample Press Release to be distributed to media and supporters in advance of the season (Appendix C); a sample Newsletter to be emailed to media and supporters (Appendix D), a Sign-Up Sheet to receive the email newsletters (Appendix E), and a Contact List for the major media outlets (Appendix F).

Evaluation

After implementing the marketing/communications plan among the UCSC resources (coach, intern, Athletic Director, etc.) the next step is to focus on evaluating the plan's effectiveness in terms of strategies suggested here.

Did the attendance double at home games? Did the Volleyball Program raise the \$8,000 needed to reach a \$22,000 total budget? Did more members of the community attend the volleyball matches this season? Did more people visit the UCSC athletic website (www.goslugs.com)? Were the Girl/Boy Scout and Youth Nights effective (did anyone show up and if so, did they return)? Did the pizza company, sports store, and restaurant agree to be sponsors of the Program? Did the Program receive more coverage in the local newspapers because of improved PR efforts?

The Volleyball Coach and Athletic Director should analyze the figures from game attendees and money raised at the beginning, middle, and end of the seasons to see how much progress was made after implementing the researchers' suggestions.

The Volleyball Coach will be most involved in the process of evaluation because of involvement in the program; however, the Athletic Director at UCSC, Greg Harshaw, and the Head of OPERS, Dan Wood, will also be involved in this process because they are the ones that ultimately decide the Volleyball Program's budget, which has direct effect on the objectives for its teams.

REFERENCES

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Slug Talk. (February 11, 2004). Interview with Coach Jay Hosack. KZSC Radio.

APPENDIX A

SJSU Project Proposal

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR VOLLEYBALL PROGRAM

Marketing Communications Plan for University of California – Santa Cruz Volleyball
Program

Plan C Project

Interdisciplinary Studies

Lorien R. Reckmeyer

San Jose State University

December 2004

Introduction

The University of California - Santa Cruz (UCSC) is a Division III-affiliated school of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The University has limited money for Intercollegiate Athletics, which means its teams' coaches are responsible for the majority of marketing and communication activities in addition to coaching, recruiting, and fundraising (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

The UCSC Volleyball Program includes men's and women's teams which are known as the "Banana Slugs" like all other UCSC teams. The Volleyball Program struggles to fill seats at home games and its coach acknowledges that help is needed to improve in this area of operations (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003). This MA project will develop a Marketing Communications Plan to meet this need, which is anticipated to help the Volleyball Program achieve its goals of filling seats at home games, raising money for the Program, and increasing awareness of the Program and its players among the students of UCSC and the public of Santa Cruz County.

This MA project will also significantly help achieve the researcher's career goals. She is completing an Interdisciplinary Studies Master's Degree in Sports Communication because she is very interested in working in the communications field for a sports organization. Working on this project will enable the researcher to gain more hands-on experience designing and implementing marketing communications efforts for a sports organization, as well as developing contacts in the profession through research interviews.

In addition to working on a Master's program, the researcher has held numerous internships, part-time positions, and temporary work in sports communication and marketing. She is also a highly experienced volleyball player from the Bay Area who won two Northern California High School Championships and three National Championships with a club team and at the Outdoor Grass National Tournament. In addition, she played Division I volleyball at Fresno State University and coached an elite club volleyball team. This background is an advantage in working with a collegiate volleyball program in this area since she knows the sport extremely well and is familiar with many potential markets for UCSC to target.

Background

Literature Review

The sports industry has come a long way in the past century, when its original management functions consisted primarily of selling tickets and making seating arrangements. Sport is now the sixth-largest industry in the United States, with a Gross Domestic Sports Product (GDSP) of \$213 billion (Brown, 2003). Present-day sports franchises require managers to help owners and professional staff formulate and achieve performance goals and objectives (Amar, 1999). Modern sports managers must understand principles and relevant applications to make them usable in meeting the work needs of their organizations; these include operations, marketing, finance, sociology, psychology, and anthropology (Amar, 1999). Communication professionals work to find

the best way to reach their public, what the public is most interested in, and how to maintain their attention over an extended period of time (Amar, 1999).

The business of sport marketing was founded in 1961 by lawyer Mark McCormack to 'bring some marketing magic to sports' (Centaur Communications Ltd., 2003). Major sport firms relate externally to the public through public relations (PR) departments or agencies (Bridges & Roquemore, 1996), while collegiate athletic departments use sports information departments to perform these services. No matter what the setting, the purpose of these departments is to create a positive public image of a particular organization, team, athlete, sport, or product line. In higher educational institutions, the Sports Information Director is the communications connection between the media, students, alumni, and followers (Bridges & Roquemore, 1996).

Americans' passionate interest in college sports continues to grow (Kilbourne, 2003) partly because we look on our colleges and universities as entertainment centers (Basinger & Suggs, 2003). These teams have a huge role in construction, manufacturing, tourism, media, transportation, and advertising in the national economy (Greenberg, 2003), so it is no surprise that many athletic departments are a major marketing strategy for their higher education institutions (Basinger & Suggs, 2003).

Since the sports industry is growing so rapidly, the importance of communication grows as well. Consequently, communication professionals play an increasingly important role in sports organizations. It is important for communication professionals,

and sport marketers in particular, to develop new methods for reaching targeted audiences (Brown, 2003).

One way to reach the public is by staying up-to-date with evolving technologies and client preferences. Public relations agencies are using technology more than ever, relying on the Internet as an integral part of day-to-day operations (Public Relations Quarterly, 1998). At the end of 2002, the online adult population had reached 114 million Americans - 61% of U.S. adults (Brown, 2003). This growth underscores that sport industry professionals need to understand the value of technology as an effective marketing tool to provide information about an organization and to generate awareness about it (Brown, 2003). Knowing what clients like is important for communication professionals. They need to know what information their clients respond to, how they want it transmitted to them, and when. Knowing which media like press releases sent to them by fax, which by email, and which by hard copy is also very important (Public Relations Quarterly, 1998).

Managing relationships is another significant concern for communication professionals (Lindenmann, 1998). Good relationships are beneficial because they not only improve economic opportunities, but also help avoid or minimize conflicts and crises. An organization is nothing without its people and it is difficult to win people over without developing relationships with them. Kathleen Ladd Ward, former chair of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Research Committee, said "The ultimate objective of public relations is to build and maintain beneficial relationships between

organizations and their publics” (Lindenmann, 1998, p.19). Important attributes of good relationships are: trust, understanding, credibility, behavior, mutuality of control or conflict avoidance, and maintenance of the relationship that exists between an organization and its key constituents (Lindenmann, 1998).

Suggs states that maintaining a consistent philosophy on marketing and fundraising within an athletic department is also crucial. Programs can be ineffective in generating revenues and achieving goals if there isn’t an athletic director who can streamline the department (April, 2002).

Many sports organizations have been very successful in their efforts to reach the public. Whether they are college programs, sports commissions, or professional sports teams, their goal is the same – to draw the public’s interest to generate money and attention through sports.

According to Dr. Richard Montgomery, a nationally-recognized volleyball expert at San Jose State University, defining stakeholders and creating an environment built on a quality program are the two most important elements of developing a successful Sports Marketing Plan (Dr. R. Montgomery, personal communication, 2003). Prioritizing target audiences and maintaining a wholesome and competitive environment for the players is essential.

One example is Stanford University, which is consistently ranked as one of the top athletic schools in the country while, according to Suggs, playing in one of the six richest sports leagues in the country - Pacific-10 Conference (March, 2002). Its women’s

volleyball team has finished in the top-10 in the country 19 times, in the top-5 16 times, and won the national title 5 times (American Volleyball Coaches Association).

Stanford's volleyball program manages to regularly fill seats at its home matches even while competing with numerous other entertainment choices for Bay Area fans. Josh Thiel, Marketing Director for this volleyball program, says the most important strategy in its Sports Marketing Plan is grass-roots marketing (J. Thiel, personal communication, 2003). This includes having players and coaches visit local schools to talk to children about the program and help create awareness of the team and its players; working with Stanford Hospital and doing 'good will in the community;' and giving information and group discounts to Girl Scouts, park & recreation departments, and youth teams.

Stanford's women's volleyball program also creates different types of marketing material, including team posters and pocket schedules, flyers announcing games, season and game-series programs, and a large sign outside the athletic facilities on campus. Money made from booster club donations and ticket sales goes towards the volleyball program's \$2,000 budget for marketing and communication efforts (J. Thiel, personal communication, 2003).

A representative of a top Division I volleyball program, who would like to remain nameless so as to not reveal its secrets, was generous enough to share its marketing plan with the researcher. It includes five main areas of marketing and communications to focus on:

- Ticket sales - efforts included: season tickets; special offers for summer volleyball campers; season ticket brochure mailing; 2 different club volleyball plans; retirement communities; faculty and staff season ticket offer; student season ticket offer; group sales; and discount days.
- Media - efforts consisted of: print; radio; public address announcements (PAs); and Internet.
- Sponsorship - efforts included: giveaway days; “roof” cards; time-out program prizes; program posters; time-out contests; match sponsorship opportunities; introductory balls; trading cards; and poster/autograph days.
- Schedule - efforts consisted of: pocket schedules; schedule posters; schedule bottles; magnet schedules; and billboards.
- Community - efforts included: school kits; local school nights; Girl Scouts night; and local community nights.

This example will serve as a guide to help develop a specific Marketing Communications Plan to meet the needs and abilities of UCSC’s volleyball program.

Another example is Ohio State University, which is considered by Suggs to be a “sports factory” because it is the largest and most expensive college-sports program in the United States, and has one of the few athletic programs in the country that isn’t a financial drain on the university (November, 2002). According to him, the Buckeyes radiate enthusiasm by using several techniques in its marketing plan to keep students and faculty passionate about its sports, including: fundraising, constant renovation,

maintaining national media broadcasts, utilizing the school band, encouraging pre-game festivities (November, 2002), and capitalizing on the increasing interest in electronics. BuckeyeMag iMags, which are video magazines, provide behind-the-scenes coverage of every campus sport (Business Wire, 2003). BuckeyeMag clips offer fans a direct connection to the game and is similar to watching a DVD on the internet. The program features in-depth coverage of Buckeyes' games, players, and coaches delivered direct to fans' computers, and costs only \$6.95 per month (Business Wire, 2003).

Numerous other schools are taking advantage of the ability to reach fans and sell tickets online to large sporting events, such as football and basketball. Stanford University, Georgia Tech, UC Berkeley, and UCLA - to name a few - are starting to use an electronic ticket delivery system created by Justarrive, Inc. (Business Wire, 2000). Tickets are attached electronically to magnetic-striped cards, allowing fans to swipe the cards upon entry to games and avoid will-call lines. Using this method appeals to sport teams by reducing the cost of marketing and distributing tickets (Business Wire, 2000).

The University of Memphis is hoping to increase awareness by altering its image (The Commercial Appeal, Inc., 2003). Collateral has been printed with the slogan "Relentless," which the Tigers hope describes their teams' offensive and defensive approaches, and will draw fans to its sporting events. The University of Maryland is a prime example of a school that needed to change its image to overcome adversity. After the death of basketball star Len Bias in 1986, the Terrapins started a vast marketing campaign to change the university's image (Pulley, 2003). Maryland's marketing efforts

focused on developing a unified image for the university. Through a series of focus groups, the Terrapins not only succeeded in generating a buzz, but also raising money and enrollment numbers (Pulley, 2003).

Several colleges and universities have used successful marketing practices to reach fans and generate money. The University of Maryland used campus banners, email messages to current students and alumni, and ads in newspapers (Pulley, 2003); Oberlin College focused on “community builders” such as bonfires, spirit rallies, and tailgate parties (Gose, 2003); while other schools placed information in student newspapers, alumni magazines, and other official publications (Bowen & Levin, 2003).

Successful teams and marquee players definitely affect fans’ impressions. “Having a marquee player like Logan Tom [who plays for the United States Olympic Team] has certainly drawn fans to games,” Thiel said (J. Thiel, personal communication, 2003). Not only do successful teams help attract fans to games, but they also help with selling school merchandise and drawing attention from the media. Ohio State University has seen an almost double increase in Buckeye Merchandise since winning college football’s Championship game and finishing #1 in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) rankings last year (The Columbus Dispatch, 2003). According to Suggs, having an entertaining and winning team helps establish momentum (August, 2002) because people want to identify with a winner.

The San Jose Sports Authority, which is made up of 5 staff members and 21 voting board members, has brought numerous revenue-generating sporting events to the

Silicon Valley. These include, but are not limited to: the NCAA Men's Regional Basketball Championships; NHL All-Star Game; Women's World Cup; NCAA Women's Final Four; Siebel Classic; MLS All-Star Game; San Jose Sports Hall of Fame; USOC Titan Games; and, most recently, the 2003 Literacy Classic at San Jose State University (San Jose Sports Authority; PR Newswire, 2003).

Richmond, Virginia, owes much of how it is perceived as a sports town (enthusiastic, efficient, and eager) to the Sports Backers, a ten-year-old non-profit sports commission that receives most of its money from the private sector. The Richmond Backers' mission is to increase the number of visitors who come to Richmond through sports and to build economic support for additional athletic facilities (Dorr, 2001). The Sports Backers is a typical type of group now. There are about 230 sports commissions nationwide with the same mission. A key reason why these sports commissions are successful is due to their members' enthusiasm for what they do and their background in competitive athletics (Dorr, 2001).

The National Basketball Association (NBA) is a professional sports franchise that has been highly successful in reaching its target audience, in part because of media coverage. In a case study done on the NBA, several public relations strategies stood out as to why the NBA has been so successful in achieving its goals. The NBA's public relations professionals used mass media as a vehicle to reach its audience and it created tremendous community involvement (Fortunato, 2000). According to Sherman (1998), NBA Commissioner David Stern said "understanding the importance of being engaged

with the area where you operate, embracing the idea of a public-private partnership, and having a strong understanding toward the feelings of the fans is critical (p.119).” The NBA also sent media kits to all media prior to games to make sure they were prepared; made sure the players trusted their team’s public relations people; educated its players on media relations so they would know how to handle the media; and made sure they served the public.

In contrast, the National Hockey League (NHL) has had a major communications problem. Most Americans know little about hockey. The public often can’t accept a sport as major league if they never see it on national television (Garrett, 1992). This lack of television coverage has been the biggest concern for the NHL. It is getting better every season, but still doesn’t compete with the coverage of the other major sports. Because of its mostly regional coverage, the NHL can’t expand its fan base. “We have to do an especially good job in marketing hockey where it isn’t a natural thing to play,” said NHL Players Association Executive Director Robert Goodenow. “We have to sell the entertainment, the speed, the excitement, and the pizzazz” (Garrett, 1992, p.74).

The University of Kansas has also had some problems regarding marketing and communications over the past few years. According to Suggs (June, 2001) the addition of four teams to the Big Eight Conference (now the Big Twelve) has caused the Jayhawks to struggle to compete with the other schools due to its lack of comparable resources. With a budget half the size of its opponents, the University of Kansas can’t rebuild facilities and stay up-to-date with its competitors.

Before altering strategies to reach target audiences, a sports marketing professional must know what will work to reach the public. Since game tickets sold to spectators are one of the critical sources of revenue in collegiate and professional sports, increasing attendance at games is a primary concern for the organization's ongoing survival (Swanson, Gwinner, Larson & Janda, 2003). According to this study, there are four individual psychological motivations for attending sporting events: game attractiveness, demographics, individual preferences, and economic consideration.

A university can also use its athletic programs by focusing on the identity that students feel for the institution they attend. Brand awareness of a university is largely due to its sports programs (The Commercial Appeal, 2003). The athletic conference that a university competes in also affects its identity (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2003). However, the quality of a college's sports teams won't guarantee that high school students will choose to attend that school. According to Suggs (March, 2001), access to jobs and internships, student clubs and organizations, community-service opportunities, and intramural sports played a greater role in students' college choices than watching or participating in varsity sports. Conflicting evidence showed that sports has the potential to increase interest, applications, and enrollment (Indianapolis Business Journal, 2003).

The increasing popularity of cause-related marketing programs (CRMPs) can be attributed to the integration of sponsorship in many organizations' sport marketing strategies (Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell & Clark, 2003). The sponsorship of sports, events, and causes has become an established communications tool seen as useful in

building brand awareness, brand image, and corporate image. Supporting a non-profit cause that consumers care about and becoming involved in 'do-gooding' can result in favorable consumer attitudes toward the organization (Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell & Clark, 2003).

When an organization is having a communications problem, it is vital to focus on how best to maintain positive relations with its internal and external publics (Swain, 1998). A good way to measure the effectiveness in handling relationships is by conducting internal and external research to quantify employee and client satisfaction levels. Surveys of employees, as well as current and lapsed clients, are particularly good to discern feelings. These findings can help an organization decide what is working and what needs to be fixed. The best way to measure these feelings is by using either a five-point Likert scale or an eleven-point negative-to-positive continuum (Lindenmann, 1998).

Overview of University of California – Santa Cruz

The Volleyball Program (men's and women's teams) is one of 13 Intercollegiate Athletic Programs at UCSC which exist under the 'OPERS Umbrella' (Office of Physical Education, Recreation and Sports) on campus (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003). The Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, Greg Harshaw, works under the OPERS Head, Dan Wood. Jay Hosack is the Head Coach of both volleyball teams (men's and women's) that make up the Volleyball Program and works alone. Coach Hosack is in charge of all public relations, communications, outreach, marketing, recruiting, and

fundraising efforts (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003). The Program is allocated an \$8,000 budget by the OPERS Umbrella, the distribution of which is entirely up to the coach's decision. OPERS will also match funds raised by the volleyball program dollar for dollar - up to an additional \$8,000. Coach Hosack spends approximately \$250 on marketing and communications, which is taken out of the money allocated for the volleyball program (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

The Intercollegiate Athletic program is very low in importance at the University, but its coaches care about their programs and work hard to build support for their teams (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003). The Volleyball Program has a difficult time building awareness for the team and its players because the university prohibits its athletic programs from selling merchandise in the college bookstore, so Coach Hosack and the volleyball players occasionally sell merchandise elsewhere as another avenue to increase funds. However, the bookstore manager has agreed to consider selling athletic merchandise next year (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

The women's volleyball season runs from August to December, while the men's season runs from January to May. The Volleyball Program's primary public includes UCSC students who live on campus (approximately 7,000), students who live off campus, and sports fans living in Santa Cruz County. The demographics for each game are pretty consistent. Approximately 75% of attendees are students, with the remaining 25% being family and friends (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

UCSC has two Sports Information (SI) assistants who take care of the website (www.goslugs.com) by updating it with information that Coach Hosack gives them, but they don't go to the games or write their own articles (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003). He provides the SI assistants with statistics and articles to be added to the website. A prior Sports Information Director designed a poster that has a picture and the game schedule, which Hosack updates every year. He also designs the team media guides for the season and writes information for the media guides and website. No brochures have been made to date (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

UCSC currently allows fans free entry to its home games, gives several media guides to each player for free, and holds several fundraisers (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003). This year fundraisers include a car wash, selling athletic merchandise outside of the bookstore, and sending a letter home with each player asking for help raising money (Appendix B). The majority of money raised, approximately 95%, comes from this letter that goes out to family and friends of the volleyball players. Each player is responsible for raising money themselves to cover their own uniforms and expenses for road trips to games and tournaments (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003). The amount depends on the season and how much the team travels, but this year each player is responsible for covering \$500; last year, it was \$400 per player.

Coach Hosack says there are other important marketing and communication factors that affect UCSC volleyball, including the following: game information is posted

around campus on game days; UCSC used to host a grass tournament every year to raise funds, but it didn't make enough money to justify the time and effort expended; and UCSC holds 5 summer volleyball camps on campus – 3 beginner/intermediate camps run by US Sports Nike Camps and 2 high potential camps run by Coach Hosack and other coaches/players he selects (Jay Hosack, personal communication).

Description of Preliminary Work Undertaken

Two meetings and several phone/email conversations have taken place with Coach Hosack which gave the researcher a solid understanding of the situation at UCSC and his goals for the Volleyball Program. These goals include: filling more seats at home games; raising more money for the volleyball program; and increasing awareness of the program and its players among both UCSC students and Santa Cruz County residents (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

Several meetings have also taken place with a couple professionals in the sports industry, including: Dr. Richard Montgomery (former Director of Sport Management, Department of Human Performance - San Jose State University, current President of R. & N. Montgomery Inc., and successful volleyball coach); and Josh Thiel (Marketing Director for the Stanford University women's volleyball program). They were selected because of their knowledge of volleyball and sports marketing practices.

Over 30 articles have also been found in San Jose State University's library database discussing sports marketing plans for college and professional sport organizations.

Logistics

Budget

Adobe PageMaker will be purchased for the researcher's laptop computer. This program is a desktop publishing software used to design communication and marketing material, and costs \$600 dollars. This program has been chosen because Coach Hosack is familiar with the software and can use it to update templates on his UCSC computer. Other proposed costs will include: special paper to print brochures; paper for flyers; printing and photo copying expenses; gas money to drive from San Jose to Santa Cruz and back (approximately 30 miles each way); three-ring binders to present the final project; and costs for assembling numerous copies of the project report. The total cost for this project will be approximately \$1,000.

Tasks & Timeline

The proposed timeline for the completion of this project is as follows:

- Completion and acceptance of Master's Project Proposal (December, 2003).
- Meeting with Coach Hosack (early January, 2004); followed immediately by starting work on this project.
- Focus groups conducted (January, 2004).

- First draft of project for consultation with Coach Hosack (February, 2004); one-to-two weeks allocated for turn-around.
- Second draft of project to Coach Hosack and Project Committee (March, 2004).
- Final Project submitted to Project Committee (April, 2004).

Product

The finished MA project will include a detailed Marketing Communications Plan laid out for the UCSC volleyball program, presented in a three-ring binder. This plan will include templates of what UCSC needs to do to accomplish its goals, as well as recommendations about how to do that. A brochure and flyer for the current season will also be made, in addition to giving Coach Hosack the template so he can alter this collateral for each season.

An example of a successful marketing plan for a sports organization is provided in David K. Stotlar's book, Developing Successful Sport Marketing Plans. According to Stotlar, a successful plan includes many chapters: products and services analysis; situation analysis; target markets; marketing objectives; marketing strategies; marketing mix; and implementation, control and evaluation (Gladden, 2003).

This Marketing Communications Plan will follow the above guide and include each of the chapters, as well as a product chapter, where templates and brochure and flyer designs will be attached. The 'marketing strategies' section will take an integrated marketing form, meaning that the communication techniques will be designed to work

together: including advertising, website, direct marketing, sales promotion, publicity and public relations, and event sponsorship (Belch & Belch, 2004).

This Marketing Communications Plan will be presented to UCSC and can be used as a template for its future marketing communications efforts. UCSC Intercollegiate Athletics will be the main audience targeted by this MA project.

Method

The researcher will meet with Jay Hosack, Head Coach for the UCSC volleyball program, every few weeks during the next 7 months, as well as converse through email. He is her primary source of information for this MA project.

Secondary sources of information for this project include Dr. Richard Montgomery, and Josh Thiel. They will give the researcher other examples of successful sports marketing plans for organizations at different levels.

Three focus groups will also be conducted on the campus of UC - Santa Cruz. Students will be asked to fill out surveys stating where they have heard about the Volleyball Program, if they have attended a volleyball match and why they had or hadn't done so, and if they have any suggestions on how the Volleyball Program can improve its attendance at games. This will hopefully give the researcher ideas for ways to reach all students. The first focus group will consist of friends and family who currently attend volleyball matches. The second focus group will consist of students who are members of the Inter-Greek Council on campus, including freshman through senior students. The

third focus group will consist of students enrolled in Coach Hosack's Physical Education class. Each focus group will include between 15-20 people. Other sources will include the 30-plus journal articles that identify successful marketing communication techniques for college athletic departments and sport organizations that were found in the library and online.

After meeting with and reviewing these sources, the researcher will develop an appropriate Marketing Communications Plan with strategies for UCSC volleyball to achieve its goals and objectives.

Coach Hosack and UCSC Athletic Director Harshaw will evaluate the effectiveness of this project. Coach Hosack states that, 'if this MA project improves UCSC's ability to streamline its marketing and steadily increases the visibility of the Volleyball Program,' I would consider it a great success (J. Hosack, personal communication, 2003).

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APPENDIX B

Letters of Approval From UCSC Volleyball Coaches

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO

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OFFICE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION AND SPORTS

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95064
459-2531 / 2532

10/15/03

To: Dr. Wilcox, School of Journalism & Mass Communication
From: Jay Hosack, Head coach UCSC Volleyball
Re: Lorien Reckmeyer

Dear Dr. Wilcox,

This letter is to inform you that Lorien Reckmeyer has chosen the UC Santa Cruz volleyball programs for her project in school. I am very happy that she has given us an opportunity to bring these programs to the forefront of athletics at our institution.

She and I have had a couple of meetings already, discussing where the program has been, what it is now, and where it wants to be in the years to come. She has come up with a few ideas already that can help us immediately. I am eager to get more info from her.

She has asked numerous questions about how this athletic program is funded. After hearing about how low the athletic program is on the totem poll of importance with the University, she was amazed at how we perform so well on a National level. The actuality is, the coaches that are here really care about their programs, myself included.

I look forward to working with Lorien more, as she has given me a glimpse of what she is planning to implement. I will update you with our progress as the year goes along.

Thank you for your time, and please forward this to anyone who requests references on Lorien.

Sincerely,

Jay Hosack

Jay Hosack
Head Coach
Men's & Women's Volleyball

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

Intercollegiate Athletics/OPERS
UC Santa Cruz
1156 High Street
Santa Cruz, California 95064

VOICE: 831.459.5982
FAX: 831.459.4070

E-MAIL: jhosack@ucsc.edu
WEB: www.goslugs.com

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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION AND SPORTS

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95064
459-2531 / 2532

April 27, 2005

Dr. Dennis Wilcox
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
San Jose State University
Attention: Dr. Dennis Wilcox

To Whom It May Concern:

Subject: Lorien Reckmeyer's Masters Thesis

To Dr. Dennis Wilcox

This letter is regarding a Masters Project on marketing/communications by Lorien Reckmeyer. Reckmeyer's marketing plan would definitely aid UCSC volleyball in achieving our fundraising goals. As the head coach for both the men's and women's volleyball teams at UCSC, I can state first hand that fundraising is extremely difficult but necessary for the success of our program.

Reckmeyer's marketing plan to raise funds by charging admission, selling merchandise and having concessions at our home matches, are all things that we have implemented into our program to accomplish our fundraising goals. She also suggested creating a "Youth Night" to attract a younger audience and reach out to the community and extend our fan base. We have done something very similar to this and had a youth clinic for middle school and high school age girls which was extremely successful.

Another aspect of Reckmeyer's plan that we will utilize is to establish better community outreach by increasing awareness for the general public. She suggested putting up posters at businesses around town and contacting local high schools and junior colleges. This is definitely something that needs to improve with our entire athletic department. Even our own campus awareness is not at the level it should be and can be greatly improved with this marketing plan.

Reckmeyer also suggested in her marketing plan to improve public relations through the local newspapers, school publications and radio stations by submitting press releases and interviews. This is something that we have implemented and are continually trying to improve upon. She also suggested hiring an intern to be responsible for developing and implementing a marketing program for our athletics department which would be extremely helpful. Unfortunately, our athletic department does not get sufficient funding making fundraising and marketing crucial to maintaining our program. Reckmeyer's marketing plan would enable us to raise funds easily and efficiently and aid us in reaching our goals.

Respectfully,

Selene Teitelbaum
Head Men's and Women's Volleyball Coach/SWA
University of California, Santa Cruz

APPENDIX C

Press Release

Contact: UCSC Volleyball
Head Coach (or intern's name)
(831) 459-5982

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**UC-SANTA CRUZ WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL
COMES OFF IMPRESSIVE 2004-2005 SEASON**

SANTA CRUZ, Calif., August 15 2005

It is time, once again, for UC-Santa Cruz (UCSC) Women's Volleyball!

The 2005-2006 season should be an exciting one, with eleven players and last year's new Head Coach, Selene Teitelbaum, returning. The 'Slugs' had a tremendous season last year, doubling the number of wins from the previous year.

The UCSC women open their season with a tournament at CSU – Monterey Bay, the last weekend in August. See their entire schedule below. All games are played in the UCSC Main Gym and start at 7:00pm, unless otherwise noted.

Check back weekly for UCSC player and season statistics and come support UCSC Women's Volleyball in what should be another exciting and winning season. Go Slugs!

Date	Opponent	Date	Opponent
Aug. 27-28	at CSUMB Otter Classic	Oct. 16	at Occidental
Sept. 1	at Rutgers University	Oct. 19	vs. Vassar
Sept. 3-4	at NYU Invitational	Oct. 22-23	at La Verne Tourney
Sept. 10-11	UCSC Slug Fest	Oct. 27	vs. CSU Monterey
Sept. 17-18	at Pacific Coast Classic	Oct. 29	at CSU Hayward
Sept. 24	at CSU Hayward	Oct. 29	vs. Colorado College
Oct. 5	at Menlo College	Oct. 30	vs. Colorado College
Oct. 8	vs. CSU Hayward	Nov. 3	vs. Bethany College
Oct. 15	at Chapman	Nov. 5-6	DIII Championships

APPENDIX D

Email Newsletter

UCSC Slug Fest

UC-SANTA CRUZ WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL COMES OFF IMPRESSIVE 2004-2005 SEASON

SANTA CRUZ, Calif., August 15 2005 – It is time, once again, for UC-Santa Cruz (UCSC) Women's Volleyball!

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SCHEDULE

Aug. 27-28	at CSUMB Otter Classic
Oct. 16	at Occidental
Sept. 1	at Rutgers University
Oct. 19	vs Vassar
Sept. 3-4	at NYU Invitational
Oct. 22-23	at La Verne Tourney
Sept. 10-11	UCSC Slug Fest
Oct. 27	vs CSU Monterey
Sept. 17-18	at Pacific Coast Classic
Oct. 29	at CSU Hayward
Sept. 24	at CSU Hayward
Oct. 29	vs Colorado College
Oct. 5	at Menlo College
Oct. 30	vs Colorado College
Oct. 8	vs CSU Hayward
Nov. 3	vs Bethany College
Oct. 15	at Chapman
Nov. 5-6	DIII Championships

Top Row: Head Coach Selene Teitelbaum, Kristen Onorato, Brina Mocsany, Lisa Kauchak, Briana Willford, Kim Bernet, Amy Strang, Gillian McGraw, Carmen Aguilar-Wedge. Middle Row: Martina Kroll, Kate Wellmon, Jenna Koch. Bottom Row: Lauren Chiodini, Jenessa Hall.

SLUGS SPOTLIGHT

Selene Teitelbaum returns to UC Santa Cruz after finishing graduate school at Bemidji State University at Minnesota. At BSU, she received a Masters of Science in Sports Studies. At BSU (an NCAA Division II institution), Selene also served as the Assistant Women's Volleyball Coach for two seasons and interim head coach for the spring season. In her first year at BSU, the team doubled their conference wins from the previous year and have since been in the running for the conference championship. After graduating from Sonoma Valley High School with a 5th in state finish her senior year, Selene attended UCSC and played four years for the Slugs as an outside hitter and defensive specialist. She was the team captain her last two years and received two All-Tournament awards her senior year before graduating with a degree in Music in 2001. After graduating from UCSC, she became the Women's and Men's Assistant Volleyball Coach before leaving for BSU to obtain her Masters degree. Selene is excited to be coaching once again at her alma mater!

APPENDIX E

Sign-Up Sheet for Email Newsletter

Name

E-mail Address

Phone Number

How did you hear about the Volleyball Program?

[illegible]

APPENDIX F

Media Contact List

MEDIA CONTACT LIST

NCVA Office (local- San Francisco)
(415) 550 - 7582
F. (415) 550 - 7762
vball@ncva.com
www.ncva.com

Girl Scouts of Santa Clara County
(408) 287 - 4170
stronggirls@girlscoutsofsc.org
www.girlscoutsofsc.org

Girl Scouts of Monterey Bay
(831) 633 - 4877
(800) 624 - 4757
gsomb@gsmontereybay.org
www.gsmontereybay.org

Boy Scouts - Monterey Bay Council
(Santa Cruz County Loma Prieta District)
(800) 442 - 7945
rwalsh@bsamail.org
www.montereybayarea.org/lp.html

Santa Cruz County Park & Recreation Department
(831) 420 - 5270
parksandrec@ci.santa-cruz.ca.us
(831) 420 - 5265 (info about volleyball leagues)

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(831) 429 - 2446
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Sports Editor
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sports@mercurynews.com
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(831) 479 - 6100
www.cabrillo.edu

West Valley Junior College
(408) 867 - 2200
www.westvalley.edu

Hartnell College
(831) 755 - 6700
www.hartnell.edu

Central Coast Section (CCS)
www.cifccs.org
SCCAL (SC Coast)
Aptos
Mt. Madonna
Harbor
San Lorenzo Valley
St. Francis
Santa Cruz
Scotts Valley
Soquel
Watsonville

Pizza My Heart
(831) 426 - 2511
Allison@pizzamyheart.com
(for donation/sponsorship requests)

Smokestack BBQ
(831) 423 - 1851

Brunos BBQ
(831) 438 - 2227

Sprockets (volleyball equipment store in Los Gatos)
(408) 354 - 5450

Pacific Wave (sports store)
(831) 458 - 9283

Play It Again Sports
(831) 475 - 1988