

A Content Analysis Of Relationship Marketing  
Conducted By The Four Major Professional Sports  
Leagues In North America

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A Content Analysis Of Relationship Marketing Conducted By The Four Major Professional Sports Leagues In North America**

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This paper addresses the condition of relationship marketing on the Internet conducted by professional sports franchises. It is hypothesized that franchises are not utilizing all of the relationship marketing tools available to them on the Internet. The literature establishes the Internet as an ideal medium to conduct relationship marketing, reviews the definition of interactivity and how it relates to relationship marketing on the Internet, outlines previous studies done analyzing web sites and establishes the criteria that will be used to evaluate the sports web sites. The procedure, a content analysis of 121 professional sports web sites (all North American pro teams from hockey, basketball, football and baseball) on criteria established through the literature, is discussed. The results show the current state of relationship marketing on the Internet by sports teams broken down by each major sports league. The results show if any of the major professional sports leagues are executing relationship marketing on the Internet better than any of the others.

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## **Introduction**

Sports, at every level, is essentially about “us” against “them.” In the world of professional sports, with rocketing player salaries and roster turnover due to free agency, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the fans to retain the sense of closeness with the teams—the “us” is now the fans and the “them” is the organization. Possible results of this schism can be lack of attendance and season ticket sales, drops in sales of merchandise, and an overall absence of interest. Professional franchises have often operated on the “if we have it, they will come” logic, knowing that the fans would always flock to the sporting event. However, because of some of the reasons listed above, this is seemingly no longer the case.

For example, according to a January 2001 study, 15 of the 30 major league baseball teams had poorer attendance in 2000 than 1999 and fans with strong fans base such as the Atlanta Braves, Baltimore Orioles, Colorado Rockies and Arizona Diamondbacks dropped 4 percent, 12 percent, 14 percent and 18 percent, respectively (Maier, 2001). In addition to this, ticket prices have risen every year in both baseball and basketball every year since 1995 (Team Marketing Research, 2001). This study does not propose that maximizing relationship marketing on the Internet will increase attendance, but an underlying tenet is that relationship marketing on the Internet will help to remedy any of the aforementioned problems before they start happening. For instance, if the NFL is strong in attendance (which it currently is) or if any particular team in an individual league is stronger than any others at the current time, implementing relationship marketing now may help to forge relationships needed in the future.

Professional sports teams need to work harder to maintain fans. Part of this hard work is to abandon the old logic and adopt a new approach that shows the fans that the organization is committed to them and makes them feel more a part of the club. The Internet presents an ideal way to help this relationship marketing problem. The Internet enables the fan to interact with the club in numerous ways—chats, e-mail, highlights, stats, etc. The question now becomes: Are professional sports teams utilizing the Internet to its fullest capabilities to maximize their relationship marketing efforts? This research examines that question by determining how effective relationship marketing is conducted on the Internet and applying those standards and evaluating the web sites of the four major professional sports in North America: baseball, football, basketball, and hockey.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the state of relationship marketing conducted by sports teams on the Internet, or their capabilities to practice relationship marketing on the Internet. This provision is made because this study will determine if the structure of the web site is set up so that it contains the necessary elements. The actual carrying out of these activities (regular scheduled chats, prompt response to e-mail) is beyond the scope of this study.

Another important aspect of this study is that it contributes a method of evaluation for analyzing these sites based on the literature review conducted in the areas of relationship marketing and web content analysis. This paper examines the application of the theory of relationship marketing on the Internet that has been established by the literature.

## **Research Question**

How is relationship marketing defined in the literature and what are the elements necessary to carry it out on the Internet?

## **Literature Review**

The term “relationship marketing” has been best explained and studied by Robert Morgan and Shelby Hunt. In their 1994 article “The Commitment-Trust Theory Of Relationship Marketing,” they define relationship marketing as the “establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p.20). This differs from the typical business interactions that are one-way. In the case of a sporting event, you buy the ticket, attend the game, and leave. Relationship marketing gives the opportunity for there to be more two-way interaction—a chance for a comment, suggestion, complaint, etc. Relationship marketing allows an opportunity for the consumer to be heard by the corporation.

The main tenets of Morgan and Hunt’s theory of relationship marketing are commitment and trust. Commitment is the level of cooperation shown by the corporation and the consumer to engage in a relationship. Since the corporation needs the consumer, the corporation needs to demonstrate that the relationship with the consumer is important. It is then up to the consumer to respond to the “reaching out” by the corporation. Morgan and Hunt claim that “relationships are built on the foundation of mutual commitment” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p.23). Trust refers to one party having confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity. This means that there is confidence in the organization and that they can rely on organization. The two terms reliability and

integrity are further characterized by honesty, fairness, responsibility, utility, generosity, and consistency (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). If a company or organization exhibits these characteristics, the higher level of trust among consumers can be achieved.

Relationship marketing garnered significant attention in the mass communication field recently as well. Jonna Holland and Stacey Menzel Baker examined how characteristics of a web site and how personalization and community are related to brand loyalty (2001). The authors developed a model that showed that creating site brand loyalty leads to predictable affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes from customers, such as repeat visits to and patronage of the site, fewer intentions to defect to competitors, and more favorable attitudes toward the site (2001).

Michael Rich's 2000 article discusses the direction of relationship marketing. While he believes that there is a need for more "rigorous databases and greater utilization of current computerized tracking systems" (Rich, 2000, p.170), he also thinks that the knowledge of a customer's personal feelings that would allow the company to customize and enhance the experience of the messages received (Rich, 2000). Further, Rich states that relationship marketing is not necessarily about getting the user to spend money, but a way to make the marketing process easier (Rich, 2000).

In another recent study involving both relationship marketing and the Internet, Davis et al put forth the notion that in electronic commerce environments a trust-based approach must be taken to consumer marketing relationships (Davis 1999). With growing numbers of e-tailers and lowering numbers of retailers, building and nurturing relationships on the Internet has become a significant priority. With the Internet growing

in popularity and accessibility each year, relationship marketing and Internet relationship marketing literature will continue to grow each year.

Another important study in relation to this topic is Adrian Nicole’s 2000 article entitled “Team Web Sites And Relationship Marketing For Sports Fans.” In this essay, Nicole first establishes why the Internet is one appropriate solution for relationship marketing among sports franchises. The author establishes that sports teams already have an established customer base and that this gives them an advantage in their relationship marketing efforts (Nicole, 2000). The fans are central to the success of the franchise because advertisements and sponsorships are sold on the basis that fans are going to see them. Nicole then goes on to point out the overlap between the average sports fan and the average Internet user. The findings were as follows:

	Internet User	Sports Fan	ESPN SportsZone Visitor
Male	70percent	64percent	95percent
Average Age	30	36	29
Median Income	50-60K	50K+	55K

The overlap of Internet users and sports fans amplifies the fact that the Internet is a strong way to reach the sports audience.

Nicole’s study posits that a “team web site is a platform for increasing brand equity because it provides immediate interactivity between the fan and the team” (Nicole, 2000, p.33). According to the author, increased brand equity of the team will encompass qualities such as decreased price sensitivity, decreased value performance outcome

sensitivity, and increased fan lifetime value. The author examined 22 sports team's sites and determined that sports franchises were not totally implementing relationship marketing in their web sites. This current study looks to extend Nicole's initial research by using her theory that the Internet is an ideal medium to conduct relationship marketing for sports teams and applying it comprehensively to sports teams in North America with criteria established by research.

A key cog to this study is interactivity: what it means and how is it used on the Internet. Timothy J. Weiss, in his article "Cyber Relationships and Brand Building," submits that the key to interactivity is customization and personal attention (Weiss, 1999). Some key concepts in Weiss' study are also utilized in this study. He believes that interactivity "must be personalized to the needs of the user and his/her interests" and "interactive in nature and delivery" (Weiss, 1999, p.20). Weiss conducted a study that executed both a content analysis on interactivity and interviews with Web marketing and Internet professionals. From the interviews (conducted via e-mail), he found that a "connection," or relationship is formed through like-mindedness, trust and the right kind of attention (Weiss, 1999). He found that web sites attend to these needs by creating communities of similar interests, have an added value (fans appreciate having the most up-to-date information) and are convenient. More key highlights that Weiss found were real-time and customized content. For his content analysis, his "checklist" included: giving the site a byline; putting the top executives online; listening and responding to customers' comments; provide choices in content; give the visitor control of the amount and timing the customization; track interactions and preferences; tailor offers based on

profile database; encourage inter-stakeholder relationships; make navigation easy; keep improving and have constant and timely content.

The article by Ghose and Dou utilizes many of the same interactive elements of a website as a method of evaluation as Bodkin and Perry. The authors claim that “one factor that is influential in improving the quality of a company’s website is interactivity” (Ghose and Dou, 1998, p.37). They also suggest that the level of interactivity in a website is critical to getting the users involved in the marketing communications process. The author's point is that the more interactivity there is, the more likely the user will engage in a relationship with the site (and thereby the company). The study found that the level of interactivity has a significant effect on the quality of corporate web sites. “Success” of a web site for this study was gauged by their inclusion in the Lycos Top five percent list. Ghose and Dou believe that such elements such as feedback forms, searches, virtual reality presentations, online ordering, contests and prizes, broadcasts, bulletin boards, section for user groups, games, and multimedia presentations are important to engage users (1998). Other elements they cite— electronic post cards, dealer locator, troubleshooting products, software downloading—are indeed important but do not translate well to sports web sites. One important note in this study was the acknowledgement that interactivity and relationship marketing are very closely related. The author's note that the potential for customer interaction (interactivity), "facilitates relationship marketing and customer support to a greater degree than ever before" (Ghose and Dou, 1998, p. 40). This closeness alludes to the fact that the more interactive elements, the greater opportunity for success in relationship marketing on the web.

To conduct this study, Ghose and Dou used a content analysis sheet that included (but was not limited to) the elements listed above. They found that the greater the degree of interactivity based on the presence of the elements listed above, the greater the likelihood of it being included in the Lycos top five percent sites list. Specifically, they found that the element “customer support” was most commonly found on sites ranked in that top five percent.

Judee Burgoon, in her study “Testing the Interactivity Model,” does not address interactivity on web sites, but does tackle the topic of interactivity. So while her methodology for this study is of little consequence to this topic, her discussion of interactivity is valuable. She conceptualizes interactivity in two ways. The first includes just three elements of interactivity: interaction, mutuality and individualization. Interaction is "the degree to which users perceive they are cognitively, affectively and behaviorally engaged in the interaction" (Burgoon, 2000, p.36). Mutuality is the sense of connection and understanding of the two entities (Burgoon, 2000). Individualization is defined by Burgoon is the "extent to which users perceive they have a rich, detailed impression of the other's identity and personalizing the information" (Burgoon, 2000, p.36). The second conceptualization had more elements to it, but it expounds on the three listed above. According to Burgoon, for interactivity to be present, these things need to be present: participation, mediation, contingency (the extent to which one person's queries, responses and comments are dependent on the prior ones in the cointeractant), media and information richness, geographic propinquity, synchronicity, identification, parallelism and anthropomorphism (Burgoon, 2000, p.10).

While Burgoon's study was more along the lines of how the interactivity was presented (through interfaces), some important elements of interactivity are raised in this study and are repeated in other studies. For example, synchronicity, information that is transmitted in real-time is a recurring theme in interactivity. If synchronicity is present, interaction is taking place, but naturally, interaction can take place even if synchronicity is not taking place. The same is with identification and participation, one can participate even without being identified, but if there is identification, participation must have take place. Synchronicity, interaction, identification and participation are all recurring themes in interactivity literature.

Blattberg and Deighton defined interactivity as "the facility for individuals and organizations to communicate directly with one another regardless of distance or time" (1992, p.5). In another study, Steur's model defined interactivity as "the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time" (1992, p.73). Deighton adds another element to interactivity emphasizing the importance of the ability to record the responses of the user (1996).

As shown, interactivity is not cleanly defined in the literature. For this study, interactivity is gauged on several concepts. Some form of interaction between the site and the user is necessary for there to be interactivity. This interaction does not need to be in real-time, but real-time events are obviously considered interactive in nature. Customization of the experience is also a key. Allowing a user to see the information that he/she selects on a web site in the manner that he/she selects helps to make the experience on a web site more personal. Underneath these categories of interactivity lie many sub-elements on a web site. Accessing information over e-mail, participating in

chat rooms, accessing live audio or video are all ways that the company/web site interact with a user. The ability to choose e-mail updates (or particular e-mail lists), select the order of information on a web site are subsequently ways in which the user has control over the content. These are the elements and guide lines in which interactivity will be judged.

In order to actually evaluate the web sites, some form of criteria is necessary. In Monica Perry and Charles Bodkin's study "Content Analysis Of Fortune 100 Company Web Sites," definite criteria is established. This study admits that "while the potential is evident, it is not clear whether or not companies are taking full advantage of that potential by utilizing a broad, rather than narrow, range of marketing communications on web sites" (Bodkin and Perry, 2000, p.87). This study evaluated corporations' effectiveness in using the various elements of the marketing mix in their web sites. Some of the elements that Bodkin and Perry emphasize are the ability to search a site, to contact the operators, news, to learn more about the company, etc. (Bodkin and Perry, 2000). Specifically for this study, it provides an outline of a web site content analysis.

To conduct the study, the authors evaluated 50 web site and identified 55 web site components. They then divided those components into nine categories: product advertising, company-specific advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, interactive/customized, two-way communications, images, and web-specific issues (Bodkin and Perry 2000). The authors then studied 50 more web sites to test the instrument reliability and found the inter-coder reliability to be 93.8 percent (Bodkin and Perry, 2000). For this study, elements found in the interactive/customize, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and two-way communications were utilized. However,

not all elements, such as stock quotes found in the public relations section of the code sheet, were used because they did not translate to sports teams. To analyze the results, the authors first determined how many sites utilized all 55 web components. The authors then analyzed each of the nine categories and determined how many companies utilized elements in that specific category. Finally, the researchers did "an analysis of variance utilized to examine the impact of the categories on web site development across industrial classifications" (Bodkin and Perry, 2000, p.94).

Kristine McInerney's article "Online Marketing: What Are Successful E-Tailers Actually Doing," also supports many of the constructs put forth by Bodkin and Perry. McInerney posits that there are four categories to a good web site: community, interactivity, convenience and design. Her first categories, community and interactivity are of particular interest to this study; while her second topics are not as important because of the uniqueness of sport in that it does not have a typical "e-tailer" agenda (i.e. while teams do sell paraphernalia on their sites, the main purpose is not to sell "inventory" such as books or CDs like Amazon.com). Further, this study does not examine how easy or convenient the elements are to find on a web site but looks to see if the relationship marketing pieces are in place on a web site. McInerney claims an online community should be like a group of neighbors discussing topics that they have in common. She posits that this community could be formed in the way of structured chats, or could be on message boards where the users are free to come up with the topics, or could be with a guest speaker. When discussing interactivity, McInerney stresses the opportunity for the user to customize his/her page and experience and also the chance for the user to talk back to the company. In relation to customization, McInerney feels that

"giving users the ability to personalize the site as their own is a good way to take customization to the next level" (McInerney, 2000, 24). The author also recognizes the significance of e-mail as a "push" method. The user can decide to request information from the company in the form of e-mail or other communication. It is important to note that it is up to the user to decide if he or she wants the updates.

It is from the interactive elements and the methodologies discussed above that the code sheet has been formulated. This study will apply many of the interactive and technological concepts discussed above, as well as the methodology described by Bodkin Perry, and build off the concepts discussed by Morgan and Hunt and in Nicole's study.

### **Hypothesis**

**H1:** Professional sports teams are not making full use of relationship marketing elements on the Internet.

**H2:** Some professional sports leagues have more relationship marketing elements on the Internet better than other leagues.

### **Methodology**

The first step in this study was to develop an instrument to perform a content analysis on sports teams' web sites. The instrument from this study was devised from the literature discussed above. As mentioned in the introduction, sports is sometimes ruled much more by emotion than by good business sense. Much of what makes a "good" web site for regular Internet companies, whether they be strictly e-commerce or merely supportive of a business, can be applied to the web sites of sports franchises. The

researcher, however, needed to go through the elements of what makes a good web site for relationship marketing in the literature and distinguish which elements are supportive of Internet relationship marketing. For example, while having a shopping bag may be good for an e-commerce site, this element does not support relationship marketing on a sports team web site. Further, an “About Us” section on a sports web site is important because it sheds light on common values held with the fans and helps to build both trust and commitment (as it does with "regular" business sites). Another example would be that a “Contact Us” section demonstrates the franchise’s commitment into a relationship with the fan—the opportunity for two-way communication is involved. This device is rooted in business rationale, but is specific for sports team's web sites.

The sample included all four major sports leagues in North America: the National Football League (NFL), National Hockey League (NHL), Major League Baseball (MLB), and National Basketball Association (NBA). In all, 91 web sites were examined representing all 120 teams. All sites from the NFL, NHL and NBA were examined while one from MLB was studied because each site in MLB was designed the same and contained standardized content. In other words, every team has the same look and the same kinds of content, all relating to that team, of course. Therefore, by analyzing one site it was possible to obtain data for them all. This sample size allowed the researcher to make accurate generalizations about the web sites and the current state of relationship marketing on the Internet by professional sports teams. Further, the census sample size allowed the researcher to isolate which specific leagues are most effectively using relationship marketing tools.

Using the sheet attached in Appendix B, each site was examined for the presence of each element. Although it extends beyond the bounds of this study, it may be noted during the study how easy or difficult it is to find some of the elements. For example, a site may have a certain feature that is seemingly illogically placed, it will receive credit for having the element but it may be noted that it was difficult to find within the site. These irregularities are important to note for the franchises because while it is important for the organizations to know what to implement, it is more important for them that the fan can find, recognize and be able to use any of the resources.

To determine presence of an element on a site, several criteria were established. To meet the standards of the element “Applying For An Account,” the usage of the site must have been affected by membership. Most often more access is gained by applying for an account. For example, to access chats or certain sections of the site, you must have a membership. Most sites examined had accounts that required registration or an account to use the message boards or chat rooms, but an account could also be set so that a user could have complete access to games, sweepstakes, or the ability to control the display of information on the site.

An element is present when it is accessed only through the site. The site must be responsible for the maintenance and content of the message boards and/or kids pages to receive credit. For example, the NBA had chats that were run through Yahoo.com, however, these chats could be accessed through Yahoo.com. While it is true that the host site does provide this opportunity, it is not unique to the site and fails to meet the basic requirement of actually hosting an element: regulation and maintenance. The same goes for links to outside sites. For example, in the NFL, several sites linked to the NFL.com

kids page. This does not count as a “Kids” section because it is not accessed only through the host team’s site.

The element “Inside Information” pertains to information that can be accessed only through the web site. Information such as game notes, player diaries exclusive to the site or any other element that can only be accessed via the web and would not be considered a feature story. A feature story is one in which a player or coach is profiled in a detailed fashion. It provides an alternative view of the primary news or newsmakers.

Some web sites promoted a relationship marketing concept on the web, but that does not qualify as anything in relation to this study. For example, the Denver Nuggets and the Colorado Avalanche have a program that rewards fans with points every time they buy tickets, merchandise, and concessions. If, however, fans could earn points for visiting the web site, it would have related to an account with the team and been included in the elements in this study. However, no teams implemented this concept. While this is a strong relationship marketing concept, it does not relate to the relationship marketing they are conducting solely on the web.

The content analysis sheet was divided into two sections. The first section included the two aspects described in Morgan and Hunt: trust and commitment. As stated previously, trust refers to one party having confidence in an exchange partner’s reliability and integrity (also honesty, fairness, responsibility, utility, generosity and consistency) while commitment refers to the level of cooperation shown by the corporation and the consumer to engage in a relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Therefore, the elements under trust and commitment on the code sheet were determined as contributing to these two tenets of relationship marketing. Again, the scope of this study was to measure the

ability for a web site to obtain a commitment and trust relationship with the fans, not the actual measurement of commitment and trust. The “About Us” section shed light on common values with the user and by providing a genealogy of the team; the franchise exposes itself and shows high level of cooperation to become involved in a relationship. This is similar to the “Press Release,” “Injury Updates,” “Multi-Media Capabilities” (highlights and press conferences), and “In The Community” sections because those sections also expose the inner-workings of the franchise on a regular basis with all of the happenings and news in the organization. By having all of the latest news and highlights, the fans look at the section (and site) as a reliable place to obtain news about the team and by explaining what the team does in its charities; it demonstrates the franchise’s helpfulness in the community and its integrity.

With the “Customer Service,” “Site Map,” “Search,” “Contact Us” and “Links to Other Teams” aspects of the site, the franchise is demonstrating helpfulness and reliability because it does not want the user to get lost navigating the site and it shows concern for their time. It also shows that the franchise is making an effort and a high-level willingness to engage in a relationship because it exhausts several avenues of help and the ability to access help to ensure that you are satisfied with your visit. The “Educational” and “Statistics” sections show the reliability, fairness, honesty and integrity of the site by providing a chance for the fan to learn about the game, its rules, or statistical leaders, with no interference of team bias. By providing the fans this factual information in these sections, the fans are able to become a better general fan of the sport and shows integrity to the sport. In the “Kids” section, younger fans can interact and play

games and shows that the franchise is showing a high value of family (perhaps a demonstration of common values) and integrity.

With “Apply For An Account,” and “Season Ticket Holder Area,” this provides those who show more of a commitment (season ticket holder, paid Internet subscription) with more benefits. This demonstrates that as a fan’s commitment to the team increases, so does the franchise’s. This relates back to a high-level of willingness to become involved in a relationship and also Morgan and Hunt’s theory that “relationships are built on the foundation of mutual commitment” (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p.23).

“Promotions,” “Games,” “Surveys,” “Chat Rooms,” “Customized Page,” “Customized Desktop,” and “Bulletin Boards,” all serve to give the fan a voice and a choice. These elements demonstrate a willingness to become involved in a relationship because it provides an avenue to get the fans involved. By providing promotions, games, surveys and quizzes, the franchise is “reaching out” to the fans and is essentially saying that it wants the fan to become involved and it wants to understand what the feeling is among the fans. Again, this study does not measure if the effectiveness of how these elements are being carried out. The customized information is also another way that the team extends itself to the fan, allowing them the choice of certain information. This is a helpful feature that could maximize the user’s visit. The bulletin boards and chat rooms allow fellow fans an opportunity to interact with other fans. The franchise helps facilitate this (and is helpful and trustworthy because of it) because it provides a place in cyber space to meet and, if players are involved, coordinating the players to be online and conducting the chat.

The second section divided the interactive elements into both formal and informal modes of communication. This section is a subset of the trust and commitment section—it details *how* the team is attempting to interact with the fan. Hence, the interactive elements from the trust and commitment section are then divided between formal and informal modes of communication. It is important to have these two distinct modes because while formal modes are easier for the team to conduct and respond to because they are soliciting responses, informal modes are necessary because it provides fans with “control” of the content. Therefore the relationship takes on a different aspect in that things are not done on the team’s terms, which is generally the case outside of the Internet.

Formal modes of communication are characterized by structure. For example, a quiz or an application is structured by the site and is considered formal. The information that is requested is controlled by the franchise. This involves filling out a survey (questions asked by the team), filling in a bullet for a poll, etc. The information is controlled by the franchise. Applications for accounts, surveys, polls, e-mail update requests, quizzes, games, e-commerce (of team whose web site is being visited) are all formal modes. The franchise is desiring specific information and the user is not able to deviate from what is desired. For example, answering a poll would be formal communication, but writing an e-mail suggesting a poll question would be informal communication.

With informal communication, the user controls the flow and the content of the communication, in the instance of an e-mail from a fan to the franchise. Chat rooms (with and without players), links to other sites and e-commerce (to other team’s stores) are

informal because the main site is merely a conduit for other information. The main site has no control over the information that is being disseminated.

This study allowed the researcher to determine if both formal and informal methods are being utilized. After the content analysis was performed, final tally sheets were assembled. The results show how many sites utilized each element. For example, how many out of 120 sports web sites have a special section for season ticket holders, how many allow the user to customize the web page, how many have a kids section, etc. The results were examined by using the composite scores of each sport by using the chi-square statistical analysis. This was used to indicate significant differences among leagues. It should be noted that the data was run using all four leagues despite Major League Baseball being standardized and creating a block of similarity.

Crosstabs were run and provided descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis to show if a relationship existed between an element (such as a message board section) and a particular professional league. Then the researcher used ANOVA (Table 1 in Results section) and descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis to determine if there was a relationship between any particular sport league and relationship marketing techniques. The chi-square analysis indicated where those relationships were and how strong the relationships were. Tamhane tests were used because the sample size varied from group to group (29, 30, 30, 31). Tamhane does not assume equal variance (as Tukey does).

The statistical significance between relationship marketing and sports was broken down by the three components that make up relationship marketing on the Internet: commitment and trust; formal; and informal. In all, the researcher tallied all of the teams to provide an overall look at relationship marketing on the Internet for professional sports

teams. These results allowed the researcher to determine the current state of relationship marketing by professional sports teams on the Internet within the three categories of commitment and trust, formal and informal. This also allowed the researcher to indicate areas in which the leagues can improve their relationships with the fans.

Based on the literature, it is posited that sports teams should develop their sites with relationship marketing as a goal. However, this may not actually be the case. In order to understand the rationale behind the sites, the understanding of relationship marketing by those who decide the content on web sites and the goals communicated by the organization, interviews were conducted on a limited basis. The interviews were conducted across the various sports, using two teams in each sport. The total number of interviews was eight; two each from the organizations in professional hockey, baseball, football and basketball in North America. The interviews with content developers were not random: teams to interview were based on their score in the content analysis. A team that scored the highest or near to that in each sport was interviewed as well as teams that scored the lowest. The interviews were conducted over the phone. The questions addressed how content developers approach relationship marketing if at all, their thoughts on relationship marketing on the Internet, and thoughts on elements they feel integral to relationship marketing. This allowed a qualitative comparison of the teams that scored highly and those that scored poorly and their difference in theoretical approaches.

The person contacted was the concept and content developer for the team's site, not the actual web developer. The web developer handles the technical development of the site and is not involved with the decisions about content while the concept developer is involved with the strategy and goals of the site. The interviews were brief and focused

on the goals of the site and probed at the understanding of the awareness of relationship marketing on the web. This, along with the statistical data collected, helped to provide insight on the way that relationship marketing is viewed and conducted by professional sports teams in North America.

### **Results-Data**

As stated above, the data was broken down in three areas: commitment and trust elements, formal elements and informal elements. A look at the results of the commitment and trust elements is first.

Looking at the crosstabs in the commitment and trust elements, several of the results show a relationship to one particular league. As mentioned before, Major League Baseball's web sites are standardized, so when one team has an element they all do. That, of course, will create strong relationships for MLB. Therefore, strong relationships are to be expected in that regard.

First of all, there were several sections that every team in every league had. All teams had multi-media capabilities, e-commerce of some kind and press releases or news. Only one team (in the NFL) did not have statistics, but the rest of the teams in the rest of the leagues did. The only element that no team in any league had was a customizable web page section.

In addition to those listed above, there were several individual commitment and trust elements that had a particular relationship to one league or another. MLB was most associated with having e-mail sign-ups, applying for an account, inside information,

injury updates, customized desktop, games and sweepstakes, chat-rooms, features, educational, about us, search, community, links to other teams kids sections.

Surveys and polls element (27 out of 29 teams) and the periodic chats with players/coaches element (17 out of 29) were most closely associated with NBA sites. The elements most associated with the NFL were quizzes (eight out of 31), a site map (10 out of 31), and the contact web master element (17 out of 31). In other words, these elements are closer in association to one particular league than any other.

Using the post hoc Tamhane test, it showed that there was a significant difference between the NBA and the NFL, the NHL and MLB in commitment and trust elements (see table 2). There was no significant difference between the NFL, NHL or MLB. The mean for the NBA was just 13.965, while the mean for the NFL was 16.935, the NHL was 17.2 and MLB was 18.0. (Descriptive statistics for commitment and trust can be found in table 3.)

ANOVA (Table 1)

				Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
INF OR ML	Between Groups	<b>(Combined)</b>		16.452	3	5.484	9.886	.000	
		Linear Term	Unweighted	15.333	1	15.333	27.641	.000	
			Weighted	15.182	1	15.182	27.368	.000	
			Deviation	1.270	2	.635	1.145	.322	
	Within Groups				64.348	116	.555		
	Total				80.800	119			
CO MTR ST	Between Groups	<b>(Combined)</b>		274.064	3	91.355	17.269	.000	
		Linear Term	Unweighted	226.303	1	226.303	42.780	.000	
			Weighted	222.473	1	222.473	42.056	.000	
			Deviation	51.591	2	25.795	4.876	.009	
	Within Groups				613.636	116	5.290		
	Total				887.700	119			
FOR MAL	Between Groups	<b>(Combined)</b>		7.956	3	2.652	3.075	.030	
		Linear Term	Unweighted	3.087	1	3.087	3.580	.061	
			Weighted	2.980	1	2.980	3.455	.066	
			Deviation	4.976	2	2.488	2.885	.060	
	Within Groups				100.044	116	.862		
	Total				108.000	119			

Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons For Commitment and Trust (Table 2)

Dependent Variable		(I) V1	(J) V1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Com/Trust	Tam-hane	NBA	NFL	-2.9700(*)	.5942	.001	-4.8686	-1.0713
			NHL	-3.2345(*)	.5990	.000	-4.7804	-1.6886
			MLB	-4.0345(*)	.5990	.000	-4.9713	-3.0977
		NFL	NBA	2.9700(*)	.5942	.001	1.0713	4.8686
			NHL	-.2645	.5890	1.000	-2.3383	1.8093
			MLB	-1.0645	.5890	.430	-2.7719	.6428
		NHL	NBA	3.2345(*)	.5990	.000	1.6886	4.7804
			NFL	.2645	.5890	1.000	-1.8093	2.3383
			MLB	-.8000	.5939	.438	-2.0939	.4939
		MLB	NBA	4.0345(*)	.5990	.000	3.0977	4.9713
			NFL	1.0645	.5890	.430	-.6428	2.7719
			NHL	.8000	.5939	.438	-.4939	2.0939

\* Indicates significance

**Descriptive Statistics—Commitment and Trust (Table 3)**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
<b>C/T</b>	<b>NBA</b>	29	13.9655	1.7825	.3310	13.2875	14.6435	11.00	18.00
	<b>NFL</b>	31	16.9355	3.3758	.6063	15.6972	18.1737	10.00	23.00
	<b>NHL</b>	30	17.2000	2.5107	.4584	16.2625	18.1375	12.00	23.00
	<b>MLB</b>	30	18.0000	.0000	.0000	18.0000	18.0000	18.00	18.00
	<b>Total</b>	120	16.5500	2.7312	.2493	16.0563	17.0437	10.00	23.00

The second grouping of elements for relationship marketing conducted on the Internet to be discussed will be formal. In analyzing the crosstabs, there are several leagues that have a strong relationship with the formal methods of relationship marketing on the Internet.

The only element that was utilized by all teams in all leagues was e-commerce. This only includes e-commerce that is related exclusively to that team. Major League Baseball had a significant association with the elements applying for an account, games and sweepstakes, and e-mail updates. The poll element was more associated with the NBA than any other league (28 out of 29) and quizzes were the more related to the NFL (eight out of 31) than any other league.

Using the post hoc Tamhane test, it showed that there was a significant difference between the NBA and the NHL and MLB in formal relationship marketing efforts (see table 4). There is no relationship between the NBA and the NFL or between the NFL and

any of the other leagues. The mean for the NBA was 3.5862, the mean for the NHL was 4.3 (best among the leagues) while the mean in MLB was 4.0. The mean for the NFL was 4.0968, but there was no significant difference detected between that and the NBA because of the differential in the size of the leagues. (Descriptive statistics for formal methods can be found in table 5.)

**Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons For Formal (Table 4)**

			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
Dependent Variable	(I) V1	(J) V1				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Formal	Tam-hane	NBA	NFL	-.5106	.2399	.441	-1.3276	.3064
			NHL	-.7138(*)	.2418	.006	-1.2715	-.1560
			MLB	-.4138(*)	.2418	.030	-.7989	-2.8691E-02
		NFL	NBA	.5106	.2399	.441	-.3064	1.3276
			NHL	-.2032	.2378	.986	-1.0397	.6332
			MLB	9.677E-02	.2378	.999	-.6460	.8396
		NHL	NBA	.7138(*)	.2418	.006	.1560	1.2715
			NFL	.2032	.2378	.986	-.6332	1.0397
			MLB	.3000	.2398	.307	-.1312	.7312
		MLB	NBA	.4138(*)	.2418	.030	2.869E-02	.7989
			NFL	-9.6774E-02	.2378	.999	-.8396	.6460
			NHL	-.3000	.2398	.307	-.7312	.1312

\* Indicates significance

**Descriptive Statistics—Formal (Table 5)**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
<b>FOR MAL</b>	<b>NBA</b>	29	3.5862	.7328	.1361	3.3075	3.8649	2.00	5.00
	<b>NFL</b>	31	4.0968	1.4687	.2638	3.5581	4.6355	2.00	6.00
	<b>NHL</b>	30	4.3000	.8367	.1528	3.9876	4.6124	3.00	6.00
	<b>MLB</b>	30	4.0000	.0000	.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.00	4.00
	<b>Total</b>	120	4.0000	.9527	8.697 E-02	3.8278	4.1722	2.00	6.00

The last grouping of elements for relationship marketing conducted on the Internet to be discussed will be informal. In analyzing the crosstabs, there are several leagues that have a strong relationship with the informal methods of relationship marketing on the Internet.

The NBA had a significant relationship with e-commerce as it relates to the ability to access other teams' merchandise (29 out of 29) and player chats (17 out of 29). MLB had a significant relationship with the chat-room and bulletin board element. All but one team (a team in the NFL) had links to other teams on their sites.

Using the post hoc Tamhane test, it showed that there was a significant difference between the NBA and the NHL and MLB in the informal elements (see table 6). There was no other significant difference between the leagues in this element. The NBA averaged three (3.0) of the four informal elements, while the NHL and MLB averaged 2.2 and 2.0 elements, respectively. (Descriptive statistics for informal elements can be found in table 7.)

**Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for Informal (Table 6)**

			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
Dependent Variable	(I) V1	(J) V1				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Informal	Tam-hane	NBA	2.00	.5806	.1924	.087	-5.0547E-02	1.2118
			3.00	.8000(*)	.1940	.001	.2789	1.3211
			4.00	1.0000(*)	.1940	.000	.6284	1.3716
		NFL	1.00	-.5806	.1924	.087	-1.2118	5.055E-02
			3.00	.2194	.1907	.928	-.4231	.8618
			4.00	.4194	.1907	.193	-.1155	.9542
		NHL	1.00	-.8000(*)	.1940	.001	-1.3211	-.2789
			2.00	-.2194	.1907	.928	-.8618	.4231
			4.00	.2000	.1923	.651	-.1923	.5923
		MLB	1.00	-1.0000(*)	.1940	.000	-1.3716	-.6284
			2.00	-.4194	.1907	.193	-.9542	.1155
			3.00	-.2000	.1923	.651	-.5923	.1923

\* Indicates significance

**Descriptive Statistics—Informal (Table 7)**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
INFORMAL	NBA	29	3.0000	.7071	.1313	2.7310	3.2690	2.00	4.00
	NFL	31	2.4194	1.0575	.1899	2.0315	2.8072	.00	4.00
	NHL	30	2.2000	.7611	.1390	1.9158	2.4842	1.00	3.00
	MLB	30	2.0000	.0000	.0000	2.0000	2.0000	2.00	2.00
	Total	120	2.4000	.8240	7.522E-02	2.2511	2.5489	.00	4.00

To sum up all of the post hoc Tamhane tests, for commitment and trust there is a significant difference between the NBA and the other three leagues and there are no other relationships in that category. In formal elements, there is a significant relationship between the NBA and the NHL and MLB, but not the NFL. In the informal elements, there is a significant relationship between the NBA and the NHL and MLB. There is no difference between the NBA and NFL in informal elements.

### **Discussion**

**H1:** Professional sports leagues are not making full use of relationship marketing elements on the Internet.

Generally speaking, professional sports leagues are doing slightly better than average in implementing relationship marketing elements on the Internet. The mean score for all leagues was 16.55 out of a possible 25 elements, or roughly 66 percent of the elements.

The one area in which most teams could improve on is commitment and trust. There are several areas all the teams could utilize to help build commitment and trust on the Internet. No team in any league had an option to customize the pages and the content. Implementing this could go well with applying for an account with the web site. After signing in, the user's page would appear and the content would suit his/her predetermined preferences.

Another aspect teams could utilize to help build commitment and trust is a season ticket holder's area. By providing these fans who have previously self-selected themselves as loyal through their purchase of season-tickets with a private section on the web, this indicates a mutual commitment and loyalty to those fans in which relationships

are founded on (Morgan and Hunt, 1994, p.23). Only 14 percent of the professional sports teams made use of this feature. Further, most of those were only to manage their account. To fully utilize this aspect, teams have several options. Extra benefits such as additional information on the latest game by a particular coach, exclusive promotions and/or contests, access to stadium music, selection in stadium music, all post game quotes from players and coaches, etc. The web site would stand on its own with all of the “normal” content, but the extra features in the season ticket holder’s section would further increase the value of that relationship. In other words, perhaps a press release is posted on the web site about a press conference hiring a new coach, season ticket holders could get access to watching the entire press conference live via the Internet.

Quizzes are another element that teams can utilize to help build commitment and trust on a web site. Only 15 percent of the teams had quizzes on their web sites. Quizzes can be used to reveal information about the history of the franchise or about last night’s game. This would be something that could be fresh every day or week that would keep fans returning to the site.

Educational sections are another way to help build relationships with fans. The NBA and the NFL were especially deficient in this aspect. Only three NBA teams and just six NFL teams featured educational elements on their sites, compared to 50 percent of NHL teams and 100 percent of MLB teams.

A way to contact the web master is yet another way that teams can help build relationships. Only 29 percent of the web sites offered this feature. Several teams had links to contact team personnel but did not include a web master. Some teams included an

empty text box to send messages to general departments within the organization, but often there was not an option to send a message to web master.

In relation to the formal elements, teams are slightly better than average. The mean score for all 120 teams was 4.000 (out of six elements). All teams had e-commerce and most provided polls (76 percent), games or sweepstakes (75 percent), the ability to sign-up for e-mail updates. As stated previously, teams can improve formal relationship marketing on the Internet by implementing quizzes and the ability to apply for an account. This kind of relationship marketing is important to implement because it gives the franchise control of the kinds of feedback it gets (fans answer questions that are determined by the franchise). This is important in gathering demographic or psychographic data about the fans who visit the web site. This can help future marketing efforts and also strengthen advertising avenues because of a more detailed analysis of the typical fan that visits the web site. And since relationships are two-way, the fan receives more access to the web site, the ability to win prizes, the ability to customize information, etc.

The professional sports leagues were slightly better than average in implementing informal elements. The average mean for all four leagues was 2.400 (out of four elements). Major League Baseball had the lowest mean with 2.000. MLB does not offer player chats on their web sites nor is there links to shop for other teams on their sites. Further, the NHL and NFL could also make use of this option as well. The NFL only has 52 percent of its teams that conduct player chats, the NHL only has 43 the NBA has 56 percent. Teams will have to look at their sites and consider adding this element. This type of informal interaction helps fans feel an ownership of ideas and the team helping to

create a bond. The user has control over the content, an important and empowering concept.

The NHL does not give fans the ability to shop for other teams on their site even though all of the sales are run through the NHL store. The NBA could offer more chat rooms and bulletin boards for fans – only 41 percent of the teams in the league had this element.

**H2:** Some professional sports leagues have more relationship marketing elements on the Internet better than other leagues.

In regard to commitment and trust, the overall average of all teams was 16.55 out of 25 elements. The NBA averaged only 13.9655, significantly less than the NFL, the NHL and MLB which averaged between 17 and 18 elements. Only one team in the NBA offered the opportunity to apply for an account with the web site. Two teams in the NBA had an injury update on their web site. Three teams offered an educational section. Zero NBA teams had a search window on their site nor was there the presence of a site map. These are immediate areas that the NBA can utilize to help build commitment and trust on their web sites.

In regard to formal elements, the NBA had the lowest mean of 3.5862, was the lowest of the four leagues. MLB (4.00) and NHL (4.30) were significantly better at implementing formal elements than the NBA. The NFL had a mean of 4.09, but it was not statistically better than the NBA or worse than the NFL or the NBA. In relation to statistical significance, the NFL is not any better or worse than any of the other leagues, but it can be said that that MLB and NHL are better at implementing formal methods of relationship marketing than the NBA.

With informal elements, the NBA had the highest mean for all leagues with an average of 3.00 (out of 4.00). This was significantly better than the MLB (2.00) and the NHL (2.20). The NFL averaged 2.42 elements, which was not statistically different from the NBA or the NFL and NHL. Generally speaking, the NFL was not any better than the NHL or MLB or any worse than the NBA at implementing informal elements.

Overall, the results were better than expected. However, as indicated above, there is still room for improvement in relationship marketing on the Internet, particularly in the way of commitment and trust. The NBA needs to implement more commitment and trust and formal methods of interaction, but is the best of all four leagues in informal relationship marketing methods on the Internet. The NFL is one of the strongest leagues in commitment and trust elements, but is average when it comes to formal and informal relationship marketing modes. The NHL and MLB are also strong in commitment and trust and formal relationship marketing elements, but are the worst at informal methods.

The interviews with the web site content developer's revealed that relationship marketing was not a well-recognized or communicated term in the industry. Only one of the eight subjects interviewed had a clear purpose for the site. Mary Owen of the Buffalo Bills stated that the purpose of [buffalobills.com](http://buffalobills.com) was "a marketing and media tool used to inform, entertain and strengthen the Buffalo Bills interest groups while creating revenue through online sales." It is worth noting that Bills web site had 24 out of 25 commitment and trust elements, the most of any team in any league. The other seven people interviewed did not have a formal goal for the site, indicating that there is a lack of communication from the organization about the purpose of having a web site. Hence, if

relationship marketing is a term that most organizations are familiar with, the concept is not filtering its way to those who make decisions about the content of the team web site.

Many of the people interviewed indicated that they consider as much fan feedback as possible and that the most important ways of obtaining this information are polls, surveys, e-mail and message boards. To them, these elements were the most important for relationship marketing. While many indicated that they gathered information (feedback) from the users about the site, only one mentioned the importance of gathering information about the users such as who they are, where they live, income, etc. This is significant because while it is certainly important to give the fans a voice, the Internet can also be a tremendous way to gather demographic and psychographic data about the users.

The one area in which most felt they could improve their sites in regards to relationship marketing and is amplified by the results of this study, was customization. The results showed that no team in any league had the ability to customize their content on a web site. Some teams, such as the Indianapolis Colts and Memphis Grizzlies, are moving closer to customization by providing the ability to choose which e-news categories they want delivered. The desire to provide customization was mentioned by five of the eight people interviewed.

### **Conclusion**

Although sports have been described by players and owners as a business, many times these organizations are not run as such. Billionaire owners who have made a fortune in the business world do not apply the same approach and principles to running a baseball team. Only recently have teams even begun to advertise. While many teams

realize that sport is a product that needs to be sold, this shows that the sports world is usually a step or more behind the business world. North America has often been described as a sports culture; however, fans are perhaps as fickle as any consumers when it comes to what they like and will not hesitate to boycott a product if they feel they are being treated improperly. Also, cable packages and television coverage make it easy for the casual fan to remain a casual fan by watching and participating from a distance.

However, sports teams do have major advantages and differences over other businesses. First of all, teams wear jerseys that carry the city's name to it and that association gives fans an immediate belief that they are a part or associated with a team. For example, it's Pittsburgh's Steelers, not the Rooneys. That association gives people a natural affinity and loyalty to the team. Also, with the exception of New York and Chicago, there is no major competition for the franchises. If someone in Los Angeles wanted to see a baseball game, it would have to be a Dodgers game. While these are important advantages, sports franchises must still work hard to maintain relationships with fans and the Internet provides an opportunity to build this relationship and keep fans as close to the teams (and the ballparks) as possible.

One of the most important contributions of this study is the instrument to measure relationship marketing on the Internet. Future research could examine this instrument for modifications as the technology capacities and more relationship marketing options become available on the Internet. Future research could also expand this study in several ways. First, this study could be duplicated in one year to gauge the progress of sports teams in this regard. It could also provide insight into the constant flux of professional sports teams' web sites. While certainly the elements at the heart of this study are

necessary to conduct successful relationship marketing via the Internet, how these elements are implemented ultimately determine the emphasis of the relationship between the fans and the organization. Another study could examine how well the elements described in this study are actually being implemented. For example, how quickly is e-mail responded to, how many player chats are hosted in a season, how often feature stories are produced, etc. Another study that could be conducted is one that studies a correlation between the teams that practice relationship marketing at the highest levels and merchandise revenue, ticket sales, television viewership, etc.

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## Appendix A

### Operationalized Elements

a) About Us—Sheds light on common values with the user (for example, a commitment to excellence, a commitment to sportsmanship, etc.). Also, in a relationship, there is a “letting down of the guard” by showing the history. In a sense, shows the customer/user that the organization is willing to be involved in a relationship.

b) Customer Service—Gives customers the opportunity to become involved and interact with the company, a chance to have concerns “heard” by the company. Shows empathy with customer.

c) Apply for an account—In relation to sports, this could either be an e-mail subscription or a password coded section. Provides the user with a chance to become involved with the organization, gives power to user. This shows that the information and flow is not one-way.

d) Press releases—Gives fans the opportunity to read about news within the organization. Again, letting the customer know everything about the organization.

e) Educational—Teach fans about organization, rules of sport, etc. Shows that the organization places an emphasis on helping the user, empathy.

f) Kids—A place for younger fans to interact. Much has been made recently about the inability for kids to go to sporting events because of the state of sports, this would be an opportunity for older fans to exemplify the fact that they are kid-friendly. Shows the value of family by the organization.

g) Promotions—Possible promotions held exclusively on-line, or a cross-promotion with other ventures.

i) Games and sweepstakes—The opportunity for free tickets or team merchandise by entering information. Gives benevolent feeling.

j) Search—Allows user to find the information they want quickly. Again, a benevolent act that shows concern for the users time and patience.

k) Site map—Again, a conscious effort to help make the site easier to use.

l) E-mail/contact us—See above.

m) Surveys—Allow users to vote on an opinion-based question. This interactivity again helps to make the communication direction more diverse.

n) Quizzes—Test users knowledge, those who get it right could win a prize...shows good-will while giving the users a chance to be involved.

o) Chat-room/bulletin board—Allows fans to discuss team-related issues in a non-regulated factor. Again gives fans more control of the topics covered, a place in cyber-space to meet.

p) Multi-media possibilities for games—instant play-by-play on the web or a radio link to listen on the computer. Shows the commitment to the user by allowing users the chance to catch every game in some form.

q) E-commerce. Chance to buy tickets or merchandise. The site should have not only that team’s merchandise, but should provide links to other teams as well. Convenient for the user.

r) Season ticket area – a special password coded area specifically for only season ticket holders.

s) Customization—Site provides user the ability to decide the order of information they receive. Also provides them the opportunity to decorate their computer desktop by making downloads available.

t) In the community—Describes public relations activities of organization and athletes within the community.

## Appendix B

Content Analysis Sheet—Relationship Marketing

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Address: www.\_\_\_\_\_

### Commitment and Trust

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail updates/sign-up                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Press Releases       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Season ticket-holder area                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Statistics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for an account                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Features             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> “Inside” information                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Injury updates                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Site map             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customize page                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> About Us             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customize desktop                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Search               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Games and sweepstakes                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact web master   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys/polls                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> In the community     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quizzes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Links to other teams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chat-room/bulletin board                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Kids                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-media possibilities for games/interviews |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Periodic chats with players                    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-commerce                                     |   |

### Interactive Elements

#### Formal

- Apply for an account
- Surveys/polls
- Quizzes
- Games and sweepstakes
- E-commerce (Shop for team)
- E-mail update (sign-ups)

#### Informal

- E-commerce (Shop for other teams)
- Chat-room/bulletin board
- Periodic chats with players
- Links to other teams/league

Notes: