



Pacific FC Strategic Communications Plan

Assignment 3A

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Executive Summary

Pacific FC is seeking to gain recognition as a significant player in the Greater Victoria sports, entertainment, and community scene. Establishing this reputation is a crucial step in ensuring the organization maintains stable ticket and merchandise sales. This plan will identify the steps to support Pacific FC to obtain its organizational goals and increase game attendance by 30 percent in the first half of the season. Additionally, we want to increase social media engagement by 45 percent by the end of the official season.

Pacific FC can put more resources into uplifting local youth community soccer organizations through proactive volunteerism and special events. Also, Pacific FC will need to implement alternative marketing strategies to reach different demographic sectors on social media and in Greater Victoria with proactive sponsorships and alliances. The costs of this communications strategy are relatively inexpensive but will require labour, planning, and resources.



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Situation Analysis

Pacific FC is the first professional soccer team and only professional sports team located on Vancouver Island. The Canadian Premier League (CPL) is a new league founded in 2017 and Pacific FC is a new team to the CPL (CPL, 2022). As a new entrant to the Greater Victoria sports market, Pacific FC needs to grow their audience and establish a positive reputation as a key component of Greater Victoria's entertainment, sports, and community scene. By establishing a positive reputation, the marketing team expects to achieve ongoing and sustainable ticket and merchandise sales. Overall, Pacific FC is attempting to establish themselves as a crucial part of Victoria's identity with this strategic communications plan.

Sports teams rely on profit to survive and as a new entrant to the market, Pacific FC has the opportunity to increase sales through strengthening community relationships and extending reach. The marketing department must achieve sustainable ticket sales and to do so the communications department must grow Pacific FC's popularity in greater Victoria. If they fail to make an impact within the community and create a following amongst fans and media the team could fold or relocate to another location.

Organizational Analysis

After winning their first ever title in the 2021 CPL season, Pacific FC has gained national and local exposure. New investment in the Starlight Stadium and thriving jersey sales signal towards economic success as well (CTV, 2022; Moreton, 2022). The reputation is limited but positive amongst the local community and fans: local media reports on team success, fanbase, and positive community interactions. Pacific FC also shows support for the Indigenous community with the release of their alternate jersey that was designed by Coast Salish artist Maynard Johnny Jr. (Ip, 2022).

Pacific FC faces two salient external threats: 1) Residents near the stadium are dissatisfied with how crowded the area can become during games and are concerned about congestion; and 2) A new expansion franchise is coming to BC, the Vancouver FC, which is located in Langley (CBC/Radio Canada, 2022) and could take some fanbase away from Pacific FC.



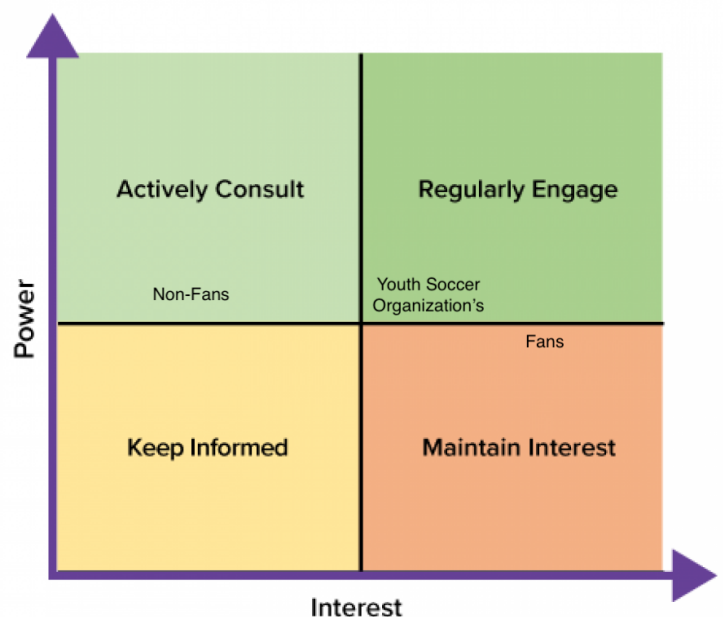
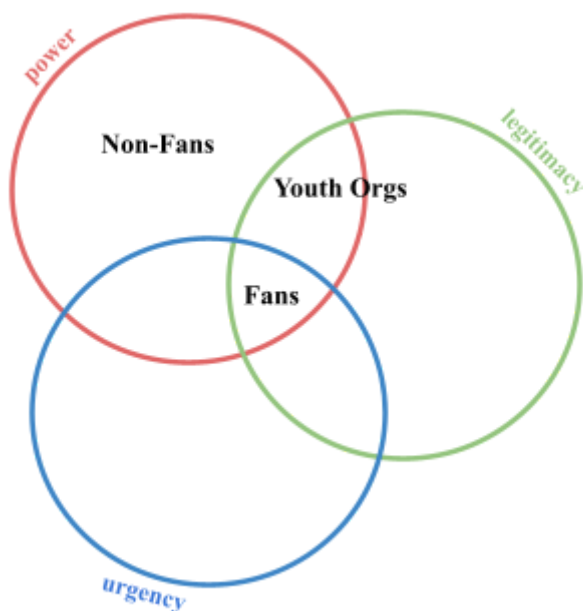
However, the stadium expansion will economically benefit Greater Victoria cab companies and entertainment venues and a franchise expansion could positively fuel friendly rivalry which will grow Victoria’s fanbase.

Stakeholder Analysis

First, we provide an exhaustive list of all Pacific FC’s current stakeholders. These include:

- fans (current season ticket holders and single ticket buyers),
- non-fans (potential customers),
- Pacific FC owners and management,
- team members and staff,
- sports journalists and local media,
- the Canadian Premier League and sponsors,
- the City of Victoria and Langford,
- residents of Langford,
- Starlight stadium expansion contractors,
- youth soccer organizations in Victoria,
- businesses adjacent to Starlight Stadium,
- and Greater Victoria sports bar venues.

Next, we look at three key strategic publics for Pacific FC and define them using demographics, psychographics, Mitchell’s salience model (Mitchell et al., 1997) , and the power/interest grid:





1. Fans (current season ticket holders and single ticket buyers)

Pacific FC soccer fans encapsulates broad gender and age demographics (Moreton, 2022) but we have chosen to focus on the majority fan demographic which is local men between the ages of 18 and 40 who already had previous interest in soccer. This is a high interest, medium power, and definitive stakeholder. Fans are capable of converting non-fans to fans and are those stakeholders responsible for Pacific FC's economic success. Therefore, they have power over the team, and a legitimate and urgent claim to engagement. This strategic plan will not focus less on attracting local men ages 18-40 because it is already an influential fan demographic and it is likely non-fans that are men ages 18-40 are being naturally influenced by their counterparts.

2. Non-Fans (potential customers)

The demographics of non-fans that are the focus of this communication plan includes local men and women under 18 and over 40, and local women between the ages of 18-40. These demographics are either currently unaware or uninterested in Pacific FC and are therefore the strategic targets to introduce to Pacific FC's fanbase. This is a low interest, high power, dormant stakeholder and an apathetic public (Grunig, 1997). Non-fans must be actively consulted by the Pacific FC communications and marketing teams to discover what they require to become fans and bring awareness of the sport of soccer to them. They have power over Pacific FC because their interest or lack of in the team translates directly to economic growth and survival of the team.

3. Youth Soccer Organizations in Victoria

The last strategic public that is a focus of this communications plan is local youth soccer organizations and players in Greater Victoria. This demographic is boys and girls under 18 that live in Victoria and have a personal interest in soccer. This is a medium interest, medium power, and dominant stakeholder. Pacific FC should be regularly engaging with youth soccer organizations to improve their public image, enliven their community engagement, grow their fanbase, and nurture the next generation of soccer fans and players. Furthermore, youth soccer organizations have a legitimate claim and power over Pacific FC because creating fans out of children will influence parents and family units to become fans as well.



Strategic Approach

Establishing Goals and Objectives

Goal

The organizational goal is to find optimal communications solutions to generate more profit. Therefore, the goal of this communication plan is to reach higher engagement with Pacific FC's targeted audiences through strategic social marketing campaigns (Hallahan et al., 2007). An asymmetric two-way (Falkheimer et al. 2018) social media strategic plan will be the primary tool to achieve the following awareness, acceptance, and action objectives (Smith, 2021). Through these combined objectives, it is hoped that non-fans under 18 and over 40 become more engaged with Pacific FC's social media and the Langford community becomes more accepting of game day disruptions.

Awareness Objective: Increased Social Media Reach

Non-fans will be strategically targeted to create a larger fan-base and actively engage the community to help establish Pacific FC as a key part of the Victoria entertainment scene. This will be achieved through growing more awareness of Pacific FC amongst non-fans under 18 and over 40. This objective will be achieved through targeted social media content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We hope to see increased engagement on Pacific FC's social media by 30 percent within three months of this campaign.

Acceptance Objective: Increased Community Acceptance of Game Day Disruptions

An effort will be made to appease community members who live in the neighborhoods surrounding the stadium due to traffic and noise concerns they have during games. This will be accomplished by announcing planned interruptions on social media with advanced warnings for any in-game festivities (fireworks, live music etc.). We hope to measure this objective by monitoring if complaints to the city of Langford and Starlight Stadium decrease. We hope to see a decrease of 30 percent within three months of this campaign.

Action Objective: Increased Game Attendance/Profit

Through an expanded social media presence to the aforementioned demographics, we hope to increase the amount of tickets and merchandise sold on a consistent basis. The objective



is to increase game-day attendance and merchandise sales by 30 percent in the first three months of the season. This goal will be measured through counting ticket sales and revenue generated through merchandise sales.

Action and Response Strategies

The following proactive strategies will be used:

1. Sponsorships

Pacific FC will put forward sponsorships with local businesses which will help gain awareness and approval within the community (Smith, 2021). Examples of this could include sponsorships with a local youth soccer team or a local non-profit organization.

2. Special Events

Events locally in the community which encourage engagement and participation from current and future fans. These special events will include photo opportunities which can produce media for further exposure in the community (Smith, 2021). Examples of special events include block parties where fans can engage and play soccer with players of the team, theme nights where fans dress up alike and more.

3. Alliance

Pacific FC works with local pubs and sports bars to play games and put on game-day events. This will help encourage a positive reputation which will generate positive publicity (Smith, 2016).

4. Volunteerism

Developing strong volunteerism with the organization will help contribute good to the surrounding community while increasing employee morale and retention (Smith, 2021). This entails rewarding employees for engaging with fans and youth to help further establish their community presence.

5. Triggering Events

Triggering events such as giveaways during attendance of a game with prizes such as free tickets or merchandise which will help provoke action among our key publics (Smith, 2016).



The following reactive strategies will be used:

1. Justification & Investigation

For parking, admit that the situation is not ideal, but that we are attempting to find a solution. As parking is an issue with fans who want to frequent games, we will acknowledge the issue and base it off good intentions (Smith, 2021). We will admit that the organization did not plan for the issue of parking to become such an ordeal but we expanded the strategy with good intentions that we wanted to expand the stadium for more fan's to be able to experience the game.

2. Apology

If a challenging unpredictable situation arises, our crisis communication strategy is to admit fault, accept responsibility, and ask our key publics for forgiveness. We will use this strategy to ensure that we maintain long-lasting relationships with those key public's (Smith, 2016).

Developing Message Strategy

Pacific FC is committed to bettering the Vancouver Island community through local investments and outreach. The key message of this campaign is "We are here for You!" meaning Pacific FC is here to create and fully commit to a community outreach program. As a result, Pacific FC can benefit Vancouver Island with youth soccer camps, school seminars, and charities, which is an investment that will benefit both the club and the community.

By committing to the program mentioned above, Pacific FC can increase its influence across Vancouver Island, which will expand its fanbase, public image, and social media engagement. Hosting camps locally also helps Pacific FC discover the next local talent, such as our prospect Sean Young, who was born in Victoria and raised in West Shore (Pacific FC, 2022)

The program is targeted to emotionally appeal to children and youths. Pacific FC's involvement within the community will improve the image of the club as their activities target the future generation (Smith, 2021). By being the only team on Vancouver Island, winning gold will also bring pride to the community as well as bringing people together in unity.

The rational appeal of Pacific FC's strategy includes contributing to Vancouver Island's youth soccer programs, which will lead to the growth and promotion of the sport and local



community engagement. This will recycle the profit back into the neighbourhood while providing the club with future prospects.

Tactical Program

The tactical elements of the communications plan include interpersonal, organizational, news media, and promotional tactics.

Interpersonal Tactics

- We will create an opportunity for organizational site involvement with Langford residents by holding a barbeque with the team. This informal setting will allow for local residents to proactively interact with Pacific FC. As a free social event, this tactic will help to increase community acceptance of game day disruptions.
- Audience site involvement with local youth soccer teams will be completed by having Pacific FC players practice with local teams and run drills. This formal meeting setting will involve going to the public and engaging directly with young soccer fans and their parents. Youth soccer organizations will also be offered deals on bulk ticket purchases. This tactic helps to fulfill all three objectives and will be effective in reaching those under 18 in our target demographics.

Organizational Tactics

- We will run social media contests where followers post hashtagged content to be entered in a draw for free one-time tickets, season tickets, or merchandise. Contests include pictures of fans in jerseys, pictures of their game day snacks, or videos of soccer tricks. This special event will fulfil the awareness objective of increasing social media reach and the action objective of increasing game attendance.
- General serial publications will be created in the form of electronic newsletters that are posted on the Pacific FC website and announced/linked to on social media. This newsletter will include information about players, game schedules, upcoming events, charitable campaigns, and new merchandise. The newsletter will help to fulfil the awareness objective by increasing social media engagement because people will want to follow social media to receive newsletter updates.
- Video interviews will be conducted with the players to humanize them to fans and followers. Videos will be published on the Pacific FC website and posted to social media



intermittently on Fridays and titled ‘Player Party Fridays!’ This will provide a method for fans and non-fans to learn about Pacific FC and increase acceptance. Tactics involving social media will be most effective in targeting those ages 15-40.

News Media Tactics

- Broadcast electronic media will be used to promote information about events and games. Broadcast media will be effective in reaching those above 40 in our target demographics but is also a supplementary method to reach other age groups. By sharing game day notices in advance, this tactic will help further the acceptance objective.

Promotional Tactics

- Special print advertising will be run to promote special event nights on game days. This will include family night ticket deals to games and partnerships with sports bars and pubs. These advertisements and events will fulfill the action objectives by increasing game attendance.
- Promotional items will be given out to increase awareness and acceptance of the team. Items include vehicle wraps, giveaway merchandise (jerseys, licence plates, soccer balls), free tickets, branded trinkets (stickers, keychains, shoelaces). Settings where these items will be given away include special events, at games, for contests, and to youth soccer teams.



Schedule and Budget

Schedule

Objectives	Increase Awareness	Increase Acceptance	Increase Action
January 2024	- Electronic newsletters start		
February 2024	- Electronic newsletter	- Video interviews begin every Friday.	
March 2024	- Seasonal promotional items debut - Electronic newsletter	- Social media contests begins - Video Interviews	- Youth soccer programs begin (throughout the season)
April 2024*	- Season opening media day - Electronic newsletter - Seasonal promotional items	- Start of Season BBQ - Video Interviews - Social media contests	- Special print advertising begins for promotions - Youth soccer programs
May 2024*	- Electronic newsletter - Seasonal promotional items	- Video Interviews - Social media contests	- Youth soccer programs - Special print advertising
June 2024*	- Electronic newsletter - Seasonal promotional items	- Video Interviews - Social media contests - Measurements of a three month survey. -Game attendance half measurements	- Special Summer Bar/Pub Promotions - Youth soccer programs - Special print advertising - Measurements of a three month survey. -Game attendance half way through season measurement
July 2024*	- Electronic newsletter - Seasonal promotional items	- Video Interviews - Social media contests	- Special Summer Bar/Pub Promotions - Youth soccer programs - Special print advertising
August 2024*	- Electronic newsletter - Seasonal promotional items	- Video Interviews - Social media contests	- Special Summer Bar/Pub Promotions - Youth soccer programs - Special print advertising
September 2024*	- Playoff media day - Electronic newsletter - Seasonal promotional items	- End of Season BBQ - Social media contests - Social media measurements -Game attendance measurements	- Youth soccer programs - Special print advertising -Game attendance measurements

*Active In-Season Months



Budget

Item	Cost	Details	Purpose/Objective
Youth Soccer Program Funding	\$7,500	Providing grants to youth soccer programs and deals on bulk ticket	Build acceptance of PFC as a community leader.
Promotional Materials	\$5,000	Vehicle wraps, giveaway merchandise, free tickets etc.	Build awareness of the PFC brand.
BBQ with team and fans	\$1,500	Food, supplies (table rentals etc.)	To build a community atmosphere with the team and Langford.
Social Media Advertising	\$1,000	Cost of online promotion through Instagram & Facebook.	Raise awareness of the team.
Video Interviews	\$1,000	Camera, audio and editing software	Create acceptance in the community.
Electronic Newsletters	\$1,000	Graphic design and labour	Build awareness of the PFC brand.

Evaluating the Plan

Objective 1: Awareness

To increase awareness of individuals, both fans and non-fans, within Victoria and surrounding areas of individuals aged 18-40 years old of Pacific FC.

Measurement:

This goal will be accomplished through the use of targeted social media content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Within three months of this campaign, we hope to see a 30% increase in engagement on Pacific FC's social media.

Objective 2: Acceptance

To influence the acceptance of 18-40 year old soccer fan's and non' fans in the Victoria area. Specifically, Increased Community Acceptance of Game Day Disruptions

***Measurement:***

This goal will be measured by observing whether or not complaints to the city of Langford and Starlight Stadium decrease. We hope to see a 30% reduction within three months of launching this campaign.

Objective 3: Action

To have an impact on fan's and non-fans of Pacific FC in the Victoria area aged 18-14 years old. Specifically to increase game attendance to regular season Pacific FC games.

Measurement:

This goal will be measured by the number of tickets sold and the revenue generated by merchandise sales. This will be measured by hoping to obtain a 30% increase in regular game day attendance.



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