August 1, 2012

Dear College Wrestling Coaches and Program Stakeholders,

Like many of you, wrestling has given me so much throughout my life. As a professional and as a person, I feel like the lessons I have learned through the sport have given me the foundation necessary to succeed in all areas of my life. I am sure that there are many of you that would agree with this assessment. This is a primary reason why I am honored to have had the unique opportunity to put together this marketing resource. In essence, it is an opportunity to give back to a sport that has given so much to me.

As many of you know, there are a variety of challenges facing college wrestling programs that threaten the long-term sustainability of the sport. In particular, given the current landscape of college athletics, the possibility of program elimination continues to be a real threat to programs at all levels. Rather than dwell on the negative, it is time for the wrestling community to take a proactive approach to enhancing the demand of the sport on a national and local level. In order to achieve this, it is my belief that college wrestling coaches must embrace a marketing mindset that will allow them to grow their program in key areas in the future.

In closing, it is my hope that this manual will serve as a catalyst for coaches looking to grow their program from a marketing standpoint. With the right mindset, coaches have all of the skills necessary to be successful in positioning their program more effectively in the future. The time to make a move is right now. If we make the right decisions, the sport will do far better than just be sustainable in the future. It will experience the type of growth and recognition that it truly deserves!

Sincerely,

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First, I would like to thank the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and Jeff Jarnecke for their support of this project. Without their contribution, there is no way that this manual would have been a possibility.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) for its valuable contribution throughout this project. In particular, I need to thank Mike Moyer for his relentless drive to develop resources that will help develop coaches in a manner that will ensure the growth of wrestling in the future. In addition, I would like to thank Pat Tocci, Tammy Tedesco, and the rest of the NWCA for their contributions to constantly advance the sport in both this manual and other initiatives.

Third, I would like to thank the college wrestling coaches who have been willing to provide their valuable time, energy and resources to help develop this manual. There is no doubt that many of the top coaches in marketing served as an inspiration throughout this process.

Finally, I send a special thank you to my family for providing me with the support necessary to make this project happen. They always serve as an inspiration to do the type of work that will make a real difference.
# I. EMBRACING A MARKETING MINDSET

a. Introduction ........................................... 6
b. What is a Marketing Mindset? ......................... 6
c. The Visionary Bill Veeck ............................... 6
d. Steps to Success: The “MARKET” Principle .......... 7
e. Benefits of Marketing Mindset .......................... 8
f. Finishing Strong ......................................... 8
g. Supplementary Marketing Material .................... 9

# II. DEVELOPING “PROMOTABLE” PROGRAM VISION 11

b. The Basics of Brand .................................... 12
c. Key Areas in “Promotable” Program Vision ............ 12
d. The Role of Vision in Branding ......................... 13
e. Doing Little Things That Make a Big Difference .......... 14
f. Make it Marketable: Positioning Program Values ......... 15
g. Finishing Strong ......................................... 15
h. Supplementary Marketing Material .................... 16

# III. CONNECTING FOR THE CAUSE 18

a. The Challenges in College Athletics .................... 19
b. Coach as CEO of Program ............................... 19
c. Connecting to Lighten Load and Enhance Efforts ........ 19
d. Steps to Create Collaborative Synergy .................. 20
e. Creating Structure for Marketing Success ............... 21
f. Finishing Strong ......................................... 22
g. Supplementary Marketing Material .................... 23

# IV. PRODUCING A POSITIVE PRODUCT 27

a. Emphasis on Consumer Wants and Needs ................ 28
b. Everyone Wants to Win, But Not Everyone Can .......... 28
c. Creating an Aura Surrounding Your Program ............ 28
d. Establish an Entertaining Environment .................. 29
e. Creating a “Consumer Friendly” Schedule ............... 30
f. Finishing Strong ......................................... 30
g. Supplementary Marketing Material .................... 31

# V. TOUCHING BASE WITH TECHNOLOGY 33

a. Role of New Media in Future Marketing Success .......... 34
b. What Exactly is New Media? ............................ 34
c. Benefits of Social Media ................................ 34
d. Steps in Social Media Success ........................... 34
e. The Value of Video Sharing ................................ 36
f. Potential Bonus of a Blog ................................ 36
g. Closing Thought: Timing is Everything .................. 36
h. Finishing Strong ......................................... 36
i. Supplementary Marketing Material .................... 37

# VI. IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE PROMOTIONS 40

a. Role of Promoting Product in Marketing ................. 41
b. Basic Forms of Promotion ................................ 41
c. Putting Promotions Into Action ......................... 43
d. Working Within the Athletics Department Environment .. 44
e. Future Innovation in Promotional Efforts ............... 45
f. Finishing Strong ......................................... 45
g. Supplementary Marketing Material .................... 46

# VII. EVALUATING MARKETING EFFORTS 50

a. It’s a Constantly Evolving Process ........................ 51
b. Evaluating Key Areas of Marketing Manual ............... 52
c. Finishing Strong ......................................... 54
d. Supplementary Marketing Material .................... 55

# VIII. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS – MAKE A MOVE 56

a. The Time for Change is Now ............................. 57
b. It’s a Marketing Thing ..................................... 57
c. What’s at Stake? ........................................... 57
d. Finishing Strong ......................................... 57

# VIII. DEFINITION OF TERMS 58
SECTION NO. 1:
Embracing a Marketing Mindset
If you are reading this manual, then you have taken the first step necessary to market your program effectively. While marketing is a multi-faceted endeavor, it all starts with the interest and passion to build your program the right way. If this is representative of your current mindset, then you have come to the right place, because this manual includes seven innovative sections with practical content that will allow you to enhance all elements of your program from a marketing standpoint. However, as you read each individual section, be sure that you consider the different ways that you can personalize each of the suggestions to your individual program. More importantly, do not be afraid to use your creativity to build on the concepts and materials provided in this manual as you get more comfortable with the idea of marketing. However, before we move on to the remaining steps, there is a foundational element that you absolutely must master if you are going to be successful building your program. This element is called the “marketing mindset” and it is at the heart of all elite marketing efforts. As a coach, once you realize the importance of embracing this mindset, then you will be ready to take your program to a new level with the remaining sections presented in this marketing manual.

## Section No. 1: Embracing a Marketing Mindset

### Introduction

Before you are ready to build your program from a marketing standpoint, it is important that you develop a mindset that will allow you to maximize efficiency in your interactions with primary stakeholders (e.g., administrators, alumni, consumers). The embracement of a marketing mindset starts with the basic concept of valuing people. Simply put, when you value people, you have a far greater chance of seeing things from their perspective. In marketing, this is absolutely critical because you must be able to develop and deliver a product that makes sense to the groups of individuals that you are targeting. When you start to think of ways that you can position your program for others, then you know that you are on your way to becoming an effective marketer. There is no one that was better at this than Bill Veeck.

### The Visionary Bill Veeck

A native of Chicago, Bill Veeck was a self-made entrepreneur who became the owner of four Major League Baseball (MLB) teams during his career. While this alone is a major accomplishment, this is not what he is most well known for among professionals in the sports industry. Instead, his legacy is directly tied to the innovative marketing strategies that he implemented throughout his career. Ultimately, it was these creative strategies that evolved the professional sports landscape into what it is today. As a marketer, he is credited with creating the modern form of promotional entertainment (e.g., firework shows) and giveaways (e.g., bobble head dolls) that are currently present at virtually every level of sports throughout the United States. If you are not sold, then take a look at some of the marketing activities that he carried out during his tenure in professional baseball. However, be sure to keep in mind that he implemented these at a time when promotions were not common or accepted. Because of this, he will always be considered one of the greatest sports marketers of all time.

- **One-of-a-Kind Entertainment:** Exploding scoreboards, firework shows and themed sound effects;
- **Promotional Giveaways:** Ladies’ “orchid” night, student/professional appreciation games and basic item/food giveaways (e.g., balls, hot dogs, ice cream, lobsters);
- **Product changes:** Added names on the back of jerseys, and encouraged airing games on the radio.

There is no question that Bill Veeck had an extraordinary mind that allowed him to come up with innovative ideas to attract consumers. However, this does not accurately describe the primary reason why he was able to set attendance records with virtually every single organization that he was affiliated with during his career. The truth is that Bill Veeck had a unique ability to put himself in the shoes of his primary consumers. Rather than create marketing ideas for himself, he constantly worked to develop a product (and brand) that would be interesting to his key groups of consumers. In addition, Veeck was a proactive person who constantly studied the art of communication so that he was able to connect with people when he interacted with them. On top of this, he never missed an opportunity to talk to an audience (or individual) about his product. As a result of his efforts, he always had individuals who were willing to come out to the ballpark to watch a game. With this type of approach, I guess you could say that he was one of the pioneer professionals who truly embraced a marketing mindset.
**STEPS TO SUCCESS: THE “MARKET” PRINCIPLE**

Now that you have a basic understanding of the marketing mindset, it is important to provide a specific outline of the steps that you can take to start building your program. The following “MARKET” acronym is one that you can use as a reminder when trying to become a professional with a marketing mindset. Once you have read each specific section outlined in this manual, be sure to revisit this “MARKET” principle so you can maximize the efficiency of your efforts. In the meantime, focus on embracing these concepts so you can start building your program the right way.

**MAKE MARKETING A TOP PRIORITY FOR YOUR PROGRAM**
*Description:* This is a foundational element for any individual interested in building his program from a marketing standpoint. As a coach, you must see marketing as a program area that is important enough to dedicate resources to on a regular basis. Once you make this a top priority, you will be ready to realize all of the unique benefits that come from intentionally marketing your program.

*Immediate Application:* Schedule an offseason and/or preseason staff meeting and discuss the priority level that your program will place on marketing. If this is an area that is clearly important, then discuss the specific things that your program would like to achieve through your efforts. At this point, it would also be helpful to brainstorm ideas that will help you realize your goals moving forward. These areas will be critical when developing your marketing philosophy in Section No. 2 of this manual.

**ATTEMPT TO PUT OTHER PEOPLE’S INTERESTS AHEAD OF YOUR OWN**
*Description:* The most challenging part of marketing for most people is developing the ability to see things from other people’s perspectives. To be successful building your brand and promoting your product, you must learn to embrace a mindset where you strive to create a product specifically designed for your key stakeholders. Each marketing decision that you make should take into consideration the wants and needs of your primary target markets.

*Immediate Application:* During your initial meeting, identify some of the primary markets that your program would like to target in your efforts. In addition, take notes on some things that you can do to market your program to these different groups more effectively.

**RECOGNIZE THAT EACH PERSON THAT YOU MEET IS A POTENTIAL FAN OF YOUR PROGRAM**
*Description:* In many ways, this epitomizes the concept of building a program with a marketing mindset. With the lack of support available to many “non-revenue,” Olympic sport programs in NCAA athletics departments, it is essential that coaches do whatever they can to maximize their efficiency in marketing endeavors. One way to do this is by seeing value in the interactions that you have with people on a daily basis. It should be each program’s goal to build its brand through positive interactions on a daily basis. Once you embrace this concept, be sure to encourage your student-athletes to take this step as well. This is a seemingly small step that will make a major difference in your marketing efforts.

*Immediate Application:* As a coach, immediately recognize that your daily actions will help determine the thoughts that people have about the brand of your program. With this in mind, it is important that your staff members value the interactions that they have with potential “fans” on a day-to-day basis. If you want to maximize your efficiency, then identify specific interaction strategies for each of your program members. Always remember that specificity will allow you to intentionally build your brand exactly the way that you want to moving forward.

**KEEP OTHER PEOPLE’S PERCEPTIONS IN MIND**
*Description:* As a marketer, it is important that you constantly think about other people’s perception of your brand. With an emphasis on your key stakeholders’ perceptions of your program, you can strategically develop a marketing plan that will allow you to build your brand in a productive manner. However, this takes a proactive approach where your staff is aware of the messages that you are sending on a daily basis.

*Immediate Application:* Building on the previous applications, consider elements of your program’s brand (see Section No. 2 of this manual) and discuss how you can ensure that you are sending the right messages to your key stakeholders. For example, if your administrators value community outreach, then invest in the development of messages via technology to ensure that you are developing your brand in this area. This concept will be discussed more in depth in the next section.

**EMBRACE INNOVATION IN YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS**
*Description:* Once you have a solid foundation in place, it is very important that you try to implement strategies that are innovative in nature. This manual is designed to provide a structure that will allow you to differentiate your program through marketing initiatives. After you read each of the sections in the manual, return to this step and brainstorm creative ideas.

*Immediate Application:* Hold off on this application until you have taken the time to implement each of the previous application areas. Once you have a solid foundation in place (vision – discussed in Section No. 2), then it is time to consider how you can build your program from a marketing standpoint. This will be highlighted throughout the manual.

**TRY TO CONSTANTLY BUILD ON YOUR EFFORTS**
*Description:* Many professionals think that they are finished once a sound marketing plan has been established. However, the reality is that effective marketing involves a constant pursuit to improve on your previous efforts as discussed in Section No. 7 of Manual. The good news is that this is something that will come naturally with experience and passion.

*Immediate Application:* This is an area that should constantly play a role in your marketing efforts. If you are just getting started, then use the previous steps to guide your growth progression. If you are a veteran of marketing, then read the manual to identify areas that will allow you to grow your program during the next year. Regardless of where you are at in your level of expertise, there is something in this manual that will help you build your program with key stakeholders.
BENEFITS OF MARKETING MINDSET

There are a variety of benefits that you can realize from implementing the concepts covered in each of the sections of this marketing manual. With that being said, it is important to note that the marketing mindset will serve as a foundation for realizing success in the remaining sections. However, once you master each of the marketing concepts, you can expect to realize the following benefits (not limited to these):

1. Stronger relationships with key stakeholders such as administrators and alumni;
2. Enhanced consumer interest in your product (dual meets and online presence);
3. Increased funding in the form of donations and related product sales;
4. Improved program brand image among all of your key stakeholders; and
5. Additional overall interest in your program, staff and student-athletes.

FINISHING STRONG

This is the day when you can make the decision to take your program to a new level. Regardless of where you are in your level of marketing, you can improve your efforts significantly by embracing the different concepts covered in this manual. However, you must first decide to commit to making this a top priority for your program. Once you make this decision, it is only a matter of time until you start to fully grasp the concept of having a marketing mindset. In the meantime, you and your staff can use the Pre-Season Marketing Meeting template on the following page to get your program started on the right foot. This sheet will help you once you advance to Section No. 2 in this manual on “Developing a Promotable Program Vision.”
1. What goals would your staff members like to accomplish through your marketing efforts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Goal</th>
<th>Priority Level (Low-Medium-High)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Enhance program brand with administrators (Example)</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Feel free to add more goals if necessary.

2. What are the primary groups that you will target in your efforts (e.g., administrators)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Market (Group)</th>
<th>Potential Interest(s) in Program*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Potential interest in program is designed for you to think of ways you can position the product for groups.
3. To be successful as a marketer, you must consider the brand that you are developing based on your day-to-day actions. What is it that you want key target markets (from previous question) to think when they hear your program’s name? Make a list of each of the areas that are important to you and discuss how well you are doing in each of these specific brand elements. Provide a rating for your performance in each of these areas (scale of 1 to 10 [1 is terrible and 10 is outstanding]).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Brand Elements</th>
<th>Rate Level of Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. As a major part of your program’s brand, it is important that staff members recognize the importance of their individual day-to-day actions. What specific strategies can your program implement to make sure that your staff and student-athletes are building your brand the right way?

5. [Optional] As a follow-up, meet with individuals surrounding your program to ask them their honest opinion of your brand. Based on their feedback, strive to make necessary adjustments to improve the perceptions of your program.

“If you fail to prepare, then you are preparing to fail.” (Benjamin Franklin)

Note. The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
SECTION NO. 2:
Developing “Promotable” Program Vision
INTRODUCTION: “THE BUSINESS OF BRANDING”

Whether coaches know it, they are in the business of building brand. From a broad perspective, sport programs such as men’s wrestling are extensions that influence the larger athletics department’s brand. Based on this fact alone, it is necessary that coaches recognize the importance of creating a program that adds value to the culture that exists within their coinciding athletics department. In simple terms, this means taking an active interest in the different program areas (see Table 1) that are a top priority for members of your senior administrative staff. From a more narrow perspective, coaches also have the responsibility to implement a structure (and culture) that will allow a program to build interest among key stakeholders. In other words, it would be highly useful for coaches to intentionally build a brand that is designed specifically for their key target markets. This section will be dedicated to helping coaches understand the areas they should consider when attempting to develop a “promotable” program vision.

THE BASICS OF BRAND

In marketing, one of most basic definitions of brand revolves around the concept illustrated in the following question: What is it that people think or feel when they hear a sport program’s name or see its logo? Most marketing experts would agree that the type of response that you get (positive or negative) depends on the decisions that are being made by the particular sport organization. The great thing is that coaches have the ability to control their brand if they are willing to put in the time and energy to position their program the right way. The reality is that a solid brand is often initiated when a staff is intentional about the messages it is sending to key stakeholders about its program on a regular basis. Based on the key brand elements identified in Section No. 1, coaches should consider attempting to develop a culture that will allow them to realize the exact outcomes they hope to achieve in brand building. For example, specific “Educational Values” should be created for a program that hopes to be recognized as a top academic performing team in an athletics department. Equally important, this process should include a structure that simplifies the decisions that all program members (staff and student-athletes) need to make on a daily basis in order to build brand the right way. This is the type of intentional approach that it takes to be highly successful in marketing and it starts with the program vision that is put in place.

KEY AREAS IN STRONG PROGRAM VISION

One of the first things that you need to do when creating a promotable vision is to consider the key segments that will be most important when marketing your program. The good news is that this process was already initiated in the “Pre-Season Marketing Meeting” sheet that you and your staff completed in the first section. As you probably already recognized, administrators are clearly one of the top segments for any program looking to improve its marketing efforts. After all, it is these individuals who directly influence the sustainability and growth initiatives by wrestling programs across the United States. As shown in Table 1, there are a variety of different program areas that are valued by senior administrators within athletics departments. It is a coaching staff’s job to understand these areas so that it is able to position its product effectively for these administrators. When you train your mind to think in this manner, you put yourself in the position to maximize the support offered to your program from administrators within your athletics department.

Table 1: Administrator’s Top Non-Revenue, Olympic Program Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct (C)*</td>
<td>5.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct (S)*</td>
<td>5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics*</td>
<td>5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships*</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community*</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics*</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising*</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment*</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan Support</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Cost</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Production</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to administrators, coaches should consider the different program areas that are most valuable to their other key target markets. It is entirely possible that these particular groups will be attracted to completely different program aspects than administrators. However, it is likely that the creation of a value system with the previous areas in mind will provide your program with a solid foundation to build your brand in a manner that will improve your status in the athletics department, university, and surrounding community. If you are still uncertain how to proceed at this point, the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) has been kind enough to build the “7 Steps to Achieve Success” model based on the previous research (See Figure 1). Be sure to use these objectives as a guide so that you are able to create a broad-based program with maximum appeal for administrators.

As a coach at the intercollegiate level, it is important to recognize that you operate within a university environment. Once you fully grasp this concept, you give yourself the greatest opportunity to increase support for your program within your athletics department and university. With this in mind, it is now time to move on to the creation of a “promotable” program vision that will allow you to effectively position your product in future years. In the following sections, we will discuss the steps necessary for your program to create a culture that will maximize stakeholder interest. This will start with your vision and mission statement and it will end with the implementation of themed values that will allow you to truly market your program in an innovative manner.

**THE ROLE OF VISION IN BUILDING BRAND**

Values play an important role in marketing. From a broad perspective, they should guide all of the decisions that your program makes on a daily basis. This structure is something that will allow your staff to stay focused on the bigger picture when facing the challenges that exist in highly competitive athletic environments. This is a primary reason why you should start with the consideration of your overall vision when crafting your value system. In essence, a vision is like a well-written dream statement that encompasses the long-term objectives that your program will strive to achieve in the distant future (approximately five to 10 years). At the very least, this includes an interactive process in which your staff agrees on the long-term goals of the program moving forward. However, it is important to note that by starting with the end in mind, you give your program the best chance to succeed from a marketing standpoint. In addition to the previous benefits mentioned, a vision also provides you with a framework to embrace the three specific elements that are presented in Figure 2 below.

**Framework for Sound Value Structure**

**Figure 1: NWCA aspirational objectives for programs.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACHIEVE</th>
<th>7 Steps to <strong>ACHIEVE</strong> Wrestling Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attain highest academic ranking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit to highest number of community service hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold highest ethical conduct standard for staff/student-athletes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in developing strongest alumni and stakeholder base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish strongest relationships with athletics administrators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verify lowest incidence of disciplinary actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envision highest level of competitiveness given resources of team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2: Core elements for creating a “Promotable” Program Vision**
When done properly, these three areas will have a synergistic feel that naturally allow a program to market itself effectively with a variety of key stakeholders. If this does not make sense at this point, it will be clear when you see the case study graphic on Missouri Wrestling later in the section. However, for now we will focus on developing an understanding of the three steps necessary to create a “promotable” program vision.

(1) MAJORING THE MANTRA
With the marketing mentality mindset that has now taken hold with coaches, it makes sense to lead with the concept of “majoring” the mantra. For the purpose of this marketing manual, a mantra is a themed slogan (e.g., Tiger Style) that serves as a foundation for the desired identity/culture that will be pursued through the program’s core values. This mantra is an extremely important element because it is something that should inspire coaches and student-athletes to live the right way on a day-to-day basis. Equally important, the slogan serves as a point of reference in all of the branding initiatives that your program will carry out moving forward. Be sure to include your staff and student-athletes in this process because it is important that you choose a mantra that has “buy-in” from key program members. Below are examples of mantras that have allowed programs to build their brand successfully with stakeholders. As you look them over, consider potential mantras that will allow you to realize your goals in marketing. You will quickly realize that this will be a branding slogan that you can use throughout your marketing efforts initiated through this manual.

(2) MASTERING THE MISSION STATEMENT
In simple terms, a mission statement is a written declaration that clearly outlines the primary purpose of the program. Whereas a vision is more focused on long-term aspirations, the mission statement is a concise statement that reminds staff and student-athletes of the key areas of emphasis that they should focus on during their day-to-day interactions. However, given the nature of the industry in college athletics, it is certainly possible for a program’s mission statement to take a variety of different forms. With that being said, it is important that this statement serves as the centerpiece to inspire program members to strive to achieve the goals outlined in the program vision. Your program can enhance your chances for success with this if you make sure that your mantra, mission statement and core values have a nice collaborative theme. This takes a proactive, intentional approach that will be guided by the “Practical Strategic Branding” template provided at the end of this section.

(3) CREATING CONDUICIVE CORE VALUES
With a mantra and mission statement in place, it is now time to move on to the creation of conducive core values. In essence, these are the specific principles that are most important to your program in its pursuit to reach its goals. Many times, these are made up of the aspirational values (e.g., honesty, integrity, sportsmanship) that your program members should embrace on a regular basis. As you might expect, these should be clear values that make it easy for staff and student-athletes to understand what they need to do each day in order to realize success as defined by the program. As previously mentioned, while these are commonly made up of simple aspirational values, it is not uncommon for coaches to use specific themes (e.g., “Competitive Greatness” by John Wooden) that encompass a variety of different values. The most important thing is that these values have meaning to each of the staff members and student-athletes that are a part of your program. Similarly, these values should serve as catalysts to realize the visionary brand of the program. The tips in the following section are helpful for ensuring that value systems are successful.

DOING LITTLE THINGS THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE
As you work to put together your program’s value system (vision, mantra, mission and values), it is important that the staff and student-athletes are involved in the developmental process. In fact, it is imperative because previous research has shown that individuals are far more likely to “buy in” to the value system if they have some say in the process. At the very least, your coaching staff and captains should be allowed to look over the different elements to see if there are any suggestions that they have to improve the system. This small step will go a long way in ensuring that they support the program’s direction moving forward. In addition, coaches can increase the chances of their vision succeeding if they pay close attention to the following three fundamental tips.

1. Be masterful in your modeling of values: One of the biggest mistakes that leaders can make is creating an “empty” value system that has little meaning. To avoid this, make sure that values are chosen that have meaning to your staff and student-athletes. As the individuals who set the tone for your program, be sure that you model the core values each day so that your student-athletes are likely to follow your lead.

2. Provide themed educational opportunities: It is often difficult for student-athletes to grasp the program vision if you do not take the time to educate them on it. More importantly, it is not likely to be seen as a priority if it is not provided time allocation within your program’s schedule. Be sure to regularly invest in innovative educational opportunities (e.g., core value seminars, guest lectures) to teach staff and student-athletes about the program values. Don’t be afraid to bring in outside individuals who can help you in this process if it is something you are not comfortable with.

3. Constantly build on your efforts: As with all areas in this manual, be sure that you are constantly looking to find ways to improve on your efforts. It is important that your staff is constantly monitoring the effectiveness of your value system to ensure that the program is maximizing the effectiveness of daily interactions.
MAKING IT MARKETABLE:
POSITIONING PROGRAM VALUES

Once you have your core ideology in place, it is time to move on to the creative phase of building your brand. With an innovative themed mantra and a sound understanding of your key values (and related stakeholders), your program now has the foundation that is necessary to market your program effectively. As you move into the remaining sections of this manual, be sure that you take the time to market each of the program areas that have been identified as important by your staff. This is the only real way to ensure that you are building your brand in a manner that will be effective with your key target markets. And as you do this, be sure to include your program’s mantra so that you have a reference point to maximize the efficiency in your marketing efforts. The Missouri wrestling program has done this as well as anyone in its “Tiger Style” wrestling system (see Figure 3). As you will notice, the program has effectively incorporated this mantra into all elements of its marketing plan. In addition, it has used this mantra as a selling point for values that it hopes to instill into each of the stakeholders associated with its program. As a result, it has created a foundation that has allowed it to build its brand in a manner that differentiates it from other programs. This is something that all coaches should strive for in their marketing efforts.

FINISH STRONG

If marketing is something that is important to your coaching staff, then it would definitely be beneficial for your program to invest time and energy into the creation of a “promotable” program vision. While there are a variety of desirable benefits, one of the key reasons to implement this process is because it gives you a solid foundation to build your brand in a manner that will differentiate your program. In addition, it will also enhance program efficiency because your staff will have the unique opportunity to understand the areas that should be a primary consideration in daily interactions. It is hard to imagine any program that would not want to realize the benefits associated with having a strong “promotable” program vision. In preparation of this step, your program can use the provided “Practical Strategic Branding” Supplementary Marketing Material document on the next page to guide your efforts.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI WRESTLING
Promotable Program Vision

MANTRA  Tiger Style

MISSION STATEMENT  But why, some say, Tiger Style? Why choose this as our core philosophy? We choose Tiger Style. We choose Tiger Style as a lifestyle, not because it is easy, but because it is difficult. We choose Tiger Style because its goals and expectations will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one that we intend to win.

CORE VALUES:

- Level No. 5: Embrace “Tiger Style” Lifestyle
- Level No. 4: Expect to Win
- Level No. 3: Always Do “One More”
- Level No. 2: Strive to Compete Hard
- Level No. 1: Believe in Yourself

The “Tiger Style” values encompass striving to realize these levels in all areas of life. It is a core philosophy that prepares student-athletes for their life both during and after their time at the University of Missouri. The “Tiger Style” mantra means striving to make the world a better place.

INNOVATIVE BRANDING IN ACTION:

- Pre-Season “Tiger Style” Educational Seminars (with student-athletes)
- The “Tiger Style” Dual Meets (with youth wrestlers)
- “Tiger Style” Tailgating Events (with stakeholders)

Figure 3: Tiger Style as Promotable Program Vision
Supplementary Marketing Material
(PRACTICAL STRATEGIC BRANDING)

Program: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

**Step No. 1:** With your staff, discuss potential mantras that can be used in future branding efforts. Based on your discussions, identify the top three potential mantras that best fit the culture of your program. List the three mantras below.

a.

b.

c.

**Step No. 2:** Building on your efforts, develop two or three graphics that could serve as the logo for your program mantra. Copy these graphics below.

**Follow-Up (Feedback):** Based on the previous steps, obtain feedback from staff and student-athletes on the mantra and logo. Once you have extensive feedback, make a final decision on the program mantra and logo that you will plan on using in your marketing efforts. Place your final product in the template on the next page.
Step No. 3: Develop a rough draft for your mission statement and core values. Repeat the previous “Follow-Up (Feedback)” step to ensure that you are developing a core ideology that will have maximum support from program members. Once you have finalized the mission statement and values, please add them in the template provided below.

Step No.4: Consider the potential strategies that your staff can implement to encourage maximize “buy-in” from key stakeholders. In addition, brainstorm innovative marketing ideas that the program can use to build brand effectively. Place these ideas in the template below.

|[Insert Program Mantra Here]|
|[Insert Logo Mantra Here]|

**Mission Statement:**

**Core Values:**

**Strategies to Encourage “Buy-In”:**

**Innovative Marketing Ideas:**

Step No. 5: Once you have finalized your template, be sure to consider whether each of the items in the template fit together in a manner that will allow you to build your brand. It is important that these elements all work well together so that you maximize the efficiency in your marketing efforts. Make any necessary adjustments before moving ahead.

Note. The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
SECTION NO. 3:
Connecting for the Cause
SECTION NO. 3:
Connecting for the Cause

THE CHALLENGES IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

There is little doubt that the expectations of being a college coach have changed drastically during the past 15 years. In the 1990s, a coach’s primary duties were related to fielding a competitive team athletically while simultaneously striving to provide student-athletes with quality learning opportunities to develop their life skills. While this is certainly still the case, there has been an adjustment in the focus of college athletics that has put more pressure on “non-revenue” programs. In particular, with the extensive program eliminations that have been realized in sports such as men’s wrestling, there is an increasing need for coaches to be aware of the reasons why athletics directors have made the decision to cut “non-revenue” programs in the past. While there are a variety of key reasons, business-related factors have consistently emerged as key criteria for athletics directors making the decision of which program to eliminate. Thus, with this in mind, it is clear that coaches must act as the CEO of their program when engaging in initiatives to build interest with key stakeholders.

COACH AS CEO OF PROGRAM

Being a coach of a college wrestling program has never been more challenging. On top of traditional athletics duties, coaches are now expected to act as the CEO as they position their programs from a business standpoint. While this includes a variety of different initiatives, at the core is the ability to improve a program’s brand through the strategic investment in intentional marketing. However, it is important to note that this is an endeavor that will not be accomplished solely by a coaching staff. Instead, it will involve a team effort that will rely heavily on the coaching staff’s ability to connect with individuals who have the skill sets necessary to enhance a program’s marketing efforts. This section is designed to help programs to succeed in this specific area.

CONNECTING TO LIGHTEN LOAD AND ENHANCE EFFORTS

With all of the expectations on “non-revenue” programs, it has become necessary for coaches to find ways to enhance their efficiency. In other words, the leaders of these programs must find ways to connect with individuals who have the ability to lighten their load so that they are able to coordinate all key program areas. To achieve this objective, coaches must identify individuals on campus and/or in the surrounding community who have the skills necessary to help enhance their marketing efforts. While this is a process that takes time and energy up front, it is an investment that can pay major dividends for a program from a sustainability and growth standpoint. However, before touching on the program structure that must be in place for this initiative to succeed, the specific steps for reaching out to these key individuals will be discussed.
STEPS TO CREATIVE COLLABORATIVE SYNERGY

One of the differentiating traits of a highly successful CEO is the ability to find individuals in specialized areas that can take an organization to a new level. These leaders are often individuals who surround themselves with people who have specific skill sets that can add to the program’s bottom line in some capacity. This is no different for a coach who is looking to be successful in today’s increasingly competitive intercollegiate athletics environment. The reality is that there are a myriad of expectations on a coaching staff and only a set amount of time to meet all of them. When all of this is taken into consideration, most coaches do not have the time necessary to carry out all of the program’s key marketing initiatives. This is a primary reason why connecting with key individuals on campus is such an important consideration for wrestling programs. With the right approach, coaches have everything they need to improve the collective efficiency of their program in marketing. In addition to the following key steps, coaches need to simply have a proactive mindset where they are determined to find qualified individuals to help build their program.

1. IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS.
   One of the great things about being a college coach is that you operate on a campus where there are individuals with a variety of different business skill sets. Incidentally, these also happen to be the exact type of people that programs can create relationships with to enhance collective synergy in their marketing efforts. However, for this to occur, coaches have to be willing to do two things initially to get moving in the right direction. First, they have to identify the specific needs that they have in regard to marketing their program. Hopefully, the earlier steps in this manual have helped to clarify some of the initial areas of consideration when developing a marketing plan. Second, coaches need to do an assessment of the academic programs on their campus to identify the potential areas with the capability to fill their needed marketing roles (e.g., social media marketing, video development, graphic design). Once these steps have been addressed, it is necessary for coaches to consider the development of sound work experiences so they can attract the most qualified students to help them in key marketing areas.

2. DEVELOPING SOUND WORK EXPERIENCES.
   The reality is that there are high-quality students on college campuses who are looking for work experiences to improve their resume. Among these individuals are students who have an interest in working in sports in some capacity. When you consider the fact that many business-related programs require (or encourage) an internship experience, it makes sense that Olympic sport programs are a prime opportunity to develop work experiences that could be very desirable to students on campus. However, it is important to note that this is largely dependent on the time that coaches invest to create an experience that is valuable to potential student interns. This starts with the ability to sit down and develop an internship template that outlines the specific details and duties of the experience being offered by the program (see “Creating Synergistic Connections” template at the end of this section). In addition to educating individuals on the specific experience, this is a document that will allow you to market your program to key individuals (professors and students) on campus. This process will be outlined more in depth in the next section.

3. CREATING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM.
   The actual development of an internship program is an advanced concept designed for coaches looking to take their program to an elite level from a marketing standpoint. As illustrated in the previous section, this starts with the creation of a template that outlines the expectations and guidelines for a single program intern (see Internship Template Example at the end of the section for guidance). For the purposes of this manual, there is a good chance that this position would be centered on one of the following areas: (1) general marketing, (2) video development, or (3) social network site specialist. While it would be ideal to find an all-in-one specialist to cover each of these areas, it may be difficult to find one individual who can succeed in each of these areas. In this case, it is important to gain a basic understanding of each area so you can maximize efficiency in your internship program. From a broad perspective, a general marketing specialist would be an individual who has the skill sets (and foresight) necessary to develop a marketing plan for your program moving forward. While these individuals can come from any academic area, it is safe to say that they would be more common in sport management or business-related fields due to the training in the curriculum. This would also be the case when looking to find a social network site specialist. However, with the goal of identifying a student well versed in new media such as Facebook and Twitter, it would also be useful to search for these individuals in communications and related new media fields. Finally, when engaging in social media marketing, video content has become a premium when attempting to attract and engage followers. With this in mind, you may want to look in appropriate fields (e.g., film development) to find individuals who can help you with the creation of videos to promote your program. These are all key areas that you should look to fill when developing your internship program. Keep them in mind as you develop the different guidelines in each of the internship positions that you create. And remember that a proactive student is one that can potentially fill more positions effectively when engaging in marketing endeavors.

4. THE RIGHT WAY TO REACH OUT.
   If you are going to have a successful internship program, there is little doubt that you are going to have to be proactive in your approach to connect with key individuals on campus. The good news is that the previous steps have helped prepare you for the information (and materials) necessary to approach professors and staff members on campus with the position necessary to help you reach qualified students. Once you have identified the appropriate academic fields, then it is simply a matter of reaching out to professors in these areas to let them know of the internship program that you have created. It would also make sense to ask to set up a meeting to talk about your program and the things you would like to accomplish through your marketing efforts. With some persistence and professional tact, you are well on your way to reaching qualified individuals who can help you take your marketing efforts and program to the next level. However, to realize these benefits, you have to be willing to step out of your comfort zone when interacting with individuals who are from a different discipline.
CREATING STRUCTURE FOR MARKETING SUCCESS

It would be a mistake to think that your work is done when you find an intern who has the skill sets necessary to help you with your marketing efforts. The reality is that finding these individuals is the first step in implementing a successful marketing plan. Once you have the intern in place, you must spend the time to educate them on the program and the sport. With the niche nature of wrestling, you will be very lucky to find an individual with the necessary skill sets who have a solid understanding of the sport. And even if you do, it is a smart move for you to help the individual to understand the culture of your program and coaching staff. Equally important, it is critical to send the message that you intend to be an important part of the program’s brand. After all, the coaching staff is a group that has the potential to be a consistent brand element as student-athletes graduate and you get new classes of student-athletes. In addition, the staff happens to be a core group that many key target markets are highly interested in engaging with. With this in mind, it is highly important that the coaching staff is actively involved in the marketing process in a few key areas.

1. EDUCATING ON PROGRAM AND SPORT.
One of the great things about outside interns is that they often have a unique perspective that is beneficial for marketing. If they are interested in sports, there is a good chance that they are in tune with many of the popular consumption trends that are common in today’s society. However, these preferences must be used with a specific understanding of the sport that they will be promoting via their efforts. In addition to an investment in educating them on the rules and subtleties in the sport, this will also involve a patience and commitment to feedback as these interns come up with initial ideas to market the program. If you truly feel they are off base with their assessment, take the time to explain why you do not feel like their ideas will work. However, before you do this, be sure to get feedback from your staff and experts in your field to make sure that it is not your perceptions that need some adjusting. Once you have spent the time to educate your interns on the program and sport, you will be in a great position to allow them to take the reins in different marketing initiatives. This is the point at which you will see your workload begin to lighten drastically because you will have taken the time to enhance your return on investment in the long run. With this being said, be aware that investing in a younger student intern can be a smart idea because they will give you more potential years of service.

2. COMMUNICATING MARKETING GOALS.
In addition to educating interns on the program and the sport, coaches should also take the time necessary to educate these individuals on the specific goals that the program hopes to realize through intentional marketing efforts. The good news is that the earlier sections of this manual provided an excellent foundation of the specific areas that need to be addressed when strategically planning for marketing. You can use your earlier efforts to educate these interns on the expectations that your staff has for growing your program. If you have not invested in this process, then take the time to do so with your marketing intern. Keep in mind that taking the time to plan will play major dividends down the road because it will allow you to streamline your efforts as you move forward.

3. OVERSEEING INTERNSHIP PROGRAM.
While your workload will be lightened following the educational areas discussed in steps Nos. 1 and 2, it does not mean that you will be completely absent when it comes to marketing endeavors. In fact, it is safe to say that if you want to be successful in growing your program, you (or a staff member) have to be actively engaged in the process on a regular basis. At the very least, you should schedule one to two formal meetings a week to receive briefing on the progress that is being made in the area of marketing. This is also a time when you need to be ready to give feedback and potential suggestions to the intern. If you choose to be more active in the process, then you can identify the role that you will play with the student. The most important thing is that the coaching staff takes an active interest in the ways that the program is proceeding in different marketing areas. This involvement will show that these areas are a priority for the coaching staff and program.

4. VOLUNTEER YOUR SERVICES.
As the intern gets actively involved in marketing efforts, don’t be afraid to volunteer your services in different capacities. In many instances, a student will be intimidated to ask questions because of your stature as the coach of the program. More importantly, the mentality of asking if you can help him will foster loyalty with this individual. If you have a solid intern, this will go a long way in encouraging him to go above and beyond when promoting your program. And remember, when you build a strong relationship with your student worker, there is a good chance that you will be building the brand of your internship program. As a result, you will continue to attract high-quality applicants that will enhance the effectiveness of your marketing.

5. SHOW APPRECIATION FOR EFFORTS.
In some instances, select professionals will make the mistake of thinking that interns are individuals who work and need little recognition. Whether you are paying the individual or not, this is a mentality that is a major mistake. As many programs have a limited budget, it is important that you treat interns extremely well so that you can retain high-quality workers. This starts with showing an appreciation for their efforts on a regular basis. When these individuals do a good job and you recognize their efforts, you can really help build your relationships with these individuals. This will go a long way in making sure that you have a highly productive internship program in which you maximize the efficiency of all of your marketing efforts.
FINISH STRONG

With the challenges facing Olympic sports, it is necessary for coaches to embrace the role of being the CEO of their program if they hope to ensure sustainability in the future. However, this puts additional expectations on many coaches who already work long hours throughout the year. With this being the case, it is extremely critical that programs find ways to maximize their efficiency in key areas. The internship program discussed in this section offers a unique opportunity for coaches to attract individuals who have the skill sets necessary to build their program from a marketing standpoint. While there is an initial time investment, this internship program has the potential to bring a strong ROI in marketing in the long run.
Supplementary Marketing Material
(Creating Synergistic Connections)

Program: ___________________________ Date: _______________

Step 1: As a staff, it is important that you sit down and identify the key areas that you hope to receive assistance in for the upcoming year in marketing. For the purposes of being efficient, do not be afraid to consider the future sections in this manual as you plan for potential interns to help your program grow from a consumer and stakeholder standpoint. Using the table below, brainstorm some of the marketing areas (e.g., marketing plan development, social media management, video production) that your program needs assistance with during the upcoming year. In addition, identify a priority level for each area so your program is able to maximize efficiency in connecting with key groups on campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas of Assistance</th>
<th>Priority Level (Low-Medium-High)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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Step #2: Once you have identified 3 to 5 areas where you need assistance, it is important that you consider some of the exact job duties that need to be filled within each area. For example, if you need help with social media management, then a job duty would be “running the day-to-day operations of Facebook and Twitter sites with supervision by assistant coach overseeing marketing.” Additional job duty considerations could be more specific areas like “developing specific themed content to be released on sites on a weekly basis.” The point here is that you are specifically developing the responsibilities to be included in your internship program.

Area #1:
Area #2:

Area #3:

Area #4:

Area #5:

Step #3: With your staff, determine the number of interns you think you will need to meet the requirements outline in #2 above. Once you have determined the number of individuals you will need, it is important that you develop a template that outlines the marketing internship that you are hoping to fill for the upcoming year. Remember to make this a strong document because this will serve as a marketing piece to draw top-notch students to your program. An example of an internship template has been included in the next Internship Example Template.
Step #4: Using your staff, student-athletes, and resources surrounding your program, identify the potential academic programs on campus that would offer ideal candidates to target in your search for potential interns. Once you have thought of these programs, use the Internet to target potential faculty members who have the capability to reach quality students in these areas. At this point, it is time for you to make initial contact with these individuals to tell them about your marketing internships and your goal to attract top students for a quality work experience. This is where you can use your created marketing internship template to help brand your program and experience.

Step #5: Once you have a marketing intern in place, be sure to use the “Create Structure for Marketing Success” as a guide to remind you of the little things your staff needs to do on a regular basis to create a quality internship experience. While this alone is the right thing to do, keep in mind that this is also critical for maximizing the efficiency in your marketing initiatives.

“If you start today doing the right thing, you are already a success even if it doesn't show yet”
(John Maxwell)

Note. The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
University of Tennessee Chattanooga Wrestling (Marketing Internship)

**Objective:** The UTC wrestling staff is currently seeking a qualified individual who has the attitude and skill sets necessary to help take its program to the next level from a marketing standpoint. UTC Wrestling Information: The program has recently adopted a “Chattanooga Strong” mantra that embraces the different areas of what it means to be a member of the UTC wrestling program. In addition to being highly competitive in competition, the program also hopes to build a brand that embraces student-athlete success in academics, community service, conduct, and other key areas. With a solid foundation in place, we are looking for an individual who has a passion for helping us to better market our program in the future.

**Current Marketing Initiatives:** The UTC program has invested in a variety of key initiatives that will serve as a nice foundation for the individual who serves as the marketing intern. In addition to investing in Facebook (2,200+ likes), Twitter (400 followers), and YouTube accounts, the program has also developed an initial plan for content ideas to be released on a weekly basis.

**Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:**
- Coordinating with staff to develop a marketing plan for 2011-12 season.
- Helping run Chattanooga Strong Facebook (2,200+ likes) and Twitter (400 followers) sites.
- Developing a strategic plan for building interest on social network sites.
- Coordinating weekly program video releases for different online platforms.

**Qualifications:**
- Must possess personable demeanor, creativity, and proactive approach to problem solving.
- Knowledge in marketing and social network sites considered a plus.
- Would welcome individuals with experience and/or knowledge in video editing (not required).

All interested applicants should send their cover letter and resume to Rocco Mansueto at rocco-mansueto@utc.edu no later than January 15, 2011.

Note. The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
SECTION NO. 4:
Producing a Positive Product
SECTION NO. 4: Producing a Positive Product

EMPHASIS ON CONSUMER’S WANTS AND NEEDS

At this point in the manual, you are well aware of the fact that marketing is about creating a product that is appealing to your key stakeholders. For this to occur, you and your staff must take the time to identify the groups of individuals who are most important to your program. This will allow you to consider their unique wants and needs strategically so you can make marketing decisions that will build your brand effectively. In particular, you will have the information necessary to build a core product that will be appealing to a wide range of consumers. This will be extremely important as you attempt to build a dual-meet environment that will increase attendance (and excitement) moving forward.

EVERYONE WANTS TO WIN, BUT NOT EVERYONE CAN

There is little doubt that winning is a program element that will help attract consumers to local dual meets and tournaments. However, the reality is that there is only one team that can win the NCAA title, 10 that can finish in the top 10, and 25 that can put themselves in the final team rankings. This means that there is a limit to the number of programs at each division that can rely on winning to build attendance. Even when winning occurs and is the sole emphasis, you limit the opportunity to attract casual consumers such as college students who are not familiar with the sport of wrestling. The bottom line is that there are no college wrestling programs in the United States that would not benefit from investing in a more entertaining environment at local competitions. For most programs, this is an absolute must when creating a product that is conducive to sustainability initiatives. The good news is that there is no limit on the number of college wrestling programs that can be highly effective in marketing efforts. In fact, the unique nature of this initiative (broad-based success for the sport of wrestling) makes it so college coaches will need to work together to make sure that a product is being developed that is fan friendly.

CREATING AN AURA SURROUNDING YOUR PROGRAM

To be successful in marketing, there must be an emphasis on creating an intentional aura surrounding your program. As illustrated in Section No. 2, this starts with creating a set of values that guides the actions of coaches and student-athletes on a day-to-day basis. It is these actions that serve as the foundation for the brand that you create with the different stakeholders surrounding your program. However, it is important to note that this is only one part of creating an aura surrounding your program that is attractive to consumers. Once you have solid individuals making the right decisions on a daily basis, it is your job as a coach to do three specific things to drum up interest in your program and competitions.

1. GET OUT AND ABOUT:

One of the best ways to build interest in your product is by getting out of your mat room to talk to people about your program. While this is certainly a shift in mentality from the past, it is something that your coaching staff must embrace if you are going to be successful from a marketing standpoint. As a central part of your program’s brand, it is important that you get out and make yourself visible to potential fans on a regular basis. And remember, with each interaction comes the opportunity to turn someone into a supporter of what you are trying to achieve. However, you must initiate the contact and actively seek out opportunities to build the brand of your program. When you do this, you take the first step toward getting people to be willing to come out and watch one of your competitions.

Below are some potential “added-value” interactions that you should consider moving forward with when attempting to build an aura surrounding your program.

- **Campus Groups:** The pursuit to develop an aura surrounding your program starts with your ability to create a product that is entertaining. However, this process coincides with the efforts that you put in to attracting consumers to your events. Being housed on a college campus, it makes sense that you make an active effort to attract large groups on campus (e.g., fraternities, sororities, student fan clubs, ROTC) to your events throughout the season. Through targeted promotional efforts, there is a great opportunity to drastically increase your attendance because these are groups that have an active interest in university-affiliated events.

- **Coaches:** When it comes to coaches, there are two specific areas that you should be concerned with in your marketing efforts. First, it is important that you develop strong relationships with coaches in your athletics department because of the unique synergistic benefits that come from reaching matching target markets. In essence, when you cultivate these relationships, there are potential opportunities to build your brand via cross-promotional social media and word-of-mouth marketing. This will be discussed more in depth in the next section. Second, it would be highly useful to place an emphasis on building strong relationships with coaches in the surrounding designated marketing area (DMA). As many coaches know, this is a critical element when attempting to access young athletes who will serve as a primary segment for your program.

- **Young Athletes:** In some ways, this may be one of the most important segments that you target in your marketing efforts. This is for a couple of reasons. First, young wrestlers are engaged in the sport and often have a natural “built-in” interest in your program due to the high level of competition fostered at the college level. Second, these are young individuals who can become “lifelong consumers” for your program if you handle your interactions with them properly. This is a primary reason why professional sport leagues often target young individuals. A younger demographic is desirable because you can cultivate loyalty that will carry over into adulthood. Coaches should keep this in mind when carrying out marketing efforts.

- **Professors:** After reading the previous section, you probably have a good idea of why professors are important when attempting to build an aura surrounding your program. In addition to offering unique access to high-quality students for select internships, these individuals can also help enhance the efficiency of your marketing efforts if approached the right way. For example, after building a positive relationship with a Cornell professor, head coach Rob Koll was able to arrange for his program’s camps to serve as a centerpiece in a marketing class project. These types of relationships have also allowed the Cornell wrestling program to grow from a marketing standpoint in other key areas.
• **Staff Members:** If you would like to create an aura that differentiates your program, it is highly important that you set out to actively initiate positive relationships throughout your athletics department. Within each area in your athletics department (e.g., compliance, marketing, public relations), there is an opportunity to build relationships that will enhance the efficiency of your program. If you invest in people the right way, there is a good chance that they will go out of their way to help your program grow. In addition to these benefits, a large part of program sustainability is being the program that does not cause any burden within your athletics department. Instead, you should be the one program that adds unique value to the individuals within each specific area.

• **Administrators:** As you develop an entertaining product, it is important that you consistently sell your program to administrators. As you approach key meetings with your athletics director, be sure to sit down as a staff to develop a strategy for delivering your program’s message in an effective manner. If you do not have regular meetings, reach out to see if it would be possible to meet from time to time to discuss your program’s progress. However, be sure that you are fully prepared for these meetings because you do not want to waste your athletics director’s valuable time. More importantly, you want your actions during the meeting to make your athletics director (and senior administrators) a fan of your program. You might also want to consider whether you can connect with your athletics director via technology. Some programs have realized great success by adding their athletics director to their email list. When combined with an effective online presence (e.g., links to the program’s themed YouTube videos), it can go a long way in building your brand with administrators. Naturally, this will increase their interest in your dual-meet competitions as well.

2. **BE PASSIONATE ABOUT PRODUCT:**
As a marketer, it is important to remember the importance of selling your product. Simply put, if you do not believe in your program, then it will be impossible to sell it to others. On the other hand, if you have values in place and believe in your mission, then you will have a far greater chance of getting people to support what you are trying to achieve (e.g., attendance records, increased followers via social media). With this in mind, it is your job to be passionate about your program when you interact with people on a daily basis. Keep in mind that people are far more likely to follow a passionate leader than one who has little direction and/or motivation. As the leader of your program, it is your job to get people to buy into your vision far before it becomes a realization.

3. **INVEST IN INNOVATIVE ENTERTAINMENT:**
While traits such as passion and persistence may get people to attend your competitions, it is highly possible that these alone may not keep them coming down the road. In coordination with each of the previously discussed steps, it would be highly beneficial for programs to create an entertaining environment at competitions if coaches hope to develop loyal consumers (and to set attendance records). This is a marketing area that is important enough to discuss more in depth in this manual. Some of the key elements to creating this type of environment will be outlined in the following section. As coaches read this section, it is important that they consider potential areas that can improve the entertainment value of events while also building the brand of the program.

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**ESTABLISHING AN ENTERTAINING ENVIRONMENT**

From a branding perspective, attendance will always be a desirable outcome for coaches who choose to invest in marketing initiatives. With this in mind, it is important to consider potential areas that coaches can leverage to maximize interest in their competitions throughout the year. For coaches interested in this endeavor, the GROW principle below is a great starting point when considering steps to enhance the interest at dual meets and tournaments. Be sure to continually invest in these areas if you want to create the type of product that will result in a positive aura surrounding your program. When you get each of these areas right, you will have a platform to really take your marketing efforts to the next level. However, as with all marketing initiatives, these must be priority areas if you are going to succeed with creating an entertaining environment for your key market segments.

**GENERATE EXCITEMENT THROUGH PRODUCT EXTENSIONS**

Description: In marketing, the core product consists of the actual product that exists on the field where competition takes place. When using wrestling as an example, this means that the coaches, wrestlers, facility and rules often make up the core product. However, it is important to note that much of marketing relates to the other areas (product extensions) that surround the event. For example, at a dual-meet competition there is an opportunity to include added value elements in the form of music, lights and other entertainment options. In essence, there are many other areas that you can enhance to make sure that your target markets are enjoying the event. In many instances, these entertainment options can coincide with promotions that you offer at your events. In fact, it is important that these areas are considered in coordination with each other as you develop your marketing plan.
REWARD CONSUMERS WITH INNOVATIVE PROMOTIONS

**Description:** Promotions have become a necessary element in marketing initiatives for all sports organizations looking to attract large groups of consumers. While promotions can take a variety of different forms, they are often characterized as the intentional steps that sport marketers implement to build interest in an upcoming event (or product). From a content standpoint, this includes the promotional videos (and content) that are released strategically to consumers ahead of an event to make it more desirable. However, it is important to note that the most visible promotions often come in the form of giveaways that result from attending an event. This is an area that programs must take advantage of if they are going to maximize attendance moving forward. Below are a few examples of recent promotions that have helped programs attract more fans at home dual meets.

**Examples:** Chattanooga Takedowns for T-Shirts, Central Michigan University iPad 2 Giveaway, Michigan’s Fraternity Flat Screen Giveaway

OFFER KEY STATISTICS TO PEAK CONSUMER INTEREST

**Description:** In addition to product extensions and innovative promotions, it is important to provide key statistics that will peak consumers’ interest. As illustrated by the myriad of statistics that you can find on ESPN broadcasts, our society is often fascinated by the numbers that are associated with high-level sports competition. With this being the case, it is important that you attempt to incorporate team and individual wrestler statistics in your program, broadcasts and promotions, when appropriate. If you truly want to encourage consumers to get to know more about your team and the sport, then find a way to tie in program statistics into creative giveaways during home dual meets.

WORK TO CREATE UNIQUE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Description:** In many ways, this would be considered a high-level marketing application for wrestling programs. The reason is that engagement is a difficult thing to achieve because it involves a culturalization process once you have built a solid fan base. For the purposes of this manual, intentional fan engagement will be defined as the unique traditions that are created to keep fans actively involved during competition. One of the best examples of this is the “Twoooooo” response that has been cultivated at Iowa wrestling matches. While somewhat rare in college wrestling, there are hundreds of examples of these types of engagement strategies that have been successfully culturalized in college basketball and football fan bases. In addition to drastically improving the environment during competition, this process also helps keep different segments of fans actively involved throughout sports events. Ultimately, this makes it far more likely that fans will stay interested in the event regardless of the outcome. This is a concept that college wrestling must embrace in the future if programs are going to maximize attendance at dual meets and tournaments.

CREATE A “CONSUMER FRIENDLY” SCHEDULE

As coaches take the final steps towards creating an entertaining home dual-meet product, it is important that they consider the schedule that they will offer to their consumers. With a newly established marketing mindset, there needs to be an emphasis on scheduling some highlight duals that will allow you to achieve your objective of entertaining potential target markets. Naturally, this will be most effective if you effectively develop a home dual-meet schedule with rivalries that people will be attracted to. Once you have done this, it is important that you take the next step and actively market these dual meets using the other strategies discussed in this manual. One great example of this is the “Battle of the Beltway” series that has been created between the Maryland and American programs. In addition to developing a creative name, the programs have created an actual belt to be awarded to the team that wins the dual meet each year. Ultimately, this gives the programs a platform to more easily attract consumer and media attention moving forward. This is something that all programs should strive for in their scheduling.

FINISHING STRONG

At this point in the manual, you are well aware of the fact that college wrestling must make a variety of adjustments if programs (and the sport) are going to be successful in the future. With dual-meet competitions being a central core product, it is extremely important that coaches take steps to ensure that they are maximizing attendance throughout the season. As illustrated in this section, this starts with coaches taking an active role in promoting their program to key individuals as they interact with them on a daily basis. However, you now know that you must also create an entertaining dual-meet atmosphere if you are going to develop a loyal fan base moving forward. With the right approach in this area, there is no question that you have the capability to get to the point where you are ready to set dual-meet attendance records. In addition to helping create a stronger support system surrounding your program, this will also go a long way in impressing the administrators in your athletics department. To aid in this process, use the “Strategies to Produce Positive Product” template provided on the next page.
1. At this point in the Marketing Manual, it is important that you sit down with your marketing team to identify the specific product-related goals that you have for your program for the upcoming year. Using the table provided below, identify your attendance based goals and list three specific strategies you will implement to achieve your goals.

### ATTENDANCE-BASED GOALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Attendance (Dual Meet Season): ________</th>
<th>Date: ________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategies to Achieve Goal: 1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Maximum Attendance (Single Dual Meet): ________ |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Strategies to Achieve Goal: 1. | 2. |
| 3. |

| Alternative Attendance (Special Events)*: ________ |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Strategies to Achieve Goal: 1. | 2. |
| 3. |

*For marketing events such as golf outings, banquets, and other important events that build program brand.*
2. In addition to specific attendance-based goals, it is important that you strive to create a unique aura surrounding your program. Building on the previous section, what are five specific marketing-related strategies that your program will implement right away to help create this aura to enhance your branding efforts?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

“The most beautiful thing in the world is a [sports facility] filled with people” (Bill Veeck)

Note. The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
SECTION NO. 5: Touching Base with Technology
ROLE OF NEW MEDIA IN FUTURE MARKETING SUCCESS

With the increase in popularity of the Internet in a variety of age segments, sport organizations have placed a heavy emphasis on ensuring that they grow their fan base in a variety of different Web-based mediums. While organizational websites were a primary starting point, the evolution of the Internet has coincided with the creation of many innovative outlets with the capability to effectively connect with consumers on a personal level. As the popularity has grown, many of these interactive-based consumer sites have been coined as “new media” because of their unique ability to engage individuals on a personal level. It is this capability that has drastically changed the landscape of marketing among sport organizations at both the college and professional levels. With most high-level executives (and professionals) predicting that social media will be the future of sport business, it is important that coaches embrace the use of these mediums in their marketing efforts moving forward. This section will focus on providing coaches with a foundation that allows them to effectively build their brand via new media.

WHAT EXACTLY IS NEW MEDIA?

Before moving on to the potential practical applications of new media, it is important to provide a basic definition of this concept so that coaches are aware of the different mediums that are available as marketing tools. From a marketing standpoint, new media can essentially be defined as the interactive forms of communication available via the Internet that serve as platforms to deliver content to digital devices at any time. In essence, these forms of communication can now be seen as the blogs, RSS feeds, social media, texting and video sharing that allow sport entities (organizations and/or programs) to connect with consumers on a personal level. The practical applications of each of these mediums for sport programs will be discussed in this section. However, social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) will serve as the primary foundation for these marketing efforts due to their mass popularity and unique ability to develop databases to effectively communicate with consumers on a consistent basis.

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

As previously mentioned, one of the greatest benefits of social media is the mass popularity among consumers in the United States and around the world. This is one of the primary reasons why many sport organizations have turned to social media to enhance their marketing efforts with consumers. However, there are specific reasons why social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter have become so popular among a wide range of segments. It is important that coaches are aware of these reasons so they are able to leverage the capabilities as they attempt to build their program’s brand with consumers. First, the interactive nature of the sites is ideal for allowing sport programs to communicate with stakeholders who are interested in the program. More importantly, the creative platforms on these sites allow organizations to deliver innovative content that is attractive to both current and potential consumer segments. Second, building on this innovative content concept, there is a compounding effect via sites such as Facebook and Twitter because individuals (and groups) have the capability to easily share creative posts with others. Thus, when handled properly, there is a third benefit that comes in the form of a database of fans that emerge from effectively engaging followers. It is this database that allows programs to effectively deliver their message to appropriate fan segments on their own schedule. With constant pressure on the sustainability of the sport, these are benefits that college wrestling programs cannot afford to pass up.

STEPS IN SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

The most obvious step in realizing success in social media is to get your program involved right away on key sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The reality is that you cannot take advantage of these benefits if you are not willing to make a commitment to develop an online presence for your program. However, once you have made this decision, there are several other initiatives that you should consider if you are going to be effective in social media marketing. In addition, as you read through these suggestions, realize that it is going to take a proactive mindset to build your brand in a manner that is appealing to your consumers. As a program, it is your job to make sure that you are creating a social media product that is unique and creative based on what you would like to achieve in your marketing efforts. With this in mind, here are the “Seven Unique Steps to Social Media Success” that you should consider as you develop your online presence.

1. INVEST IN REGULAR PROGRAM FEATURES:
Beyond setting up the background information on your program’s page, the most basic decision that your coaching staff (and marketing interns) will have to make is what type of content that you will feature on a regular basis. While this seems like an elementary step, it is certainly one that you should approach strategically so that you are able to maximize the effectiveness of the content that you are offering. From a planning standpoint, this becomes about identifying the type of information that will allow you to build your brand in a manner that was previously established in Section No. 2 of this manual. In addition to the type of messages (e.g., training updates, community service round-up, student-athlete academic progress), your staff should also identify whether posts, graphics, photos, and/or videos will be used to engage consumers. As you do this, do not be afraid to examine the strategies that top programs are implementing via their social network sites. And throughout this development process, understand that innovation in this area sometimes takes time because you need experience with the strategies that are effective in engaging your followers. The key is to be willing to jump in and embrace the opportunities that exist for your program when you invest in marketing your program via social network sites.
2. CREATE A SEASONAL ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE:
While regular posts are a necessary part of using social network sites effectively, they are not the sole consideration when attempting to develop a base of highly engaged followers. In today’s competitive social network site environment, you have to develop a niche approach if you are going to differentiate your program from other entities. To do this, it is important that you at least consider putting together a set seasonal entertainment schedule that followers can expect when attempting to keep track of your program. In simple terms, this means developing some creative themed (see step 3 below) entertainment options that you will offer on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis to serve as the core foundation to your marketing efforts. For example, the Binghamton wrestling program has created a Two Minute Tuesday series featuring one of its student-athletes that it releases each week for its followers. While creative content is clearly necessary, one of the things that make this marketing initiative more effective is the themed name to inform followers when they can consistently expect the content.

3. USE MANTRA-RELATED THEMES TO PACKAGE CONTENT:
When considering the types of innovative entertainment that you will offer, it is important that you strongly consider the packaging so that you are able to effectively build interest while simultaneously building your program’s brand. With the brand (mantra) established earlier in this manual, this should be an easy step to comprehend. In essence, as you work to develop creative ideas (e.g., a weekly technique video), it is important that you focus on coming up with creative names that will peak your primary target markets’ attention. Rather than simply calling it a technique video, you could follow Purdue wrestling’s example and call it the “Boilermaker Technique of the Week” series. This is a simple step that can go a long way in building the brand of your program as a group that is creative and worthy of attention. The top programs in this particular area will intentionally establish names that will build the brand of the program’s mantra moving forward. Be sure to be on the cutting edge here so that you and your program are able to maximize interest in your product.

4. ENCOURAGE COACH AND STUDENT-ATHLETE INTERACTION:
In many instances, coaches will simply turn over the keys to social network sites to an intern (or athletics department employee) so that they can focus solely on coaching. While having an intern handle the site is encouraged, there is no way that your program will reach its full potential from a marketing standpoint if you are not an active part of your program’s brand. As a coach, it is important that you are present in some form on your program’s social network sites. At a bare minimum, you should provide interviews and quotes to be posted on your Facebook and Twitter sites. However, if you want to become a program that is considered outstanding in marketing you must play an active role in the presence of your program on these sites. Moving forward, the top coaches in this area will be involved in Facebook and Twitter so they can provide occasional posts and feedback to fans of the program. Equally important, the top staffs will make sure that student-athletes are a primary part of social network site presence as well. In addition to including them in innovative program content (e.g., themed interview videos), effective programs will encourage their student-athletes to take an active role in providing feedback on the content being posted on the team’s social network sites. The programs who do all of these things well will clearly differentiate themselves as premier social media marketing innovators in college athletics. This is exactly the type of thing that college wrestling needs to be successful moving forward.

5. MAKE INTERACTION A PRIORITY:
Building on the previous step, it is critical that programs make it a priority to interact with followers if they want to connect with consumers on a personal level. One of the biggest mistakes that most athletics departments make is that they provide updates on their Olympic programs with no intention of ever responding to the comments made by followers. While it is sometimes not realistic to respond to every comment, it is important that programs understand that they are sending the message that fans are not important when they never take the time to interact. On the flip side, when interaction is made a priority, there is a far greater chance that you will develop loyal social media followers who will support your program by sharing your message. When this comes from coaches and student-athletes, you have the opportunity to create an intimate experience that is highly valued by fans of wrestling and your program.

6. CROSS-PROMOTE WITH SIMILAR ENTITIES:
One of the greatest benefits of social network sites is the ease of linking important program messages to other similar entities that have the capability to extend your reach. Yet this seems to be one of the most under-utilized capabilities among college wrestling programs on social network sites. As you develop your themed program schedule, keep in mind that you can effectively notify entities (e.g., Elite Level Sport Marketing, National Wrestling Coaches Association) of your content by tagging other groups when you release your content. Similarly, once you have developed themed rivalries with other programs, you can tag the other program with relevant posts to help build interest in the event. The point here is that there is an opportunity to be proactive in extending the reach of your messages if you are constantly pushing to get more people interested in your program. Building on earlier sections of the manual, this strategy could be highly effective once you engage groups on campus.

7. CREATE PROMOTIONS TO BUILD DATABASE:
As coaches, it is important to realize that you are in a unique position to develop cost-efficient promotions that have the potential to build significant interest in your social network site presence. Rather than focusing solely on promotional giveaways at competitions, programs should also invest time in creating a promotional schedule that will be carried out via social network sites. For example, programs could offer a variety of team apparel and promotional materials signed by individuals surrounding the program (e.g., coaching staff and former student-athletes). Ideally, there could be some smaller individual giveaways that lead to a culminating grand prize giveaway at some point during the year. Ultimately, these would be most effective if they coincide with active campaigns to build the number of followers on your social network site pages. When implemented properly, this has major potential to drastically increase your fan base so that you are able to deliver important marketing messages via these mediums.
THE VALUE OF VIDEO SHARING

When it comes to online marketing, video is a powerful tool that has the capability to add tremendous value to the consumers on your social network sites. In fact, the intuitive nature of video editing software makes it so all programs have the capability to create a wide range of creative videos that can build your brand. If you are not familiar with this process, there are certainly students (and staff) on your campus that can assist you in this particular area (see Section #3 on “Connecting for the Cause”). Once you have come up with creative video concepts and entered the development phase, it is critical that you spend time to think about the outlets with sharing capability that will best allow you to best circulate your videos. While athletic department websites have a useful role in marketing, it is important to recognize that many of them do not offer an ideal platform for sharing videos in the most appealing format. However, with video sharing sites like YouTube, coaches are assured that they can promote their videos in a manner that will be most effective for circulation purposes. In short, YouTube allows you to share the videos in a mini-format on your feed where consumers can easily click on the video to watch it without leaving Facebook. This video accessibility is something that all programs should consider when deciding where to host their program’s video content. Another benefit of YouTube is that you can create a channel where followers can subscribe to your video updates. This will tie directly into the specialized roles concept that will be discussed in an article posted on the NWCA Marketing Resource Web page.

POTENTIAL BONUS OF A BLOG

While social network sites are an ideal platform to delivering messages in an efficient manner to consumers, there is certainly value in investing in a blog if you have the time and resources. In simple terms, a blog is a website where a team has the ability to deliver content in a more in-depth manner. In fact, it could even be seen as a medium that allows teams to provide a more detailed insider experience for consumers. The traditional format of a blog is one where the content provider writes commentary and/or updates in a concise manner with links, photos, and/or videos. One of the greatest benefits of a blog is that you can use them as content feeders on your social network sites. For example, once a story is published, you can simply incorporate the link into your status updates on Facebook and Twitter. These sites have made it so the link is visually appealing when you post them to your followers. Thus, with the previous comments in mind, the blog offers a nice medium for programs to control the type of content being provided to their consumers. As a result, there is some freedom in the creativity that goes into the content that is updated on the blog on a regular basis.

CLOSING THOUGHT: TIMING IS EVERYTHING

As your program initiates your social network site presence, there will be several things that you will learn about efficiency in the early stages of the process. The important thing is to consistently improve your efforts so that you are able to build your followers. Do not be afraid to reach out to individuals who can help you navigate the mediums as you get started. And once you have a solid foundation, be sure to think about the ways that will help differentiate your program via online marketing. With that being said, one area of emphasis that you can consider early on to improve follower engagement and interaction is the time that you post your priority content. If there is content that you want to highlight, be sure that you release them during peak times on Facebook and Twitter. While this entirely depends on your specific followers, it is safe to say that you should avoid releasing content extremely early in the morning and late at night. The best way to assess this is by paying attention to the “likes” and comments that you receive as you release content. Once you figure out peak days and times, you can coordinate to release your themed content in a manner that maximizes exposure to your followers.

FINISHING STRONG

For college wrestling to be a competitive entertainment option in the future, coaches must embrace the role that social media plays in the overall experience being provided to consumers. As younger generations become more involved in social media, sport organizations and teams must adapt if they are going to continue to cultivate interest and loyalty among key consumer segments. However, the time for coaches to act in this area is now if they do not want to operate at a disadvantage in the future. With a proactive mindset, coaches (and programs) have the opportunity to be a pioneer in this particular area for Olympic sports in the future. This is definitely an area that will help determine program’s overall effectiveness in marketing moving forward. Get started the right way today by investing in the “Striving for Excellence in Social Media” template provided on the next page.
1. Using the same template as provided in the previous section, identify the specific marketing-related goals that you have for social media in terms of increases in followers and interaction on Facebook and Twitter. Be aware that you have different options on how to evaluate the effectiveness of interaction on these sites. The important thing is that you determine a specific strategy to evaluate the quality of your releases based on your followers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Increase in Followers (Facebook/Twitter):</strong> <strong><strong><strong>/</strong></strong></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies to Achieve Goal:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em><em>Interaction Among Facebook Followers</em>:</em>* __________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies to Achieve Goal:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Program options: Average comments, likes, and/or shares per key program release.*

| **Interaction Among Twitter Followers*:** __________ |
| **Strategies to Achieve Goal:** |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

* Program options: Average RT’s and comments per key Tweet.*

**Note.** Program can determine specific measures for other social media outlets.
2. In the space below, determine three specific “added value” program features that you can develop to release on your social media sites. As described in this section, if you are going to be effective with marketing, it is important that your program establishes both the type of message (e.g., training updates, community service round-up, student-athlete academic program) and the specific method (e.g., simple post, photo post, video post) utilized for delivery. As you engage in this process, be sure that your features are the type of content that will build critical brand elements determined in Section #2 of the manual. Use the table below to identify a strategic plan for the program features that you will offer to followers this upcoming season.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Message</th>
<th>Method of Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. When dealing with social media, you need to be proactive in your attempts to make sure that you are extending the reach of your messages. Using the “Steps in Social Media Success” from this section, identify five specific strategies that your program will implement to increase the reach of the previously identified program features during the upcoming season.

(1)

(2)
“Conversations among the members of your marketplace happen whether you like it or not. Good marketing encourages the right sort of conversation” (Seth Godin)

**Note.** The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
SECTION NO. 6:
Implementing Innovative Promotions
SECTION NO. 6:
Implementing Innovative Promotions

ROLE OF PROMOTING PRODUCT IN MARKETING

In marketing, there is little doubt that your core product and product extensions have to be solid if you are going to be successful in attracting a high volume of consumers to your events. At this point in the manual, you now realize that this will be directly influenced by the quality of the product that you turn out for consumers on a regular basis. In addition to the overall competitiveness of your team, the process of effectively building your fan base will correlate with the entertainment value that you are able to create for attendees at your home dual-meet events. However, building on Section No. 4 in the manual, there is another step that you must consider once you have invested in creating an entertaining product. While the “build it and they will come” mantra sounds convincing, it is not a philosophy that you want to rely on when marketing your program. Instead, once there is a foundation in place for a solid home dual-meet product, you need to take the next step and make sure that your key target markets are aware of your events. Equally important, you need to promote your event in a manner that will create interest from individuals in the surrounding campus and community. This section will focus on providing a basic understanding of the key areas that coaches need to consider when attempting to build their program from a marketing standpoint.

BASIC FORMS OF PROMOTION

For the purposes of this marketing manual, the term promotions can be defined as any activity that is designed to stimulate interest in the consumption of a product. In simple terms, it is the implementation of all of the concepts in this manual to build interest in your program. However, for the purposes of this section, we will focus specifically on the four different types of promotions and how they can help coaches to build on their marketing efforts. In addition to providing basic definitions of each type of promotion (see graphic to the right), the section will also present the basic strategies that coaches can implement within each area to build interest in their product.

NUMBER 1

Advertising: In many ways, starting with advertising makes sense because it is the promotion that offers the least potential for programs on a broad scale. While advertising on billboards and in local print materials has some value, there is an associated cost and this is something that most programs cannot afford. In addition, when used in combination with the lack of a segmented approach (ability to reach your key target markets), the investment in traditional advertising is often not worth it for a program with a limited budget. However, there are ways to navigate this process so that you are able to advertise your program in a cheaper and efficient manner. With the increasing popularity of new media, it would be smart to partner strategically with other groups to help extend your reach via social media. If you have a solid fan base on popular sites such as Facebook and Twitter, you can strive to create working relationships with other related entities to extend the reach of your messages. For example, many programs have recently reached out to Elite Level Sport Marketing (ELSM) and the National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) to attempt to share their message with more consumers. In exchange, the programs have intuitively made the decision to actively promote messages from both ELSM and the NWCA. This is an example of a synergistic, cost-efficient approach to advertising that is beneficial to programs with a limited budget.

Basic Application: Identify at least five sport entities (e.g., organizations, programs) that can help spread the message about your program. Once you have identified them, reach out to see if there is potential for a relationship in which you can work together to enhance the marketing efforts for both entities. Be sure to go above and beyond when attempting to add value to the organizations you are targeting. For example, you can help to promote their initiatives via social media in hopes of enhancing their efforts. If you have chosen the right entities, this will help you in establishing a relationship that is valuable to your program.

TYPES OF PROMOTIONS

1. ADVERTISING:
   Paid, impersonal (not directed to set individuals) message conveyed through the media.

2. PERSONAL SALES:
   Face-to-Face (or technology based) presentation in which seller has opportunity to persuade customer to purchase something.

3. PUBLICITY:
   Any form of exposure in the media not paid for specifically by the sport beneficiary (and not controlled by them either).

4. SALES PROMOTION:
   Innovative ideas to develop consumer interest in your sport product.
We have our wrestlers go out to dining halls to do meet and greets. Each wrestler gets assigned 30 tickets with their name on it so we know who gets people to attend. - Rob Koll

NUMBER TWO

**Personal Sales:** For most programs, there will not be a sales department that will be responsible for helping to increase attendance at events. Nor is it cost efficient to hire individuals to serve in this capacity. With that being said, there are some options available to help in the sales department for your program. First, as members of the coaching staff, you have to make it your goal to sell your program to as many people as possible on campus and in the surrounding community. Once you have a solid “promotable program vision” in place, you can also encourage your student-athletes to help engage in this process. Think of these areas as non-traditional forms of personal sales. For a more traditional model, you could follow Cornell wrestling coach Rob Koll’s model and make student-athletes distribute dual-meet tickets on campus to help boost attendance for key dual meets.

**Basic Application:** Strategically identify key dual-meet competitions on your schedule and encourage your staff and student-athletes to become a part of your sales staff. In the early stages of your marketing plan, ask your student-athletes to spread the word about your matches via social media and when interacting with other students on your campus. As you might expect, their effectiveness will depend on their ability to connect with normal college professors and students within the university environment. Once you have effectively embarked in this process, you will have a foundation for the staff and student-athletes to help with “selling” your events as they approach. Be sure that you are proactive with involving them in the marketing process for key events. This process can range in the level of complexity and involvement. It can be as simple as having them pass out schedule cards (or related promotional materials) and talking to others about events and it can be as complex as having an actual competition to reward individuals who get the most people to your home dual meets. The important thing is that you are creative in your approach to sell people on your product. This will not happen if you do not have a proactive mindset when it comes to marketing.

NUMBER THREE

**Publicity:** Media exposure has become an area that sport organizations must capitalize on to be successful in building their brand with consumers. From a basic marketing perspective, publicity can be defined as the non-paid exposure that a sport program receives from various media outlets. With that being the case, it should be every college wrestling program’s goal to do everything in its power to maximize publicity through both the traditional (e.g., newspapers) and new (e.g., social network sites) media avenues. To achieve this, coaches should proactively reach out to individuals in these key media outlets to attempt to create a connection with the program. Similar to larger sport organizations, you may even want to consider the implementation of specific hospitality initiatives (e.g., food and beverage; insider perspective) to make your home dual meets more appealing to local media. In coordination with a personal invitation, your program may be surprised to see the type of publicity your program receives from these simple steps. The upside here is that the earlier sections in this manual will provide you with a foundation to effectively position your brand once you are able to create connections with members of the media.

**Basic Application:** The great news is that social network sites have given programs a platform to effectively publicize their events (and products) to primary target markets. However, this takes a proactive approach to building your database for these sites on a regular basis, and even if you do extremely well in this area, this should not be the only publicity initiative that you embark upon. The reality is that there are media outlets that can help you to build the brand of your program. With this being the case, it is important that you identify local media that have the ability to extend the reach of your messages. You should start with building a strong relationship with the sports information staff in your athletics department before extending your efforts to local newspapers, television stations, and other mediums with the potential to help you publicize events. Once you identify these media outlets, it is important that you reach out to these individuals to see if you can start communication that will allow you to build a relationship with them. If appropriate, consider developing organized events at practices, competitions, and/or banquets to involve key media members with your program. The important thing is that you actively think about ways to enhance the quality of the publicity that your program receives. This is a great thing as you approach key events (e.g., community service, highlight dual meets) and you would like to extend the reach of your program’s message.

NUMBER FOUR

**Sales Promotions:** In marketing, sales promotions are the flashy elements that tend to be most visible to consumers. In many ways, they are similar to high-amplitude throws in wrestling. Without a proper foundation, there is little chance that you will be able to realize all of the benefits that come from innovative sales promotions that occur in coordination with your event. In fact, for a promotion to be successful, it is almost guaranteed that you need to take into consideration the key target markets that will be in attendance at your event. In addition, the promotion must fit within your overall marketing strategy so that it effectively builds your brand moving forward. At this point in the manual, you understand these elements and are ready to consider ways that you can enhance your creative promotional efforts. Because promotions have the most impact for programs, we will spend a large portion of the remainder of this section identifying strategies for you to enhance your promotional initiatives.

**Basic Application:** Building on Section No. 4 (Producing a Positive Product), there is little doubt that coaches have to find a way to develop an exciting environment at dual meets for consumers. While there are a variety of considerations to achieve this, a large part of your success in this area will depend on the promotional items that you tie in to the product that you are offering. As a staff, sit down and consider the potential giveaways (or benefits) that you can offer to improve the product available to your fans (see Producing Results with Promotions template at end of section). This will play a major role in determining whether you will be able to increase the demand for your product. Examples of potential promotions will be provided throughout the rest of the section. Use these as resources to tailor your promotions to your individual program and surrounding environment. It is possible that you will be able to take your promotions to a more creative level than what you see in this section, so do not be afraid to innovate.
PUTTING PROMOTIONS INTO ACTION

Now that you have a basic understanding of promotions, it is important to break these concepts down further so you know exactly how your program can benefit from an effective marketing plan featuring innovative promotions. To help with this process, the key promotional elements will be broken down into two specific categories: (1) Consider a “timely” themed approach; and (2) Create added value through creative giveaways. Each of these areas will be discussed with specific examples of strategies that coaches can implement to better position their program from a marketing standpoint in the future.

1. CONSIDER A “TIMELY” THEMED APPROACH:
   - Connect to a larger cause: Regardless of the size of your sport organization, there is tremendous value in attaching yourself to a greater cause that will allow you to build the brand of your program. From a marketing standpoint, creating a strategic relationship with an entity involved in “making a difference” is important for a couple of key reasons. First, it allows you to reach groups of individuals who previously might not have had any information and/or interest in your program. By attaching to a cause that they are passionate about, these individuals are far more likely to take interest in supporting your program and events. Second, the connection offers the potential to build your brand because you are actively supporting a cause that is favorable to most people. For example, the North Carolina gymnastics team partners with breast cancer advocates to sponsor an annual “Get Real & Heel” event at one of its home competitions. In addition to providing added value entertainment (e.g., face painting for kids, giveaways), it gives all of the proceeds to groups that are advocating for breast cancer awareness. Naturally, this is an event that has great potential to draw media attention if you use the tips provided earlier in this manual. The goal should be to have at least one major event where your team partners with a larger cause to enhance your marketing efforts. This is the type of event that has an upside for all entities involved if you handle the situation right. More importantly, this is a collective initiative that can build the brand of the sport of wrestling in a way that will encourage growth on a broad scale.

   Examples: Ohio State’s Autism Awareness, Edinboro’s Military Appreciation

   - Create synergy with a similar entity: In coordination with the previous step, it would also be smart for programs to consider partnerships with similar entities to improve their marketing efforts. From a marketing perspective, one of the primary goals here would be to create partnerships with groups that allow you to extend the reach of your program’s brand to new segments of consumers. For example, many programs have taken a proactive approach when developing free clinics and dual-meet competition opportunities for youth wrestling groups in coordination with their home events. In essence, the promotion that you offer to these teams makes perfect sense because you are adding value to a segment that would have a direct interest in your product. When you provide kids with an opportunity to grow and/or showcase their skills, then you are building loyalty with the entire family because many parents are loyal to groups that invest in their kids. On a slightly different platform, another example of connecting with a similar entity is the partnerships that wrestling programs have embarked upon with gymnastics teams in their “Beauty and the Beast” event. With creative packaging (and promotions), this is an event with great potential because you have an opportunity to reach consumers who may be interested in your product. As a coach, it is your job to schedule a meeting to identify entities that you can create a relationship with to build the brand of your program.

Free wrestling clinic for all ages and abilities!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2ND

The University of Michigan wrestling program will host a free wrestling clinic on Sunday, Jan. 2, from 10 a.m. - noon at the Bahna Wrestling Center. The clinic is open to all ages and skill levels, and will feature technique and practice planning instruction from Wolverine All-American Tyrel Todd (2006-09) as well as members of the U-M coaching staff.

The Wolverines will hold an open practice beginning at 9 a.m. following the clinic. All participants are invited to remain at the Bahna Wrestling Center to observe practice.

For more information contact Sara Walker at 734.615.3025 or walks@umich.edu

For the complete wrestling schedule please visit MGoBlue.com

WRESTLING

Sunday, January 16th @ 2:00pm

- Pre Game Tailgate @ O’Kelly’s 1:00pm
- Traditions & Spirit Torch event
- Student Apple iPad giveaway
2. CREATE ADDED VALUE THROUGH CREATIVE GIVEAWAYS:

- Wrestling-related benefits: The easiest (and sometimes most efficient) way to create an effective promotional giveaway program is by using the resources most readily available to your staff. The reality is that many programs have cost-efficient products at the tip of their hands that would be extremely appealing to some of their key target markets. For example, many traditional wrestling fans and younger generations of wrestlers would be highly interested in creative apparel giveaways if they are packaged properly. At a very basic level, all programs should consider doing T-shirt giveaways at their events to build interest in their home dual meets and tournaments. Rather than do this in a traditional, boring manner, coaches should consider throwing them out while encouraging a more exciting environment at their events. On a more advanced level, coaches could truly differentiate their product by combining “insider values” with themed packaging. The insider values could start with signed apparel (former NCAA qualifiers, All-Americans, and other standouts) and could extend to added value benefits such as one-on-one clinics and/or tours of the program’s facility. Other potential examples could include free camp tuition, guest coach experiences, one-on-one interactions with staff members, and other themed experiences. Obviously, your higher-end giveaways would be offered on a limited basis to individuals who win a raffle and/or specific competition. All of these promotions could be carried out in coordination with your home dual-meet schedule to encourage attendance. As an advanced strategy, proactive coaches can consider developing themed grand prize packages to enhance marketing efforts. For example, the Stanford Cardinal could create a “Super Fan Prize Pack” that includes the following benefits: guest coach at a home dual meet, apparel pack signed by former All-Americans, and priority seating at all home events. While this is just a basic foundation, it should illustrate the potential that coaches have to improve their promotional efforts using benefits easily available to them. With a proper delivery strategy, the investment in this area offers a unique opportunity to improve the atmosphere at events.

- Athletics department benefits: While wrestling-related benefits should be at the core of your promotional efforts, it is possible that they will not necessarily be appealing to key segments such as college students. The reality is that few of them have the type of involvement in wrestling that would cause them to react to the promotions presented in the previous section. However, this does not mean that you cannot implement promotions that will increase interest among these segments. In fact, many of you operate in athletics departments that have resources that would be enticing to individuals who are connected to the university. For example, most athletics departments have access to apparel that they would consider allowing you to use in giveaways if it assists in brand-building initiatives. In addition, while many coaches are against affiliating with sports such as basketball, there is potential to get tickets to big-time events (e.g., home basketball and football games) that would be appealing to college students and other affiliated segments. The biggest consideration here is that you use your creativity to identify potential athletics department resources that could be used in your promotional initiatives. Hopefully, you have used the suggestions earlier in the manual to build quality relationships throughout your athletics department. This will make it far easier to obtain products that will allow you to increase the demand of your program and events.

- Sponsorship-related benefits: As you enhance your marketing efforts through the content offered earlier in this manual, there is a solid chance that you will see an increase in attendance at your home competitions. When you are able to achieve this status, it is important to realize that you have an active audience that is valuable to potential sponsors. With a proper delivery strategy, the investment in this area offers a unique opportunity to improve the atmosphere at events. The insider values could start with signed apparel (former NCAA qualifiers, All-Americans, and other standouts) and could extend to added value benefits such as one-on-one clinics and/or tours of the program’s facility. Other potential examples could include free camp tuition, guest coach experiences, one-on-one interactions with staff members, and other themed experiences. Obviously, your higher-end giveaways would be offered on a limited basis to individuals who win a raffle and/or specific competition. All of these promotions could be carried out in coordination with your home dual-meet schedule to encourage attendance. As an advanced strategy, proactive coaches can consider developing themed grand prize packages to enhance marketing efforts. For example, the Stanford Cardinal could create a “Super Fan Prize Pack” that includes the following benefits: guest coach at a home dual meet, apparel pack signed by former All-Americans, and priority seating at all home events. While this is just a basic foundation, it should illustrate the potential that coaches have to improve their promotional efforts using benefits easily available to them. With a proper delivery strategy, the investment in this area offers a unique opportunity to improve the atmosphere at events.

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FUTURE INNOVATION IN PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

At this point in the manual, we do not need to revisit the specific marketing benefits that are associated with a sound investment in social media. However, it is important to note that promotions on sites such as Facebook and Twitter can be a great way to increase interest in your program. From a traditional standpoint, the posting of event promotions described earlier in this section allows you to extend the reach of your messages. When they are highly creative, they even have an opportunity to spread to different individuals who may have an interest in your program. Naturally, this allows you to build your followers without engaging in more advanced applications. Once you are more comfortable with your online presence, you will realize that there are strategies that you can implement to encourage the circulation of your messages. For example, promotions that are effectively tied to the “share” and “Re-Tweet” (RT) features on Facebook and Twitter often allow sport organizations to drastically extend the reach of their promotional message. More importantly, it develops the type of content that will actively engage followers on a regular basis. This is something that will continue to be a major emphasis for sport organizations in the future. Learn to do it and you will provide yourself with a skill set that will differentiate your program from a marketing standpoint.

FINISHING STRONG

One of the primary goals that most programs will have across the United States is increasing attendance at their home dual meets. This makes sense given that past programs have been eliminated due to a lack of spectator interest at events. With this in mind, it is important that coaches take the steps necessary to improve the demand for their product. Given the competition in the entertainment industry (and the demanding nature of consumers), there is little doubt that sport organizations will have to effectively implement innovative promotions in the future if they want to engage key groups of target markets. For men’s wrestling, this starts with the basic identification of potential giveaways that are available to programs to use at their events. However, this should be seen as simply the first step, because effective promotional programs are also packaged in a manner that maximizes interest among groups of consumers. While this could be seen as a challenging process, it is one that should be faced with optimism because of the platform that it offers to differentiate the product being offered by programs.

If you want to build a fan base, it will never hurt you and you will never have less fans if you invest in an entertaining dual meet environment

~ Rob Koll
Step #1: Using the table below, create a list of the potential benefits that could be available to your program to offer as promotions during your dual meet season. As you create this list, reach out to individuals surrounding your program to see if you can get your hands on “added value” items that would be appealing to your key target markets. As you obtain these items, add them to the list and begin to think of potential themes that would create interest for targeted dual meets within your schedule.

### Planning for Promotions

**[Part I: List of Potential “Highlight” Benefits]**

#### Wrestling Related Benefits:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

#### Athletic Department Benefits:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

#### Potential Sponsor Benefits (if applicable):

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

---

**Supplementary Marketing Material**

*Producing Results with Promotions*
Step #2: Based on the items you listed in #1 above, create a list of the items that would be of interest to your key target markets. For most programs, the realization of success in marketing will depend on the ability to attract tradition wrestling fans (e.g., coaches, wrestlers, and normal fans) and college-aged students. If this is not the case (or if you want to segment sharper within a group), then feel free to swap these out for your choice of groups you would like to attract with promotions. Once you have these groups identified, list any item that could be used to market your events effectively. Do not be concerned at this point if you list your promotional items in more than one segment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seasonal Promotion Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Part II: Connecting Promotions to Key Segments]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Traditional Wrestling Fans:**
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

**College Students:**
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

[Insert Other Primary Segment Here]:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
Step #3: Using both of the previous two steps, work with your team to create some promotional nights that will serve as highlight marketing items within your dual meet schedule. To do this effectively, you first need to identify the theme (e.g., Social Media Night) that you would like to use for specific target markets (e.g., college-aged students) at a select dual meet (see Table below). In addition, you need to strategically package the benefits and methods of publicizing in a manner that will activate your promotions. Work to create a strategic promotional outline for three different events within your schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seasonal Promotion Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Part III: Developing Promotional Nights]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dual Meet #1:**
1. **Target Market(s):**
2. **Theme:**
3. **Benefits:**
4. **Methods of Publicizing:**
5. **Activation Strategy:**

**Dual Meet #2:**
1. **Target Market(s):**
2. **Theme:**
3. **Benefits:**
4. **Methods of Publicizing:**
5. **Activation Strategy:**

**Dual Meet #3:**
1. **Target Market(s):**
2. **Theme:**
3. **Benefits:**
4. **Methods of Publicizing:**
5. **Activation Strategy:**
Step #4: Based on the events you have created above, consider potential partnerships that will allow you to connect to a larger cause for one select highlight dual meet. If appropriate, combine this with one of the events that you have developed above to create a larger synergy in your efforts. In addition, attempt to identify some of the potential steps that you need to take to carry out your promotional schedule.

“The aim of marketing if to know and understand the customer so well the product fits them and sells itself” (Peter Drucker)

Note. The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
SECTION NO. 7:
Evaluating Marketing Efforts
SECTION NO. 7:
Evaluating Marketing Efforts

IT’S A CONSTANTLY EVOLVING PROCESS

If you want to have an elite program that is highly valued within your athletics department, your marketing efforts will probably never end. In fact, if you have the right marketing mindset, you will naturally always look for opportunities to improve on your efforts. As a coach, this is something that is probably easy for you to understand. Once a season ends, your mind turns to the next one and there is a pursuit to find ways to improve on your techniques and training routine. It should be no different when you are attempting to build your program the right way from a marketing standpoint.

As the CEO of your program, it is your job to surround yourself with a team of individuals that will be looking for ways to innovate in your efforts. When you do this on a regular basis, you put yourself in a position to have a program that will create real value for your key target markets. However, this takes a process of evaluation as you work to build on your marketing initiatives. This section will focus on identifying some basic strategies that you should consider when evaluating the effectiveness of your marketing plan. First, we will discuss two different methods that will play a role in the assessment of your efforts: (1) The “On the Go” Evaluation Method and (2) The “Post-Match” Evaluation Method.

1. THE “ON THE GO” EVALUATION METHOD:
As you invest in marketing, you will learn that creativity and innovation often comes with experience. In essence, as you invest in your efforts, an intuitive feel will come that will make marketing far more efficient for both you and your program. Naturally, it is this experience that will allow you to evaluate your efforts “on the go,” because you will know what decisions to make based on the situation you are facing. However, it is important to note that you must place a priority on growing your marketing skill sets so you can get to the point where you have a natural feel for effective strategies. In the meantime, you can settle for an “awareness mindset,” where you consistently consider how your decisions will be received from the individuals you are looking to attract. For those of you who have read the entire manual, you will recognize that this is simply an extension of the marketing mindset, because you are simply taking the time to think about your key segments before making a decision. Some specific examples of this will be included later in this section.

2. THE “POST-MATCH” EVALUATION METHOD:
One of the most common evaluation methods in marketing includes seeking out feedback to assess your efforts. While it is often more time-consuming (and sometimes involves cost), it is the method that allows you to get the most accurate feedback when attempting to maximize the efficiency of your marketing decisions. It should also be noted that this process also helps to improve the quality of the previous “On the Go” evaluation method. In this particular “Post-Match” method, the program should be concerned with getting actual feedback from target markets in some capacity. From a cost- and time-saving perspective, this could be as simple as approaching college students attending your event to see what they thought about the product being offered. In addition, you could ask them to give you suggestions on how you could make your event more appealing to larger groups of college students. For programs looking to take their efforts to another level, this can include a more organized, strategic approach to evaluating aspects of the marketing plan. For example, surveys can be created to determine whether target markets are satisfied with the product you are offering online (using social network sites) and/or at actual dual-meet events. The point here is that you are attempting to collect actual data that will help you to make more sound decisions in your marketing. The good news is that this process can be extremely cost- and time-efficient if you have capitalized on the suggestions mentioned in Section No. 3 (Connecting for the Cause) of this manual. With these methods in mind, it is time to move on to specific evaluation strategies you should consider in coordination with your marketing plan.
EVALUATING KEY AREAS OF MARKETING MANUAL

There is no question that the evaluation process has become an extremely important element of a high-level marketing plan. This is a primary reason that professional sport organizations invest so heavily in databases that allow them to consistently evaluate their efforts. While college wrestling programs are certainly not professional organizations, this does not mean that coaches cannot learn from their decisions when investing in marketing initiatives. In fact, all programs should embrace some forms of evaluation when looking to market their programs effectively with key target markets. For coaches interested in this process, here are some suggestions that you should consider moving forward from each of the sections we have covered in the manual.

1. EMBRACING A “MARKETING MINDSET”:
In many ways, this is a slightly nontraditional approach considering that this is not actually a tangible product that you are turning out. However, there are some potential applications that you can consider as you carry out the “MARKET” principle and other concepts covered in this section. In particular, be sure that you are aware of your effectiveness in considering other people’s needs before your own. This is a core element of marketing and it will ultimately determine how successful you are as a marketer.

Specific “On the Go” Application: As you interact with people, pay attention to how they respond to you on a regular basis. To get some perspective, observe someone who is highly successful with people (and who you respect) and try to assess how you compare to this individual when it comes to interacting with others. A non-biased awareness of your ability to connect with others can be a valuable skill when developing yourself as an extension of your program’s brand. Equally important, it will determine whether you are ready to realize success as the marketing person for your program.

Specific “Post-Match” Application: One of the most difficult processes of evaluation is assessing your own ability to add value to your program. If this is something that is important to you, seek feedback from others who can tell you if you have the skills necessary to embrace a marketing mindset. This can be in the form of a mentor or it can be simply seeking out individuals who can give you an accurate representation of your skills with people. However, this will not work if you do not approach the assessment with an open mind and a desire to improve.

2. DEVELOPING “PROMOTABLE” PROGRAM VISION:
There is no question that this step is critical in your pursuit to build a strong brand for your program. In many ways, it gets everyone on the same page so that all key stakeholders are working toward a common pursuit. With this being the case, it is important that you strive to get feedback that will allow you to maximize your efficiency in creating a “promotable” program vision. As you think about what you want your brand to be, it is important that you seek to get input from individuals close to your program and also from your primary target markets. This will allow you to build a foundation that will enhance your efficiency in other marketing areas discussed in this manual.

Specific “On the Go” Application: As a coach, you will be in a position where you will be largely responsible for dictating the vision of your program. This is something that you should take seriously because it will impact the future sustainability and growth of your program. With this in mind, it is critical that you discuss the key areas of your vision (e.g., mantra, mission statement and values) with staff members and your student-athletes. When they have a chance to provide input to the process, they will be far more likely to embrace the vision that you are attempting to culturalize. This is a primary reason why some of the top coaches in the country in any sport attempt to include these individuals in their visionary process. By seeking specific feedback in this area, you can maximize the chances of “buy-in” among key stakeholders.

Specific “Post-Match” Application: To improve the evaluation process, it is important that you collect information from your key stakeholders. One simple way of doing this would simply be seeking feedback on your mantra (and related graphics) on Facebook and Twitter. This can accomplish two specific marketing-related objectives. First, it provides you with an opportunity to determine whether your key areas of vision will be something that are appealing to your key segments. Second, by including them in the feedback process, it is more likely that they will support the vision with positive word-of-mouth advertising moving forward. On a more advanced level, you could create a survey to make sure you have more formalized data to make sound decisions in this process. The important thing is that you have some feedback that will allow you to improve your chances of succeeding in this area.
3. CONNECTING FOR THE CAUSE:
In some ways, the suggestions in No. 1 above would apply to this specific area. However, this also specifically involves your ability to connect with key individuals on campus and in the surrounding area who can help to enhance the efficiency of your marketing efforts. With this being the case, it is important that you are constantly on the lookout for ways to improve this process. If you would like to develop an internship program that can take your business-related efforts to a new level, then you need to invest in constant assessment that will help develop “cutting-edge” opportunities. This is truly something that has the potential to differentiate your program within your athletics department.

Specific “On the Go” Application: One of the most basic steps that you can take is seeking feedback from qualified individuals when developing your internship template. As you develop the template for the specific position you are seeking, turn to professionals in the field who can give you productive feedback before reaching out to potential professors on campus. Once you have done this, do not be afraid to ask the potential professors what you can do to make the internship more appealing to top students in their program. As you seek out this feedback, you will find that you have the information necessary to improve the opportunity you are offering to young professionals. In return, you will attract the type of individuals who have the skill sets necessary to grow your program in an innovative manner.

Specific “Post-Match” Application: As part of the internship process, it is important that you actively seek feedback from the individuals working with your program. Once you have an intern in place, schedule regular meetings to discuss all aspects of the experience. In your meetings, ask the individual exactly what is going well and exactly what can be improved to make the opportunity even better. This should be a formalized process where you actually keep notes so that you can track the internship experience in the future. In addition, it would be smart to provide a survey at the end of the experience to get data on how to improve the process. For programs looking to really enhance their efforts, they can seek specific feedback from the contact professor on campus. By doing these forms of assessment, you increase the chances of attracting high-quality individuals moving forward.

4. PRODUCING A POSITIVE PRODUCT:
In terms of industry standards, this may be one of the more common areas for assessment in marketing. The reality is that you will have a hard time creating a product that is highly appealing to your primary target markets if you do not consider their wants and needs. More importantly, as you invest in this specific area, it is critical to get feedback on your product so that you are able to improve your efforts moving forward. As you secure this feedback, you will obtain the necessary information to weed out initiatives that are not effective from an efficiency standpoint. You will also receive comments about areas that are highly effective with consumers. The end result will be acquiring data that will help you to create an environment that is highly appealing to your key segments.

Specific “On the Go” Application: As an owner of professional baseball teams, Bill Veeck used to constantly observe the game environment to see consumers’ responses to the product that he was offering. In addition, he took things a step further and would sit in the stands to actively engage in conversations with fans to determine potential areas that he could improve at the ballpark. While college wrestling is slightly different, this does not deter from the need to actively seek out feedback about your environment. As a coach, it should be your goal to create a product that people are excited about supporting from a viewership and word-of-mouth standpoint. To do this, you must try to identify ways to improve the atmosphere surrounding your home dual meets. What better way to do this than by talking to key target markets on how to improve the product.

Specific “Post-Match” Application: If you are looking for a more advanced way to improve your product, then look to create a sound survey that will assess consumers’ perceptions of the product that you are offering at your events. It is understandable that some coaches will feel like this is something that is out of their strength zone. If this is the case, then attempt to connect with an individual on campus who has the skill sets necessary to help develop the survey. However, it is possible that your intern will have the ability to help with this assessment as well. On a smaller scale, you can also put together some focus groups (10-15 consumers) to get useful feedback on how to enhance your product.

5. TOUCHING BASE WITH TECHNOLOGY:
Given that social media will continue to play a major role in marketing efforts in the future, you should always strive to improve your presence so that you differentiate your program. The good news is that popular sites such as Facebook and Twitter now have built-in features that allow you to track the effectiveness of the content that you are offering. If you are a coach who would like to have an elite program in marketing, it is important that you invest in tracking these unique features.

Specific “On the Go” Application: The most basic way to assess your effectiveness is by paying attention to the responses that you get to your posts. By simply tracking your likes and comments, you can learn a lot about what content is most popular among your followers. Another simple strategy would be simply asking followers what type of content they would like to see on a regular basis.

Specific “Post-Match” Application: With the wide range of potential technologies available in marketing, it is very difficult to keep up with the mediums you should be using to effectively engage your consumers. Once you have decided on these mediums, it can also be challenging deciding on a strategy to keep followers interested in your product. To help with this process, you can seek feedback from your key individuals if you have successfully built a database of program followers. Rather than complicate this process, you can simply ask your database which mediums they engage in and the type of content they would like to receive about the program. Similar to the previous sections, this can include a survey if you would like to get more formalized data to guide decisions on technology.
6. IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE PROMOTIONS:
In many ways, this is an extension of “producing a positive product” that was presented in No. 4 above. In fact, it is likely that these two steps will be implemented simultaneously to create an exciting environment that will serve as a foundation for “creating an aura” surrounding your program. Given the importance of this specific area, you would be wise to seek feedback from consumers that will allow you to improve your efforts moving forward. The good news is that the assessment methods will be highly similar to the ones previously presented.

Specific “On the Go” Application: Similar to No. 4 above, pay close attention to your environment and attempt to identify promotions that will increase the excitement at your events. For a slightly more advanced approach, seek out feedback from your consumers so that you can actively improve the quality of the product that you are offering on a regular basis.

Specific “Post-Match” Application: Use focus groups and a survey to collect more specific data on the promotions being offered to your key target markets (see No. 4 on previous page). Use the information to make sure you are offering promotions that will differentiate your product in a way that increases demand among consumers.

FINISHING STRONG
In many ways, there are a lot of similarities between marketing and wrestling. For one, to be successful in both areas, you must have a vision that allows you to stay focused on something larger on a daily basis. In addition, you need to have a unique passion and self-discipline to stay on task each day as you strive to perform at the highest level. And finally, even if you get these things right, there is a good chance that you will need to reassess your efforts if you do not succeed in achieving your goals. With these qualities being learned through the sport, there is a strong likelihood that coaches have many of the foundational elements necessary to be successful in marketing. The bottom line is that it has to matter to you if you are going to take your program to a new level. When it becomes a passion to grow your program, the desire to assess and improve on your marketing efforts will come naturally. The coaches that constantly look for ways to improve will differentiate in a manner that truly makes their program unique in their athletics department and in the sport. As you strive to realize this pursuit, it will be important that you set goals and priorities to meet on a regular basis. The Marketing Priority Calendar template on the next page is designed to assist in this process.

There is no passion to be found in playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.  
- Nelson Mandela
Supplementary Marketing Material
(Marketing Priority Calendar)

Program: ____________________________ Date: _______________________

Objective: Pareto Principle – Allocate 80% of time, energy, & resources to top 20% of priorities.

List of Priorities (High Importance; High Urgency) Deadline(s) Completed
1. ____________________________ ____________________________
2. ____________________________ ____________________________
3. ____________________________ ____________________________
4. ____________________________ ____________________________
5. ____________________________ ____________________________
6. ____________________________ ____________________________
7. ____________________________ ____________________________
8. ____________________________ ____________________________
9. ____________________________ ____________________________
10. ____________________________ ____________________________

Priorities (High Importance; Low Urgency) Priorities (Moderate Importance; Low Urgency)
1. ____________________________ ____________________________
2. ____________________________ ____________________________
3. ____________________________ ____________________________
4. ____________________________ ____________________________
5. ____________________________ ____________________________

Annual Marketing Goals Progress
1. [Insert specific goals from previous Supplementary Marketing Material activities here] ☐
2. ☐
3. ☐
4. ☐
5. ☐

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

“Success is the Masterful Application of the Fundamentals on a Daily Basis”

Note. The Word version of this document will be made available on NWCA website with examples of applied marketing strategies.
SECTION NO. 8:
Concluding Thoughts - Making a Move
**SECTION NO. 8:**
Concluding Thoughts - Making a Move

**THE TIME FOR CHANGE IS NOW**

Many of you have been actively engaged in the conversations about the challenges facing college wrestling. And while these talks are certainly warranted and sometimes productive, they alone will not help the sustainability and growth of our sport. The reality is that you have to get things done if you are going to make a real difference. Regardless of your situation, the time for change is now. For the sport to succeed in the long run, all coaches at all levels must be proactive in taking control of the things that will enhance the demand for their product. From a sustainability standpoint, this means striving to build the type of program that will be highly valuable to your administrators and members of the athletics department. From a growth standpoint, this involves being the CEO of your program and being highly passionate about building the support surrounding your program. When all coaches completely embrace this type of mindset, college wrestling will take the first step towards reaching its full potential.

**WHAT’S AT STAKE?**

If college coaches make the decision to maintain the current course of action, there is a very good chance that the long-term sustainability of the sport is at risk. The economic model in college athletics is unlikely to change and NCAA Olympic programs will continue to be a primary target for program elimination if coaches do not position their program strategically for administrators. The good news is that coaches can do something about this immediately. By investing in the right plan of action, they can take the first step towards minimizing the chance that their program will be eliminated. It is this collective decision that will ultimately drive the growth of the sport in the future. When coaches across the country truly invest in growing their programs the right way from a marketing standpoint, the sport will experience a transformation that will increase the demand for college wrestling on a broader scale.

**IT’S A MARKETING THING**

There is one simple reason why marketing is so important. Simply put, it is truly unique because it incorporates many of the key areas that programs must address to maximize the sustainability and growth of the sport. The good news is that you put yourself in a situation to succeed when you learn to embrace the most important concepts present in marketing. By following the seven sections in this manual, you are taking the first step toward ensuring that you grow your program the right way in the future. So as you finish this manual, understand that marketing will play a major role in whether you succeed in best positioning your program moving forward.

**FINISHING STRONG**

As we finish this manual, it is my hope that you have learned skills and strategies that will allow you to grow your program moving forward. If this is something that rings true for you, there is a very good chance that you are now motivated to be a person that improves the overall strength of your program. When you invest in this process, remind yourself that you are doing something beyond simply improving the positioning of the product you are offering. While this is an important element, it is important to remind yourself that you are also doing your part to grow the sport as a whole. With that being said, the time for you to make a difference is now. Take the competitive mindset that you learned from the sport and set out to be the best program in your entire athletics department in all areas. It is time to set a standard of excellence that truly differentiates the sport of wrestling.
DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Key Marketing Manual Terms

1. BRANDING:
The process of positioning your product in a unique manner so that key stakeholders have a positive association when they interact with your program. Specifically, this process involves making daily marketing decisions that will help to control the things that individuals will think when they are presented with elements of your program. The goal with branding is to make the right decisions each day so that people will think of excellence, innovation, and entertainment when they see or hear about your program. Below are other branding-related terms that you will encounter in this manual.

1a. Business of Branding: The acknowledgement that you are in a field that requires you to effectively build your brand to be successful. With this mindset, you put yourself in a position to truly make your program unique through your marketing efforts.

1b. Brand Building: The pursuit of getting involved in marketing initiatives that will enhance the brand of your program in both the short and long-term.

1c. Intentional Branding: The process of actively making decisions each day that will build your brand in a manner that lines up with the vision that you have for your program. By taking control of this process, you will be able to maximize your success in all areas of marketing.

1d. Visionary Brand: The long-term legacy that you would like to leave as a coach for your program and the sport. In short, this involves exactly what you hope people to think about down the road when they associate with you and the program.

2. CEO:
The chief executive officer of your program. For the purposes of this manual, this involves making a wide range of business-related decisions that will allow your program to grow in the future.

3. CORE PRODUCT:
The elements that make up the core part (coaches, wrestlers, and facility) of the sport product. For the purpose of the manual, these are the central areas that you experience in wrestling when there are not other “added value” elements added to the event atmosphere.

4. CROSS PROMOTE:
The process of partnering with another entity so that you are able to promote your product to a targeted group of consumers.

5. DESIGNATED MARKET AREA:
The surrounding area where your program has the highest potential to draw in consumers.

6. DIFFERENTIATION/DIFFERENTIATE:
The process of making decisions that will distinguish your program from others within your athletic department and designated market area (DMA). In more simple terms, this means engaging in innovative marketing so that you can give your program a “leg up” from a competitive standpoint.

7. KEY PROGRAM AREAS:
The different elements of your program that have the potential to significantly add value to your stakeholders. These are the areas that extend beyond the traditional athletic excellence (winning) expectation that is normally the primary focus by programs. Through the emphasis of these other areas, programs can increase the chances of sustainability and growth within their athletic department.

8. INTENTIONAL MARKETING:
Similar to intentional branding, this term can be characterized by the proactive approach that you take in the immediate future to market your program effectively.

9. INTERNSHIP:
An organized work experience created by your program to help attract high quality students (young professionals) to enhance your marketing efforts.

10. LIFELONG CONSUMERS:
The individuals who become long-term supporters of your program because of the effective marketing strategies that your program implements.

11. MARKETING INITIATIVES:
The different activities that your program chooses to invest in when developing and implementing your marketing plan. These can include any of the areas presented in this manual.

12. MARKETING MINDSET:
This term is highlighted by two primary criteria. First, it involves the ability to truly see marketing as a valuable endeavor that has the potential to benefit your program. Second, it is buying in to a mindset that places value in people so that you are able to build the support surrounding your program.

13. PROMOTABLE PROGRAM VISION:
The process of developing a vision, mantra, mission, and values that will effectively build the brand of your program with key stakeholders. With the right overall vision in place, the program has the right structure to effectively market program with the different sections presented in this manual.

14. PRODUCT EXTENSIONS:
The different “added value” marketing elements that enhance the entertainment value offered to consumers at your events.
15. PROMOTE:
The process of making marketing decisions that will build the brand of your program the right way. Depending on your objective, this involves engaging in any activity that will help deliver your message effectively to key target markets. These activities are often referred to as promotions.

16. RETURN ON INVESTMENT:
The specific benefits that your program realizes for your investment in marketing-related initiatives.

17. SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:
The innovative use of new media to interact with potential fans of your program on a regular basis. These outlets are discussed more in-depth in Section No. 5 of the manual. However, below are manual terms that relate to marketing via social media.

17a. Likes: The feedback mechanism designed on Facebook where your followers are able to “like” the content that you post.

17b. Shares: The process of individuals sharing your message to their friends on Facebook.

17c. Re-Tweets: The re-posting of your tweet from followers and other members of Twitter.

18. SKILL SETS:
The unique attributes that a person has that would be useful for growing your program. For the purpose of this manual, this term is dedicated to finding individuals who have specific marketing skills that you can utilize to enhance your efforts.

19. STAKEHOLDERS:
The key individuals surrounding your program that have the potential to help you strengthen your growth initiatives. Naturally this often includes individuals who have a stake (or interest) in your program.

20. SUSTAINABILITY:
The pursuit of engaging in activities that will strengthen the likelihood of your program receiving additional support from top administrators in your athletic department.

21. SYNERGY:
The process of engaging in relationships that will multiply the effectiveness of your marketing decisions.

22. TARGET MARKETS (A.K.A. SEGMENTS/MARKET SEGMENTS):
The groups of individuals who have the greatest potential to be interested in your program. In addition, these should be people who can also help your program grow in some manner.

23. VALUE SYSTEM:
The vision and values that your program puts in place to ensure that coaches, student-athletes, and staff members are making the right decisions on a daily basis.

24. VIDEO DEVELOPMENT:
The process of developing (taping, editing, and creating) videos with the potential to build the brand of your program. These are often videos that will be created to circulate on your social network sites.