Indian Institute of Management Calcutta

Working Paper Series

WPS No. 786
August 2016

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Abstract
A sports organisation is a particular case of a service-provider whose survival is heavily dependent on the loyalty of its fan-base, and key concepts and practices of relationship marketing intuitively lend themselves to this context. This exploratory study is to understand the prevalence of relationship marketing practices in sports organisations in a professional sport set-up in an evolved market for sports management. The study finds that sports organisations are aware of the need for relationship marketing practices, and also finds that sport organisations are making a conscious attempt towards implementing relationship marketing practices in managing the connection with their consumers by allocating resources to this effort.

Key Words: Relationship Marketing, Sports Organisations, CRM.

Introduction

Relationship Marketing has attracted the attention of academicians as wells as practitioners for close to three decades. For a large part of the 20th century, the primary focus of marketers was to acquire new customers, and as a result they had a transaction and exchange orientation (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). Changes in the business environment over the last two decades have pushed firms to revisit this focus (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000). An increase in competitive intensity has meant that firms are focused on customer retention and loyalty (Dick, and Basu, 1994). High consumer expectations in today's world mean that firms must keep a track of these expectations, which are best addressed through a cooperative and collaborative relationship (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2000; Copulsky and Wolf, 1990). Businesses today are therefore making a conscious move from a transactional orientation to a relational orientation (Dwyer, Shurr, and Oh, 1987).

The presence of relationship marketing is most perceptible in the service economy. Services are characterized by intangibility, simultaneous production and consumption, and their non-standardized, and perishable nature (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985). Additionally, there are multiple customer touch-points, also referred to as 'moments of truth' (Bitner, Brown, and Meuter, 2000), not all of which are under the producers control. The task of marketing a service is therefore a challenging one (Zeithaml, Gremler, Bitner, and Pandit, 2006).

Sports management is one such service industry where customer orientation is paramount, especially since involvement of customers with the team they support is very high (Wann and Branscombe, 1992; Shani, 1997), and customers are very demanding (Bolchover and Brady, 2002). A satisfied clientele is the key factor that determines the economic well being of a sports team (McDonald, Sutton, and Milne, 1995), and has an impact on its survival and growth. Teams therefore approach customers with actions that are based on a long-term view, and a relational orientation (Irwin, Zwick, and Sutton, 1999).

There is a need to address the current state of sport in India wherein teams are trying to understand ways to connect with their customers. This is important for teams and

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leagues in India's leading sport, i.e., Cricket, and is probably higher for other sports whose fan bases are smaller. While professional leagues for sports in India are a reality today[2], there is a need for a conscious effort on the part of these leagues and its constituent teams to ensure strong bonds with their customers. In this context this study is an attempt to draw lessons for India from practices of relationship marketing in a market with an established, mature professional sport set-up across sports. Due to historical reasons, the UK sport context is similar to in India in that there is commonality in the sports played. Also, when there is an overwhelming dominance of one sport in these markets, viz., Football in the UK and Cricket in India, both of which define the behaviour of entitites within the respective sports and also effect the way in which other sports are viewed, the survival strategies of other sports, and their share of the sports pie. In the UK Football clubs and County Cricket teams are established entitites with rich club histories, a strong franchise, and are today brands of significant stature. The need to survive, grow and consolidate mind-share of the consumer has led most clubs to have ongoing programmes towards building stronger bonds with the customer, and therefore a larger loyal cutomer base.

This study is an attempt to understand the relationship marketing activities that sporting organisations in mature markets the UK undertake to forge stronger bonds with their customers. The objective was to compare findings from this study to findings from earlier studies, and also to provide directions for practice in the Indian context. The methodology of the study replicates the case-based methodology of studying relationship marketing practices in professional sport as defined in Stavros (2005) and Stavros and Westberg (2008).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Extant literature on relationship marketing, sports marketing and the confluence of the two streams is reviewed first. This is followed by a description of the research methodology. Thereafter the case of one of the leading county Cricket clubs is presented. This is followed by implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Literature Review
Marketing traditionally has focussed on transactions and exchange (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). However, over the years there has been a significant shift from a transactional to a relational orientation (Dwyer, Schurr and Oh, 1987), i.e., a move from conflict and choice independence to mutual cooperation, and mutual interdependence (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). This shift is an acknowledgement of the change in focus from value exchange to value creation, wherein firms have started to seek collaborative relationships with both customers and suppliers (Copulsky and Wolf, 1990). Scholarly work in channel cooperation research (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Weitz and Jap, 1995), networks (Dwyer, Shurr, and Oh, 1987; Anderson, Hakansson, and Johanson, 1994), and services marketing (Berry, 1983; Bitner, 1995) reflects this change of orientation in marketing thought.

While evidence for the arguments for a relational orientation is found in business-to-business, services, and industrial marketing contexts, it is in the consumer markets that the focus of this study lies. Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) provide deep insights in studying relationship marketing in consumer markets. They state that when marketers and consumers are separated, as in the case of mass markets (e.g., consumer goods markets,) consumers develop relationships with products and their symbols. They added that consumers choose to bestow loyalty to some products and processes of purchase, which

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[2] As of today India has professional leagues for Cricket, Hockey, Badminton, Tennis, Kabaddi, Futsal, and Volleball.

shows a semblance of relational behaviour. The primary objective for the consumer in doing this is to reduce choice, and three motivations drive this consumer behaviour – personal, sociological, and institutional – and help in the formation of relationships. These insights are interesting from the point of view of sports organisations, which are brands in their own right and have a deep following among their target consumer. However, the organisation and the customer are still at an arm's length, and the fans identify with the symbolic representation of the club as a manifestation of what they are buying into.

Various scholars have tried to understand the concept of identity involving sports brands and sports fans. Researchers have studied the effect of 'sportscape' and personal attachment (Hill and Green, 2000), spectator aggression in sport and its ties to identification, arousal, and self-esteem of sports spectators (Branscombe and Wann, 1992), image management by the club as a way to enhance value derived, and therefore the brand's equity (Ferrand and Pages, 1999), why people consume the product that is professional sport (Mason, 1999), what a sports brand is and how to build it (Milligan, 2000), and creating identification amongst fans towards professional sports teams (Sutton, McDonald and Milne, 1997). Others have tried to measure motivation of spectators of sport (McDonald, Milne and Hong, 2002), and attempted to provide typologies of sports consumers (Stuart, Smith and Nicholson, 2003). In this context of understanding individual consumers, Stavros (2005) provided an excellent summary of literature on consumers of products of sports organisations or sports brands. From his literature review Stavros (2005) concluded that there are five broad aspects into which motivations of a sports fan may be classified, viz., Servicescapes (tangibles that come along with the service provided by the brand), Loyalty (allegiance and devotion to a sports brand), Winning (the positive effects of winning and conversely the negative effects of losing or player transfers that may cost a win), Group behaviour (important as sports consumption is largely in groups), and Sport Image and Excellence (image that the fan perceives of the club).

Gruen (2000, page 355) states that "…membership organisations provide members access to desired services and preferential treatment, a sense of belonging and identity, and the ability to meet others with similar interests." This is apt in the context of sports where membership to clubs is either formally provided through various levels of membership sold by the club, or fans assume membership of clubs by showing their allegiance to a club. This validates the work of various scholars (Shannon, 1999; Irwing, Zwick, and Sutton, 1999; Stavros, 2005; Stavros, Pope, and Winzar, 2008) who point to the necessity of taking a relational view of contexts such a sport. In this context, while Ratten and Ratten (2011) do not specifically mention the term Relationship Marketing, they provide a broad view of where sport marketing is headed, encompassing various aspects and suggest that there is opportunity for both research and practice in entrepreneurship, tourism, CSR, and marketing involving sport.

A study of literature of relationship marketing in the context of sport included articles from both practitioner-oriented and academic-oriented journals. Among the practitioner oriented journals, Burton and Howard (2000) provide a guide to current and aspiring managers in the sports industry on how to handle difficult situations by taking actions that are consistent with the principles of relationship and services marketing. Lapio and Speter (2000) catalogued the successful implementation of relationship marketing by NASCAR. Raymond (2001) provides an insight into the relationship marketing effort undertaken by teams in the Major League Baseball (MLB), focusing on the loyalty programmes that have been put in place by teams in the league. Lee, Grabel, and Ryder

(2005) conducted an exploratory study the relationship marketing efforts across the four big leagues in the US (MLB, NFL, NHL, NBA) in order to reevaluate these efforts. Also, there are multiple press reports that point to adoption of relationship marketing practices by organizations: Barrand (2003) on the launch of a loyalty scheme by Rugby Football Union (RFU) of England, Brichter (2003) about a lucrative reward scheme for supporters, and Smith (2005) about use of technology to encourage fans to renew tickets for the next season. Discussions on the subject in academic journals revolve around the following themes: Shani (1997) and McDonald and Milne (1997) are two early pieces of work in the area of relationship marketing in sports, and provide a critique of relationship marketing in sports, and suggestions for the future. McDaniel and Moore (2005) provide an example of a particular Relationship Marketing Instrument (RMI); specific methods that help bring about benefits of a relationship marketing programme; that they term as Permanent Seat Licensing that has been successful in remodeling or building nine NFL Football stadiums. McDonald, Sutton, and Milne (1995) modify the SERVQUAL measure (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985) to provide a measure for service quality in professional sports. Gladden, Milne, and Sutton (1998) provide a conceptual framework for assessing brand equity of a sports brand, by taking Division I College Athletics teams as the subject of their choice, and conclude that brand equity is a dynamic entity especially in the sports brand context, and that the consequences of equity is a function of the antecedents of equity, the current equity, and the consequences of the previous period, therefore corroborating Gronroos' (2000) observations when he wrote about the Nordic School of Relationship Marketing thought. Irwin, Zwick and Sutton (1999) studied predictors of success of marketing a sports franchise or sports brand, and find that current performance drives ticket plan sales, while renewal rates are related to factors other than team performance. Bee and Kahle (2006) presented a framework based on Kelman's Functional Approach to Attitude Change, to study why consumers engage in relationship marketing, and proposed compliance (superficial), identification (self-esteem and image), and internalization (value similarity that leads to a long-term relationship as three distinct levels of understanding relationship formation. Stavros (2005), and Stavros, Pope and Winzar (2008) studied relationship marketing in the Australian Professional Sport context using the model suggested by Shani (1997), and posit that although marketers know of relationship marketing, they are reluctant to adapt its principles. Smith and Roy (2011) provide a theoretical framework that links developing a customer orientation as being integral to ticket selling activities in a sports organisation, and studies how this behaviour can be motivated.

The objective of this study was to understand relationship marketing activities that sporting organisations undertake to forge stronger bonds with their customers. The study brings together two streams of literature, i.e., relationship marketing, and sports marketing. This study was carried out in the context of business-to-consumer relationships. Specifically, the study focused on the relationship between a sports organisation as a service providing firm, and its customer base that buys the sports organisation's product. Sports is a high-involvement category wherein loyalty is the greatest asset that the service provider enjoys with the customer base. The constructs of Trust and Commitment manifest themselves over many episodic interactions with the service providing organisation. These relationships are deep, and bonds that the customer forms with the sports organisation are built over a considerable period of time. Most importantly there is a sense of pseudo-ownership among the consumers, a situation that can be the envy of marketing managers of most products and services.

The impetus for this study comes from anecdotal evidence that suggests that the relational view is very nascent in the Indian consumer context, and interestingly also

among Indian sports brands (i.e., clubs). The current state of affairs in sport in India is that even teams that are part of cash-rich sports leagues do minimal relationship marketing activity with their customers. While professional leagues for sports in India are a reality today there is a need for a conscious effort on the part of the league, and its teams to ensure strong bonds with their customers. This study is an attempt to learn from the practice of relationship marketing in a market with an established, mature, professionally-run sports set-up across multiple sports, and one that shares similarity to the Indian context. The output for the study will benefit management practice in sport. This is particularly important since sports and specifically sports entertainment is a growing industry in India - the coming of professional leagues, a move towards better structure and systems, an increase in awareness about sports as a viable career option, and an increase in fitness consciousness, all point to sports moving towards taking a more important place in our society. The growth in sport will require, among other things, an understanding of the sports customer base, and an active move to retain customers for long-term gain, i.e., a conscious effort to move from the current transaction based interaction with customers, to a more relationship orientation.

Research Methodology
Stavros (2005), and Stavros and Westberg (2009) studied the relational paradigm in the Australian Professioanal sport context, using triangulation and multiple case studies. Stavros and Westberg (2008, page 310) state that "… understanding of the operations of various organisations, a charting of events of their history and an identification of strategies, issues and contemporary practices…suggested the need for the richness of data that qualitative case studies are able to provide." Stavros (2005) and Stavros, Pope, and Winzar (2008) also noted that most of the previous work on relationship marketing in sport has been done in the North American context, which is consistent with what was observed by this author. This observation strengthens the need for an exploratory study of this nature to be undertaken in the context outside of the North America. The UK was chosen as the geographical context of the study due to the maturity of the sports market with its established clubs and leagues for the leading sports, as also its similarity to the Indian context.

Given the exploratory nature of this study qualitative methods were considerd to be best suited. Furthermore, since the study is an attempt to replicate earlier work of Stavros (2005) and Stavros and Westberg (2008) in a different context, the researcher decided to use the same methodology as was done by these earlier researchers. Therefore, the methodology employed was to use data from personal interviews, archival and publically available data, and participant observation to create cases for each sports organisation studied, and later thread together the underlying principles to arrive at an answer to the research question.

Data Collection
With growth in the service economy across the world, scholars from the field of marketing have focused on services marketing and the way it is peculiar and what makes services different from products. Of particular interest to this study is the concept of service encounters (Bitner, 1995), i.e., the multiple interactions at multiple customer touch-points between service provider and customer. Taking the example of an airline, a phone-call to the helpline, an interaction with an official of an airline, or a steward, each qualifies as a service encounter. The smallest unit of interaction or service encounter are acts that are more commonly known as 'moments of truth' (Gronroos, 2000; Bitner, Brown, and Meuter, 2000). A series of acts on the same subject constitutes an episode (Gronroos, 2000). A relationship is strong when the sum total of acts and episodes has left

a positive impression (Bitner, 1995). Since acts and episodes are a continually occurring phenomena in a relationship (Gronroos, 2000), a relationship is dynamic in nature. Therefore, an organisation must show consistency in delivering its promises to ensure an overall positive image (Bitner, 1995), and a strong relationship. Taking this process view of relationship building and maintenance, wherein the relationship is governed by "moments of truth" through the course of the life of the relationship, it is clear that relationship marketing cannot be equated to a CRM exercise, and that CRM tools only measure what is the sum total of the results of all activities that have gone to make the relationship. This understanding necessitates taking a holistic perspective in looking at data to understand the levels of relationship marketing. This is also true of the context of services that are provided by sports organizations, which is the focus of this study. Given this stress on the holistic perspective, information was collected on the history of the club, its organisation structure, revenue streams, attendance and membership, marketing practices, relationship marketing focus etc. Specifically, given the exploratory nature of the study, and the argument made earlier for qualitative research, the survey instrument for this study was a discussion guide that would aid the researcher in a conversation akin to an in-depth interview. While the instrument was ideally desgined to be administered in person, depending on the respondent's convenience, it could also be administered over the phone. Data was proposed to be collected from four sports organisations – two County Cricket clubs, and two Football clubs. The endeavour was to build cases for each club that would include information that would provide for a hoilistic view.

Top English Country Cricket Clubs and Football Clubs were contacted through the contact details furnished by them at their websites, by sending emails or via telephone. Of the approximately 20 County Cricket Clubs and Football Clubs contacted, most refused to provide any data over and above what was already shared in the public domain and also refused to give an interview. In the end, only one organisation, i.e., Surrey County Cricket Club (Surrey CCC) agreed to provide data. As proposed, the case is constructed from the data provided by the club, and this is used along with data publicly available on club websites and other sources as a guideline to make inferences.

Surrey CCC: A Case
Data was collected through Interview with the Head of Corporate Sales of the club. Follow up questions were addressed by emails as required. In addition, information available on the club's website was used to fill any gaps. The researcher also attended a match at the club, courtesy a member of the club, to get a feel of the atmosphere of a game-day at the venue that hosts the club.

History of the Club
The Surrey County Cricket Club (Surrey CCC) has been in existence since 1845. Surrey CCC is a member owned organisation which leases the land that the Kia Oval is on from the Duchy of Cornwall. The Kia Oval is also known traditionally as The Kennington Oval. It is considered the 'Home of English Cricket', and is a historic ground – among the many interesting facts about the club and the ground, the first test was played here in 1882, the legend of the 'Ashes' was born here, and traditionally the last test match of any series is played at this ground[3].

The stated[4] Mission, Vision and Values of the Club are as follows.

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[3]Source: ESPN Cricinfo Website(http://www.espncricinfo.com/england/content/ground/57127.html) Last accessed 31 July 2016
[4] Source: Interviews and email communication.

"Mission - Why We Exist
To be the leading domestic club in World cricket,
And for the *Kia* Oval to remain one of the best and most iconic international venues,
In order promote a vibrant and growing support of cricket in London, the UK and beyond.

Vision - What We Want to Be
We want to be…
The best cricket club; to match and then exceed the highest levels of cricketing excellence that have been set during our proud history.
Respected; for the way we behave, play cricket, and do business.
With the biggest supporter base; as a club which attracts support from all cultural quarters, and for whom membership of our club is an aspiration that can be realised.
and an amazing home; to further develop the Oval as the powerhouse venue of English cricket, providing the best customer experience, peerless facilities and operational excellence

Values - What We Believe In
Working together as ONE TEAM.   Our work and objectives are all interrelated. We must recognise the value that each party brings, and help others to succeed. Everyone is welcome at Surrey.
We want to EXCEL. At everything we do, both on and off the pitch. Our individuals must be ambitious for the team and for themselves. We will invest in our people, and expect performance in return. We should enjoy our work, and should tirelessly strive to ensure that our members, supporters and customers also enjoy their time with us.
We seek RESPONSIBILITY, and apply the highest professional standards at all times. We encourage individuals to lead and follow as part of a dynamic organisation, and always to act in the best interests of the club."
(Source: Surrey CCC)

Organizational Structure of Surrey CCC
The organisation structure of Surrey CCC is a matrix structure to help communication around all departments and to restrict any territorialism. The chart in Figure 1 shows this matrix structure. It is interesting to note that the Marketing function reports directly to the CEO. Also, the team specifically handling the newly initiated CRM effort is part of the Commercial Department.

----- Insert Figure 1 about here -----

Revenue Streams & Their Relative Importance
The club's main revenue streams, in order of value are International ticket sales, International Hospitality sales, Sponsorship, Public catering, Distributions from ECB, Conference & events, Membership, Domestic Ticket Sales, and Retail sales.

Attendance
Ticket sales around the year, including international and domestic events but not hospitality, account for 30% of revenues. Attendance at matches is therefore very important for the club. The club's Head of Corporate Sales recalls that the importance of attendance was clear in 2010, when the marquee summer test match did not sell out for the first time in around 25 years. This resulted in the Club announcing a £500k loss for the year and wide-scale redundancies.

International matches have mostly been sold-out in the last three decades. However, this is becoming more difficult given the increased amount of Cricket being played, which many argue reduces the 'special' nature of a match. Also, there is an increased competition in the leisure sector, and London being a hub provides multiple options to the public in both sport and non-sport activities.

Although there is a change in the attendance itself, there is not a large shift in demographic over the years. The advent of T20 has brought a younger audience to the ground for those particular games. The spectators for T20 tend to be young professionals as long as the matches are played on weekdays. At weekends a family atmosphere can be expected. In the mid 80s, there was a very large West Indian spectator base for particular international tours, but with the West-Indian team not doing as well, it has now become far more difficult to attract that demographic to matches. In the context of visiting teams it is interesting to note that all matches involving India are usually sold out much in advance.

The researcher's observation from a mid-season 40-over competitive match that the home team played against a top County side was that only half the stands were occupied even though the match was played on the weekend. This is only an extension of the phenomena that Cricket is facing in the UK in general, with domestic games failing to attract very large audiences, and in that context the attendance on the day was perhaps on the higher side.

Membership
The Surrey CCC is a members' club and members are paramount. The focus of the business is to safeguard the future of Surrey CCC, with the interests of the members at heart. There are different types of memberships on offer so that people can choose which games they like to attend. For example, the top level membership allows access to all Surrey and England matches. At the other end, one could just purchase the Surrey County Championship matches. Membership numbers have remained relatively flat over the past ten years and tend to be just under 10,000. There is usually a small spike before Ashes years when membership provides access to international tickets for those games. The current restructure of the membership has meant that there is now a price differential between the best and worst seats in the Pavilion. This had not been in place before. Now members buy a specific seat, so in effect get better service and pay on that basis.

Marketing and Related Activities
Apart from the regular marketing activity, the club conducts market research in ground with the help of the ECB at major matches. Hospitality and Conference clients all receive feedback forms after their event. However, traditionally the club had not been very good at database management services because the structure of the organisation was siloed. There is currently a full review of all data that is being pooled by an external company on the club's behalf. The club has recently established a specific role for events and customer experience, which will be wholly focused on customer service and the club's offering at the ground. As noted earlier, this forms part of the Commercial department within the existing structure. Relationship Marketing practices were earlier non-existent, but is fast becoming a priority. The database work is the first stage for this.

Media & Communications
Media is important to the club as a venue to showcase the club and cricket as a whole given *Sky*'s influence of the financials at the ECB. While all channels and avenues (print,

tv, radio, internet etc.) are important to at a local level, *Sky* is the most important in terms of the funding of the overall game.

Community and Volunteers
Surrey CCC community involvement ranges from local community engagement and influence over key community issues. Surrey CCC develops project and programmes that work across developing opportunities in participation, social inclusion, education, healthy living and facilities. The Surrey CCC engages with over 3,000 people across inner London with coaching and education programme annually. The club facilitates volunteering throughout its schemes, and offers work experience opportunities with all deliver partners like 'The Prince's Trust'. The club also regularly engages with its neighboring International venue with complimentary ticket offers.

'A Day at the Cricket' – Ambience and Activity
The historic "Hobbs Gates" mark the entrance to The Oval. On entering the ground there are two structures in the ground that are imposing – the first is the Member's Pavilion, and at the other end is the new stand with the media boxes that were constructed in 2004 along with refurbishing the stadium. The other imposing structures are the gasometers on the east side of the ground.

The club believes that it provides a more inclusive atmosphere at its games than its leading competitor, the Lord's Cricket Ground. The atmosphere here is more of an exciting sporting event rather than an English garden party type feel that one may get at Lord's. For example, the Barmy Army trumpeter can be credited to help with the atmosphere at the venue. While breaks during the game in international matches are run by the ECB, for domestic matches the club tries to make the matches as fun as possible, with activities, T-shirt launchers, music etc., to accompany the actual game. Unfortunately, the club has constraints in terms of space around the venue, which makes customer servicing circumstances difficult at busy times.

The researcher's own experience from a 40-over game attended was that unlike in the case of a Football match, the queues were orderly, and tickets to a game were available at the gates. Everyone looked relaxed, and came to enjoy 'a day at the Cricket', to catch some sun, and enjoy a decent match. Many spectators (old and young alike) had empty score-sheets and pens or pencils at hand, and they filled out the score-sheet diligently even though a large electronic scoreboard showed the current score along with relevant statistics that could be fit on the board. There were some spectators chanting slogans for their team. The spectators were clearly enjoying a nice sunny day with a drink of their choice in their hands. The members stand has a bar attached to the lounge, and similarly each stand has access to an establishment that serves drinks. There were also temporary stalls selling thigns to eat, and seemed to be well stocked for the duration of the game.

Conclusion
In light of the competition for the cusomter's share of mind, share of wallet, and share of leisure time, the Surrey CCC is proactive about the use of relationship marketing tools and techniques to retain customers, enhance customer experience and is involved in the community that it is a part of, with an aim towards a long-term profitable relationship with its customers, which would ensure a sustainable future for the club.

Implications, limitations, and directions for future research

Implications

This exploratory study replicates the work of Stavros (2005) in the UK context using the methodology proposed by Stavros and Westberg (2008). Although this study was exploratory in nature, time bound, and has limited data points, it directionally agrees with what was found by earlier scholars in their studies in North America and Australia (Lapio and Speter, 2000; Cousens, Babiak and Slack, 2001; Stavros, 2005) that there is a growing awareness amongst sports entities that relationship marketing is important to their survival and prosperity.

Results indicate that although a customer orientation among sports clubs was always part of the management's view, specific focus on relationship marketing may have been missing earlier. In the light of competition for the cusomter's share of wallet, and share of leisure time, clubs involved in the sport of Cricket in the UK are waking up to a new reality wherein they must address the concerns of customer retention, and enhancing customer relationships. They are getting proactive about the use of relationship marketing tools and techniques to retain customers, enhance their experience, and aim for a long-term profitable relationship.

From the perspective of the practitioner in the Indian context this study points to the need for an active relationship marketing programme. However, as noted earlier, following Shani's (1997) framework (as mentioned in Stavros, Pope and Winzar, 2008), Indian sports organisations will take time to move forward from their current transactional orientation. This is particularly of interest since there are many sports vying for the Indian consumer's share of mind and wallet.

Limitations
While publicly available content on websites of various Football and Cricket clubs shows evidence of elements that are either a part of or point to relational orientation, this needs to be corroborated with interviews and personal interaction with key members of the organization within these clubs. Comparison of results across studies would not be prudent at this time since the number of data points is few in this study. Once further data is collected a comparison across different regions may be possible, and one would be better able to appreciate the issues surrounding use of relationship marketing in a sports context. At the time of proposing this study, it was suggested that data will be collected from four clubs – two each from Football, and County Cricket Clubs, and cases built for each club. The thought behind choosing four clubs was to be able to analyse differences in general, and in the relationship marketing efforts in particular, both among sporting bodies within a sport, and across sports. However, given the inability or reluctance of most clubs to share their experiences either due to confidentiality issues or due to paucity of time at their end, only one case could be written. This is a major limitation of the study.

Directions for Future Research
Firstly, more data needs to be collected in the UK context to allow for a multiple case perspective, and also allow for comparison across different regions that have established professional sports set-ups, viz., North America, Australia, and UK for starters. Given the growth of sport in the Indian context, as seen from the number of competitive leagues for various sports, a replication in the Indian context would be interesting. The attempt would be to see where sports organizations in India stand as per Shani's (1997) framework. This will also allow a comparison with the established markets in the developed countries that were discussed earlier.

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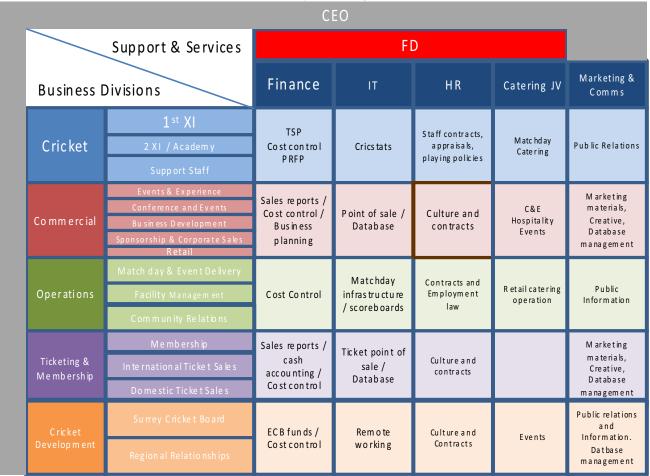Adler, L. (1966) "Symbiotic marketing", Harvard Business Review, Vol. 44 No. 6, pp. 59-71.

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Figure 1 – Organisation Structure: Surrey County Cricket Club

Surrey CCC Organisation Matrix

CEO						
Support & Services / Business Divisions		FD				
		Finance	IT	HR	Catering JV	Marketing & Comms
Cricket	1st XI / 2 XI / Academy / Support Staff	TSP Cost control PRFP	Cricstats	Staff contracts, appraisals, playing policies	Matchday Catering	Public Relations
Commercial	Events & Experience / Conference and Events / Business Development / Sponsorship & Corporate Sales / Retail	Sales reports / Cost control / Business planning	Point of sale / Database	Culture and contracts	C&E Hospitality Events	Marketing materials, Creative, Database management
Operations	Match day & Event Delivery / Facility Management / Community Relations	Cost Control	Matchday infrastructure / scoreboards	Contracts and Employment law	Retail catering operation	Public Information
Ticketing & Membership	Membership / International Ticket Sales / Domestic Ticket Sales	Sales reports / cash accounting / Cost control	Ticket point of sale / Database	Culture and contracts		Marketing materials, Creative, Database management
Cricket Development	Surrey Cricket Board / Regional Relationships	ECB funds / Cost control	Remote working	Culture and Contracts	Events	Public relations and Information. Datbase management