MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE 2012 PARALYMPIC AND OLYMPICS IN LONDON

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Abstract: From this perspective, the author developed this report for the London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG). The report’s main aim rested on helping raise LOCOG’s international profile and boosting its future targeted share of the market. The 2012 Paralympic and Olympics in London are the basis of the study. It covers the London Olympic and Paralympic Organizing Committee (LOCOG) in ensuring a successful event. The LOCOG has used several marketing strategies to achieve its final objectives. In the context of the Olympics 2012, this study examines the efficacy of the chosen marketing tactics. The marketing tactics chosen were market penetration Strategy it was successful and provided the business with added benefits based on the study results (LOCOG). For example, not just in the UK but worldwide, they have gained a greater awareness of the games. The use of contemporary technologies will help the company to offer the games in grand style. It will also guarantee that commercialization is done and that communications are well articulated and cost-effective. System hacking, bogus websites and tickets, and the ICT system’s installation expenses were the challenges presented by the technology. LOCOG had to work with the police to guarantee fraudulent transactions were minimized. The websites should likewise be filtered, and the public globally informed of this. Following this, the author identified 4 technology-oriented opportunities that the marketing team can also maximize. This was followed by a discussion of recommendations that LOCOG’s marketing can implement to achieve success.

Keywords: Business, Sports, Olympics, Organizational Development, Paralympic

1. INTRODUCTION
A lot of people were expected to attend the London Olympics and Paralympics 2012. The games were regarded as a means to promote tourism and culture in the UK. One of the chosen organizations to make sure the games was successful is the London Organizing Committee of the Olympics and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). The Olympics Games are global arenas that attract forth the best world athletes and large spectator audiences. This is important since it is a recipe for cooperation and unity of different groups of people across the globe. For this reason, Olympics have won the powerful marketing function contrary to the ancient past when the event was considered a political platform where different ideologies were propagated.

The trend in ideology ceased in the 20th century as the sporting event took an economic turn (McLoughlin & David 2010). For that matter, marketing and advertising become practices that were prioritized to enable generate considerable profit from this mega sporting event.

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Although LOCOG comes from the private sector, it receives public funding for the preparation and organization of the games. The group is responsible for marketing and awareness-creation of the games as part of its strategic strategy. The games offered opportunities to promote the UK tourist sector and its diverse culture. The study examines the organization's existing marketing strategies and the added value of the company. It also explores the difficulties and possibilities that technological advances offer. Finally, it recommends the possibilities accessible as part of the competitive advantage.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

Paralympics Initiatives
Specific projects for the marketing of Paralympics games were developed with the purpose of educating and raising people's awareness. The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics raisers’ function was conducted at the International Paralympic Day on September 08, 2011. (LOCOG 2011, p.17). The Paralympics and "the next day's opening of ticket applications for Paralympics” (LOCOG 2011, p.17). The launch was intended to raise awareness of the 2012 games internationally. A picture of the individuals with impairments was formed and sales went up significantly. Channel 4, a UK favorite station was chosen to be the venue for the Paralympics, (LOCOG 2011, P.17). The additional benefit was that the worldwide awareness of Paralympic sports globally enhances the COLOG profile. The broadcaster will also broadcast the Paralympic sports on an official channel.

Sponsorship
Sponsorship has been used in the marketing mix in the 21st century. The COLOG was able to develop and advertise the awareness of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games via the selection of various sponsors. For example, Adidas, a world-renowned company, was an official sponsor of the 2012 Paralympics. Although Adidas was recognized to the greatest extent, the desired objectives were met via cooperation with COLOG. Sainsbury, which served as a stage for the Paralympics 2012, is another sponsor selected in 2010 (LOCOG 2011, p.17). After then, the necessary number of fans might be reached, and tickets could be sold to them. For instance, the population of Sainsbury supermarkets in Great Britain is estimated at 33 per cent. Compared to the awareness that is generated, it is a large population. The objective of COLOG is to provide variety, culture and festival sports that reduce the bad behavior of disabled people.

3. MARKETING MIX STRATEGY

Pricing Strategy
LOCOG has developed a pricing plan to make tickets accessible to everyone. The company disclosed a price structure in 2010 via marketing segmentation techniques. For the various 26 Olympic Games, tickets were sold for £20. In July 2012 a ticket for a child less than 11 years cost only £11 based on the pricing plan. Tickets were sold for £16 for anyone older than 60 years (LOCOG 2011, p.15). The organization planned to sell about 2 million for less than £10 among for the Paralympics. The company was able to reach more clients via sales with the cheap price approach. Boone and Kurtz (2012, p.644)'s aims to increase market share since it has performed successfully in other major companies such as Wal-Mart shops.

Promotion Strategy
COLOG has established websites from which customers could register and learn about the progress of preparing for the Olympic Games. The business plan was to promote the UK and worldwide games through the website. Social media networks like Facebook and twitter (Zarrella 2009, p3-4) were used to provide customers with a chance to check up on developments at the 2012 Olympic Games every day. LOCOG used YouTube for showing movies
and footage related to the Olympic Games, except for Facebook and twitter. The additional benefit was that the company could promote itself, Great Britain and worldwide the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The image of the brand and the organization would enhance the UK’s prominence. The idea of web use and marketing was extensively embraced in view of its capacity to reach a broad audience simultaneously. This makes it dependable and economical.

Place Strategy
COLOG used the Olympic torch to visit several UK cities and towns. Through the trip, awareness among the many people in the United Kingdom areas was created. The Olympic tour served as a promotion in modern marketing techniques utilized for road performances. LOCOG established partnerships with different people from different areas of the UK, and these connections enhanced the organization promotion of the games. The Paralympics and Olympic mascots were introduced in 2010 by Wenlock and Mandeville. The pair visited over 200 locations in Britain as part of awareness-creation for the games (LOCOG 2011, p.16)

Product Strategy
Sponsorship of goods through means of communication channels according to McDonald (2007, p.588) was adopted by COLOG. The sponsor and the sponsor profit from each other. The business who has granted its rights (COLOG) would also build up its reputation and expand its brand with the promotion of the image of the sponsor. It also sensitizes the various advertising mediums. In ancient Greece, Olympic sponsorship began and is now part of the marketing mix (Kenyon & Palmer 2008, p.31). It serves as a strategic action that attracts and realizes public attention (Tourism 2012). The sponsoring parties appreciate the connection mutually. The COLOG would, for instance, be able to promote their goods during the 2012 Olympics. The sponsor aims to "draw the image and the aura of the Olympics as leaders on the market" during the event (Kenyon & Palmer 2008, p.31).

BRANDING STRATEGY
The 2012 Olympic and Paralympics LOCOG was relaunched with a new logo (BBC Sports 2007). The new logo of the business was intended to serve as an ambition to the world’s population. The purpose of the logo was to inspire young people across the world. It was to stimulate interest of many individuals who think that the Olympics encourage people to participate in sports, community engagements, educational and cultural activities connected with 2012 sports, according to the head of the organizing committee (BBC Sports 2007). According to LOCOG, the new brand would operate as a marketing campaign which would generate £2 billion for the organization (BBC Sports 2007). The design and colors are so interwoven so as to appeal to the young generation. The brand's variety, as a marketing strategy attracted a lot of people into the Olympics in 2012 because the various branding components of the marketing created an image for the target audience or customers. A powerful and favorable brand gives an exterior image to a desired business (Shahri 2011, p.51). The brand was all about principles, methods, practices and individuals. The unique branding approach gave the business more value because the desired message was sent directly to the target audience (Shahri 2011, p.53).

4. EXPERIMENTAL STRATEGY
This strategy allowed the company to charge sponsors who wanted to join the Olympic Games 2012 for a fee (Laurie 2011). The transfer of a third party's marketing rights generated income for the organization. The COLOG was able to access the outside world through the transfer of rights and sponsorship. This marketing strategy provided value to the business in the sense that the demand for tickets was significantly increased. The LOCOG's early study has shown that demand for tickets at cheap prices was larger than supply (LOCOG 2011, p.15) and the company's goal of generating enormous profits
was achieved as planned. According to the LOCOG, the initiative contributed to the organization's income and guaranteed that the attendance at stadium was always full (LOCOG 2011, p.15).

The COLOG was able to promote the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics due to the usage of globally renowned businesses like Adidas, British Airways, BP, BMW and Lloyds TSB. As part of the sponsorship agreement, the COLOG realized over £690 million (LOCOG 2011, p.19). A list of sponsors has been maintained to enhance the game's familiarity and the market share for the sponsors. Olympic marketing allows sponsorship companies to derive reasonable profits (Kenyon & Palmer 2008, p.33). The COLOG was able to promote the event worldwide due to strong collaboration with the International Olympic Committee.

5. TECHNOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The use of technology in event management offers the company adopting it both opportunities and difficulties. The use of modern technologies by COLOG during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic events provided some expected possibilities and difficulties as outlined below.

OPPORTUNITIES

In the 2012 Olympic Games technology played an important part (London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012, p.1; McLellan 2011). The use of modern technology gave COLOG a useful platform for marketing the games. For instance, the COLOG was able to reach the broadest audience via social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and twitter (Powell, Groves & Dimos 2011, p. 8). This was easily accessed by logging on and following the Olympics 2012 website (Powell, Groves and Dimos (2011, p.8). It is well noting that the social media has been seen as an important contemporary method to marketing. By use of You Tube, LOCOG could reach millions of individuals on their mobile phones and in their homes who had an internet connection.

In 2007, more than 20 000 people followed mascots through twitter, and Facebook when Wenlock and Mandeville were appointed a torch bearer at the mascot Olympics (LOCOG 2011, p.16). The participants have a forum to share thoughts and views on the theme of the 2012 Olympics. In addition to COLO reaching a large customer base worldwide, it promoted the Olympics. More than 10, 000 variations have been documented since the introduction of a mascot customizer in 2011 (LOCOG 2011, p.16). For COLOG, this indicated how familiarity with the games was achieved. You Tube enabled users to see several movies produced as a marketing campaign for the event. For COLOG, technology was a major contributor to the achievement of its marketing plan.

By using mobile phones, various stakeholders, the general public and customers were "connected, enabled, informed and engaged" (London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games 2012). LOCOG used technology to provide useful information to various stakeholders to achieve a competitive edge. Technology was essential to the COLOG because it made the process of decision making more efficient and efficient (London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012). Since the LOCOG was responsible for providing people, PA systems, scoreboards and video boards with education and awareness, modern technology allowed these services to be provided with dispatch and efficiency (London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012, p.1-2).

The group utilized local interconnections and networks to make sure the public had real-time access to events. In order to ensure success of the 2012 Olympic Games, modern technology was essential to the organization. The internet offered LOC Olympic Tickets for the 2012 Olympics with an online gateway or platform. The online shopping ensured that customers from various parts of the globe were able to buy tickets by press of a button. Online marketing and ticket sales were affordable and efficient. The cost involved printing tickets and
distribution methods were avoided. Through this technical initiative, LOCOG was able to reduce cost. On-line accessories for the 2012 Olympic Games were also available to customers. The newest technology was also used to check any fraudulent ticket sales and guarantee stadium safety (Bloxham 2011).

6. CHALLENGES
Modern technology can also pose challenges in the organization of global events. Illegal internet sites and hacking had previously been observed (Parliamentary Science and Technology Office) (2009, p.1-2). According to a BBC investigation, a Norwegian firm sold 2012 Olympic tickets at five times higher price (Carter 2009). Such fraudulent activity adversely affected the public image of LOCOG. The LOCOG and the police were challenged to prevent people from using fake websites (Jeavans 2011). Indeed, the police reports stated vividly that websites posed a great danger, since big cartels control them. Accordingly, the LOCOG spent a lot of money in filtering websites who were offering fake tickets to customers (Jeavans 2011).

Finally, COLOG had financial difficulties. The budget of £500 m was projected for the games, according to the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology (2009, p.1). However, the LOCOG budget increased due in part to the cost on the various technologies deployed. Also, the general financial crisis in the UK and Europe at the time did not help matters. It should also be noted that the organization was heavily dependent on sponsorships for successful games.

7. CONCLUSION
On the basis of the results, LOCOG clearly did everything it could to guarantee the success of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. The organizers used the various marketing techniques to promote the games. The 2012 Olympic Games drew not only supporters but also visitors and that led to a boost in the economy of the UK. It also created jobs for many, and more would profit from the LOCOG activities. The company has utilized marketing techniques such as sponsorship, branding, internet marketing, Paralympics and showcase promotion, as well as the adoption of the Olympics mantle to reach various individuals in the UK (Boone & Kurtz 2012). The internet certainly played a crucial role in marketing.

On the other hand, the technical advantage of COLOG is competitive. The organization was able to reach many individuals worldwide via the usage of social media networks such as twitter and Facebook. The internet platform allowed the company to reduce online sales expenses. The up-to-date websites of the organization provided adequate information on the preparation and developments of the 2012 Olympics. Effective choices were made via efficient information exchange.

The UK Government should tighten the laws and regulations to protect the activities of COLOG. The COLOG must work with the police to monitor the flawed websites imposed by COLOG agents in the sale of tickets. COLOG could monitor and disconnect websites selling false tickets at excessive rates by the use of filter technologies. This would enhance customer confidence and loyalty in the United Kingdom and elsewhere across the world. In order to make the game successful in September 2012, a high security awareness and protection for customers was essential. Finally, its customers should be sensitized about the existence of online scammers and conmen to minimize customer vulnerability to fraudsters.

REFERENCES


