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Organizational Overview/SWOT Analysis: Sportsnet

Executive Summary

Sportsnet is Canada's leading multi-platform sports broadcasting company that connects sports fans to their favourite teams and athletes locally, regionally, nationally and globally through the use of: TV, Radio, Print, Online and Mobile. Originally launched as CTV Sportsnet in 1998, Sportsnet has been owned by Rogers Media since 2001. Rogers Media Mission Statement: "We strive to deliver the best, most innovative products and services while managing our operations responsibly and conducting our daily activities in an ethical and transparent way."

Throughout its course, the Sportsnet brand has expanded to consist of Sportsnet, Sportsnet.ca, Sportsnet the Fan/Radio, Sportsnet Magazine and the Sportsnet Mobile apps.

Sportsnet is the official Canadian NHL rights holder, and regionally holds the official television broadcast rights for the Calgary Flames (including radio rights on Sportsnet 960 The Fan), Edmonton Oilers, Toronto Maple Leafs (including radio rights on Sportsnet 590 The Fan) and Vancouver Canucks. Sportsnet is the national leader in MLB television broadcasts and holds the rights to all 162 Toronto Blue Jays games.

Introduction

As an aspiring media professional and sports lover I was fortunate enough to receive an internship position as a radio and digital media intern with the Sportsnet 590 The Fan division of Rogers Sportsnet. Much of my daily work consists of editing guest

audio from daily shows for sportscasters and sports updates, social media work, and assisting producers with lineups and stories. I've had the chance to experience seeing content be created all around me while working within the Sportsnet hub on television, radio, and digital platforms. From my work thus far in the semester, I can say I've gotten a real feel for the media industry. After speaking with my superiors I've gathered a sense of what Sportsnet is really about; what they have done successfully, what they have struggled with and areas that present room for growth in order to strengthen the company.

Interviewees

Eric Prime has been with Rogers Sportsnet for nine years and currently holds the position of Sports Editor/Producer/Reporter. He also takes on the role as the intern coordinator and supervisor for Sportsnet 590 The Fan (Sportsnet's outlet for Toronto Sports Radio). The sports editor is responsible for quality news, features and photos on athletic events, people or issues. This includes editorial meetings, production, preparing for presentation, and presentation/publication. As a sports producer and reporter, Eric is responsible for assisting in breaking news stories and developing unique and compelling feature stories. This position assumes leadership in executing the station and newsroom mission.

Brent Gunning has been with Rogers Sportsnet for two years and currently holds the position of Sports Editor for Sportsnet 590 The Fan. The sports editor is responsible for quality news, features and photos on athletic events, people or issues. This includes editorial meetings, production, preparing for presentation, and presentation/publication.

Strengths

- Canada's leader in sports broadcasting – well recognized brand

- Holds broadcasting rights to many top professional sports leagues/teams including the NBA (Toronto Raptors), NFL (Buffalo Bills), MLB (Toronto Blue Jays), and NHL (Calgary Flames, Edmonton Oilers, Toronto Maple Leafs and Vancouver Canucks)
- The Canadian broadcaster for Premier League Soccer, Tennis Canada, Indy Car Series, Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), and the Canadian Hockey League
- Sportsnet Central is one of the most watched and well known hourly sports update broadcasts
- Sportsnet coverage can be accessed by multiple platforms (TV, Internet, Mobile, etc.)
 - This format allows users and audiences the convenience of various outlets to access programming, information and updates
- Able to target the huge market
- Have many different Sportsnet channels for different coverage (Sportsnet One, Sportsnet 360, Sportsnet World etc.)
- Sportsnet is operated in four regional feeds – allows various regions access to channels and programming (Pacific, West, Ontario, East)
- Slogan: “Fuelled by Fans” – incorporates and engages audience
- In October 2015, Rogers announced that it planned to produce 101 sports telecasts in 4K ultra-high-definition format in 2016, including all Blue Jays home games and marquee NHL games starting January 2016
 - Developing with new media as the industry and technology progresses, changes and evolves
- High growth rate

Weaknesses

- Primary focus is on the major professional leagues – minor leagues get significantly less coverage
- Costly to have coverage of all top sports professional leagues

- Average viewer tunes in only for major sporting events
- Competitors such as Canadian broadcasting company TSN overtaking broadcasting rights could cause failure
 - Competition for a larger share of audience
- Future new media is costly and can have an unsustainable result – such as newly adapted 4K television (\$\$\$), the result and sustainability won't be seen for a few years
 - Ex: 3D TV – costly and a short lived trend
- Majority audience is male (specifically young males)

Opportunities

- With focus on major professional sports, there is opportunity to cover other sports such as golf, tennis, bowling, etc. (niche markets)
- Chance to have success on international front with digital and mobile platforms
- Current competition is vulnerable as Sportsnet holds the majority rights to most major sports broadcasts
 - This must be maintained to hold a competitive edge
- Through traditional media, as a company, the industry is looking to monetize their services and offerings to the internet
 - Social media allows for sales pitches as well as audience engagement
- Growing economy with growing demand of sports for entertainment purposes

Threats

- Competition for ratings from other sports networks (TSN, Fox Sports, ESPN, TVA Sports etc.)
 - TSN (Bell Media) is a strong competitor in Canadian sports broadcasting
- More exclusive coverage from networks such as NFL Network, NBA TV, Leafs TV
- Competing sports networks may draw talent and staff
- Increased fees to keep coverage of MLB, NHL etc.

- Does not hold sole rights to Leafs and Raptors games (shared with TSN)
- State of the Media Industry – Currently layoffs are common within the media industry. Rogers recently announced they would be relieving 200 employees of their duties
 - During the week of February 8, 2016 long time host Jeff Sammet and popular co-host Greg Brady of daytime show Brady & Walker, were relieved of their duties with Sportsnet 590 The Fan
 - Employees progress through promotions which increases salary costs (employees age through this process), eventually companies can let them go and take on a new entry level employee for a fraction of the cost
- The industry is progressing towards becoming more and more digital – more computers and less employees (this may be far off but in our ever growing industry, it is almost inevitable)

Conclusion

As previously noted, Sportsnet has had large amounts of success as a platform within the Rogers Media family. This being said, we have looked at some of the weaknesses the company holds that could look to be improved upon in the future. As well as threats that should be capitalized on as best as possible in order to limit the vulnerability of the company to these threats. With a company that is so widely known and has had so much success, the one quote that comes to minds to sum up the inner workings of Sportsnet is, “With great risk, comes great reward.”

Works Cited

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