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The Elusive Fan: Reinventing Sports In A Crowded Marketplace (Business Books)



Synopsis

Sports are a multibillion-dollar global business that will continue to grow by leaps and bounds into the foreseeable future. The bad news is: It's never been harder to attract, engage, and retain the sports fan. Today's sports fans are bombarded by choices. Traditional sports, such as baseball, football, and basketball, compete for fans' dollars with snowboarding, lacrosse, poker, and even paintball. The old business formulas, developed in the age of three TV networks and creaky stadiums, no longer apply. World-renowned communication expert Irving Rein, international marketing guru Philip Kotler, and communication specialist Ben Shields deliver an innovative new business model centered squarely on fan satisfaction and retention. They give you the tools to transform your sports product into an enduring brand-immune to the vagaries of winning and losing—that quickly adapts to changing market conditions. Along the way they illustrate their points with fascinating case studies, including Manchester United's transformation from a plucky home team to a billion-dollar international franchise Professional golf phenomenon Michelle Wie's quest to maximize her talents and marketability Southlake Carroll High School football team's benchmarking of professional and college football programs to build its own brand Daytona International Speedway's reinvention of fan intimacy Combining expert analysis with field-tested strategies for winning hearts and minds, The Elusive Fan is your guide to surviving and thriving in today's ever-widening world of sports.

Book Information

Series: Business Books

Hardcover: 368 pages

Publisher: McGraw-Hill Education; 1 edition (July 14, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0071454098

ISBN-13: 978-0071454094

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.3 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 16 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #94,693 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #188 in Books > Business & Money > Management & Leadership > Training #237 in Books > Textbooks > Business & Finance > Marketing #842 in Books > Business & Money > Marketing & Sales > Marketing

Customer Reviews

PRAISE FOR THE ELUSIVE FAN

Forget cars, computers, and cola. The most competitive arena in marketing is sports. Rein, Kotler, and Shields do a brilliant job in analyzing the issues involved in attracting elusive fans who have many more choices today than they have ever had.

Al Ries, author, *The Origin of Brands* “The Elusive Fan is the most thorough and comprehensive overview of the sports marketing industry I have seen. The insights and recommendations are a must read for anyone involved or interested in the field.

Brian Billick, Head Coach, Baltimore Ravens “The authors apply insightful consumer analysis and branding concepts to the practical problems of bringing people to games, attracting eyeballs to sports TV, and opening consumer wallets for merchandise.

Professor Stephen A. Greyser, Richard P. Chapman Professor, Marketing/Communications, Harvard Business School “The Elusive Fan is a must read for anyone interested in sports marketing strategies-and the 21st century world of sports in general.

Bob Dekas, Coordinating Producer-College Basketball, CBS Sports “Authors Rein, Kotler, and Shields have hit a home run. The Elusive Fan offers a detailed playbook for sports decision makers looking to up their game.

Jonathan Hoenig, Fox News personality and portfolio manager at Capitalistpig Hedge Fund LLC “The Elusive Fan is an essential primer for the past, present, and, most importantly, future of sports.

Jeff Davis, author of *Papa Bear: The Life and Legacy of George Halas*

Irving Rein, Ph.D. is a Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University’s School of Communication. The author of 12 books, including *High Visibility*, a groundbreaking study of image making, Rein also serves on Major League Baseball’s Commissioner’s Initiative for the 21st Century and is a member of the Advisory Board for Northwestern University’s Master of Arts in Sports Administration. Philip Kotler, Ph.D. is the S. C. Johnson Distinguished Professor of International Marketing at the Kellogg School of Management. He is the author of 35 books, including *Marketing Management*, the most widely used marketing book in graduate business schools worldwide. He has been a consultant to IBM, General Electric, AT&T, Bank of America, Merck, Motorola, Ford, and other global corporations and places. Ben Shields has done consulting work for a number of organizations on communication issues. His expertise is in sports and technology, and he is currently a doctoral student in communication studies at Northwestern University.

Rein and his associates start out from the premise that the sports world is changing for a multitude of reasons including: increased competition for the fans attention and money, the decreasing social aspects of going to the ballgame, and technology that means fans don’t have to physically go to the

game to watch it, along with the increasingly individualized nature of sports itself presents a major challenge to those who make a living off of live game attendance. I really enjoyed the section discussing the history of sports-fan relationships from the Monopoly generation through the Highlight Generation because it really puts the later discussions of rebranding strategies into proper context. The levels of fan involvement and explanations of how fans make decisions is perhaps the most useful thing for sports management types because I've been to a number of venues where teams just don't get that aspect. It is not Field of Dreams "You may build it, but we don't have to come." Then came the scenarios at the start of each chapter, which nearly derailed several of the earlier chapters. I felt like they really undercut the authors general ideas about fan decision-making and the entire idea of reaching out to the Elusive Fan. What fan in this economy has \$2000 dollars to jet across the Atlantic for soccer matches? That might be the type of fan you want as a sports manager, but he would be a far easier get then the average fan. The average fan will be lucky to afford the cheapest seats at a minor league baseball or hockey game. Often watching on television or online is a necessity for the average fan. Rich people will not be the savior of sports. Just ask the many teams and leagues that have folded. Rein et al. redeem themselves in later chapters by producing a logical common sense approach to rebranding whatever the sports product is. I also enjoyed this part of the book because it does not require a fancy degree in marketing or sports management to comprehend. While I believe that the general premise the authors lay out in the book is correct about the changing nature of the sports world and the challenges, one will need to sort through the mystifying scenarios of the first few chapters.

This is a good solid book about sports marketing (also applicable, as other reviewers have noted, to entertainment marketing). A couple of the hypotheticals presented are a little hokey, but that's not unusual. On the (mildly) down side, I don't like the Kindle reader on my laptop as well as I do the Nook reader (the latter is considerably easier to navigate and more "book-like"). Cloud Reader is a useful feature, but I prefer Nook's user interface.

I'll give it 3 stars because the authors put in some effort, but not much here you couldn't learn by reading the trades. No real insight. Linking your brand to your marketing effort? Brilliant! It reads like some college course on sports marketing Just a lot of "tired, recycled sports cliches applied to business from the 90's...if you're desperate for information then by all means buy it. If you're looking for real insight you probably won't find it here.

Reads a little like a textbook, but a great book!

Revolutionary. The ideas in this book transform how sports marketing is done.

The Elusive Fan is more than just another book on sports marketing. It emphasizes the importance of the connection between the brand and its different levels of fans, which is often overlooked in sports marketing textbooks. In addition, it reads very smoothly.

this was a gift for someone else. im guessing they liked it since they were excited to receive it!

Use this book in my Sports Marketing Class - works out great!

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