

USA HOCKEY LEVEL 5 COACHES SYMPOSIUM THESIS

“CREATING AN IDENTITY AND A CULTURE”

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USA HOCKEY LEVEL 5 COACHES SYMPOSIUM THESIS
“CREATING AN IDENTITY AND CULTURE”

Introduction: The culture and identity surrounding any successful hockey club, (and for that matter any successful organization) is created long before a team takes the ice. This manuscript will describe the proven methodology employed by NYTEX Sports, a small family owned and run sports management company, whose foundation is built upon the principles of strong family values, community, selflessness, a tireless work ethic, sacrifice, respect and responsibility. These lessons permeate the NYTEX Sports (NYTEX Sports Centre) and Texas Brahmas partnership and the identity and culture has been created throughout the history of our organization.

The proof of its success is well chronicled, including the achievement of 90% fan attendance at Texas Brahmas home games and a ‘AA’ professional Central Hockey League championship in 2008-2009 in only our second year of operation. The integration of these ideals into our daily work schedule, our employees and our young hockey players teaches and provides invaluable principles within their armamentarium of skill required to achieve success both on the ice and in our young athlete’s future personal, vocational and professional endeavors. When a hockey player graduates from our program they will go forth with the skill set to be valuable citizens, compassionate team oriented co-workers and loyal family members. In the meantime, they will leave with invaluable memories they had of playing the game they love. Our success is not measured in wins and losses, but the number of





players and patrons who return to our home as adult fans, adult hockey players and youth coaches. The pedigree we have created naturally produces grateful fulfilled players who often return to youth

coaching to impart these same great

lessons and principles to the next great generation of young hockey players. Thus, the vehicle by which we achieve our desired common goals which are outlined below is through effective coaching. In order to have a complete understanding of coaching one must know that it is defined as: “the art of creating an environment, through conversation and a way of being, that facilitates the process by which a player can move toward desired goals in a fulfilling manner”.

I. ORGANIZATION NAME: NYTEX SPORTS MANAGEMENT

Marquee Franchise Attraction:

- The Texas Brahmas Hockey Club (CHL)
- The Texas Brahmas Youth Hockey Association (NTXHL)
- Texas Outlaws Professional Indoor Arena Soccer (PASL Pro)
- Texas Outlaws Youth and Adult Soccer Leagues
- Tejas Volleyball Club (USA Volleyball Sanctioned Club)



Mission: Provide our youth with the environment and skill set to maximize their potential

to become the best athlete, including hockey player, and individual they can be.

Vision: Provide our athletes with skills they will utilize throughout their lives both at the rink, court and turf, and in their personal, vocational and professional lives.

Mantras: ‘Respect the Game’

‘R & R’ = “Respect and Responsibility”

‘Be a Brahma’

Principles: Pride, Loyalty, Passion, Honor, Brotherhood, Selflessness, Respect and Responsibility.



The Brahma- An extremely resilient and fastidious creature who can ‘take the heat’ better than any cattle. This breed is resistant to heat and disease and can live in the most unforgiving of environments. In short, they are one tough breed.

II. OPTIMAL INTEGRATION OF A MULTIPURPOSE ARENA

The purpose of this manuscript is to explain how we (NYTEX Sports and The Texas Brahmans Hockey Club) created a new winning identity and culture in a previously failed venue and organization, and to consider the vast potential a retooled entertainment venue and its accompanying marquee minor league professional sports franchise presents to its Junior Hockey Program its youth hockey association and surrounding community.

This will achieve the goal of fulfilling



requirements of the USA Hockey Level 5 Coaches

Symposium Thesis/Certification while addressing the subject matter covered in the general session titled “Creating and Identity and a Culture”. Any arena or entertainment venue requires a marquee team and brand so that the surrounding community may



identify with its venue, professional and junior teams and youth hockey association. This identity is the focal point of all promotional and marketing efforts required for the

implementation of successful professional, junior and youth hockey programs and business plan. The procurement of investment interest from local and regional businesses, the surrounding municipalities, and surrounding community patrons as well, and of paramount importance, corporate sponsorship, is integral in the fiscal viability of such a venue and its programs.

It is a difficult challenge to create a new identity and winning culture in a new venue. A history of failure and poor management in a venue under new ownership and management poses new and difficult challenges not faced by our predecessors. Erasing a history of failure requires total commitment by management, staff, coach’s parents, patrons and players.

III. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The operating principles consist of the following key strategies to begin to build a new identity and culture.

- Offer diverse in house programs with an emphasis on introductory levels.

-Ensure top priority of staff to maintain a clean



friendly environment.

-Consistently introduce new patrons and participants to the facility to broaden its functional scope.

-Keep scheduling prompt and on time.

-Implement grass roots marketing and programs to develop lifelong customers and fans.

-Install and implement comprehensive point of sale registration and payment systems.

-Diversify the building.

IV. NAME RECOGNITION-A SYMBOL OF SUCCESS AND WINNING

Creating name recognition requires a recognizable logo and crest with memorable colors and images. NYTEX Sports, founded through the merging of New York (NY) and Texas (TEX) displays 'Lady Liberty', the symbol of the great state of New York, superimposed over the



great state of Texas. This logo has provided a distinct visual impact and is rapidly being recognized throughout the North Texas Region. The Texas Brahmas distinctive Purple and Black moniker of a "Baby Bull" has been recognized as one of the most distinctive logos in the CHL and NTXHL. All products are co-branded through jerseys, hats, tee shirts, sweat suits, signage, etc. as you will always see a NYTEX Sports and Texas Brahmas logo side by side. The juxtaposition of the two logos create name and program recognition. This concept is vital to the growth of all NYTEX Sports Centre programs and is the footings upon the foundation that has been built. When the community sees

the NYTEX Sports Centre/Texas Brahmas logos they understand the attitude of professionalism, accessibility and community and above all they know when they enter the NYTEX Sports Centre they will have an enjoyable comfortable experience for their family. Also implied will be the fact that the opposition will have to face strong well coached disciplined hockey teams with a tireless work ethic; it is woven into the fabric of every sweater. Our success on the ice at both the youth

hockey and professional level has gained us regional recognition. The logos are gaining National recognition as well. We have had success at youth hockey tournaments in Lake Placid, NY, Chicago, IL, Las Vegas, NV,



Philadelphia, PA, California and Texas. The CHL competes in seven central US states to which the Texas Brahmas are recognized. We have also sent Texas Brahmas players from the CHL, to NHL affiliated teams in the AHL, such as the Houston Aeros, San Antonio Rampage, Rockford Ice Hogs, Austin Stars, Syracuse Crunch and Springfield Falcons. The Brahmas moniker is gaining North American Exposure which further enhances our brand bolstering our identity and culture of a top notch professionally run organization. Our fans are loyal and loud and with a winning percentage of 80% at the NYTEX Sports Centre over the last two and a half seasons, opponents are extremely uncomfortable competing in our building. “That’s true identity. That’s true culture.”

a. THE VENUE

The Arena/Ice Rink: The physical plant, venue or ice arena has a distinct design and services which gives it its unique identity. Below is an outline of the amenities and how

they further enhance its identity and culture.

The Locker Rooms: in addition to two professional lock rooms we have duplicated the



‘professional feel’ in our travel association lock rooms. As a part of our grass roots programs we have painted the locker rooms in the Brahmas colors, purple, black and white, added stick racks, a flat screen TV, stereo and white coaches’ board.

Each player has their own designated lock room space, hooks for their sweaters and equipment and an accompanying shelf.

Rather than having to lug their equipment all the time to

practice, the athlete’s gear remains in the locker room during the week; in between practices and games to air out. We strive to duplicate the feel of a professional locker room so that the player receives a sense of professionalism from the time they are six-year-old mites. Mannerisms such as this, assists in the player’s development of self worth and confidence; they come to expect all things surrounding the organization to be first class and professionally run. This carries over to their demeanor on the ice. Along with the first class treatment, our young athletes are taught and reminded of the great advantages they have and what a privilege it is to play the game they love for a special organization.



This further enhances the respect they develop for NYTEX Sports and their Texas Brahmas uniform.

The Fitness Center /The Sports Medicine and Physical Therapy Center

The fitness center and weight room is equipped with free weights, cybex, universal and parabody machines as well as aerobic equipment including schwinn airdyne cycle arm ergo meters, and lifecycle treadmills, stationery bikes and elliptical. All athletes at the NYTEX Sports Centre have access to Mr. Tom Hart, our full time athletic trainer and physical therapist. In the event of an acute injury to an athlete, Hart evaluates the player and triages them to the necessary family physician, orthopedic surgeon or neurologist. He remains available (daily in house) to provide ongoing physical therapy for any youth hockey or adult league player who is in need of the treatment. Hart is on staff to function as the full time trainer with the Texas Brahmas of the CHL. Also of note: The NYTEX Sports Centre is equipped with four automatic external defibrillators. In the event of a cardiac arrest, we are prepared. Keep in mind that although the probability of sudden cardiac arrest is remote in most youth, athlete's parents and grandparents are frequently in the building, thus we must be prepared for the one opportunity we may have to save a life.

The Venue

- 140 Square Foot facility including 2 NHL Size Rinks
- The Hockey Shop (pro hockey shop)
- Restaurant and Concession Stands

Contents

- 1 NHL Sized ice surface (200x 85)
- 2500 seats in primary arena; 1000 bleacher seats in secondary arena
- 2 Pro locker rooms



- trainers room and Head Coach & Assistant Coaches offices
- 2 Junior Brahmas locker rooms
- 9 locker rooms –including 1 women’s locker room and 8 men’s
- 5 additional locker rooms for your youth hockey travel association teams Mite, Squirt, Pee Wee, Bantam, Midget locker rooms
- Restaurant (ZuRoma Bar and Grill) and Concessions



Food and beverage is available to our patrons throughout the day and evenings.

- Community Room, Business Meeting Rooms, Party Rooms and Class Rooms

Team meetings and or organizational meetings can utilize our community rooms and further enhances the professional experience at the NYTEX Sports Centre.

The venue- the NYTEX Sports Centre- is a multipurpose sports and community facility. In addition to what has been previously mentioned, the NYTEX Sports Centre has accommodated professional wrestling, youth grappling and judo tournaments, professional roller derby, Radio Disney concerts and a regional Wine Tasting Convention to name a few diverse events.



b. THE TEAMS

- The Texas Brahmas (CHL) AA Pro
- The Texas Junior Brahmas (NAHL) Major Junior
- The Texas Brahmas Youth Hockey Association
- NYTEX Sports Centre Recreational Hockey League
- NYTEX Sports Centre Adult and Senior Hockey League
- NYTEX Sports IHL Adult Instructional Hockey Programs Hockey for Everyone
- The Brahma POPS-Adult League teams consisting of Brahmas Youth Hockey players parents

V. DEVELOPING YOUR FAN AND CUSTOMER BASE

All individuals who enter The NYTEX Sports Centre are treated with courtesy and respect and are introduced to the “culture of the NYTEX Sports Centre and The Texas Brahmas Hockey Club”.

Leadership (management, coaches and parents) are provided with the resources they need to succeed and attain our goal of 100% player, parent, family member and patron satisfaction. We aspire to have anyone who enters our facility to become part of our family, community and culture of fun winning hockey.

We promote community involvement and our leaders are expected to foster our community outreach programs.

Our coaches are briefed on the vital role they have in the development of our young



hockey players; not just as hockey players but as potential scholar athletes and functional citizens. We stress the importance of teaching the lessons required to develop upstanding young men and women including respect, responsibility, discipline, team work community service and the importance of each athlete’s responsibility to his teammates as well as how to respect their opponents. We develop their character and thus the reputation of their team and the organization. Attainable goals are set for each player and team which focus on personal learning, improving and above all having fun

playing hockey. Coaches of all levels (mites through midgets, juniors and pros) interact daily sharing ideas as well as coaching philosophies and strategies. We encourage continued learning amongst our coaching staff and stress its vital role in the development



of our players and programs. Above all, we stress the importance of creating a competitive environment which is *fun* for the player. One requirement we stand by is all

of our Brahmas Youth Hockey coaches are mandated to hold a USA Hockey Coach's card. Coaches will teach at levels consistent with the guidelines put forth by USA Hockey. We also encourage and support all coaches to participate in the USA Hockey Coaching Education program and obtain the highest level of certification possible. We aspire to be hockey educators.

We provide your players and parents with guidelines, standards, practice plans and structure. We tell them what to expect and what is expected of them. Set forth from day one are our principle: proper attitude, preparedness, investment and commitment. We make clear each players and parents role on our teams and set goals, both short term and long term. Players are taught the importance of preparation and the need for repetition in practice while at the same time creating 'small games' to keep it enjoyable and fun. We

are sure to have players and parents held accountable for their actions on and off the ice. Stress is put on structure and consistency throughout our youth hockey programs as players develop from one level to the next.

Despite the concentration on consistency through each advancing level players obtain the benefit of varying coaching styles and approaches as they move from tier to tier.

Brahma youth hockey association players develop a sense of pride and identity through interaction with the professional



Brahma players and the boys and young men at a tier (age group) above them through mentoring and teaching programs. One program which we have found to be successful includes the 'Pro Brahma mentoring Program- the professional locker room is open to any youngster for several minutes after each Brahm's home game; to shake a player's hand, obtain an autograph or just talk to about the game. We have found that the parents and youth hockey players gain a great appreciation for what it is like to be a professional hockey player, seeing the inside of what is an otherwise inaccessible place- 'the professional sports locker room'. The pro players also get great enjoyment out of it- (especially if they win that night!). One of our many mantras is "Be A Brahma". The player learns through many levels of teaching, both on and off the ice, that respect and responsibility, pride and passion and a tireless work ethic is what it means to "Be A Brahma". They are taught that their uniform and the 'Brahma Crest' is a sacred cloth, a 'community coat of arms' and it is a privilege to wear it from the first day they earn it. It's to be treated with care and respect, kept on a hanger and never to touch the floor. It's their flag and they learn its value and what it represents. We feel this lesson creates a

sense of pride and fosters responsibility, a quality our players can take with them when they become adults. Pro Brahma players are accessible for private lessons as well as included in the youth hockey practices and games throughout the hockey season. It's not at all unusual to see six or eight pro Brahma players sitting ice side watching the mites or squirts play. After all, many of these youngsters are their pupils in private hockey lessons. Again this promotes a sense of commonality from the youth hockey player to the professional. The professional is expected to conduct themselves in a similar fashion and understands the importance and meaning of 'the brotherhood' that has been created at the NYTEX Sports Centre and the Texas Brahmas. They understand their responsibility to the next generation of young hockey players, their mentorship is invaluable in this regard. They also derive great satisfaction from how they are revered in their ability to contribute to the development of these young athletes.

VI. TRANSLATING "THE IDENTITY AND CULTURE" TO THE ICE

FACT: All great organizations

and teams take on the

personality of their leaders

and coaches respectively. You

perform in game situations how

you prepare in practice.



Shoddy preparation translates into shoddy performance under game circumstances.

Consistency and repetition in practice of fundamental hockey systems and situations (ie; breakouts, power plays, penalty kill) will translate into proper execution and success on the ice; it has been proven time and again. Through the use of USA Hockey's Coaches

Manuals, USA Hockey Coaches Clinic, sharing of knowledge with fellow and competing coaches and utilizing “small games” we have integrated a mixture of repetitive fundamental drills and skills as well as individual creativity in “small games” circumstances. Combined, the player integrates hockey fundamentals with creativity to produce the ultimate team player. We stress preparation from the moment the player awakens the day of a practice or game to the post game meeting or critique. All learning takes place from positive reinforcement. Constructively pointing out and correcting player mistakes always is accompanied by comments concerning the positive contributions an individual brings to the team and his teammates. Winning principles such as selflessness, respect, responsibility and accountability are stressed from the time the player physically enters the NYTEX Sports Centre and through these principles they develop a sense of pride and loyalty to their teammates, their team and the organization. They can’t help but succeed.

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