

Winning Is Not a Strategy: A Game-Changing Approach to Driving Attendance

By Zac Logsdon. Published 2018 by Black Lane Publishing Co., Norman, OK. \$14.95. 159 pp. ISBN: 9781644679852

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Winning Is Not a Strategy: A Game-Changing Approach to Driving Attendance is a must-read for sport marketing professionals, particularly those working in intercollegiate athletics, where many of the book's examples and anecdotes are rooted. This book looks beyond some of the traditional assumptions about why fans attend sporting events and offers fresh ideas on how to reapproach marketing to fans. This is the second book Zac Logsdon has written after his long career as a sport marketing practitioner for University of Oklahoma athletics and now as CEO of Old Hat, a strategic marketing agency specializing in intercollegiate athletics. The first book, *If Not for Athletics*, was a broader book about sport marketing and areas where the industry needs to change, while the focus of *Winning Is Not a Strategy* is on providing new ideas for marketers to reengage these lost fans and implement positive marketing changes in sport settings. Although the focus of the examples in this book lean toward college sport marketing, there are transferable examples and anecdotes from professionals in both college and professional sport dispersed throughout the book, making it relevant across sport contexts.

With a mix of data and anecdotes from the field, Logsdon challenges some of our previous approaches to marketing and provides thought-provoking questions about how to improve on these flaws to maximize our marketing efforts. A more traditional marketing textbook might actually answer more of these posed questions, but Logsdon spends much of the first half of this book setting the stage for what problems exist in today's approach to sport marketing and poses questions to the reader to ponder. This approach could serve professors well by having the challenges in the book presented, followed by an investigation into solutions, whether through discussion or assignment format.

In Chapters 1 (“Winning Is Not a Strategy”) and 2 (“Do Different”), Logsdon sets the stage with possible motives for fans to attend games beyond seeing a team win. After extensive research in the college sport landscape, Logsdon points out that there have been major declines in attendance in sports like college football, even in winning programs, so while many school administrators believe that winning is the most important factor driving attendance, there are certainly other areas where marketers have the capacity to control and better connect with prospective fans and consumers.

In addition to highlighting the misconceptions around using winning to drive attendance, the biggest assumption that Logsdon challenges in this book is that sport marketers have long been targeting the wrong group of consumers in most of

their marketing efforts. In Chapter 3 (“The Players”), Logsdon suggests that marketers stop creating marketing materials that serve only the most loyal fans, or campaigns that try to attract fans who only show up when the team is on a winning streak or when the best opponent comes to town. Rather, most attention should be given to educating and enticing new fans, while “activating the affinity” that casual fans have for the team (p. 49). Chapters 3–6 delve into this idea by also criticizing the way marketing campaigns are presently designed and delivered, with suggestions for how to maximize campaigns targeting the desired types of fans (i.e., casual and new fans) in the future.

In Chapter 7 (“The Game Day Experience”), Logsdon transitions from problems in attracting fans with current marketing materials and presents issues in the game-day experience once fans are at the building. He breaks down areas where marketers have more and less control to prioritize where the majority of effort should be focused. For example, marketers may not have much control over the quality of the marching band or cheerleaders, and they may not easily shift the price points for tickets or concessions, but they should have a high degree of control over the quality of the graphics on the video board, the pregame entertainment offerings, and in-game promotions, so it is these areas where marketers should focus the majority of their efforts in boosting the game-day experience for fans.

Chapter 8 (“Research + Insight + Strategy”) introduces the basics of conducting market research to design marketing strategies. Logsdon does a great job of providing an anecdote to think about the hours and resources college football teams put into studying their opponents via film and designing subsequent plays and strategies. In fact, he notes that one football program he spoke with estimated that their coaching and video staff spent approximately 21,000 hr/year on insight and strategy. But when Logsdon approached his marketing colleagues with experience at various institutions, they reported devoting zero hours to research and insight, largely due to lack of resources. This lack of devotion of resources in marketing departments becomes a theme in the latter half of this book. Chapter 9 (“Paying for Strategy”) starts by suggesting the importance of understanding what the additional revenue earned is per fan for every ticket purchased as a tool to be used in leveraging marketing efforts to grow the fan base, particularly to be used for budget meetings on the importance of investing in marketing.

The final chapter of this book (“13 Things You Can Do Now”) makes up nearly a third of the text and gives readers a tangible list of 13 things marketers can do to start improving their marketing efforts. These tips include a road map for evaluating the sport offering, a brief overview of how to collect and analyze valuable marketing data, how to conduct an audit of the services and game-day experience for fans, a concise overview of social media basics to consider across generational lines, and a few other ideas about where to devote organizational resources to maximize marketing efforts. If readers take nothing else from this book, there are several quick-hitting strategies worthy of a read during the final 50 pages.

This book could serve as a great supplement to a master’s sport marketing course, as it skips ahead of the introduction to marketing and gets right to the next steps in improving today’s marketing landscape. This is a must-read for those presently working in sport marketing, especially in the college sport landscape.