

Cleveland Indians Ticket Sales

2015 Season

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**Executive Summary**

This is the business plan I was able to design for my part in the Cleveland Indians ticket sales project that we conduct here at Tiffin University. As a university we partner up with the Indians during the second semester of the school year and the students get a chance to experience what it is like to sell tickets. These students were also offered a chance to take a trip to a seminar at Progressive Field, where Indians staff gave them a tour of the ballpark and also help them understand a more in-depth approach of ticket sales.

Progressive Field in Cleveland offers a family friendly experience, all while getting to enjoy some of America`s pastime. The games we had to offer were on various dates throughout the months of April and May, against different teams across the league. Three of the games offered were against divisional opponent, Tigers and Twins, and often create even more of a hostile atmosphere for opposing teams when visiting Cleveland. We also were given a Sunday game where the Indians would battle in-state foe, The Cincinnati Reds, with Ohio Cup stipulations. The other opponent would be an American-league team in the Toronto Blue Jays, an A.L. East division team.

My Cleveland Indians marketing plan is set up to give everyone an firm understanding of my standpoint on how I will go about to help out the Indians organization. My plan is designed to encourage anyone and everyone who is a fan of baseball to go out and experience what Progressive Field has to offer. I want people to understand you don’t have to be a Tribe fan to enjoy the game, in fact you really don’t have to be a baseball fan to enjoy the experience, and the ballpark is built for all different types of people and suitable for any type of social gathering.

The Cleveland Indians as an organization over the years have had some of the worst attendance rates in all of baseball. Unlike some teams, the Indians have to deal with the cold weather of the north and to be honest having not had the most success recently and haven’t won a world series since 1948. It is our goal to help the organization fill seats and also gain vital experience in a field many of us may be employed in the future. As a seller it was important to decide how to sell a game at Progressive Field to a consumer. The big thing we were able to sell this year was the park renovations. It is our job to get the potential buyers to understand and want to find out for themselves how family friendly the park is, while at the same time if they want a causal seat in the new picnic concourse in right field, or would enjoy a sit down meal at the new restaurant in the stadium, it can all be attained at one location, Progressive Field.

**Organizational Overview**

Mission Statement

“Try something new, experience something different, be a part of something more than baseball, be a part of The Tribe”

Vision Statement

Our vision as a group was to sell as many tickets as we could, while better understanding the process of marketing and promoting this type of product in sports.

Market Penetration

Marketing penetration occurs from the use of the fan forum as well as the advertising done through the different types of social media.

**Situational Analysis**

Marketing Summary

The Cleveland Indians are a Major League Baseball team that is part of the American League and plays in the central division. Progressive Field is the home of the Indians and used to be named “Jacobs Field” before it was sold in recent years. The Indians have had some of the worst attendance rates in baseball over the past years, while seeing moderate success on the field and some great individual success throughout the ball club. As an organization though, the last time the Indians were able to win a World Series was 1948.

Marketing Targets

I am reaching out to not only Indians fan, but any baseball fan that wants to experience a game at a stadium that feature new renovations and a new look about it. Within that group of baseball fans I searched for those who would like to see the Indians play, but if they didn’t care for the Indians than I tried to sell them on one of the Indians opponents and some all-star players that played on that team or a legendary coach. I made sure to appeal to families with the new Indians clubhouse in right field and the fact that Cleveland was voted to have the most family friendly ballpark in all of baseball.

**S.W.O.T. Analysis**

Strengths

* New ballpark renovations
* Divisional rival games
* Ohio Cup game, appealing to both Indians and Reds fan in Ohio
* 2nd place finish in the division in 2014

Weaknesses

* Limited dates that our discounted tickets are available
* Unpredictable weather in Cleveland
* Unsure of the team performance

Opportunities

* Possible lasting impression on the Indians organization from performance with these ticket sales
* Networking
* Chance to learn more in a field of interest

Threats

* Competition to sell throughout campus, and other universities involved
* Struggle to find Indians fans
* Stadium renovations aren’t finished in time for the home opener

**PEST Analysis**

Economic Climate

The global economy seems to be on an upswing and my information could hopefully help to lead fans to their favorite team’s ballpark and out to see a game during spring training or the regular season. Cleveland as a city is home to numerous professional sports team and three teams that compete in four of the major sports leagues in the United States. It is a city that has always been home to major sports teams, but has taken on the reputation of being one that can`t win a championship.

Legal Issues

The only issues that could be a problem are copyright issues could be a legal issue, which could arise from if I would be considered stealing someone else ideas or work and using it as my own. This is something that I avoided throughout my work. From the aspect of selling tickets though there shouldn’t be any legal issues involved.

Demographics

The area surrounding where the Indians gives them plenty of opportunity to thrive and I feel like has a fair share of baseball fans can be found nearby. Within a six hour drive in different directions from Cleveland you can find 4 different Major League baseball teams that include the Indians and Reds in Ohio, the Tigers in Detroit, and the Pirates in Pittsburgh. Not limited to that area though as baseball can be found nearly everywhere throughout the United States, not always a Major League team, but possibly a minor league affiliate.

Demand Trends

The trend for the Indians is one that can vary from year to year based off of the team’s performance as well if we decide to trade players that are fan favorites or some of our best players. The Indians this year though do have plenty of new attractions inside the ballpark that will hopefully bring a demand for tickets.

Product Life Cycle Factors

The game of baseball itself has been around for long enough and is seen as one of the most popular sports around the world and in the United States so the product life cycle factors are not that evident.

Technological Trends

One technological trend that the Indians are taking advantage of this year is the use of smartphones and the transition to the use of digital ticketing. Consumers like convenience and this is the new way of convenience when it comes to ticketing in sports and no longer do you have to keep track of a ticket.

**Marketing Objectives/Strategies**

Goals

1. Sell a minimum of 5 tickets
2. Find that buyers were happy with their purchase and the process
3. Better understand the logistics of ticket sales

Marketing Activities

For my marketing plan I wanted to advertise more to people outside of my comfort zone and people I didn’t know. My marketing activities during my plan included using the internet and spreading advertising through blogs and social media. I was able to meet a gentleman who was a complete stranger to me and get him to allow me to join his fan forum where I posted my ticket offer and was able to land a buyer. I also used phone calls and emails to try to sell these tickets and when it came to people my father does business with I began to start trying to sell a suite and not just the tickets. Throughout the process as a group we also used our group flyer with post on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Specific Responsibilities for objectives

1. Sell a minimum of 5 tickets to receive credit for class, but also use the selling process I described in my marketing activities in order to sell tickets.
2. Contact each of my buyers and take the time to discuss their experience at the ballpark, and find out what they liked and didn’t like about their experience. I would also like to find out if there was anything that I could have done to make the process be carried out any smoother.
3. Take the information and feedback from my buyers and analyze what I learned from selling and following up with them to evaluate myself and the types of things I can do better if I ever do this project in the future or make ticket sales my profession.

Time frame for objectives

1. From the start of February 2015 to March 23, 2015 is the amount of time given to sell the minimum of 5 tickets.
2. Sometime following their visit to Progressive Field during the 2015 season, probably during the early offseason (November or December), give those buyers a phone call and take some time to show them that you actually cared about how their experience went. This type of information will not really be needed until the following season or if I were ever to do this type of sales again and I would be sure to take notes of feedback.
3. As soon as I start to gather the information I will then take all the information I gather and put it into a document that is only for information regarding feedback from fans and notes that I can use for future references.

Impact of Strategies

Each strategy I use should be beneficial to not only me, but the Indians organization for future use. I will be able to expand my knowledge and further myself in this field, while the Indians gain more customers and hopefully soon to be fans.

**Marketing Mix**

Core Product

The product I was selling was the experience that the Cleveland Indians can provide. At Progressive Field not only are you buying a ticket to watch a baseball game, but also the many other different aspects and things throughout the ballpark and the fact that you just never know what will happen on any given day at during the game.

Product Extensions

Outside of the baseball game itself fans get a chance to experience downtown Cleveland and are only minutes away from Lake Erie when at the ballpark. These fans get a chance to see some of the league’s best players take the field and possibly the World Series Champs playing. The stadium now also features many new attractions including a restaurant and a new kids area.

Prices

Each ticket will cost $20 and will get you a seat down the 3rd base side of the field near the left field corner. Though we are selling these tickets if this is not the types of seats a fan may be searching for we can direct them to any area of the ballpark they may desire.

Promotional Activities

On Saturday, April 11th, fans will receive a magnet schedule give-a-way and on Friday, May 8th, fans will be able to enjoy fireworks following the game as well as it will be dollar hot dog night at the ballpark.

Distribution

The Indians will distribute tickets differently this year and use a digital approach. Fans will be delivered tickets through their email, credit card, or even smart phone and can be printed off or presented at the gate for admission to that days game.