

Marketing Campaign for Sports Clubs. Case study: Archery Club Saga

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Abstract

Over the years, along with the technological development and the migration of numerous activities from the offline to the online, we have come to live in a world where sedentarism prevails. In this context, now more than ever, sport has an essential role in the harmonious development of the young generations, as well as in maintaining the physical health of each individual. In Romania, since our first participation at the Olympic Games in 1900, sport has occupied a place of honor and athletes have been continuously supported to reach performance, while aiming to popularize and normalize an active lifestyle among the general population. However, coming out of the communist era (early 90's) meant also the end of coherent strategies for sport and, thus, no more results in European and international competitions. When looking at a local level, this responsibility falls in the hands of local sports clubs so that every citizen can be given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of doing sports, while sport passionate shall have, through appropriate coaching and guidance, the chance to reach performance. As such, this paper aims to emphasize the key role that marketing has in the sport industry and the importance of the promotional activities for the growth of local sports clubs. More specific, this paper comprises a description of the sports market, and at a local level, the situation of archery in Bacau city through an analysis of SAGA, the only archery club in town. The paper presents the results of a quantitative research aiming to uncover the attitudes, perceptions and behavior of Bacau citizens regarding sports in general, and in particular, archery. Based on these results, and on the current situation of SAGA sports club, in the last part of the paper we propose a promotional campaign for this club.

Keywords: Sports clubs, Sports marketing, Marketing research, Promotional campaign.

JEL classification: M31.

1. Introduction

Now more than ever, sport has an essential role in the harmonious development of the young generations, as well as in maintaining the physical health of each individual. In Romania, since our first participation at the Olympic Games in 1900, sport has occupied a place of honor and athletes have been continuously supported to reach performance, while aiming to popularize and normalize an active lifestyle among the general population. However, coming out of the communist era (early 90's) meant also the end of coherent strategies for sport and, thus, no more results in European and international competitions.

Having such a huge gap in terms of sport enthusiasm, practice and overall involvement, we see the urgent need of a shift in national and regional strategies that aim to bring sports and people back together. As such, this paper aims to emphasize the key role that marketing has in the sport industry and the importance of the promotional activities for the growth of local sports

clubs. More specific, this paper comprises a description of the sports market, and at a local level, the situation of archery in Bacau city through an analysis of SAGA, the only archery club in town.

Conducting quantitative research aiming to uncover the attitudes, perceptions and behavior of Bacau citizens regarding sports in general, and in particular, archery, we have gathered insights on sports consumer behavior that will allow us to take more efficient decisions when it comes to the communication strategy proposal. Thus, based on these results, and on the current situation of SAGA sports club, in the last part of the paper we propose a promotional campaign for this club.

2. Consumer behavior in sports marketing

2.1. Understanding the sports market and its consumers

Over the years, the sports industry has proven to be one of the most dynamic and diversified areas in terms of its audience, environment, and to what concerns the activity in itself. By crossing the borders of the traditional, the implications of sports migrated to a world of a constantly-changing and growing multimedia industry, a fact which visibly reflects in its marketing. Thus, the players are now making increased efforts to remain cognizant of the emerging trends and marketing opportunities in order to stay ahead of the game. For this, stakeholders from all sectors of the sport industry are displaying increased attention to understanding the changes of the market and, most of all, the behavior of the sports consumers. While the past three years have brought great changes in terms of consumers' behavioral patterns, the sport industry has in particular changed its operating strategies, adapting to a world with limited physical interaction.

When it comes to the sports consumer, according to Schwarz and Hunter (2008, p. 105), we can distinguish two categories: the spectators – those who only observe the sport activities and attend sport events, and the participants – those who actually take part in sport activities. For a better understanding, each shall be further classified in narrower categories: fitness, competitive and nature sports, and the spectators, in turn, differentiated according to whether they attend sport events, watch them from home, or read sports magazines (Kahle and Riley, 2004, p. 5). In all these cases, the consumers are characterized by a variety of attitudes and values (Westerbeek and Smith, 2003) so that over the years many researchers have developed many different theories referring to sports consumers' behavioral patterns and the factors which influence them.

When referring to the notion itself, Shilbury et al. (2009, p. 43) define the sport consumer behavior as “a process involved through which individuals select, purchase, use, and dispose of sport-related products and services.” Here, we can either talk about the personal use of these products or services, such as buying tickets to a football game, or about the use in an organizational context (for example, buying equipment for a football team). As such, the sport consumers can be classified as organizational consumers or personal consumers (Schwarz and Hunter, 2008, p. 90). Considering the purpose of this paper, the latter (the individual consumer) shall be the primary focus in the following pages.

In this regard, many authors have written about different factors which determine one's engagement in sports activities, factors which can be either external or internal. If we look at the environmental determinants, as Mitrea and Boboc (2011, pp. 82-90) stated, the social factor is extremely influential in the consumers' decision to take part, in one form or another, to sports activities (specifically the family, friends, colleagues or teachers), as well as the culture, subculture, the social class, or geographical and climate factors. On the other hand, when referring to the internal factors, the self-perception or the stage of the consumers' life-cycle play an important role.

Cottingham et al. (2014), through the research of why do people consume sport, concluded that there are variety of internal psychological reasons to be uncovered, as no individual is the same to another. Among these reasons, Trail and James (2001, cited in Stander and Van Zyl, 2016, p. 3) mentioned the following:

- the feeling of empowerment people get from watching their favorite team
- the desire to learn new things by watching sport
- spectators' admiration of a certain sport's elegance, artistry or beauty
- the excitement which comes from the tense anticipation of the result
- the opportunity to escape the humbling reality to a world of adventure
- the sex appeals some athletes have
- players' athletic ability and talent
- the favorable circumstances for spectators to engage in conversation.

All these elements represent the ground of sport consumers' motivation and, as such, are closely related to their behavior so that increased attention must be paid to them, especially in a context of a constantly-changing environment of consumption.

To continue with, several researchers have discovered that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the motivations of the consumers have in fact remained the same, but they manifested by undertaking different endeavors in order to fulfill their needs and wants; the expectations changed, while new experiences and trends arose, shaping in turn new preferences. For example, people who previously engaged only in contact sports, or frequently participated in public to live events, shifted their preferences to non-contact sports during the pandemic or, respectively, replaced the physical events with the online broadcasts (Teare and Taks, 2021).

Thus, it is essential to remain cognizant of consumers' motivations and adapt the sports marketing strategy according to the environmental changes.

2.2. Communication in sport marketing

An essential factor in the growth of the global sports industry, especially during COVID-19, is the communication. While most sport events were moved online, a well-established strategic communication played an important role in keeping in touch with the public, as well as facilitating the administration of sport activities.

To define sport communication, we shall refer to it as “a process by which people in sport, in a sport setting, or through a sport endeavor, share symbols as they create meaning through interaction” (Pedersen et al., 2007, p. 196). In this context, the best way through which sport marketers interact with the consumers is promotion. In order to create and maintain favorable relationships, the public needs constant stimulation, which is achieved through a set of different promotional activities, often combined: advertising, public relations, sales promotions and personal selling.

Advertising refers to “any paid form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor” (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014, p. 429), having the ability to reach a large number of people. Still, it is important to consider that the communication in this case takes place one-way only (from the organization to the consumers), and more, not many have access to it as it is usually expensive.

As opposed to advertising, personal selling involves direct communication between the organizations' representatives and the consumers, “with the aim to convince them to accept a point of view about the brand or product in question, and ultimately to convince them to take some action and try the product” (Smith, 2008, p.172). Here, sponsorships and endorsements are frequently used in the sports industry; as sport fans often are emotionally and

psychologically attached to sports celebrities, endorsements have proven to be highly effective in giving reliability to a product (Smith, 2008, pp. 173-174).

For a faster response in terms of sales, great incentives and value can be offered to the consumers through sales promotions (Key and Czaplewski, 2017, pp. 327-329). Talking either about contests, price-off deals, premiums or sweepstakes, sales promotions are characterized by increased participation from the consumers and are advantageous in terms of drawing attention and providing exposure (Smith, 2008, p.174).

Public relations is in charge with establishing favorable relationships with the different groups in the sport industry, such as the fan clubs, the media, the government and other local entities, while managing unfavorable stories (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014, p. 429). As opposed to the other promotional tools, PR is free and the most frequent use is that of publishing new information to different media channels, which makes it highly accessible even to small sports clubs (Smith, 2008, p.175).

According to the target market of the promotional efforts - either the final consumer or an intermediary - one of the following strategies of communication can be applied: a push strategy, where you try to move your product down the distribution line to the final consumer (here a well-developed personal selling strategy is needed) or a pull strategy, where you promote directly to the end consumer, meaning that the demand will be created by using tools such as advertising or sales promotions. Still, to what exclusively concerns sports marketing communication, it is common for a mix of these two strategies to be used (Smith, 2008, p.181).

Considering all available promotional tools, it is important to adapt to the environment and use only the appropriate ones, in the appropriate places. As such, the increase use of social media must be taken into account when considering the best channels to communicate. In 2022, it became a necessity for all sports organizations to be present online, as well as for sports teams and athletes to direct their efforts to communicate with their audiences through social media. A constant interaction with the social media users, as the literature revealed, considerably contributes to increasing awareness and fan identification, as well as it offers the opportunity of commercial gain (Sharpe, Mountifield and Filo, 2020).

3. SAGA club and its market

3.1. The Romanian archery market

The practice of archery in our country began around the year 1930, bringing over time numerous achievements at both national and international levels (agerpres.ro). With 2 participations in the Olympic Games (2008, in Beijing and 2020, in Tokyo) (Romanian Olympic and Sports Committee, 2022), Romania has transformed archery into a very popular sport among young people, leading to the establishment of many sports clubs, to the organization of competitions, but also of activities for amateurs.

The Romanian Archery Federation (FRTA), is the sports institution that deals with the organization, administration and coordination of the archery activity in our country, at all levels, as well as with the development and promotion of archery in all its forms. Established in 1990, FRTA currently has a number of 46 affiliated clubs and about 700 athletes (frta.ro), being in a continuous process of development. At an organizational level, according to the Romanian Archery Federation (2021), its main objective is the active development and constant increase in the contributions that the Romanian athletes bring to our country on the global stage, thus increasing the international prestige of Romania. In this context, until 2024, the focus of the Federation shall fall on the improvement of the selection, training and promoting process of those athletes able to gracefully represent Romania in international archery competitions.

In terms of the competitive environment, we have discovered the following three archery clubs to be the most visible organizations in terms of top scores and presence on the market.

a. Redpoint Club

Established in 2008 in Oradea, Redpoint is one of the most active archery clubs in Romania at both amateur and professional levels. They offer courses for children, young people and adults, while training a successful archery team for performance. They classify in the top 3 archery clubs in our country, managing to obtain numerous medals at national competitions over the years. In 2022, they were awarded 7 medals at the National Indoor Archery Championship, being the club with the greatest number of participants. While having an outstanding presence in the professional environment, from a marketing perspective, there are great improvements to be made. All information about the club's activity can be found on its website, but presented briefly and with little relevance to the needs of the consumers. The website is not well optimized and information such as history of the club, functioning program, prices, coaches are difficult to find, if not absent. The club is also present on Facebook, periodically posting about the club's results in competitions.

b. Aktiv Club

Established in 2002 in Bucharest, Aktiv Club is one of the affiliated members of FRTA and of the Archery School, being in the national top clubs when it comes to their results in competitions. Having an active involvement in organizing national competitions and being permanently present in all national championships, Aktiv Club promotes the development of the national sport and focuses on attracting a large number of sport practitioners with the purpose of obtaining outstanding performance results. While actively taking part in organizing archery courses and competitions, thus having an active offline presence, the awareness of the club is rather limited, having little to no presence in the online environment. Their website is characterized by little information of their activity, as well as their social media pages. As such, without directly getting in contact with the club management, there is no way for the public to be kept up-to-date with current information about the club's activity.

c. Domeniul Arcasilor Sports Club

Based in Cluj-Napoca, Domeniul Arcasilor Sports Club is one of the biggest archery clubs in the region, being mainly focused on transforming archery into a sport which brings people together, forming a community of passionate people. As opposed to the previous clubs, Domeniul Arcasilor is not aiming for results in a professional context, but the objective of the club is to offer guidance to those who want to learn archery, as well as offer a safe environment for amateurs to practice. From a marketing perspective, as compared to Aktiv Club and Redpoint Club, Domeniul Arcasilor has a better-established image in terms of branding and presence in the online environment. Their website offers details about the club and its objectives, training sessions and competitions, and their Facebook page is kept relatively up-to-date, with an average of 2-3 posts per month.

3.2. SAGA archery club

Established in 2011 in Bacau, by the artist Geanina Ivu Vlad and her husband, out of their passion for archery, SAGA sports club became over the years a place where people of all ages can learn archery in a safe environment, guided by expert trainers, and have the opportunity to reach performance.

SAGA is the only local sports club which offers archery courses, providing all the necessary training, facilities and equipment for both beginners and professionals.

According to the document describing the status of SAGA sports club (2011), the scope of the club is to select, train and participate in local, national and international level competitions, in order to obtain the victory of the athletes in the archery discipline.

While striving for performance, SAGA sports club aims to put Bacau city on the national archery stage through its active participation in national competitions with top results. In 2022 alone, the club members have managed to obtain:

- a national record in Junior Compound
- Rank 6, 7 and 9 in Compound at the European Grand Prix in Plovdiv/ Bulgaria
- 2nd place in Compound Under 21 Women at Veronica's Cup World Ranking in Kamnik/Slovenia
- 2nd place at the National Indoor Championship

In order to fully understand the present situation of the club, the following paragraphs shall discuss the segmentation and targeting approach, positioning, marketing mix, as well as provide an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the club.

To begin with, considering the sport industry is a diversified one, SAGA sports club chose to segment its market from a demographic, geographic and behavioral perspective. More specific, the club addresses its services to the people between 16 and 45 years old who live in Bacau city, in the urban or rural area, and perform a minimum of sport activity (at least once or twice a month).

The targeting strategy is rather broad, being undifferentiated, so the club addresses people with the above-mentioned characteristics altogether, in the same manner.

In terms of positioning, SAGA sports club has no defined strategy at the present. While it is the only archery club in Bacau, no previous efforts were made for the development of a USP or a positioning strategy.

To continue with the marketing mix, the club's offer consists of archery classes for both amateurs and professionals, taught by certified trainers (Geanina Ivu, the founder, president and head coach, and Marius Vlad, secondary coach).

The promotional activities, so the means through which SAGA communicates with its target market, are limited, and advertising, sales promotions, public relations, personal selling, direct or digital marketing are not used at their full potential. The only constant communicational effort of the club consists of social media posting (Facebook) of the results obtained in competitions, along with photos from championships. There are no particular people assigned to ensure the marketing activity, the founder of the club taking charge of all communication on behalf of the club.

Considering the above-mentioned factors, we can conclude that no specific marketing efforts were made in order to aid the growth of the organization. In this context, for a truthful understanding of the position that SAGA sports club hold on the market, a SWOT analysis shall emphasize the most important factors which need to be considered in the development of the future communication campaign (as presented in Table 1).

Table 1. The SWOT analysis of SAGA archery club

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good outdoor and indoor training facilities - national champions in archery - certified trainers - active presence in competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - weak online presence - hard to obtain information about the club's activity - low number of coaches - unexperienced management - the lack of a clear development direction
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - extracurricular sport activities organized by schools - local sport events and competitions organized annually - the popularity of archery in awarded movies and video games (The Hunger Games, Assassin's Creed, Far Cry) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased costs in all sectors - sport consumer's changing behavior because of the pandemic - excessive bureaucracy - little interest from the public for archery - lack of governmental support for this sport

4. Quantitative research on consumers' attitudes and behavior towards archery

Being one of the oldest sports in history, over the years, several studies have shown the benefits of archery for people of all ages. But even though it is a commonly practiced sport all over the globe, apart from the activity at the Olympic Games, and implicitly that of the Romanian Federation, there is little to no data regarding our country. No information is available to describe the general attitudes, perceptions or behavioral patterns of the general public regarding archery, so in turn, local archery clubs are in the difficulty of trying to meet unknown needs, wants and desires. That being said, through marketing research, this section addresses the situation of archery in Bacau, constituting the base of the future promotional campaign for SAGA archery club.

4.1. Research methodology

By conducting this research, the scope is to understand the behavior of the local consumers regarding sports, gain perspective of the awareness level of archery-related activities and measure their willingness to involve in this sport either as spectators or participants in order to correctly position and promote SAGA sports club. Prior to this research, no other efforts were made with the purpose of gaining insights on the topic, and as such, the obtained results will be of great use for both SAGA club and the future endeavors of other local organizations in the industry.

The research had the following main objectives:

- O1. Determining the respondents' level of involvement in sport activities
- O2. Identifying consumers' level of awareness regarding the local sport clubs
- O3. Discover where the respondents search for information about sports clubs
- O4. Discover what type of information consumers' find important in their decision to join a sports club
- O5. Research consumers' attitudes towards archery
- O6. Determine respondents' willingness to practice archery
- O7. Measuring the awareness level of SAGA sports club and its activity
- O8. Identifying consumers' satisfaction level regarding the communicational efforts of local sports clubs

In order to collect the required data in the most effective way, we have chosen to conduct an online survey. In addition to being the fastest and most accessible method, it allows us to reach a larger number of people, which can respond to the survey at any convenient time for them. The potential respondents were approached on social media, and more specific, on Facebook, as it allows the reach of a diverse audience. The questionnaire was shared on groups gathering people with sport interests, data being collected in May 2022.

In order to obtain relevant information, which can portray an accurate image of the attitudes and behavior of the local market, the information was collected exclusively from the citizens of Bacau city. As such, the interest falls on the individual consumers living in Bacau, age between 16 and 45 years.

In the context of this research, the geographical factor must be considered in the sample size establishment. Even though the calculated size of our sample was 385, considering that this research is an exploratory one and is conducted in an academic context, the sample size was limited to 100. In terms of sample structure, we have chosen the stratified random sampling method, and for an accurate representation of each category of respondents, the sample was build based on gender and age, as follows:

- gender: 50% men and 50% women
- age groups: 30% for 16-18 years old, 40% for 19-24 years old, 20% 25-35 years old, 10% for 36-45 years old.

4.2. Research results

When asked to mention the first sport club in Bacau that comes to mind and to recall other sport clubs they know, the respondents frequently mentioned 3 clubs: CSM Bacau (52%), World Class (44%) and TNT (35%); in this context, Bronx club was also mentioned by 19% of the respondents, SAGA club by 18% and Interfast by 17% of the respondents. Other clubs mentioned were: Fiesta, Doina Melinte, Xtreme Academy and NOVA Bjj.

Further on, from a given list of sport clubs, the respondents were asked to check the ones they know about. Here, almost all respondents recognized CSM Bacau, and almost a half of the respondents were aware of the Bronx sport club. SAGA archery club also checked by a quarter of the respondents.

As shown in Figure 1, in order to determine respondents' interest in joining a sports club, a dichotomous question was given, and the results showed that more than a half of the respondents were interested in being part of a sports club.

From those with a positive answer, most respondents are between 16 and 24 years old. To continue with, in order to determine whether age is an influential factor in the decision to join a sports club, a correlation was made between the two variables. Here, the Pearson Chi-Square test had a value of 0,001, resulting in a statistically significant connection between the two. With a contingency coefficient of 0,38, we can therefore conclude that there is an average relationship between age and the decision to join a sports club.

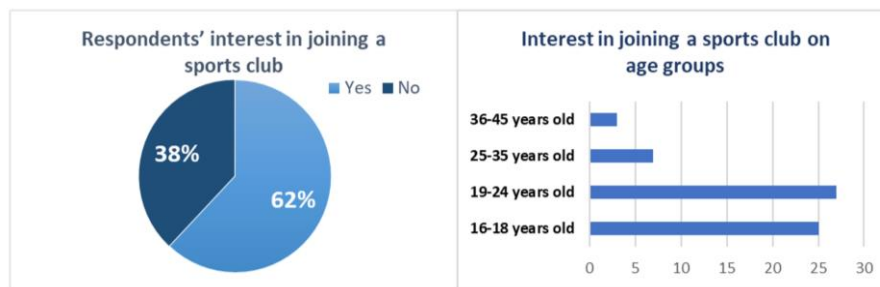


Figure 1. Interest in joining a sports club, in correlation with age group (%)

When it comes to sources of information, in order to find information about a particular sports club, almost half of the respondents search for the club's website, 29% search on Google for information from different sources, while 24% look on social media channels. Here, mostly people between 16 and 18 years old search on social media, while all other age groups do not use social media as much in this regard.

To determine which factor is most influential in the decision to join a sports club, respondents were asked to order the following factors from the most important to the least important: prices, club's coaches/team, club's results, facilities, and the health benefits of that particular sport. As a result, 88% of the respondents rated the club's prices to be either the most important or the second most important factor. Club's facilities were also a decisional factor, being classified as the second most important by 34% of the respondents, while information about the club's coaches or team was considered the third most important by 39% of the respondents.

To continue with, respondents were asked about the level of information they have on archery. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 means very much information, the average grade was 4. 84% of the respondents answered their knowledge of this subject is moderate or less, while only 16% ranked their knowledge on level 6 and 7.

Moreover, by using a Likert scale, the questionnaire further on aimed to discover the attitudes of the respondents towards archery based on several attributes. As such, 75% of the

respondents agreed or totally agreed that archery has great health benefits. While only 19% believe it is not a dangerous sport, almost half of the respondents have a neutral attitude regarding the danger level archery implies, and 34% believe this sport is dangerous. Regarding the costs to practice this sport, 54% do not know that to think about how expensive it is, while 26% believe it is not an expensive sport. 43% of respondents consider archery to be a sport not only for teenagers, while 40% of the respondents have a neutral opinion towards which age group this sport particularly addresses to. In this context, when asked about the likelihood of practicing archery in the future, 40% of the respondents have shown a positive attitude towards this sport, being likely to practice it in the future, 26% are rather unlikely to try archery, while 34% have a neutral stand.

Another relevant piece of information in this research is how much do people know about SAGA sports club. The results revealed that more than half of the respondents have never heard of SAGA sports club, 37% have only heard about it and do not have any particular information, while only 5% of the respondents have some information about the club's activity.

Finally, to assess respondents' satisfaction regarding the communicational efforts of the sport clubs in Bacau, 5 statements related to the received messages were given. The attitudes were mostly negative in all cases: 86% of the respondents believe that sport clubs in Bacau do not communicate enough, 65% agree that the information transmitted is not interesting, nor useful (61%). What is more, 83% find it hard to obtain the information, and 76% of the respondents stated that the information transmitted does not fully answer their questions. With most responses being negative (Strongly disagree or Disagree), it can be said that there is a general dissatisfaction regarding the communicational efforts of the sports clubs in Bacau.

5. Proposal of a marketing communication campaign for SAGA sports club

Being the only archery club in Bacau, since 2011, SAGA became a place where competition, fellowship and the free spirit intertwine. Established in the heart of Vlad family, the founding members, Geanina and Marius Vlad, managed to bring together passionate young people, striving for performance, and obtain remarkable results at both national and international levels. As such, in this section, our aim is to develop a promotional campaign through which SAGA club will be able to increase its awareness in Bacau city and promote archery practice for amateurs and professionals.

5.1. SAGA sports club situation and positioning on the market

As disclosed by the Statistical Direction of Bacau County in the Annual Statistics Report (2022, p. 222), at the end of 2020 were reported a number of 173 local sports organizations, representing 18% of the total organizations in the industry present in the North-Eastern region of Romania. Moreover, a number of 4631 legitimate athletes were reported (15% out of all athletes in the North-Eastern region), therefore showing great development potential in the local sports sector.

In this context, SAGA sports club was founded in 2011 under the Law on physical education and sports no. 69/2000 and of the Government Ordinance no. 26/2000 on associations and foundations, having at the moment a number of 7 athletes actively participating in national competitions, as well as members practicing archery at an amateur level. Located at 20 minutes walking distance from the city center, in a easily accessible area, the premises of SAGA sports club provide a corner of nature and a spot of relaxation right in the heart of Bacau city.

From a marketing perspective, the club does not have nor has had a well-established strategy, having made no efforts with the purpose of promotion. Even though, over the years, the club has managed to obtain remarkable results in the national archery setting, its athletes

being awarded with numerous medals, these results have failed to be locally recognized on the basis of not reaching the public through appropriate communication channels and methods.

As such, in order to build a successful campaign, the first step is to have a well-established position on the market. In this case, we are opting for a positioning strategy based on product features. As SAGA sports club is the only archery club in Bacau, with complex facilities and certified coaches, and there are no direct competitors in this field, it is the most suited choice to enhance these unique characteristics. What is more, the positioning of the brand shall be completed by the points of parity enhancing the specific of archery: patience and focus improvement, physical development and the sense of adventure. Alongside, every brand must tell a story and stand out through its particular features, so the points of differentiation that make up the story of SAGA are: passion, courage and performance.

Furthermore, it is important to mention there is no logo or slogan to complete the brand image, and a promotional campaign would be hard to implement without these elements at least. Considering the meaning of the word “saga”, as well as the history of archery, my proposal is: “SAGA: Be the hero of your story!”. Bringing all these elements together in a world of art, Figure 2 presents our vision for SAGA brand logo.



Figure 2. Proposal for SAGA logo

5.2. Communication objectives and target market

When setting the campaign objectives, it is a necessity to consider the club’s situation on the market. Looking at the research results, which have shown that most respondents have never heard of SAGA archery club, or they have heard about it but have no specific information, the campaign objectives will be at a cognitive and conative level. As such, this campaign proposes to:

- Educate the target market regarding the benefits of practicing archery
- Increase awareness of SAGA archery club with 50% among the target market
- Increase the online presence and engagement rate of the brand with 20%
- Attract at least 10 new members of the club.

In order to do so, the campaign will only focus on the 16-24 age segment. Being the most active, as shown by the conducted research, and also more interested in joining a sports club, as well as in practicing archery in the future, we consider the communicational efforts of this campaign most suited to be directed towards this age category. To continue with, according to the demographic criteria, both men and women will be targeted, with a low-medium income, from the middle class and a high school degree or/and university degree, as well as students in the terminal years of high school. From a geographic perspective, the campaign will only target people from Bacau city and the rural area near Bacau, while the psychographic characteristics shall include an interest for sport activities and a positive attitude towards new experiences. The campaign targets consumers that have an active lifestyle, do sports at least once a week and are already members or have an interest in joining a sports club, so people that value their physical health.

5.3. Campaign design

The marketing communication mix for this campaign will integrate advertising, sales promotions and public relations. Considering the specifics of the sports industry, we have chosen the best tools which we believe will best help SAGA archery club to successfully reach its target audience, and the following paragraphs will offer a detailed description of how each tool will be implemented.

Firstly, the campaign will take place between 4.07.2022 and 31.07.2022, with the 4 main events taking place on 9, 16, 23 and 30 of July (each Saturday during the 4 weeks).

Starting with the social media marketing, the main focus will be on improving the brand's presence.

One week prior to the campaign launch, an Instagram account will be created, for which there will be 3 posts per week before, during and after the campaign as well, as part of the long-term social media strategy (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). The posts will include photos from the training sessions/behind the scenes at competitions, an educational video each week, graphics with the results obtained in national and international competitions, as well as myths about archery (and why they are not in fact real) and presentations of club members.

During the campaign month, Tuesday and Thursday, Instagram stories will be posted (with the latest news and upcoming events). At the same time, all posts and stories from Instagram will be redirected towards Facebook as well.

To continue with, Facebook and Instagram ads will run, promoting the 4 archery events which will be held as part of the campaign. Here, on Facebook we will use carousel ads, while for Instagram we will go for the classic format, both containing photos with groups of people having fun at archery courses and photos from competitions (with a simple graphic design overlay).

Moving on to public relations, and more specific to events, the campaign shall seize the opportunity of the local traffic restriction during summer. Each Saturday and Sunday, from 1 PM until 12 AM, the main street in the center of Bacau city is opened for pedestrians only, so that every weekend many different manifestations take place. In this context, by concluding a partnership with the city hall, SAGA archery club will organize 4 archery events in July, with demonstrations and trial classes, for which the aim is to attract young people towards joining the local archery community and become members of the club. The events shall be promoted on social media through daily promotional videos and graphics starting with 5 days before each event, and 2 days with follow-up photos from the event.

Also, in this regard, sales promotions will complete the events by offering 50% discounts for the first month membership to the 4 people with the best scores at the trial classes. This way, both cognitive and conative objectives will be reached.

During and after the campaign implementation, monitoring and controlling actions will be needed. To go in-depth, the results of the social media ads will be actively monitored in terms of number of impressions and clicks, and naturally translated to the number of people attending the events and joining SAGA sports club. For the social media presence of the brand, indicators such as the number of impressions, followers and engagement rate will tell how well suited the content is, so that adjustments will be made accordingly. At the end of the campaign, the success will in fact be measured by the above social media indicators and the number of new memberships of SAGA sports club, along with a survey which will test the degree to which the established objectives were met.

6. Conclusions and discussions

Throughout this paper, under the umbrella of the sport industry, our purpose was to enhance the importance of marketing in the strategy of any organization and obtain relevant

information that can contribute to the growth of local sport clubs. By forming an in-depth image of the sports market at both national and local levels, we managed to develop a promotional campaign for SAGA archery club, thus enriching the sport activity in Bacau city. For doing so, in this paper we included theoretical aspects, statistical data and promotional actions from which a number of indispensable key ideas shall be further brought to light.

In a complex and well-structured industry, constructed on the basis of a long chain of supplies, production factors, infrastructure and support services, delivery, media, marketing and after sales, in order to create a successful strategy, the first step is to understand the consumers.

Further on, in order to deliver value to the sport consumers and satisfy their needs, wants and desires, sport organizations make use of eight elements that make up the marketing mix: product, price, promotion, process, physical evidence, people, performance and program. Being different from the classical 4 P's, this mix of elements altogether approaches each side of the sport sector, from the sport product itself, to the people involved in the creation process, the management of marketing activities, the quality of the performance (facilities, performance accuracy, responsiveness, security, empathy) and the planning of all activities that will attract the target market towards a sports event.

An essential factor is also the active use of sport marketing communication, the most frequently applied being advertising, public relations, sales promotions and personal selling.

Nonetheless, any promotional strategy is based on a number of stages. After a situation analysis and positioning the organization on the market, objectives must be clearly set in accordance to the needs of each company (either cognitive, affective or conative). Further on, the market should be segmented and the target customers selected and described with all their relevant characteristics. Only then a budget can be set, and the strategy can be design while taking into account all the above-mentioned elements. What is more, as a method of better understanding the situation of the market, sports marketers use research to gain insights and go in-depth of the aspects that are unknown.

As such, the practical part of this paper consisted in quantitative research addressing the situation of archery in Bacau, as well as the attitudes and behavior of local sport consumers. The results showed that respondents practice sport between 1 and 4 times a week, the most active having between 19 and 24 years old. The most recalled sport clubs in Bacau were CSM Bacau, World Class and TNT, while more than half of the respondents have never heard of SAGA sports club. Surprisingly, more than half of the respondents were interested in being part of a sports club, out of which most were between 16 and 24 years old. To find information about a sports club, the majority searches either on Google, from various sources, or the club's website, and the most influential factors in the decision to join a sports club are the club's tariffs and facilities.

Regarding archery, most respondents have limited information on the subject, but are still willing to try this sport in the future. Finally, the research uncovered a general level of dissatisfaction regarding the communicational efforts of the sports clubs in Bacau city.

In this context, we have developed a communicational campaign for SAGA archery club, addressing both the negative aspects resulted from the research and the current needs of SAGA. Aiming to inform the target market regarding the benefits of archery, increase the awareness and the online presence of the club, as well as to attract new members, the campaign targets people between 16 and 24 years old living in Bacau city, with an active lifestyle, an interest for sport activities and a positive attitude towards new experiences. Integrating advertising, sales promotions, public relations and social media marketing, the campaign will take place between 4.07.2022 and 31.07.2022 and shall focus on 4 main archery events taking place in the city center. Ads will run on social media channels, and discounts will be given to the event

participants, thus making use of a mix of communicational tools with the purpose of reaching the established objectives.

To end with, we find it important to mention the research limitations; considering it was conducted at a local level, in an academic context, the research only offers limited data from the market, and as such, the promotional campaign was developed on the basis of narrow information regarding the situation of the sport market in Romania, with no recent nor abundant statistical data from secondary sources either.

Thus, we believe the information in this paper should be considered the starting point of further investigations in the sports industry, contributing as a guideline for future debate.

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