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**LOCAL MEDIA PROMOTION OF THE B.A.C., ELEMENT OF
THE SPORT MARKETING STRATEGY**

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Abstract

Our work is based on the premise that the success of a competition depends mostly on the specific marketing actions, which have to be much more diversified and more efficient in the Romanian cities where no competitions of the same level have taken place for a very long time and local media can be a very important factor in this approach. The aim of the research was to increase the performance level of local and national Athletics - by promoting the international competitions in the media the Romanian and foreign athletes who participated in the competitions and it was considered that the promotion of international athletic competitions in the local media, organized by the Romanian Athletics Federation in partnership with the local administration in Pitesti, is a marketing action that facilitates the increase of the spectators at the sport event and determines their active participation in stimulating, encouraging, supporting the athletes to achieve valuable performances. Research results highlight the fact that a marketing strategy where the "3 M", Methods, Means, Materials are effective, and promoting the event and attracting the public to the stadium is successful. The paper presents the elements of the marketing strategy developed and implemented by the media in Pitesti and the results of its implementation at Senior Balkanic Athletics Championships, 2016 from the perspective of spectators and the Romanian team components.

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Keywords: Athletics competition, promotion mass-media, management, marketing.



1. Introduction

Our research aimed to satisfy the five categories of reasons that attract the sports consumer, "Big 5 Sport Motives" (Shilbury, Quick, & Westerbeek 1998, pp. 48-49).

Taking into account that the marketing activity puts the customer in the spotlight, it is normal for the product to be made in accordance with its requirements and needs (Shank, 2005). Around the sporting product are the elements of the marketing mix, in the design of which the organization must take into account the specific characteristics of the sport activity in general and of each particular sport (Niță, 2016; Niță, 2017; Niță & Mihailescu, 2017) Considering that the organization of an event "involves an ample process of management of infrastructure, allocated staff, budget and time (Constantinescu & Gheorghe, 2015) and that promotion is "that part of the company's communication process, using a set of specific methods and techniques (materialized in promotional activities), try to influence the behaviour of its current and potential clients in order to obtain the best results (profits) for a longer period of time" (Anghel, 2009, p.48) and that the implementation of the promoting involves (Schwarz & Hunter, 2008, p. 200) several synergistic actions, we have materialized the elements of the marketing mix in the promotion of the Balkan Athletics Championship (B.A.C.) the 75th edition, Pitesti, 2016.

It was considered that the promotion of international athletic competitions organized by the Romanian Athletics Federation in partnership with the local administration in Pitesti was considered to be a marketing action that facilitates the increase of the spectators at the sport event. The local mass media promotion of the Seniors Balkan Athletics Championship, 2016 edition, organized by the Romanian Athletics Federation in partnership with the local administration in Pitesti, determines the creation of an environment favourable to materialize / maximize the performance potential of the athletes in the competition.

2. Problem Statement

The Athletics Federation of Romania, affiliated to the Balkan Athletics Association, has organized the 75th edition of the Balkan Athletics Championship, which took place from 25-26 June 2016 at the Nicolae Dobrin Stadium in Pitesti. The sport event was organized for the third consecutive year by the FRA, each time in the same location. The media commission's mission was, as far as possible, to target the marketing strategy of all parties involved in the 75th edition of the Balkan Athletics Championship, Pitesti, 2016: Romanian Athletics Federation, athletes, coaches, public and sponsors.

3. Research Questions

Our strategy focused on the promotion of the participating athletes, their results, the importance of the competition - the 75th edition, the posters and flyers produced and distributed for the contest, the news and the broadcasts made before the start of the Balkan of Athletics and during the it. Our research and analysis was based on the views of the RAF, the athletes and the public on how to promote media competition. We considered it important to know the structure of the public in four categories:

- depending on how they participate in sports competitions (active, passive participants);
- depending on your attachment to sports (spectator, TV viewer, sportsman, amateur);

- depending on the involvement in sport reasons (fans of a sport, fans of an athlete, fans of a particular event, etc.);
- depending on sport behavior (temporary fan, local fan, devoted fan).

4. Purpose of the Study

The objectives of the media marketing strategy were:

1. Informing the public about the organization of the Balkan Championship Athletics, 75th edition, Pitesti, 2016;
2. Improving the image of the RFA by promoting organizational quality and notoriety increasing through performances of Romanian athletes;
3. Positioning the Romania's team as an important member of Athletics Balkan level;
4. Attracting young people from Arges County and not only to practice Athletics;
5. Gaining confidence from local authorities on behalf of sponsors to invest in Athletics.

5. Research Methods

In order to promote the competition and to carry it out in the presence of a large audience, a competition promotion committee was organized at the local media level. (Figure 01)



Figure 01. Model of the Balkan Athletics Championship Promotion Committee, 75th edition, Pitesti 2016

In order to streamline the action to promote the competition, efficiency that represents the case study in our research, we had analysed the techniques of promotion from the perspective of the advantages and disadvantages of the uses, inventing the main specific communication tools and techniques. Thus, the elements of the marketing strategy have been elaborated and its implementation has been implemented. (Figure 02)

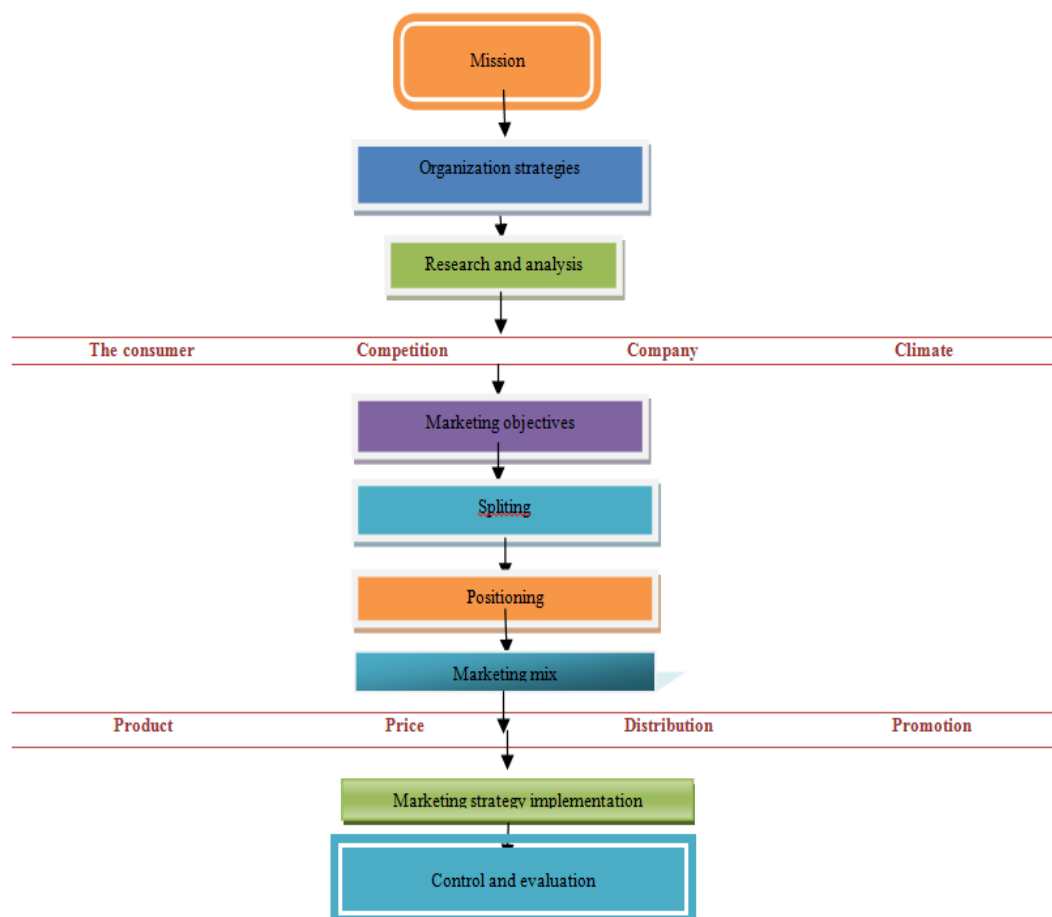


Figure 02. The marketing strategy model in the promotion of the Balkan Athletics Championship

In promoting the competition we used a unidirectional communication system consisting of the following components: source of information-message (i.e. the information or idea to be broadcast); the message broadcast channel (representing the real message support); the receiver of the information (consumers, distributors, etc.).

The following means were chosen to promote competition: written press; the television;

- advertising through electronic media - we refer here to media sites and social networks. The competition was promoted by various sites in Arges County, sites that have a large number of visitors daily. And this means of information is based on the rapid possibility of transmitting information and updating it permanently. In addition, a Facebook page was created specifically for the competition, which contained information about the contest, but also about the Romanian athletes participating in the competition. The page was successful, with a large number of views for each post.

In addition to these methods that were used in the competition promotion strategy, others have been used in connection with advertising: (Table 01)

- outdoor advertising - by using banner poster for advertising purposes, applied around sports grounds in Pitesti, Pitesti City Hall, Argeş Prefecture, DJST Arges, etc .;

- direct advertising - by the controlled transmission of messages to a specific group of people, involving the communication action aiming the informing and attracting spectators to the competition. In case of the direct advertising, at the media committee advice, athletes who participated in the competition

came in direct contact with the public, sharing flyers with viewers and sharing information about the competition.

Extremely important were the prints (banners, flyers), which were a very effective means of promotion because of the direct contact they had with the target audience

6. Findings

Table 01. Advertising through electronic media

TV Institution	Media	The type of information	Duration	The title	Data
Argeş TV		News	0'58''	Expectations from the Balkan	09.06.2016
Argeş TV		Interview	1'28''	The ballet of athletics in Pitesti	13.06.2016
Argeş TV		News	0'34''	Important presence at Balkan	16.06.2016
Argeş TV		News	0'31''	Balkan athletes compete in Pitesti	20.06.2016
Argeş TV		Interview	1'19''	Positive impressions after Balkan Athletics	27.06.2016
Antena 1 Piteşti		Interview	1'13''	Balkan, again in Pitesti	08.06.2016
Antena 1 Piteşti		News	0'15''	Ionica calls the audience to the stadium	24.06.2016
Antena 1 Piteşti		News	0'20''	Panturoiu, champion at Balkan	28.06.2016
Curierul Zilei		Reportage	-	The Balkan Championship begins	25.06.2016
Curierul Zilei		News	-	Two Arges in the contest	25.06.2016
Curierul Zilei		Reportage	-	Panțuroiu, champion	27.06.2016
Curierul Zilei		Reportage	-	Romania, second in the Balkan Championship	28.06.2016
TOP		News	-	The ballet of athletics will take place in Trivale	24.06.2016
TOP		News	-	Cornel Ionică hopes that the pilots will come to the contest	24.06.2016
Argeşul		Reportage	-	Athletes from 17 countries come to Balkan	22.06.2016
Argeşul		Reportage	-	Andreea Panțuroiu, the new champion at the triple	27.06.2016
Argeşul		News	-	Five gold medals on the first day	27.06.2016
Argeşul		News	-	Romanian women, leaders	27.06.2016
Argeşul		Reportage	-	Second place in the final at Balkan athletics	29.06.2016
Argeşul		News	-	Marian Oprea at the third Olympics	29.06.2016
Online institution	media	The kind of information	Duration	Title	Data
Epiteşti.ro		News	-	Balkan athletics in Pitesti - the program	24.06.2016
Instituțiilestatului.ro		News	-	The Balkan of Athletics in Pitesti	14.06.2016
Instituțiilestatului.ro		News	-	The Balkan of the Athletics Program	15.06.2016
Instituțiilestatului.ro		News	-	The Balkan of the Athletics Program	16.06.2016
Instituțiilestatului.ro		News	-	Get ready for Athletics	24.06.2016
Instituțiilestatului.ro		News	-	Romania, 2 nd place at Athletics Balkan	27.06.2016
Bitpress.ro		News	-	Balkan Athletics Championship in Pitesti	22.06.2016
Agpress.ro		Interview	-	Panturoiu, about Balkan	20.06.2016
Agpress.ro		Interview	-	Răzor, about Balkan	21.06.2016
Agpress.ro		Interview	-	Bobocel, about Balkan	22.06.2016
Agpress.ro		Interview	-	Florea, about Balkan	23.06.2016
Agpress.ro		Interview	-	Pierdevară, about Balkan	24.06.2016
Agpress.ro		Interview	-	Neagoe, about Balkan	25.06.2016

The athletes' information on the Facebook page concerned the year of birth, the best result of the career, the best result of the year, the current club, the coach and the track record so far. (Figure 03).

Posts have been successful with the public, the created Facebook page having an impact of hundreds among the people who appreciated the page, as well as the posts regarding the contest, the program, the athletes, etc. - the posts with the hundreds of votes.



Figure 03. Ancuta Bobocel presentation on the Facebook page created specifically for the competition

As part of direct advertising, the flyer was the first of its own initiative, and thus a first direct contact was created; the public could find out about competition and could be attracted to follow the contest. (Figure 04)



Figure 04. Presentation Flyer for Ionuț-Andrei Neagoe, one of the Romanian athletes participating in the Balkan Athletics Championship, 75th edition

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the competition promotion we developed and validated a questionnaire of 21 items that we handed to a sample of 100 spectators present and a questionnaire of 28 items distributed to 50 participating Romanian athletes to the competition.

In the following figures (Figure 05, 06 and 07) we have suggested some aspects that reflect the effectiveness of our strategy in the two categories of subjects: spectators and athletes.

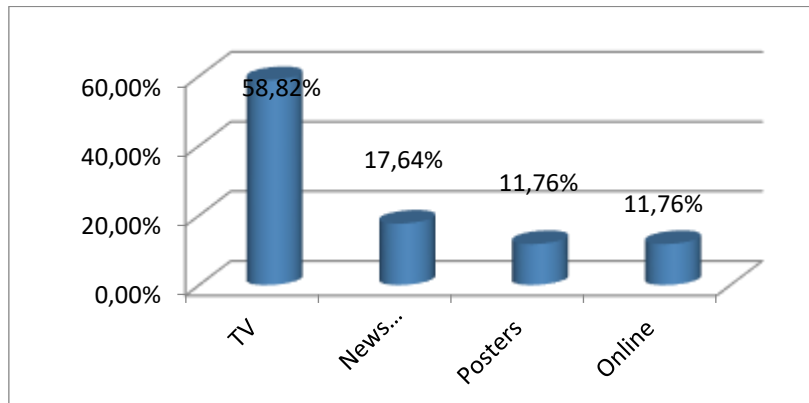


Figure 05. Representation of sources of information on the conduct of the competition

From the survey we found that to a large extent the public understands the positive role it plays in achieving the performances of the athletes.

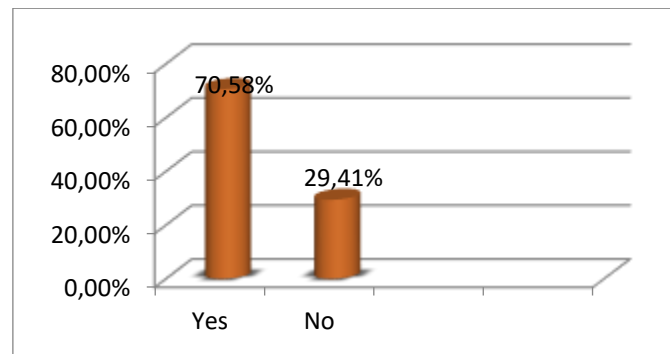


Figure 06. Public Replies to Item 17 "Do you think the results of the contest can be influenced by the atmosphere created by viewers?"

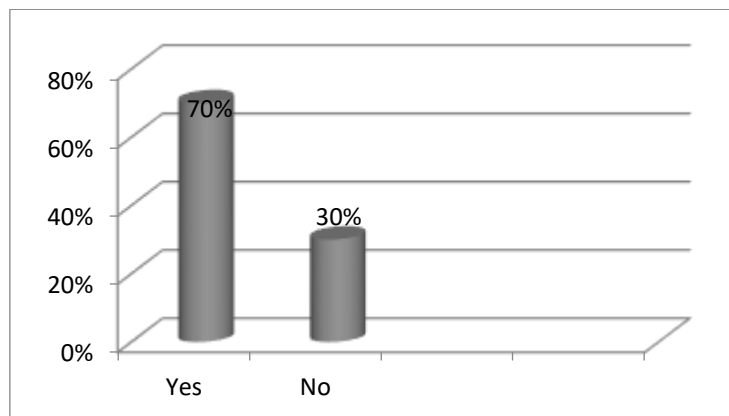


Figure 07. Athletes' Responses to Item 21 on Improving Results by Promoting Competition and Attracting Spectators

7. Conclusion

Depending on the appetite for Athletics, the public comes to the stadium to watch athletic competitions: 47.05% of those surveyed come to each Athletics contest, 23.52% only attend international competitions, 23.52% follow national competition, and 5.88% participate as spectators occasionally at

athletic competitions. It is also important that the audience knows from the athletes participating in the competition, which also speculated very well by the media, by promoting the important athletes before the competition. 100% of the respondents are willing to receive information about Athletics through the media.

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