

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SPONSORSHIP SALES JOB POSTINGS IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

The sale of corporate sponsorship is a critical component to the financial success of sport organizations. However, little attention has been paid to the job requirements of those who are expected to generate this revenue for sport organizations. The purpose of this study was to examine sponsorship sales job postings in the United States. Content analysis methodology was utilized to examine 372 sport sponsorship sales job postings from four sport job websites over a one-year time period. Logistic regression revealed more experienced positions were more likely to engage in consultative sales, management and database management than entry-level positions. Outsourced organizations were more likely to engage in prospecting, fulfilment and consultative sales, while in-house engaged in setting appointments. Supervisory roles focused on database management, while non-management roles focused on selling, prospecting, cold calling, creating packages and generating appointments. The most common skills sought by employers were communication skills (82.5%) and computer skills (60.8%). The current study provides an understanding of sponsorship sales positions in the sport industry and it is the first to examine the content of sport sponsorship sales postings. In general, findings revealed the top job responsibilities in each job classification were selling, giving presentations, fulfilment and prospecting. It is clear these are key components necessary for sport sponsorship sales positions. This knowledge can help better prepare job seekers, as well as educators, by developing relevant training focused on these areas. Additionally, sport managers and future job seekers now have a resource of desired qualifications for sponsorship sales positions.

Keywords: Corporate sponsorship; Sponsorship activation; Sponsorship job postings Sport sales.

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INTRODUCTION

Sponsorship is defined as a business relationship between a sport entity and a corporation focused on a mutual exchange of benefits or services (McCarville &

Copeland, 1994; Stotlar, 2005). Sport entities exchange specific marketing rights that may be used for commercial advantage, and in return corporations provide funds, resources or services (Howard & Crompton, 2004). The marketing rights granted to sponsors help them reach their target market and position the product in the minds of consumers (Berrett & Slack, 1999). Sport organizations provide a unique packaging of marketing inventory customized to the needs of the prospect, which could include the basic exchange of services, signage, advertising, media, premium seating, corporate hospitality, product sampling, naming rights, retail sales space and experiential marketing opportunities. Sponsorship, which involves a two-way exchange of benefits, is fundamentally different than fundraising, where the donor provides funds without expecting anything in return (Howard & Crompton, 2004).

As a revenue stream, sponsorship sales are important in the sport industry. In North America, sports accounted for 69% of the \$18.9 billion spent on sponsorship (IEG, 2013). Over \$51 billion was spent on sponsorship worldwide in 2012 (IEG, 2013). In American intercollegiate athletics, royalties, advertising and sponsorship account for 9% of revenue in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (NCAA, 2011). Additionally, sponsorship spending in the big four professional sports (NBA, NHL, MLB and NFL) was recorded at \$2.12 billion in 2010 (IEG, 2010). Furthermore, approximately three-fourths of all revenue for NASCAR teams is derived from corporate sponsorship (Smith, 2009), partially due to the best sponsor recall in the sport industry at approximately 50% (Spanberg, 2012). At the Olympic level, sponsorship accounts for 27% of revenue in the United States Olympic Committee, second in importance behind broadcast rights (United States Olympic Committee, 2011). Within interscholastic athletic departments, 57% of high schools sell sponsorships to generate an average of 5% revenue (Pierce & Bussell, 2011).

As an area of employment for job seekers, sales and service positions accounted for 31% of all sport industry jobs in 2011, while sponsorship sales and activation accounted for 28% of all sales- and service-related positions (8.7% of sport industry jobs) (TeamWork Online, 2012). Given the amount of revenue generated from sponsorship and the employment opportunities available in sponsorship sales and activation, it is evident sponsorship sales is a critical component of an organization's financial success. However, little attention has been paid to the job requirements of those who are expected to generate this revenue for sport organizations. While anecdotal evidence may suggest differences exist between responsibilities, skills and functions at different levels of sponsorship sales positions and types of organizations, the sport marketing literature is devoid of empirical evidence identifying the job responsibilities and qualifications of those tasked with selling corporate sponsorship. Furthermore, while educators and job seekers can review individual position announcements, no studies exist that identify trends and draw conclusions based upon the examination of a broad cross section of position announcements. Developing an understanding of what is required in sponsorship sales positions will not only aid sport marketing scholars in educating the next

generation of sales personnel, but also job seekers attempting to make determinations about which types of positions to pursue. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the nature of sport sponsorship positions in the United States by examining the content of online job postings over a one-year period.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sponsorship studies in sport have focused primarily on measurement and effectiveness (e.g., Cameron, 2009; Jensen & Hsu, 2011; O'Reilly, Nadeau & Seguin, 2007; Stotlar, 2004), motivations for purchasing (e.g., Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004; Lough, Irwin & Short, 2000; Weight, Taylor & Cuneen, 2010), and activation methods (e.g., Davies & Tsiantas, 2008; Dees, 2011; O'Keefe, Titlebaum & Hill, 2009; Pierce & Petersen, 2011). There is a lack of research, however, documenting the occupational requirements of sponsorship sales positions. Although not specifically sponsorship, two studies have examined sales and marketing positions within sport organizations utilizing similar methodology employed in the current study. Bae and Miller (2011) focused on both sales and marketing positions with the intent to better prepare students for future careers in sport. Results indicated that 62% of job postings identified a minimum of three years of experience, 68% sought excellent communication skills, 72% required a bachelor's degree and 44% indicated the ability to work flexible hours. Based on these recommendations, Bae and Miller (2011) proposed incorporating realistic experiences in sport marketing through course content, practical assignments or projects relatable to the field. This recommendation is supported by the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA), who suggest an internship is important to bridge educational and practical experiences.

In addition to Bae and Miller's (2011) work, Pierce et al. (2012) were the first to conduct research specific to sport ticket sales and service positions. The results indicated that sport organizations sought entry-level hires with a strong work ethic and cold-calling experience, while non-entry-level hires were more likely to supervise and use consultative sales. Additionally, the most prevalent type of sport sales was inside sales, with over 75% of positions from sport teams. These positions were largely from major and minor league professional teams, with limited positions from intercollegiate athletics. Outside of the sales environment Bravo, Won and Shonk (2012) examined intercollegiate athletic administrators in the United States and found that experience was the most important factor considered during the screening process, followed by recommendations and leadership experience. In the hiring stage, hiring managers valued work ethic, communication skills and motivation. The current study extended the findings from Bae and Miller (2011), and Pierce et al. (2012), by focusing specifically on sponsorship sales positions, which adds to the overall body of sport sales knowledge.

While sponsorship sales continue to increase in sport and research is needed in this area, there are some concerns about what sponsorship salespeople might face as professionals. Spanberg (2012) noted how the threat of overexposure to sponsorship

'clutter' can affect the return on an investment. Companies must be more creative and find more effective ways to measure sponsorships in order to increase the number of impressions or recalls. Similarly, it is difficult to maintain or create a strategic partnership when there is decreased attendance due to a variety of economic or team-related factors (Lachowetz et al., 2002). Seiferheld (2010) described that salespeople will need to be effective in crafting S.M.A.R.T (specific goals, measurable, aligned with vision, realistic and time bound) objectives with corporate partners. To overcome some potential pitfalls of sponsorship sales, outsourcing has become a popular trend in all levels of sport. Outsourcing is especially prevalent at the college level, where athletic departments hire professional firms to focus on sponsorship sales (Burden & Li, 2005). Rights holders such as CBS Collegiate Sports Properties, IMG College or Learfield sport pay for the rights to sell the school sponsorships, signage, promotional rights, etc. and are given bonuses through revenue sharing if they reach their goals (Stotlar, 2004).

Job Postings

Job postings are an effective tool for addressing the characteristics associated with sport sponsorship sales positions. The content of job postings helps to communicate job functions, responsibilities, transferable skills and expectations (Chelladurai, 2006; Gan & Kleiner, 2005). For instance, skills such as self-motivation, organization and creativity are transferable skills often mentioned in job postings. Responsibilities such as cold calling or prospecting define specific work tasks (Parks & Quarterman, 2003; Pierce et al., 2012). Postings also help screen applicants and develop systematic procedures for hiring an individual who will best contribute to the organization. To thoroughly analyse this important information, Lin and Ping (2008) suggested studying job postings over a long period of time using content analysis which may reveal trends in the market demand for employees, or characteristics specific to the occupation. Although these benefits have rarely been realized in the field of sport management, content analysis is common in other areas of academia (Pierce et al., 2012). More importantly, there still remain a number of critical sport sales segments unexplored (Bae & Miller, 2011). The sale of sponsorships is one of these unexplored areas and is the focus of this article. The following research questions were created to help shape the content analysis specific to sport sponsorship sales:

- 1) What job responsibilities are most commonly outlined in job postings for sport sponsorship sales positions?
- 2) What transferable skills or experiences are recommended or preferred for sport sponsorship sales positions?
- 3) What differences, if any, exist between the responsibilities and job functions of entry-level (1–2 years of experience) and non-entry-level sponsorship sales job positions (3–10 years of experience)?
- 4) What differences, if any, exist between the responsibilities and job functions of in-house organizations (i.e., team, school, league, sport and entertainment firm) and outsourced organizations for sport sponsorship sales positions?

- 5) What differences, if any, exist between the responsibilities and job functions of management roles and non-management roles for sport sponsorship sales positions?

METHOD

Data Collection

To answer these research questions, this study employed content analysis methodology. Content analysis is one of the most frequently used methods to analyse communication data (e.g., job postings), because it is precise and consistent (Berger, 2000; Pedersen, Fielding & Vincent, 2007). As described by Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005), job postings are constant, unobtrusive and accessible data due to their postings in forums, or job or public organizational websites.

Information from position postings on four prominent sport job websites in the United States was collected: *Teamwork Online*, *JobsInSports*, *WorkInSports* and the *NCAA employment forum*. These sites contained job postings from across the United States. It should be noted that six job announcements were for NHL positions in Canada. This study was limited to postings where selling corporate sponsorship was one of the primary job responsibilities. All job postings were copied and digitally saved over a 12-month period starting 1 January 2011 and ending 31 December 2011. After all duplicate postings were removed, a total of 372 unique job postings were captured.

Codebook

The development of a codebook and scheme was created to help analyse the incorporated quantitative variables. The codebook contained 39 questions to analyse the sponsorship job postings in the industry. Questions included basic demographic information such as organizational background (i.e., name, type, affiliation or competition level, location, type of sponsorship sales), minimum education, experience, in addition to the core areas of responsibilities and job functions (i.e., sell, prospect, cold call, make appointments, develop packages, give presentations, consultative sales, sales force management, fulfilment, sampling, evaluation, database management, financial management and game day responsibilities), categories of sponsorship sales personnel characteristics (i.e., self-motivated, work ethic, competitive, creative, positive attitude, communication skills, team player, bilingual, ability to work long hours and computer skills) and other preferential experience (i.e., sport knowledge, existing client base). The codebook was developed after the postings were collected and reviewed to ensure the codebook was accurate and comprehensive.

Inter-coder Reliability

Two coders possessing knowledge of the sport industry and the coding protocol were utilized in this study. Reliability between coders was established through the utilization of intercoder reliability, where 11% (N = 42) of the postings were randomly selected and independently coded (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). Scott's Pi was calculated to control for chance agreement after the job postings were independently coded for the

42 job postings. A coefficient of at least 0.70 is required for each variable in order for it to be maintained in the study (Pedersen, Whisenant & Schneider, 2005). All but 3 variables did not meet the minimum coefficient of 0.70, and were removed from the study. These variables included the job responsibilities of building relationships with customers and contract preparation, as well as the transferable characteristic of being personable.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine which job responsibilities and transferable skills were most commonly outlined in job postings for sport sponsorship sales positions. In order to examine differences between groups (i.e., entry-level and non-entry-level; in-house and outsource; management and non-management), chi square analysis was employed to determine the relationships between group membership and each variable. Logistic regression was then utilized to predict the presence of group membership by holding variables constant.

RESULTS

A total of 372 sport sponsorship job postings were collected and coded in this study. Eight states accounted for over half of all postings, including: California, 9.7%; New York, 9.1%; Florida, 8.3%; Texas, 7.0%; Illinois, 5.9%; Maryland, 5.1%; Ohio, 4.3% and Pennsylvania, 4.0%. There were two types of organizations that posted positions; third-party outsourced companies such as IMG; and in-house parties such as a team, league, school or an integrated sport/entertainment company that own a team. Approximately one-third (32.5%) of sport sponsorship sales job postings are posted by a vendor or outsourced party, while the remainder (67.5%) are posted by a team, league, school or integrated sport/entertainment firm.

The distinction between the sales and service functions of the position was also examined. Over half of the responsibilities (57%) asked for both sales and service, while sales-only positions accounted for 28% and service-specific accounted for 15%. In addition to strictly corporate sponsorship sales, the most common additional sales responsibilities was media, radio and advertising sales (62.1%). This was followed by relatively equally distributed responsibilities in group sales (12.1%), season tickets (11.6%), premium sales (11.6%) and development (9.1%).

Professional sport organizations accounted for 35.8% of job postings, followed by intercollegiate athletics (27.2%); minor league professional sport (16.7%); entertainment (12.4%); national governing body (4.8%); interscholastic athletics (2.2%) and 1.1% for postings that did not indicate a competition level. Of the 133 job postings in professional sport, the top six included the National Hockey League (NHL, 22.4%); Major League Baseball (MLB, 16.0%); National Football League (NFL, 14.7%); automobile racing (14.7%); Major League Soccer (MLS, 9.6%) and National Basketball Association (NBA, 8.3%). Half of the minor league postings were from baseball (50%), closely followed by hockey (32.1%). Of the 372 job postings, 98%

were full-time positions, 94.6% required bachelor degrees and only 1.9% required a postgraduate degree. Of the 75% that reported, the average minimum sales experience required was 3.37 years ($SD = 2.09$).

There were 14 job responsibilities and 12 transferable skills identified and coded within the 372 job postings. Of these postings, 35 were excluded due to the limited information discussed within the posting, or the focus on the media sponsorship sales inventory, yielding 337 postings that were coded for job responsibilities and transferable skills. As seen in Table 1, the top three job responsibilities for sport sponsorship positions were selling (86.9%), prospecting (70.0%) and contract fulfillment (67.7%). In addition, facilitating presentations (65.9%), the creation and design of packages (51.1%), and computer skills (60.8%) were identified in over half of the postings. As seen in Table 2, the top transferable skills were communication skills (82.5%) and possessing computer skills (60.8%). In regard to other preferred experiences, 30.9% reported specific sport knowledge such as prior experience with NASCAR or NCAA regulations, and 2.4% for having existing clientele in the desired geographic location or industry.

Table 1: Frequency of Job Responsibilities in Postings

Job Responsibility	<i>N</i>	Percentage
Sell	293	86.9%
Prospect	236	70.0%
Fulfillment	228	67.7%
Presentations	222	65.9%
Packages	172	51.0%
Cold Calling	146	43.3%
Game Day/Hospitality	145	43.0%
Needs Analysis/Consultative Sales	122	36.2%
Appointments	94	27.9%
Database Management	85	25.2%
Financial	84	24.9%
Evaluation	74	22.0%
Management Role/Supervisory Duties	42	12.5%
Sampling/Eduselling	2	0.6%

Table 2: Frequency of Transferable Skills in Job Postings

Transferable Skill	<i>N</i>	Percentage
Communication Skills	278	82.5%
Computer Skills	205	60.8%
Long Hours	141	41.8%
Creativity	121	35.9%
Self-Motivated	119	35.3%
Team Player	92	27.3%
Attitude	81	24.0%

Differences between entry-level and non-entry-level positions

Pearson's chi square analyses revealed several significant differences with regards to job responsibilities between entry-level and non-entry-level positions (see Table 3).

Table 3: Entry- to Non-entry-level Chi Square Analyses of Job Responsibilities

Skill	Entry level	Non-entry-level	Chi square	<i>df</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>p</i>
Sell	87.6%	88.3%	0.026	1	267	.509
Fulfilment	72.4%	69.1%	0.322	1	267	.335
Prospect	70.5%	74.1%	0.415	1	267	.306
Presentations	63.8%	68.5%	0.636	1	267	.253
Game Day	49.5%	37.0%	4.079	1	267	.029
Packages	46.7%	51.9%	0.685	1	267	.241
Cold Calling	37.1%	48.1%	3.134	1	267	.05
Appointments	36.2%	22.8%	5.622	1	267	.013
Needs	29.5%	42.6%	4.645	1	267	.021
Financial	20.0%	30.9%	3.852	1	267	.033
Evaluation	20.0%	24.1%	0.607	1	267	.266
Database Management	17.1%	29.6%	5.338	1	267	.014
Management	5.7%	18.5%	8.954	1	267	.002
Sampling	0.0%	1.2%	1.306	1	267	.367

First, entry-level positions were more likely to conduct fulfillment, appointments and game day responsibilities than non-entry-level positions. Non-entry-level positions were more likely to conduct cold calls, needs analyses or consultative sales practices, management roles or responsibilities, database management and financial duties than entry-level positions.

Logistic regression was utilized to examine if the position was entry-level, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Predicting Entry-Level Positions from Job Responsibilities (N=337)

Predictor	B	SE B	Wald	Df	Sig	e^B
Sell	-.605	.575	1.109	1	.292	.546
Prospect	.426	.447	.907	1	.341	1.531
Cold Calling	.576	.317	3.307	1	.069	1.780
Appointments**	-.876	.326	7.203	1	.007	.417
Packages	.356	.314	1.286	1	.257	1.427
Presentations	-.013	.349	.001	1	.970	.987
Needs**	.824	.319	6.682	1	.010	2.279
Management*	1.291	.520	6.165	1	.013	3.638
Fulfilment	-.219	.323	.461	1	.497	.803
Sampling	21.895	26085.12	.000	1	.999	3.22
Evaluation	-.010	.358	.001	1	.978	.990
Database*	.690	.354	3.804	1	.051	1.995
Financial*	.777	.347	5.011	1	.025	2.175
Game Day**	-8.20	.302	7.361	1	.007	.440
Constant	.206	.590	.121	1	.727	1.228
Model χ^2		46.199				
Model <i>df</i>		14				
Model Nagelkerke R Square		.215				

Note: e^B = exponentiated B, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

The presence of certain variables helped determine if the position was entry-level ($\chi^2 = 46.2$, $p < .001$; Nagelkerke R Square = .215). Entry-level positions were 2.4 times

more likely to schedule appointments than non-entry-level positions, and 2.3 times more likely to have game day responsibilities. Non-entry-level positions were 2.3 times more likely to conduct needs analysis or consultative sales as part of their job responsibilities, 3.6 times more likely to perform management or supervisory roles, 2 times more likely to perform database management and 2.2 times more likely to perform financial duties.

Differences between organization types

Pearson's chi square analyses identified differences in job responsibilities between third-party vendors (outsource) and those organizations who sell sponsorship in-house, as demonstrated in Table 5. Third-party firms were more likely to prospect or identify new sponsors, fulfil contract obligations, facilitate presentations and conduct needs analyses than in-house organizations. Sport organizations selling in-house were more likely to set appointments with current or prospective clients, engage in database management and conduct evaluations or present feedback.

Table 5: Organizational Level Chi Square Analyses Summary of Job Responsibilities

Skill	Outsourced	In-house	Chi square	df	N	P
Sell	91.0%	85.0%	2.389	1	337	.082
Prospect	81.1%	64.6%	9.632	1	337	.001
Fulfilment	81.1%	61.1%	13.633	1	337	.000
Presentations	74.8%	61.5%	5.831	1	337	.01
Needs	55.0%	27.0%	25.203	1	337	.000
Packages	54.1%	49.6%	.602	1	337	.255
Cold Calling	47.7%	41.2%	1.319	1	337	.151
Game Day	42.3%	43.4%	.032	1	337	.477
Financial	21.6%	26.5%	.966	1	337	.199
Appointments	20.7%	31.4%	4.234	1	337	.026
Database Management	15.3%	30.1%	8.614	1	337	.002
Evaluation	14.4%	25.7%	5.497	1	337	.012
Management	10.8%	13.3%	.414	1	337	.324
Sampling	0.0%	0.9%	.988	1	337	.449

Logistic regression was utilized to examine the variables that predicted if the organization was either outsourced or in-house, as demonstrated in Table 6. The presence of certain variables helped determine the significance of outsourced positions ($\chi^2 = 66.381$, $p < .001$; Nagelkerke *R Square* = .249). Outsourced organizations indicated applicants would be 2.3 times more likely to prospect or identify new sponsors, 2.8 times more likely to conduct needs analysis or consultative sales and 3 times more likely to fulfil contract obligations. In-house organizations were 2.5 times more likely to set appointments with current or prospective clients.

Table 6: Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Predicting Organizational Type from Job Responsibilities (N=337)

Predictor	B	SE B	Wald	Df	Sig	e^B
Sell	-.200	.515	.151	1	.698	.819
Prospect*	-.854	.392	4.748	1	.029	.426
Cold Calling	.231	.303	.580	1	.446	1.260
Appointments**	.897	.319	7.895	1	.005	2.452
Packages	.240	.291	.679	1	.410	1.271
Presentations	-.582	.334	3.036	1	.081	.559
Needs***	-1.042	.274	14.433	1	.000	.353
Management	.142	.431	.109	1	.742	1.153
Fulfilment***	-1.096	.307	12.738	1	.000	.334
Sampling	20.031	27856.80	.000	1	.999	5.00
Evaluation	.417	.361	1.330	1	.249	1.517
Database	.609	.339	3.220	1	.073	1.839
Financial	-.146	.328	.198	1	.656	.864
Game Day	.282	.280	1.018	1	.313	1.326
Constant	2.318	.562	16.995	1	.000	10.15 1
Model χ^2		66.381				
Model <i>df</i>		14				
Model Nagelkerke R Square		.249				

Note: e^B = exponentiated B, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Differences between management and non-management roles

When comparing job postings for management versus non-management responsibilities, the following variables had significant Pearson chi squares results (see Table 7). Management roles were more likely to engage in database management. Non-management roles were more likely to sell, prospect, assist in the creation of packages, engage in cold calling and set appointments.

Table 7: Management Level Chi Square Analyses Summary of Job Responsibilities

Skill	Management	Non-Management	Chi square	df	N	p
Sell	76.2%	88.5%	4.887	1	337	.031
Presentations	61.9%	66.4%	.336	1	337	.338
Fulfilment	61.9%	68.5%	.725	1	337	.247
Prospect	47.6%	73.2%	11.481	1	337	.001
Database Management	42.9%	22.7%	7.911	1	337	.006
Game Day	42.9%	43.1%	.001	1	337	.559
Packages	38.1%	52.9%	3.217	1	337	.051
Needs	38.1%	35.9%	.074	1	337	.455
Financial	35.7%	23.4%	2.984	1	337	.065
Evaluation	28.6%	21.0%	1.224	1	337	.181
Cold Calling	14.3%	47.5%	16.476	1	337	.000
Appointments	7.1%	30.8%	10.271	1	337	.000
Sampling	0.0%	0.7%	.286	1	337	.766

Logistic regression was utilized to examine the variables that significantly predicted if the position was a management role, ($c^2 = 48.423$, $p < .001$; *Nagelkerke R Square* = .253). As depicted in Table 8, positions with a management role were 3 times more likely to be engaged in database management functions, while non-management roles were 5.5 times more likely to be engaged in cold calling, 5.9 times more likely to be setting appointments with current or prospective clients, and 2.7 times more likely to be involved with the creation or development of packages and proposals.

Table 8: Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Predicting Management Roles from Job Responsibilities (N=337)

Predictor	B	SE B	Wald	Df	Sig	e ^B
Sell	.214	.581	.135	1	.713	1.238
Prospect	.378	.455	.690	1	.406	1.459
Cold Calling**	1.703	.543	9.847	1	.002	5.488
Appointments**	1.774	.653	7.376	1	.007	5.893
Packages*	1.004	.437	5.281	1	.022	2.729
Presentations	-.783	.468	2.802	1	.094	.457
Needs	-.595	.404	2.173	1	.140	.552
Fulfilment	.497	.410	1.465	1	.226	1.643
Sampling	18.731	28230.95	.000	1	.999	1.364
Evaluation	.080	.455	.031	1	.860	1.083
Database*	-1.086	.396	7.532	1	.006	.338
Financial	-.519	.417	1.550	1	.213	.595
Game Day	.370	.396	.875	1	.350	1.448
Constant	1.046	.673	2.416	1	.120	2.847
Model χ^2		48.423				
Model <i>df</i>		14				
Model Nagelkerke R Square		.253				

Note: e^B = exponentiated B, **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

DISCUSSION

This study extends the works of Bae and Miller (2011) who examined sport marketing positions and Pierce et al. (2012) who examined sport ticket sales and service positions by examining sponsorship sales position announcements over a one-year period. The first research question in the current study asked about the nature of the job responsibilities most commonly found in job postings for sport sponsorship sales positions. Content analysis was an effective tool to answer such a question (Wong, 2009). First, the geographic distribution of available jobs, as explained by Pierce et al. (2012), reinforced how job postings can be linked to “geographic job distribution, job task and duties, and data related to the compensation and benefits associated with

the jobs” (p. 3). Given this idea, it was not surprising to find the top four states of California (9.7%), New York (9.1%), Florida (8.3%) and Texas (7.0%), were the same as those in the sales job postings coded by Pierce et al. (2012).

Second, most sponsorship job postings asked salespeople to engage in sales and service tasks. Functionally, there may be an overlap of responsibilities since sponsorship encompasses the creation and selling of packages, as well as servicing the accounts sold. Only 15% of the postings were strictly service positions, indicating that sponsorship salespeople need to be effective in activation, fulfillment and evaluation. This point is especially important because sponsorship is integrated into other sales within the organization. Therefore, it was not surprising that 38% of the postings also asked the salesperson to sell media, radio and advertising.

The second research question sought to determine the experience and transferable skills preferred in sport sponsorship sales positions. Results revealed that sponsorship positions require more experience than general sales positions. Compared with Pierce et al. (2012), who found that 66% of inside sales positions required less than one year of experience, the average number of years required in sport sponsorship postings was 3.37. This is close to the level of experience found in Bae and Miller’s (2011) research on sales and marketing positions in the sport industry, and could be attributed to the fact that sponsorship requires more integration with other types of sales, as well as its ability to be a driving force of long-term sales. In essence, selling sponsorship packages and servicing to corporations is different than selling tickets to individuals, and oftentimes requires more experience to be successful. This point is reinforced by the finding that 94.6% of sponsorship sales postings required a bachelor’s degree, compared with 72% for marketing sales (Bae & Miller, 2011) and only 44% for inside ticket sales (Pierce et al., 2012). Additionally, the most desirable transferable skills or attributes were communication skills (82.5%) and computer skills (60.8%). This was not surprising considering sponsorship is heavily involved with customer service and relationship management, and involves the use of computer software to communicate and create inventory presentations.

Research question three asked if any differences existed between entry-level and more experienced positions. The results revealed that more experienced positions would involve needs analysis, presumably because experienced salespeople will have experience conducting consultative sales while understanding the process as a whole. These results are similar to those found by Pierce et al. (2012), demonstrating that consultative sales skills are required by more experienced salespeople. Conversely, entry-level positions were more likely to engage in game day responsibilities. This finding is logical considering entry-level positions are being introduced to the organization and would be performing a variety of tasks in various areas. Additionally, more experienced salespeople are more likely to have supervisory or management roles, and to generate and distribute leads to their subordinates.

For research question four, differences between in-house and outsourced organizations were examined. The results revealed that outsourced organizations

were more likely to prospect, conduct needs analysis and fulfil contract obligations, while in-house organizations were more likely to set appointments. A potential rationale for higher levels of prospecting and needs analyses by outsourced organizations may be the desire to develop a client base and engage in consultative sales. Additionally, fulfilling contract obligations would likely be most effective if completed by an outsourced organization since they would be able to devote more time and resources towards a multitude of separate accounts. It is possible, however, that fulfilling contract obligations may not have been as prevalent for in-house postings because this service component may have been implied. Or, based solely on the content analysis, in-house sponsorship sales may be lagging in the utilization of consultative sales. As a final point, the utilization of appointments for in-house organizations was also expected given in-house salespeople have regular access to their facilities.

The final research question attempted to determine if differences exist in job responsibilities between management and non-management roles. It was expected that management roles were more likely to engage database management functions because managers would likely be supervising the sales and fulfilment efforts of entry-level employees, as well as monitoring call or prospect lists. Conversely, it makes sense that the non-management roles would be conducting cold calls and making appointments as these responsibilities generally fall to sales positions with the least amount of experience. Additionally, the task of creating sponsorship packages in non-management roles could be attributed to increasing creativity and providing a learning opportunity for less seasoned employees.

Although not specifically identified as a research question, eduselling and consultative sales are two emerging concepts in sport sales training that were isolated in the content analysis. Results revealed eduselling was rarely mentioned in job postings, only appearing in 0.6% of the 337 postings. This low number does not imply that eduselling does not occur in sponsorship sales practices, but merely that they are implied, or not always listed in the job posting as a key function. This is certainly possible considering approximately 90% of teams have reported training in-house, and an average of 21.4 hours as the typical training time period (Lachwetz, et al., 2002). More regularly than eduselling, consultative sales specifically appeared in over one-third (36.2%) of job postings, supporting the awareness of this growing sales trend as a viable sales philosophy. For human resource professionals to include these types of specific sponsorship sales trends in their job postings implies a dedication to specific sales philosophies focused on training education and business partnerships.

Limitations

The most prominent limitation when conducting a content analysis is that only information communicated in the job posting can be analysed. It is reasonable to assume not all work responsibilities and skills necessary to be successful in sponsorship sales are communicated in a job posting. Therefore, the posting may not be entirely representative of the position because of omissions regarding key

responsibilities (e.g., eduselling or prospecting). Job postings may also be limited in describing how the position fits into the organization as a whole (Gan & Kleiner, 2005). A secondary limitation is the inability to make determinations about industry trends beyond the one year of data collection. With a longer time sample, it would be possible to see how job postings evolve during times of economic change or seasonal demand. Third, this paper does not delineate between types of sports events and sponsorship programmes. For example, a Tier 1 Olympic sponsorship and a small local event may require different skill sets with different sponsorship objectives. Finally, the results of this study are limited to the United States sport sponsorship market. Conclusions about markets outside of the United States cannot be made based on the results of this study.

Future Research

To determine the accuracy of job postings, future studies could match individuals who were hired with their corresponding job posting to determine perceptions about the accuracy of the posting. Secondly, future research could focus on a longitudinal design covering several years so that trends in economic, seasonal or specific job turnover could emerge. Additionally, including other sources, such as social media, to evaluate the sport sponsorship sales industry may allow a more comprehensive view of sales responsibilities or client relationship patterns. Furthermore, focusing on specific areas within sponsorship sales (e.g., premium sales) could add to this growing body of knowledge. Finally, future research could explore differences between the United States and other global sports sponsorship markets. This suggestion would be advised given the differences between global sports consumption, as well as the limited research on sports employment overseas (Madella, 2003).

CONCLUSION

The current study makes a contribution to the understanding of sales in the sport industry and it is the first examination of the content of sport sponsorship sales postings. In general, findings revealed the top job responsibilities in each job classification were selling, giving presentations, fulfilment and prospecting. It is clear these are key components necessary for sport sponsorship sales positions. This knowledge can help better prepare job seekers, as well as educators, by developing relevant training focused on these areas. In the future, the results of this study could cause job postings to be more specific, thus becoming a more accurate reflection of the position. If organizations are specific about their needs, and educators are training job seekers to meet those needs, the overall efficiency of the sponsorship sales hiring process is improved. Additionally, sport managers and future job seekers now have a resource of desired qualifications for sponsorship sales positions, as well as a resource for comparison to sales positions as a whole.

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Catherine Diamond completed her Master's degree in Sport Administration at Ball State University in 2012 and this paper came from her research project, with the data collected in 2011. She currently serves as a Project Executive for Marketing Communications with Just Marketing International in Zionsville, Indiana.

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