Sports Marketing

Inside the Sports Marketing Industry

The billboards at your local stadium, the corporate sponsored tournament you watch on TV, and the commercials with athletes promoting your favorite fast-food chain are all products of the innovative thinking and hard work of sports marketing professionals.

Although the hours can be long and the environment fiercely competitive, sports marketing offers many rewards. Generous salaries, challenging work, and excellent perks such as free tickets to sporting events and the chance to meet pro athletes are only a few of the reasons sports marketing is a popular career aspiration.

Sports marketing allows corporations to associate their brands and products with the excitement, enjoyment, and admiration that audiences assign to games and athletes. This industry, as a whole, derives its promotional techniques from fields such as advertising, public relations, and marketing.

Sports marketing is a profession notorious for low turnover, and quick advancement through the ranks is not common. More often, individuals in entry-level positions can expect to stay there for several years. Mid- and upper-level executive positions often become lifetime jobs because worker satisfaction is so high. Salaries available in the sports marketing field vary by region of the country. Most salaries for the entry-level are generally low. Wide salary ranges for the upper-level executive positions reflect the sheer variety of sports employers, even within the specific categories covered: sports marketing firms, corporate sports marketing divisions, and sports leagues and associations. For example, the Director of Marketing for a major league baseball team could earn two to three times as much his or her counterpart in the minor leagues.

In conclusion, the sports marketing industry is fast-paced, exciting, and often hectic. Marketing representatives and event coordinators deal with a never-ending stream of requests from sponsors and clients. A quick mind, a personable attitude, and a good deal of energy are necessary to keep up with all the work.

Skills

- Attention to Detail
- Enthusiasm
- Flexibility
- Communication Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Organizational Skills
- Self-Confidence

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Entry-Level Positions

Sports marketing is a rapidly growing, billion-dollar industry, and jobs in the field are highly sought after. Notice that the list below does not include an entry-level position that eventually leads to becoming a sports agent. Agents are usually people who have learned the ropes through trial and error or lawyers who have extended their practices to include sports representation.

Floater (Sports League/Association)
At most professional sports leagues and teams, the entry-level position available to recent college grads is called a floater. Floaters are essentially temporary office assistants. When a position in a particular department is vacated, a floater works in that division until the job is filled. The floater’s job is not very glamorous, consisting mostly of gofer work. However, because floaters move from department to department they get to see how the team or league is run from the inside as well as meet many people along the way. Floaters usually work with the marketing, public relations, human resources, and ticket sales departments.

Account Coordinator (Sports Marketing Firm)
Account Coordinators at sports marketing firms, support upper-level executive staff in the creation of marketing strategies, the coordination of corporate sponsorships, and the planning of sporting events. Account Coordinators help to maintain strong relationships with the firm’s corporate clients. Previous experience in sports marketing, such as an internship or volunteer position, is required. Account Coordinators do a little bit of everything and must have good writing and oral communication skills.

Event Coordinator (Sports Marketing Firm)
The Event Coordinator position is available both within sports marketing firms and "in-house" departments. This position requires a great breadth of experience in the field and is one of the more difficult entry-level positions to acquire. Working with the Event Director, an Event Coordinator assists with operations both on and off-site, and must be attentive to every detail of event staging. Event Coordinators also correspond with corporate sponsors, ensuring that all their needs are met.

Marketing Representative (Sports Marketing Division)
Marketing representatives for sporting goods manufacturers are called upon to do a wide variety of tasks, from keeping track of the athletes who endorse your company’s products, to grassroots market research. Marketing reps need to be flexible and able to handle multiple tasks. They primarily work with athletes on college and pro teams, making sure they are supplied with the company’s product.

Public Relations Assistant (Sports League/Association)
Most teams, leagues, sports merchandise manufacturers, and sports marketing firms have a PR department, because public relations is a big part of sports marketing. In order for a sporting event to be successful, it must receive media attention, which is often generated through public relations. PR assistants work with the department head to draft press releases and pitch stories to the media. PR assistants for pro teams may help direct activities in the press box on game night. PR assistants at sports marketing firms keep track of news coverage of clients and assemble clipping reports.