

Background:-

The St. Louis Blues is a professional Ice Hockey team based in St. Louis, Missouri. It is a member of the central division of the Western Conference of the NHL. They compete with Detroit Red Wings, Nashville Predators, Chicago Blackhawks, and Columbus Blue Jackets. The name came after the famous song “St. Louis Blues” by W. C. Handy. The 19,150-seat Scottrade Center, located in Downtown St. Louis is where the Blues plays their home games.

The team was founded in 1967 as one of the expansion teams during the original expansion from six to twelve teams, along with Minnesota North Stars, Los Angeles Kings, Philadelphia Flyers, Pittsburgh Penguins, and California Seals. The Blues was the last of the expansion teams gained official entry into the NHL, they were chosen at the insistence of Chicago Blackhawks over Baltimore.

The Blues made it to the final round of their first three seasons, however, they lost to the Montreal Canadians in 1968 and 1969, and then by the Boston Bruins in 1970. The 1970s was a difficult era in the Blues history, because the playoff set- up has been changed and the Chicago Blackhawks joined the Western Division. The Blues became major player in the Playoff for 25 consecutive years (1979 through 2004). Recently, after a five years of being swept from the Playoffs, the Blues made to the playoffs in 2009.

The Blues was on the edge of Collapse. This was due to mainly the financial decisions made by Salmonos first owned the Blues. The Salmonos cut the team staff down to three employees. One of who was Emile Francis, who served as team president, general manager and coach. But, also due to the pressure caused by the World Hockey Association.

Despite the fact that the Blues has been through difficult times in its franchise history, they stay competitive in all time. In 1983, the Owner of the Blues did not send a representative to the NHL Entry Draft for which the team lost the right to pick players.

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Another issue, the team was about to be moved to Canada but the NHL was unwilling to lose a big market such as St. Louis, therefore, the NHL voted against the deal. Also, in Mid 1980s the team has only 26-contracted player whereas, other teams have an average of 60 Players at that time.

Since entering the NHL as an expansion team in 1967, the St. Louis Blues have employed some of the greatest players in history, including old-time hockey heroes like Dickie Moore, and Doug Harvey. Later, fan favorites included names like Bernie Federko, Brett Hull, Wayne Gretzky, and Bob Plager.

One of the most successful campaign was “ Do You Bleed Blue?”. The former Vice President of Marketing and Communication Jim Woodcock led the campaign. It generated excitement about the team and focused attention on how to be a true fan of the Blues. At that time, people attending the Blues games were seen wearing bloody blue bandages as part of their game-day outfit. Some show their enthusiasm and support by attaching IV bags full of blue fluid to their arms. The campaign was around for a few years, and this might explain why fans had turned their backs to the Blue Bleeder theme. They felt a new fresh campaign is a necessity.

The Blues is one of the most successful NHL teams in terms of attendance. In the season 2003- 3004, the Blues was ranked in the sixth place with about 18,500 (96% of capacity). After the Blackout year the attendance suffered a tremendously, in the 2005- 2006 season the attendance was about 14,213 (73% of capacity). This big drop in attendance has a big affect on the ticket sales and more importantly the overall team spirit.

The table below shows the attendance figures in the home games. The St. Louis Blues fans are always supportive of the team despite the fact that the Blues have not win a championship in since it joined the NHL and became part of it. We need to take advantage of this great opportunity and get the fans more engaged and most importantly get more fans to support the team by buying game tickets and team collectables to help the team achieve better results and future wins in the coming season.

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Year	Attendance average	% of capacity
2000-2001	19510	101%
2001-2002	18970	99%
2002-2003	18570	97%
2003-2004	18560	97%
2004-2005	The blackout year	
2005-2006	14213	73%
2006-2007	12250	63%
2007-2008	17610	92%
2008-2009	18554	97%
2009-2010	18883	99%
2010-2011	19150	100%

Source ESPN.com

The Blues team at this time optimistically thinks that they may be entering the most exciting time in franchise history with young players like T.J. Oshie, Patrik Berglund and David Perron. Each was drafted by the Blues and has been taught what it takes to be part of the Blues. They play hard for their team, hoping to one-day lead the Blues to the NHL's ultimate prize, The Stanley Cup championship. The communication campaign will utilize this enthusiasm and use these young stars in the Advertising campaign to reach out to as many fans as possible.

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Positioning:-

- We are the St. Louis Blues a professional Ice Hockey team base in st. Louis, Missouri
- A member of the National Hockey League. We are in the Central Division of the Western Conference.
- St. Louisans, whom eager about winning, enthusiastic and supportive of their own city team.
- We Pledge to go after every game, and make it our game. Our promise is not to let you down whatever it takes.
- We compete with all NHL teams to reach our ultimate goal the Stanley Championship.
- We are different because we are the Blues. Passionate, eager, nothing will stop us from winning. Moreover, entertainment will be provided in our way to the glory.
- We are not just a team we are a part of the St. Louis history we are the Blues.

Positioning Statement:-

We are the St. Louis Blues a Professional Ice hokey, a member of the NHL. We promise to go after every game and make it our game no matter what it takes to make it happen. It is our pledge to bring glory and joy to the city of St. Louis and its people.

SWOT analysis: -

Strengths: -

- Wide loyal base of fans is a major strength to the St. Louis Blues. As research shows that the Blues is one of the most successful teams in the NHL in terms of attendance, despite the fact that they never won a championship the entire franchise history. The Blues most of the time was ranked in the top teams in attendance. This will be a helpful factor to help us achieve our goal in the campaign.
- The Blues is part of the NHL, which is a well known and widely considered to be the premier professional ice hockey league in the world.
- Ice Hockey is one of the major professional sports in the United States, along with the NFL, NBA, and MLB.
- Being located in St. Louis is a major plus to the Blues. St. Louis is a big city, with a big supporting community.
- Enthusiastic, and young players like T.J. Oshie, Patrik Berglund and David Perron. Each was drafted by the Blues and has been taught what it takes to be part of the Blues.

Weaknesses:-

- Lack of trust between the fans and the management, due to history of poor management and decision making in the past that made the Blues suffers.
- The Long history of struggling to reach the playoffs has created a huge gap between the team and the fans. Moreover, it shakes the confidence of the team members in achieving the team goals.
- Lack of stability. Constant changes in the coaching members and management may affect the team overall performance.
- Hockey in general suffers from lack in interest. Although the sport has very loyal fans, they tend to be small in numbers. As a result, this would be a big challenge to capture a larger number of audiences.
- The team performance on the field. For the fans it is all about the performance on the field no matter what efforts the management do to bliss the fans.

Opportunities:-

- Being in the big city St. Louis it provides the Blues with a big opportunity to gain support through big corporation based in St. Louis. These includes, Anheuser-Busch, Boeing, Ameren, based the other major corporation. The presence of those big corporations would give us a chance to capitalize and gain financial support through sponsorships and publicity.

- St. Louis as one of the U.S major cities captures a huge attention from major media companies such as FOX, CBS, and NBC. This would help in promoting the team in a wider range, which will allow the team messages to reach more people, and to be heard more often. Also, it would help in increasing the awareness of the team. More importantly, those media hubs would be a helpful tool and partners in achieving this campaign goal.

- Being in a big city is a great opportunity to engage with the people in the city and get involved with them through charity. Players showing up in events will help the team to reach out and become part of the society. It would help to get a free media coverage in which it all will result in achieving our goals.

- Other sports Schedules work perfectly as an opportunity for the St. Louis Blues, which will give the Blues to capture more prospects. The MLB ends on October by far every year, The NFL ends on February, and the NHL regular season Starts on October until April, and the playoffs are played from April to mid June. As a result, this would give the Blues five months as the only sports in the St. Louis area.

- The price ticket on the average is affordable starting at 12 USD.

Threats:-

- The NHL instability is one of the first threats to the game of hockey because of the long notorious NHL history of disagreements, long negotiations, and most frustrating the lockouts. The 1994–95, and 2004–05 NHL lockouts canceled many of the games of those seasons and especially the 2004-05 NHL lockout canceled the whole seasons at that year. These lockouts and disagreement among the League administration, the owners of the teams and the players presented by the NHLPA (National Hockey League Players' Association) would lay negative massive effects

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upon all the publics, the media support, the hockey community, the prospect businesses' partnerships and mostly upon the fans of the game and their interaction with the game of Hockey.

- The competition of all other sports organizations within the city of St. Louis. For example, from the St. Louis Rams, and the St. Louis Cardinals (the most loved team in St. Louis).
- The existence of more loveable sports like, NFL, MLB, and NBA all represent a huge threat not only to the Blues only but also the NHL in general.
- The emotions of the fans are not controllable by the management.

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Goal:-

The St. Louis Blues team's goal is to create more awareness for the team image (brand) to win back a larger fan base locally and nationally with energized enthusiasm, increase ticket sales, and generate more than one dollar from the Blues store.



You Inspire Us

Objectives:-

- Rebrand the Blues, the fans will be the theme of this new image in which phrases like, You Inspire Us, It takes you to win will be used in media to show the importance of our fans.
- Use promotions to generate more money from ticket sales. For example, group's tickets, full season tickets, and redesigns the Blues stores to appeal to all people men, women, kids
- Position the Blues as the Missouri State team in Hockey to attract a wide national fan base.
- Use the social media to increase the awareness of the Hockey, NHL in general. Also, to be social active to listen to the fans.

Key Publics:

The St. Louis Blues key publics for the communication campaign will mainly consist of three types of key publics which both are essential for the success of the campaign and the overall success of the team's goal on the game.

Key Public 1:-

The St. Louis Fans:-

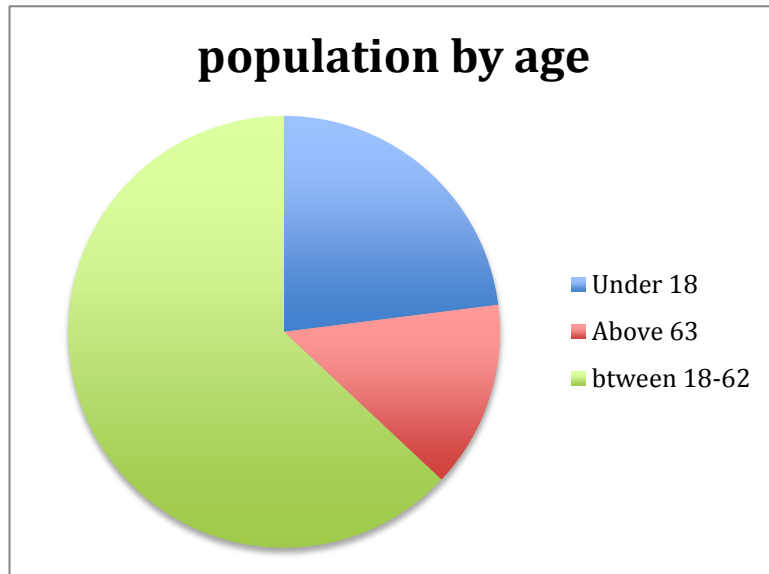
The first and most important key public is the St. Louis Blues' fans. Obviously, the major Blues' fans are located in St. Louis metropolitan community and its counties and the surrounding Missouri cities because St. Louis Blues is the only NHL team and presumably the only major Hockey team that represents the whole Missouri State. Even Kansas City does not have a professional Hockey team that is affiliated to any major hockey league.

As a result, we are talking about a big fan base with the size of the Missouri state that looks forward with enthusiasm to their only major Hockey team that represents them and represents their homeland state.

Key Public 2:-

Sports Enthusiastic. Not necessarily Hockey or St. Louis Blues Fans.

Missourians are known for their enthusiasm about sports in all kind. For example, In St. Louis there are three different sport organizations the Cardinals in the MLB, the Rams in the NFL. Kansas City has the Royals in MLB, and the Chiefs in the NFL. But the State has only one team in the NHL, which is the St. Louis Blues. Thus, the Blues has a great chance to set itself as the state's team. As per the US census of 2010 the Missouri Population is about 6,000,000 with a 63% of people aged between 18 to 63 years old. As it is shown in the charts below, the Blues has a good opportunity to capture more fan base in the State of Missouri.



Key publics 3 :-

Groups and organizations

This key public is meant to cover the universities students mainly in the St. Louis area and the other universities nearby the city of St. Louis. Also, this key public will include big corporations workers in the city of St. Louis.

The main goal behind targeting those groups is to get them to better understand the Philosophy of the St. Louis Blues, the history of the team, and what the team means to the city and its people, and vise versa.

Here some examples of the key universities we are targeting.



Here are some of the key companies we are aiming to get their support to achieve our ultimate goal of winning NHL championship (Stanly Cup).



Tactics

Key Public 1: -

St. Louis Blues Fans

TV ads: -

Advertisements on TV is one of the most Successful methods to achieve the Blues communication plan to regain the lost fans due to the bad performance of the team and the lockout. Ads will be aired in all major channels in the St. Louis area. The ads will be aired on the Local Cable Channels Such as (KTVI 2, KMOV 4, KSDK 5, KPLR TV 11, and more often in the national ESPN Sport Channel to reach a wider audience. The number of the spots will rely on how effective the Ads will be, but it would be aired two weeks prior to the season, and will be aired heavily one day or two before the game. A minimum number of spots will be 2 spots per day for each channel.

Print Ads:-

To be placed in major local newspapers such as “ the St. Louis Post-Dispatch” and other favorite local sport magazines. The theme of the Ads will be concentrating on how the fans would help the team to win all games. Ads will use different lines such as, “ you are the player that get us a win” , “ It takes you to win a game”, and “ you never let us down , we will not”

Billboards:-

They will be used prior to the beginning of the season , and during the season. They will be used lightly before the season. In another words, they will not be all around the city’s billboards until the season starts then it would be heavily used.

Radio ads

- Radio ads will be aired on St. Louise’s and Missouri’s’ favorite local radio stations like are KMOX, (AM sports and talk) which will be used throughout the day especially during rush hours like in the morning during going to work hours and after work hours. Also, in the game day.

- Bigger billboards will be on the sides of busiest highways. Mainly, the messages in the billboards will be the team members' words with a picture of the player. A Player message should not exceeds eight words. Toward the end of the season a whole team message will be replacing all the individual players messages. The goal behind that is we first need to create awareness in the audiences' minds of the players , and then will build up a team message to emphasize on the teamwork done in the whole season.
- Smaller billboards will be used in the same manner as the bigger billboards; the only change is that we would give more room for the players to say.

Social Media Campaign

FaceBook:

- Update St. Louis Blues Page with the team members information like, key players, the schedule, and in the game day post something about the opponent team.
- Attract traffic to the page by offering discounted tickets for a limited time, engage with the friends by answering their questions.
- Meet the star day, where a player will spend an hour or so communicating with the fans via Face Book page.
- Offer special deals on the Face Book page to encourage fans to participate and buy tickets.

Twitter:

- Spread awareness and important information about the team through tweeting the Blues' games schedule, and the games play times in advance and retweet them again prior to the games' days and exact times.
- Spread awareness about the tickets sales prices, groups and promotional discounts, also announce the contests, tickets' raffles, and the winners afterwards.

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- Generate excitement among the fans and the teams Twitter followers and maintain maximum traffic of tweets especially during the games season and tremendously prior to each of the Blues' games.

Foursquare:

- Foursquare will be used to encourage more number of fans to go for the games through allocating certain number of fans check-ins to the games would be given free beverages, appetizers, team's branded cheering giveaways like hats and collectables; group check-ins would be awarded group tickets sale discounts and free beverages and food meals from the team's restaurants and cafes.

Groupon Deals:

- Participate with Groupon to offer family deals of two or more tickets. In addition to that give a big discount on the team jersey or collectables. Also, offers free snacks or beverages. The number of tickets will be given in this deal will depend on the sales of the tickets. For example, if the tickets were sold out two days before the game then there will be no tickets.

Entertain the Audience at the stadium.

Those activities will allow fans to experience more fun in the game. Prizes will be distributed to participants. Here are some of the activities.

- During the break a five to ten minutes game between children of the audience will be played. The winning team gets a free hats or jersey. This game will be played in regular basis like every other week in home games.
- Another activity will be as follows, a fan will be chosen to try to score he would have a three tries. If he scores one he will get a ten dollar, scores two the prize will go to a hundred, scores three the prize will go to a thousand dollar.

- The most cheerful fan during the game will get a prize two. This aims to encourage the audience to cheer for the team all the game.
- The winner of both games will be pictured and their pictures will be used as Ads materials to encourage fans to come and experience those activities.

Key Public two:-

Sports Enthusiastic. Not necessarily Hockey or St. Louis Blues Fans.

This key public will be divided into two sub-groups. First one, is the Saint Louisian, and the Second sub-group will be all Missourian.

For the first group they will be targeted through the TV Ads, the newspapers, radio spots, and magazines that mentioned above in the first key public since the all media covers the all area of the city of St. Louis.

- St. Louis Blues Song

In addition to that a song will be produced and aired in the radio in the game days. The song will talk about the history of the team and the history of the city of St. Louis, and tries to link both as a one thing in the listeners' mind.

Missourians

- For the Missourians a travel package that includes game tickets, hotel room for two days, dinners, and one-day tour in St. Louis. This deal will be done with a cooperation of travel agencies, travel websites to bring more traffic to the city and to the Blues game.
- Invite most prominent Hockey sport bloggers to help spread the awareness and sport reputation for the St. Louis Blues team, and focuses in the team as the only Ice Hockey team in the State of Missouri. To get better understanding those bloggers will be invited to the team's fan meeting and gathering, meet the players, and all other media clubs in the organizations.

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Key Public Three:-

Universities and Corporations based in St. Louis

These two group will be targeted via two ways:-

- A corporate discount will be offered to the university students, Faculty, and to the workers of organizations. Discounts will vary based on the Organization population.
- A presentation by a team member, general manager, or communication and marketing manager of the St. Louis Blues will be given to all organizations that willing to participate. The goal of those presentations is to increase awareness of the sport in general, and to attract more fans to the St. Louis Blues.

Other Tactics for all Key Publics

In this part I would discuss a different tactics that fits all three Key Publics to increase the fans base of the Blues.

- Discount on Full season tickets up to 35%, half season tickets up to 25%, a mix of five to ten games of the fan choice with up to 15% off the original price.
- Apps for all mobile devices that give an update on the games, team news, voting option for the best player in the game.
- The Blues Day, an unknown day of the year, in this day a player of the St. Louis team will be walking in different cities of Missouri and give away gifts, collectables, and cash prizes to any one wearing a blues jersey in that day.
- Internet banner Ads will be placed in most crowded sports web sites.

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Budget

Category	Quantity	cost per unit (in U.S dollars)	Estimated Total (in U.S dollars)
COMMUNICATIONS			
Television (3 spots,6 channels)	70 spots 10 spots/7 months	1500/spot	\$ 105000
Radio	70	200	\$ 14000
Outdoor Billboards			
-Big Billboards	12	2000	24000
-Small Billboards	100	300	30000
Print (magazine - newspaper)	45	500	22500
Internet & Social media Communication			
Internet web Banners-ads	30.000.0	\$5/1000 Banner	\$1500
-Facebook display ads	100.000.0 placement	\$5 for 2,500 placements	\$ 200
-Social Media – Facebook/ Twitter/Foursquare maintenance	2	200/month*12m	\$4800

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expenditures			
-Social Media Club Meetings			\$5000
The Blues Song	1		\$30,000
Radio Spot for the Song	100	200	20000
Mobile App application Update Miantenance	1		10000
Communication Cost			262,000
Other			
Giveaway Hats T- Shirts Stickers, etc	50000	1	50000
Blue Day	1 / year	Max 10000	10000
Presentation cost	24	500	12000
Day Game activity	24	1200 Max	28,800
Sub total (others)			108,800
Total (Communication+ Other)			362,800

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Calendar

Activity/ Month	Sept	October	November	December
TV Ads				
News Paper				
Magazine				
Radio				
Social Media				
Presentations				
ticket discount				
Billboards				
song				
In game activity				
Blues Day				
Groupon				
Giveaways				
Internet Banners				
Fans meeting	once			
Travel offer				
App deals/ Ads				

	Jan	Feb	March	April
TV Ads				
News Paper				
Magazine				
Radio				
Social Media				
Presentations				
Ticket discount				
Billboards				
song				
In game Activity				
Blues Day		one day only		
Groupon				
Giveaways				
Intnernet Banners				
Fans meeting	once			
Travel offer				
App deals/Ads				

Evaluation:-

The success of the campaign will be measured through the following.

- The Increase of the ticket sales
- The increase of the sales at the Blues official stores
- The App downloads
- The fans like or follow the Blues pages in the social media venues.
- The number of hits on the Bloggers pages and by reviewing the fans comments
- The number of hits on the blues official website.
- The research by the Ad agency
- The number of ticket sold to people from outside the city.
- Feedback gathered by professionals in the media field.