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Riverhounds Marketing

The Riverhounds are a Pittsburgh based professional soccer team, and they play in the United Soccer League. The Riverhounds have the intention of joining the Major League Soccer (MLS) by 2023. The Riverhounds have a fan base called The Steel Army, the name makes absolute sense for being located in Pittsburgh, also known as the steel city. Having the Riverhounds join the MLS would help Pittsburgh bring more people to the city. Having another sports team will hopefully get a younger audience to want to stay in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh is really struggling to keep people in the city and maybe with the addition of another major league team, people will want to stay. Highmark Stadium, is where the team plays, first broke ground in the summer of 2012 and they played there first game in spring of 2013. The stadium holds 3,500 people but is able to be expanded to 18,500 for when they eventually join the MLS. It is located across the Monongahela River in station square. Highmark stadium is soccer-specific, but its field can convert to host other sports like football and rugby. The stadium overlooks the city's downtown skyline; it is a breathtaking view and no picture can do it justice.

For small companies, like the Riverhounds, it is important that their information is easily accessible and easy to read. Social media has provided this ease of access to consumers. For the Riverhounds they have a website, Instagram page, YouTube channel a Facebook page and a twitter account. The website they have is easy to navigate. It tells you upcoming games right at the top right, which is the most important part of a sports team, knowing when the games are, so the customer can know if they can go to the game. The news for the team is right in the middle of the website, so the customer can see what is going on with the team. Right below that is there social media presence. And the website also tells you who their pro league team is, the Columbus

Crew. Tickets, news, schedule, team, shop etc. are at the top with drop-down menus. Easy to purchase tickets, and is simple to figure out how to purchase them. The shop looks outdated and is not easy on the eye to look at. The roster is simple and easy to look at. They definitely could display their position for the customers to see and know what they play. Their website is definitely a lot better than I thought it was going to be but could use some work since all other social media links to their website. (www.riverhounds.com/). The Instagram page has no theme, which is important when looking at the page. The pictures could be better quality; some are hard to see or are just not good. The posts have good information about the games though. But it looks as if Instagram is not a social media page they focus on since they have very few followers on it. (@Pittsburghriverhounds). Their YouTube account does not have many subscribers. The content they post is very uninteresting. It has the same lady in most of the videos and a lot of interviews with the coach. Not many things fans would want to see this, they want to see the players being personal. They do post highlights from past games, which is the best part of their whole channel. (ThePghRiverhounds). You can tell they did not spend a lot of time on these two social media accounts, but they probably are not where their target market is. The next two social media accounts seem to be where they focus all their attention on. The Facebook page has a good size following. The information they post is current and detailed. Very easy to follow and see when the games are. The audience is not very engaged through in the posts. It says they are very responsive to messages in Messenger, which is good if someone has a question. Their telephone number and website are posted in the bio so there is easy access to contact them. (Pittsburgh Riverhounds). Finally, their twitter account, this one is very similar to their Facebook page. The main difference is that they post more videos on Twitter. Twitter is definitely easier to read and videos are a great way to get their audience to stay (@PghRiverhounds). Overall, the

Riverhounds have done a good job at maintaining their social media presence. Some of their sites need some work to make them more user-friendly, but it is really not that bad.

Technology is a big part of sports now. It is changing how people watch the game and how the game is played. People want easy access to games on their phones when they are not home. They are now able to stream the games if they are not home with a television. Technology has been able to give fans the ease of watching the game and not having to be home to do so, but technology has also enhanced the game of soccer. Goal-line technology is being used to assist referees. To implement this tech, Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) went through a long process of testing potential goal-line technology companies and having them audition their systems at FIFA matches. If the ball crosses the goal line the referee is alerted by the system. For the overwhelming majority of goals scored in FIFA matches it is obvious if the ball crossed the plane and easy for the referees to deem a goal. But the small percentage of tricky instances where the ball may have crossed the plane for a split second is where this tech will be crucial.

The culture of sports is becoming more inclusive for females. The idea that sport is a man's world today is an outdated idea. Sport is at the frontline when it comes to challenging gender roles. This questioning is being fueled by sports organizations realizing the economic opportunity that female fans represent. More Americans watched the Women's World Cup final in 2015 than the NBA Finals or the Stanley Cup (Hingo). So, women's sport is a huge opportunity for brands to play a positive, active role in equalizing the inequity of female representation both on the field and the fans base.

With technology in the sports industry companies are able to get more personalized information to fans. When a customer buys a ticket the companies are able to take that data and

really get to know what they like. They use that data to provide their fans with personal, customized information based on their interactions with the team. This creates a more engaging experience for the fans. No one ever likes those general emails, but they do like the ones that speak most to them. So this is a way to get fans to keep coming back to the games. If they remember the fun time they had they will want to buy a ticket again, and that is the goal, to get customers to keep coming back.

Pittsburgh is a city known for its sports so it is only natural that they all compete with one another. In Pittsburgh, people revolve their days around the sports games. They make sure they are either home or at the game watching them. This is very good for the market because the fans are very loyal and will always support their teams. There is a negative to this though. If two of the teams are playing at the same time the fans will pick either the team that is doing the best or their favorite sport over the other. For the Riverhounds this is a big problem. Soccer has only become popular in the States in the last few years. With that, they do not have a big or super loyal fan base yet. So people will always choose the other sports before them. The first competitor would be the Penguins; they are the biggest since they are back to back Stanley Cup champions. There is a big demand in Penguins tickets because of their success. The next would be the Steelers; there is a ten-year waiting list for season tickets for them. The Steelers may not have won the Super Bowl in a few years, but Pittsburgh loves their football team. They are a successful team each year, which makes them fun to watch. The final competitor to the Riverhounds is the Pirates. Yes, they may not be a very successful team, but baseball is known as America's pastime. It may not be the most fun to watch but going to the games are always the most fun times. It is a super relaxed atmosphere and is a great place to go with friends and family.

The Riverhounds, being a Pittsburgh based team, is doing pretty well in their industry. With all the other teams they are competing against and soccer not being fully accepted in America yet, they are in good shape. There have been talks of the Riverhounds joining Major League Soccer, can help them be more competitive against the other pro- league teams in Pittsburgh. They also have to update some of their social media pages because it is a big role nowadays in having a good fan base. If you have a successful social media page people will be more willing to share their posts and bring new customers to their games. Finally, with soccer rapidly growing in America. Once It makes its way fully to Pittsburgh, the Riverhounds will have an unbelievable amount of fans and support.

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