

Fourth, sport is social in that most consumers prefer to attend or participate with other consumers. Sport consumers like the idea of being part of a large crowd, and event participants tend to prefer the events with more players or more teams. As Wakefield (2007) suggests, a line at the grocery store is a bad thing, but a line at a ballgame is a good thing.

DEVELOPING A MARKETING PLAN

The marketing plan is the written document detailing the marketing activities that need to happen for an event to reach its objectives. In other words, the marketing plan is your game plan (Stotlar 2005). Developing a marketing plan is a step-by-step process where organizations first consider their objectives, analyze relevant data, and then develop strategies accordingly. A typical marketing plan contains the following sections.

Data and Analysis

The data and analysis section encompasses the information necessary to make wise marketing decisions. This section should include detailed analyses of the following:

- **Event description:** What is the purpose of the event, and who are our stakeholders? What is it that makes the event or location unique, attractive, and exciting to potential participants or spectators?
- **Customers and potential customers:** Who are our customers, and what are their needs?
- **Competition:** Who are our competitors? What gives us a competitive advantage?
- **Environment:** External influences such as social trends, technological advances, legal restrictions, demographic trends, and economic issues should be analyzed so that you understand factors that may affect your marketing strategies (Shank 2008; Stotlar 2005).
- **SWOT analysis:** This is related to the previous analysis, with an additional emphasis on marketing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Marketing Goals and Objectives

Using data from the analyses, event marketers should set performance goals consistent with the organization's overall goals (discussed in chapter 2). If the organization's goal is to generate revenue, then the marketing plan should be designed to maximize the amount of money that comes in through registrations, ticket sales, sponsorships, and so on. However, if the focus of the event is to promote a cause, the plan will be much different. Typical marketing goals may be related to revenue, attendance, participation numbers, media coverage, fund-raising targets, or room nights. Specific, measurable objectives define targets that need to be reached to achieve each marketing goal. For example, a local runners' organization may set the following goal and objectives for its annual event:

Marketing goal: Increase participation in the annual Spring Fun Run.

Objective 1: Retain 95 percent of last year's participants.

Objective 2: Recruit 50 new runners.

Objective 3: Recruit 10 more organizational groups.

Objective 4: Increase number of youth participants by 15 percent.

Target Markets

Market selection involves identifying potential targets and selecting target markets. Target markets are selected based on careful analysis of consumer data, and selections should be consistent with marketing objectives. A discussion of targets and segments is found in the next section of the chapter.

Marketing Tactics

In this section of the marketing plan, event marketers identify the different marketing tactics according to the marketing mix necessary for each target. Tactics are based on the four Ps: product, place, price, promotion. The marketer's aim is to create a product at an acceptable price,

in appropriate places, that can be promoted to target consumers (Masterman 2009).

Implementation

This section of the plan includes a thorough detailing of what needs to take place to successfully implement the marketing plan. Having good ideas is not enough to be successful. Instead, marketers have to execute those ideas. Planners should identify and address issues related to budget, organizational support, leadership, resource acquisition, resource allocation, coordination, and timing (Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton 2007).

TARGET MARKETING

No event can provide all benefits to all people. Even the Super Bowl, with an average audience of almost 100 million viewers in the United States, reaches less than half of the population. Think about an extreme sport event. Would it make sense to try to market the event to the entire community? Given that most people in the community would not be interested in the event, a broad marketing campaign would be wasteful because many resources would be expended on people with no intention of ever attending the event.

Instead of marketing to everyone (mass marketing), events should be tailored to meet the needs of specific segments of the population (target marketing). Segments are groups of consumers or potential consumers with similar attributes, attitudes, or behaviors. By segmenting the population into groups with similar attributes, event marketers are able to develop efficient marketing plans to reach those groups. Segments are often identified using the following criteria:

- Demographic segmentation—identifying groups based on population characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, income, and education
- Psychographic segmentation—identifying groups based on psychological characteristics such as lifestyle, personality, opinions, and values

- Product usage—identifying groups based on how often or how much consumers use the product
- Product benefits—identifying groups based on the benefits consumers seek from an event

After identifying segments, event marketers select target markets. Target markets are the segments to which the event will be marketed. They are selected based on the segment's interest in the event, likelihood of buying, size, and accessibility. Once targets have been selected, event marketers can develop specialized marketing activities and messages designed to appeal to and meet the specific needs of the target.

One common mistake is to target overly broad segments or target segments based solely on size. Think back to the extreme sport event. Organizers may have identified a large segment of senior citizens in the community. Although this segment may be large, it would not be appropriate to target this group because they would not be interested in the event, and no amount of marketing genius would be sufficient to get them to attend. This example illustrates that just because a segment is large, it may not necessarily be the best to target. In fact, smaller, well-defined segments are often the most attractive targets. Niche markets are typically small, focused segments whose needs may not be currently served by larger events. A good example of this strategy comes from the cable television industry. Although ESPN and Fox Sports Net reach wide audiences with a variety of events, smaller networks such as The Golf Channel, The Tennis Channel, The Outdoor Channel, and SpeedTV have emerged and experienced success in marketing to smaller, focused audiences. Similarly, the NBA has had some success targeting niche markets. In late 2009, the NBA rolled out advertisements and a new website targeting the Hispanic market. Even though the Hispanic market makes up only 15 percent of NBA viewers, the league has identified it as an important and growing market (Hall 2009).

THE MARKETING MIX

Sporting events are no different from other businesses in that effective use of the marketing mix

is important for reaching marketing objectives. The marketing mix is a set of marketing tools that work together to achieve an event's objectives. Traditional definitions of the marketing mix consist of elements related to the sport product, price, promotion, and place. Strategies based on the marketing mix are typically developed with the specific needs of each target market in mind.

Product

The sport product is the unit of exchange designed to satisfy needs and provide benefits to the event participant or spectator (Shank 2009). Successful event marketers know how to identify what people want and provide them with a little more (Goldblatt 2008). To do this, event marketers must understand what makes sporting events different from other products.

First, every event is a unique experience for the spectator or participant, adding an element of unpredictability for the event marketer. As such, event marketers cannot promise a close game, a competitive tournament, or good weather. However, Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2007) argue that it is the uncertainty that makes sporting events attractive. Further, sporting events are characteristically intangible (basketball game, golf tournament, or bicycle race) rather than tangible (basketball, golf club, or bicycle). The implication here is that participants and spectators typically consume sporting events for the experience instead of some tangible factor. Therefore, event marketers have to focus on the experiential nature of the event in order to attract and retain customers. For example, the 2008 Beijing Organizing Committee incorporated state-of-the-art lighting, multimedia video, and giant LED screens into the Olympic opening ceremony to produce a memorable, over-the-top event (Weiss 2008).

Second, product benefits can be delivered through a variety of means because the product package for an event may be complex. Sporting events may consist of core offerings (e.g., basketball game, volleyball tournament) as well as extensions (e.g., halftime show, awards ceremony, music, tailgating). The challenge for an event marketer is to develop an acceptable mix

of activities to meet the needs of participants and spectators. Consider the Circle City Classic, a college football game featuring two historically black institutions. Although the game itself may be the central product, fans often attend the games for the entire experience, which includes the Classic Sports X-Perience, the halftime show, and the battle of the bands. Similarly, people who attend AVP volleyball tournaments do not attend just for the volleyball but also for the music, beach atmosphere, and AVP dancers.

Price

Price is what you ask from your customers in order to watch or participate in your event. Pricing decisions are important to event managers because price balances attractiveness and value with organizational revenue. Setting the price is especially difficult for sporting events in that marketers are associating a price with an experience rather than a tangible good. You have to consider what the experience is worth to the customer, which can be difficult considering the subjective nature of intangible benefits.

To make effective pricing decisions, event marketers need to consider several factors such as the cost of producing the event, consumer demand (what people are willing to pay), and competitive prices (how your event compares with other events). Event marketers also have to consider organizational objectives when setting price. Events may set their prices to maximize profits, generate exposure, meet competitive threats, or provide participation (Shank 2009). For example, each of the following events will use different pricing strategies to meet different objectives.

- Championship boxing event: Set a high price to maximize revenue.
- Charity fun run: Set the price at a level that would encourage people to attend and give to the cause.
- Volleyball tournament: Set a price that would be comparable to other tournaments.
- Intramural softball tournament: Set a low price to encourage as many people as possible to participate.

Sporting events have many pricing options to meet these objectives, including the following:

- Charge each person for admission or participation.
- Charge teams or groups rather than individuals.
- Base the price on a package of benefits. For example, spectators could either pay per game or pay for an all-tournament or all-access pass.
- Bundle the admission price with other attractions or activities.
- Provide free admission. Free admission can be profitable if you can generate revenue through sponsorships or media. In addition, customers attending for free may generate revenue through concessions, parking, merchandise sales, or, depending on the type of event, donations.

Place

Place (or distribution) refers to important issues related to time (when is the event) and location (where is the event). Distribution strategies are typically focused on making the event timely and convenient for the customer. In regard to location, event marketers need to consider access to the location, perceived safety of the location, and proximity to transportation when designing marketing efforts. Event managers also have to manage different intermediaries (also called distribution channels) that make the event available to consumers. Examples of these intermediaries include the venue where the event is held, the media that broadcast the event, ticket agents, and retail partners. A great example of how place can influence the perception of an event is the inaugural Carrier Classic, which featured a basketball game between North Carolina and Michigan State on the deck of the USS *Carl Vinson*, a Navy aircraft carrier. The choice of such a unique location allowed active-duty military personnel to be honored in conjunction with Veterans Day (Witz 2011).

Technology has dramatically changed how sporting events are delivered. NBC, the official

Olympic broadcast partner in the United States, provided more than 3,600 hours of coverage through a variety of media platforms such as the Internet, podcasts, RSS feeds, and e-mail alerts. Whereas prior Olympics were accessed mostly through television, the Beijing Games were transmitted to viewers when they wanted it in the platform they wanted (Horovitz, Petrecca, and Howard 2008).

Promotion

Promotion embodies the methods marketers use to communicate with customers. The purpose of promotion is to stimulate interest in, awareness of, and ultimately purchase of your product (Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton 2007). Large and small events alike require strong promotional campaigns to ensure a successful event (Goldblatt 2008). Promotion is a broad category because it covers elements such as advertising, public relations, sales, and sales promotion. These methods are discussed further in the next section.

EVENT PROMOTION

Few events sell themselves. To be successful, an event promotion plan should effectively communicate with various targets through multiple methods. Promotion planning is often one of the more important elements of the event marketing mix. Event marketers must effectively utilize promotional tools to create demand, resulting in attendance, participation, sales, or other revenue.

Event marketers need to set objectives for their promotional programs. Promotional objectives are statements about what marketers want to accomplish through the promotional program. For a new event, promotional objectives may be to inform people about the event and make them aware of what the event offers. For events people are already aware of, promotional objectives may focus more on persuading people to attend or participate. Popular events may focus on reminding people about the event and reinforcing consumers' commitment to the event. Ultimately, the objectives should result in some action.

Choosing the right message will go a long way in meeting promotional objectives. Effective

messages will appeal to the target market and give the target market reason to listen. Therefore, marketers must carefully identify what they want to promote and to whom. This is often accomplished by focusing on the needs of the consumers. For example, an event targeting families will be most effective if it focuses on issues relevant to families, such as opportunities for family fun at a low price. The message also depends on the type of event. Think about what makes the event exciting or attractive. Is it the history of the event, the location, or the participants? What makes this event relevant to the target market? Demonstrating the key benefit of the event is another characteristic of an effective message. For example, ESPN used the message "More ping, less bling" to promote the 2003 College Baseball World Series; the message reinforced the idea that college baseball fans like the fact that college players play for the love of the game rather than for the money. Although short, this message effectively communicated what consumers liked about this event.

Once the message has been developed, the event marketer has to choose communication tools that will achieve the promotional objectives. Some of the most-used communication tools include advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling. Typically, an event marketer will use multiple tools to communicate the event. However, care should be taken to ensure the same message is getting across regardless of the tool being used. An integrated marketing communication (IMC) approach means the event will utilize several promotional elements to deliver a consistent message about the event.

Advertising

Advertising is a paid, nonpersonal, clearly sponsored message (Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton 2008). Advertising is often the most visible tool available to event marketers, and it can be effective in creating awareness and building an image (Shank 2009). Choosing the right media is critical to the success of advertising. When choosing media, it is important to consider whether it is appropriate for your message, whether it reaches your target market, and how much it will cost to reach your target market. Although we typically think of

advertising as an advertisement in the newspaper, a television commercial, or a billboard, a variety of other media such as newsletters, transportation ads, and yard signs can effectively reach target markets. In addition, new technologies have changed advertising. For example, events trying to reach younger markets are finding that advertising on websites and through social media may be more effective than traditional newspaper advertising. The following is a list of some of the media commonly used to promote sporting events:

Electronic media: television, radio, websites, mobile devices

Print media: newspapers, magazines, newsletters, trade publications

Outdoor media: billboards, buses, benches, posters, fliers

Publicity

Publicity is media exposure that is not paid. A positive story in the newspaper or in a magazine can be very effective in influencing public opinion. Publicity has an advantage over advertising in that it may stimulate more attention, consumers often see it as more credible, and it is much less expensive. However, the media have more control over the message.

Media coverage can often be the difference between a successful event and an event that comes and goes without anyone knowing it ever happened. According to Acosta Hernandez (2002), major events such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup would never have been possible without media exposure. This exposure motivates public imagination and brings life to athletes and rivalries.

To generate positive coverage, event promoters must know how to identify newsworthy stories and pitch them to reporters and editors. Most story ideas never make it to press or air. Stories that are timely, different, or important have a better chance of being published. Consider an event on the Legend's Tour (the Official Tour of the LPGA). Story pitches about the date of the event or the rules of the event will probably never get any attention. However, story pitches about rivalries

between golfers, records about to be broken, or human interest stories about extraordinary players are more likely to get picked up by the media.

Sometimes planned activities can create publicity for an event, generating awareness or interest. For example, in 2005 WWE used an 11-market mall tour to promote WrestleMania, its premier annual event. The tour included several interactive displays along with opportunities to meet and greet current and former WWE Superstars. As expected, the promotional tour created numerous opportunities for media coverage in each city. Similarly, celebrities can be used to generate additional publicity. In 2012, the struggling Humana Challenge Golf tournament leveraged its association with former president Bill Clinton and the Clinton Foundation to generate a surge of positive attention, which helped change the profile of the event (Montgomery 2012).

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion consists of many different techniques used to engage the consumer, such as discounts, special offers, coupons, samples, premiums, contests and sweepstakes, demonstrations, and exhibitions. In event management, sales promotion is often used to create interest or generate purchases through reduced-price or value-added incentives.

When your consumers are price sensitive and will respond to price changes, you may consider a price incentive such as a ticket discount, coupon, or free trial. For example, Utah State University did a price promotion selling football tickets for the same price as a gallon of gasoline. They were able to sell more than 2,000 tickets in one day. Although price promotions can be quite successful, you have to be careful that you do not cheapen your product.

If price is not an issue with customers, or you are concerned about cheapening your product, adding value may be the best option. A variety of tools can be used to add value such as premium giveaways (hats, T-shirts, collectable items), special attractions (postgame concerts, autograph sessions), and theme nights. A great example comes from the San Francisco Giants. To capitalize on the large Filipino population in the area,

the team staged Filipino Heritage Night. Before the game, popular Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao threw out the first pitch, ticket buyers received a Pacquiao bobblehead doll giveaway, and the team provided cultural entertainment. As a result of the added value, the team drew a crowd of 39,314 fans that night, which included a large walk-up of more than 11,000 (Nightingale 2009).

Numerous types of sales promotions can be used to promote an event. The key is to identify which types of promotions will resonate with your target market and deliver results. The following is a list of some common techniques used to promote sporting events.

Price Promotions

- Discounts
- Coupons
- Buy-one-get-one promotions
- Family packages
- Group discounts
- Bundling parking or other amenities with tickets

Value-Added Promotions

- Premium giveaways
- Trivia contests
- Sweepstakes entries
- Meet and greet events
- Theme promotions
- Camps and clinics
- Pre- and postevent entertainment
- Autograph sessions
- Cross-promotion with other events
- Product sampling
- Point-of-purchase displays
- Open houses
- Exhibitions
- Celebrity appearances
- Loyalty programs
- Honors and celebrations
- Interactive experiences
- Fan appreciation promotions

Direct Sales

Direct sales involve direct contact between the event and the consumer. Direct sales techniques most often include personal selling, direct mail or e-mail, and telemarketing and are most often used for larger purchases such as season tickets, premium seating, and sponsorship. Often, the key to direct sales is the list of prospects. These activities rarely work unless you are contacting the right people. Smaller and less frequent sporting events do not have the luxury of full-time sales staffs, so they utilize volunteer sales staffs, sponsors, and the Internet to facilitate sales.

Word of Mouth

Activities designed to generate word-of-mouth communications can be effective for communicating with hard-to-reach or hard-to-influence consumers (Greenwell and Andrew 2007). Event organizers use a variety of tactics to proactively encourage word of mouth. Word of mouth can be generated by working with other organizations to get their members talking about your event, providing recruiting incentives to current customers who spread the word and enlist new customers, and giving coupons or premium items to customers to pass along to new customers. Technology has produced additional methods to stimulate word of mouth such as viral marketing, organizational weblogs, and social networks.

Social Media

In recent years, many sporting events have begun to embrace nontraditional media, such as social media, to connect with customers and promote events. This type of media can provide instant communication before, during, and after events. Social media allow organizations to bypass traditional media and communicate directly with consumers. Further, the communication is more user driven and community oriented. This type of communication is especially effective for events that do not tend to get as much print coverage or broadcast coverage as mainstream sports. For example, organizations such as Women's Professional Soccer (WPS) and Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) have been active in leveraging

nontraditional media to compensate for the lack of mainstream media attention given their sports.

The following are a few examples of how social media can be used to promote events:

- HBO Sports put fighter interviews, press conferences, and other promotional activities on social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook to keep boxing fans constantly abreast of the events and stories leading up to the Manny Pacquiao and Antonio Margarito fight at Cowboys Stadium in order to reach younger viewers and spur pay-per-view sales (Umstead 2010).
- The University of Michigan created an offer requiring fans to "like" a page to unlock a ticket presale code, resulting in more than \$74,000 in ticket sales in one day (Butler 2011).
- The Louisville Lightning, a professional arena soccer club, used Facebook extensively to promote its inaugural season. Realizing they did not have the budget to extensively promote the team through traditional methods, team managers filled their Facebook page with player introductions, embedded video clips, photos, and a promotion for children. Most important, they used the page to urge soccer fans to buy tickets. The result was an opening-night sell-out.
- Several college football programs including Texas Christian University (TCU) and Boston College have used Groupon to promote the sales of discounted football tickets. The site has helped football programs induce new customers to attend games at low prices (Muret 2011).
- NASCAR uses social media to keep fans engaged between races. Fans who are engaged are more likely to watch race broadcasts (Busch 2011). Similarly, the NHRA has begun providing more compelling content through social media, with the goal of creating engaged fans who will buy tickets and watch televised events (Mickle 2011).
- The Marine Corps Marathon uses Facebook to connect directly with participants, which allows the event to bypass traditional media.

In addition, the Facebook postings allow participants to publicize the causes for which they are running (Nearman 2009).

ATTRACTING SPECTATORS

To attract spectators, event marketers must first ask what consumers want from the event. Do they want to see the top athletes? Be a part of history? Enjoy time with family and friends? The only way to accomplish this is to research your customers to identify what they want and what they value. Consumer groups may be quite diverse, so it is important to identify what each target market wants so you can attract them to the event (Solomon 2002).

Sporting events have many features, benefits, and attributes; however, only a few are important to consumers. For example, a World Cup soccer match could be described as being two hours long and featuring two teams and a ball. This description is accurate, but it misses the aspects of the event that are attractive to customers. If you were to describe the event as two teams comprising the best athletes in their sport, playing the most important games of their lives in front of a world stage, you would be providing a description better reflecting why spectators are attracted to the event.

Several researchers have identified important attributes of sporting events. Ferreira and Armstrong (2004) identified attributes that attract college students to college sporting events: popularity of the sport, attractiveness of teams and players, offerings and promotions, pregame and in-game entertainment, convenience and accessibility, facility quality, and cost. Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2007) identified level of excitement, price, proximity to action, level of performance, authenticity, affiliation, and socialization as key attributes that differentiate one event from another. The event marketer's task is to identify what aspects of an event are relevant to consumers, highlight the appealing aspects, and illustrate how this product is different from other entertainment options.

In addition to identifying event characteristics that are important to spectators, event marketers need to identify what motivates consumers

to attend their events. Fan motivation is often defined as the internal drive that leads to behavior. Wann and colleagues (2008) found that motivation differs according to the sport. Specifically, motivation will be different for individual versus team sports, aggressive versus nonaggressive sports, and stylistic versus nonstylistic sports. Therefore, it is important for marketers to identify what it is about their respective sports that motivates consumers to watch and attend. Although the list of motives for event attendance is extensive, a few are common to most sporting events. Funk and colleagues (2009) defined five core motivations for sport event attendance:

1. Socialization—attend to socialize and interact with others at events.
2. Performance—attend to appreciate the grace and elegance of events.
3. Excitement—attend to enjoy the excitement sports provide.
4. Esteem—attend to feel a sense of accomplishment when a team or athlete wins.
5. Diversion—attend to get away from the tension of life's everyday routines.

ATTRACTING PARTICIPANTS

Although participants are much different from spectators, the same two questions need to be addressed: (1) What do participants want from the event, and (2) what makes the event attractive to participants?

The type of event will often dictate what participants want. For example, runners in a charity road race are likely participating to support a cause or to just have fun, while competitors in a triathlon are more likely to be participating to challenge themselves and to gain a sense of achievement. In addition, different types of participants will want different things. A professional athlete will want different things than a youth team coach.

Marketers of poker events have done a good job identifying what participants want from their experiences and have used that knowledge to attract players. Poker offers two main inducements: the opportunity to win big money and the

opportunity for everyday people to compete with professionals. By focusing on these aspects of the event, major events such as the World Series of Poker (WSOP) Tour and the World Poker Tour (WPT) have seen dramatic growth in the number of players in recent years (Bradford 2009).

To make events attractive to participants, Wanda Rutledge of the National Council of Youth Sports encourages event planners to focus on the entire experience rather than just the event (Martin 2009). Athletes most likely have participated in other events and will have expectations of what their experience should be like. Make sure you understand why people are participating and what they want out of their entire experience. From that knowledge, try to turn your event into an unforgettable experience. Further, Solomon (2002) argues that events should have a player-friendly mentality and that events should be designed with the athlete in mind. In addition to the competition itself, scheduling, transportation, and accommodations can make a big difference to participants. Extra touches such as welcome parties, activities, and goody bags may make for memorable experiences.

Peavy (2008) provides a list of hints for being a gracious host:

- Thank participants for registering, and include special offers as a thank-you for registering for the event.
- Keep participants informed as the event approaches.
- Arrange for billboards or posters around the community to welcome participants and make them feel special.
- Have friendly and efficient staff greet guests.
- Train your staff to respond to visitors' needs.
- Have a big send-off when the event ends to show your appreciation and to encourage participants to return.

BRANDING THE EVENT

A brand is the combination of names, symbols, slogans, or logos that identifies a product and distinguishes it from other products (Aaker 1991).

Brands also communicate an identity or image of a product. When someone sees the brand name *McDonald's* or sees symbols such as the restaurant's golden arches, they automatically associate them with the fast-food giant. Brands also communicate quality because consumers may consider brand name products (e.g., Starbucks, Coca-Cola, Google, IBM) to be superior in quality to less recognizable brands. Similarly, an event's brand generates the associations consumers connect to the event. Events' brand names (e.g., Olympic Games, Super Bowl, the Masters, Ironman Triathlon) and marks (e.g., Olympic rings, Super Bowl logo, the green jacket, Ironman M-Dot symbol) help consumers identify the event and differentiate the event from competitors.

When branding an event, an organizer's goal should be to build up the event so that the mention of the name generates recognition, attention, and awareness (Hoyle 2002). Event organizers should try to communicate certain images or values in order to create the impression that the event is unique or important. NASCAR has been especially effective in creating and managing its brand. The NASCAR brand has been built to represent more of a lifestyle than a sport. As such, NASCAR works to communicate that it provides thrilling entertainment and that its drivers are role models and regular, down-to-earth people. This approach has allowed the sport to connect with the target markets and build a loyal audience (Bernhardt 2006).

The brand is often communicated through the event's name. A strong name is especially important because it is often the center of marketing and promotional campaigns. For example, in 2002 the Senior PGA Tour, a series of golf events for professional golfers 50 years of age and older, changed its name to the Champions Tour. Whereas the former name was effective in describing the event, the new name communicates an image of quality and experience.

In addition, event branding involves creating an experience that gives an event name recognition and longevity (Chavis 2008). The brand equity of an event will be boosted by notable or memorable experiences. A great example of a strong event brand is the Flying Pig Marathon in Cincinnati.

First of all, the name *Flying Pig* and the winged pig logo distinguish the event from all the other marathons across the country (Olberding and Jisha 2005). Second, the event is different from other marathons in that organizers tried to appeal to a new breed of runners by offering experiences and interactions unlike what traditional marathons were offering.

ELECTRONIC EVENT MARKETING

More and more, technology has become an important tool in marketing events. Websites and e-mail have become essential sources of communication, and in recent years, social media have become an important tool in connecting with spectators and participants.

Event marketing often starts with a good website, as consumers now depend on the Internet for information about events and activities surrounding them. Further, organizations depend on the Internet to build their brands and generate sales. Considering the importance of your website, it is essential to make sure the site is effectively marketing your event. In the early days of the Internet, many event organizers designed and maintained their websites themselves. However, changes in technology now demand professional skills to develop sites that look and function at a level site visitors expect. In fact, a poorly designed website may suggest a poorly organized event in the minds of many consumers. Outsourcing your web management may be expensive; however, when the price is weighed against the value of the expertise, it may be worth the cost. Regardless of whether you design a website yourself or outsource your web needs, it is important to keep the end consumer in mind. According to Graham, Neirotti, and Goldblatt (2002), there are several keys to successful event websites:

- **A marketable URL:** Your URL, or web address, must be something people will remember. Sometimes it is something as simple as *usopen.com* for the USGA's U.S. Open Golf Championship.
- **Usability:** Usability refers to how easily your visitors can use your site. Visitors should be able

to find what they need or do what they want quickly without becoming frustrated (Pedersen, Miloch, and Laucella 2007). Take time to find out what your visitors want from your site. You cannot assume you know what your site's visitors are looking for.

- **Extensive and updated content:** Your site should provide content that is interesting enough to keep people coming back. In addition to basic information about schedules, statistics, and records, event sites can provide unique content by publishing exclusive news, features, and videos that cannot be found elsewhere (Irwin, Sutton, and McCarthy 2008).

In addition to providing information, your website can be used to target specific customers for specific products. The Los Angeles Lakers enlisted an online marketing agency to help sell 2,500 premier seats at the Staples Center. Using computer technology, they were able to identify market niches by analyzing what people were looking for on the Internet and targeting those people for high-end tickets (Muret 2009).

E-mail provides event marketers a way to target and reach customers beyond their immediate area. Many events now use e-mail to keep in touch with customers, update customers on various activities, and sell tickets for events. A great example of using e-mail to reach new fans comes from the Milwaukee Brewers baseball team. The Brewers sent an e-mail to their season ticket holders offering an opportunity to purchase tickets for an upcoming game. The recipient could also forward the e-mail to a friend, and if the friend bought tickets, the recipient was rewarded with free club seats to an upcoming game (Walker 2008).

CREATING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Another good way to promote your event is through partnerships with community organizations. A wide variety of community partners can be utilized to create community support, promote your event, and involve the community. Community leaders and local politicians can provide