THE CHARLES JAGO NORTHERN SPORT CENTRE:
BUILDING BRAND AWARENESS THROUGH AN INTEGRATED MARKETING MIX

by

Scott McWalter

BComm., University of Northern British Columbia. 2008

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 2014

© Scott McWalter, 2014
Abstract

The purpose of this project is to research and identify the vital components of an integrated marketing strategy to help raise the internal and external awareness of the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre. This sport and fitness facility represents one of nine Ancillary Services units at the University of Northern British Columbia. UNBC Ancillary Services provides service-orientated and revenue-generating services that support and enhance the core activities of not only the University campuses, but of the Community of Prince George and surrounding Northern BC regions as well. This project paper will review how the Northern Sport Centre’s brand awareness can be enhanced by various units from within UNBC Ancillary Services, provide recommendations not only for a re-branding strategy but also for cross promotional marketing efforts and strategies between the various units. The first part of this paper will assess and review the relevance and effectiveness of traditional mediums of marketing compared to the revolution of marketing; which has led to social media becoming a driver of modern marketing efforts. This will provide a discussion on the importance of Facebook for the Northern Sport Centre’s optimal marketing mix, as well as an overview on other successful social media channels that integrate well with the non-traditional mediums. The second part of this paper will discuss the essential components of an integrated marketing plan for the NSC and provide suggestions on how to leverage the use of a cohesive UNBC Ancillary Services department. Equally as important, is the NSC’s ability to recognize new advertising trends and opportunities as they emerge. Next this paper will discuss the importance of community engagement and what this means to the Northern Sport Centre. Lastly, there will be a brief discussion on some of the challenges that may emerge through the implementation of establishing the optimal integrated marketing mix will be discussed.
# Table of Contents

Approval
Abstract
Table of Contents
List of Tables
List of Figures
Abbreviations
Acknowledgements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chapter I</strong></th>
<th><strong>Introduction</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1.1</td>
<td>Research Objectives and Motivation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1.2</td>
<td>Scope of Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Chapter II</strong></th>
<th><strong>Literature Review</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.1</td>
<td>Building Strong Brands</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.2</td>
<td>Integration of Marketing Strategy and Information Technology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.3</td>
<td>Traditional Marketing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.4</td>
<td>Digital Marketing</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5</td>
<td>Social Media Marketing</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5.1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5.2</td>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5.3</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5.4</td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5.5</td>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.5.6</td>
<td>Google+ and Other Social Media Platforms</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.6</td>
<td>Recent Marketing Trends</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.1</td>
<td>Introduction to the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.2</td>
<td>Overview of UNBC Ancillary Services</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.2.1</td>
<td>UNBC's 25th Anniversary and NSC's 10th Anniversary</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.3</td>
<td>User Groups, Members and Tenants</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3.4</td>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>Analysis/Findings</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4.1</td>
<td>Optimal Integrated Marketing Mix</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4.2</td>
<td>Engagement with Community Partners and Stakeholders</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 4.3</td>
<td>Limitations in the Analysis</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 5.1</td>
<td>Team NSC Rebrand</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1</td>
<td>Potential Impact of Combining Marketing Strategy with Information Technology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>UNBC Ancillary Services Organizational Chart</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>WebTrac Online Registration Features</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>WebTrac Online Registration Capabilities</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>Campaigner e-Newsletter Key Metrics</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>Team NSC Logo Concept Variations</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Marketing Strategy &amp; Technology Integration</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Profile of Major Traditional Media Types</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Content Marketing Tactics Planner</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Commonly Used Social Media Platforms</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Benefits of Social Media Marketing</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>B2C vs. B2B Social Media Preference for Marketers</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>Key Metrics for NSC YouTube Channel</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Facebook Likes Compared to Competition</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>NSC Facebook Likes By Demographic</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>Hootsuite Per-post Metrics</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Flat-lined NSC Twitter Page Growth</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Volatile NSC Facebook Page Posts</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>Northern Sport Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNBC</td>
<td>University of Northern British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNBCCS</td>
<td>UNBC Continuing Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES</td>
<td>Conference and Event Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMT</td>
<td>Email Money Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>Unique Selling Proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROI</td>
<td>Return On Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEO</td>
<td>Search Engine Optimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>Unique Selling Proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>User-generated Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2C</td>
<td>Business to Consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2B</td>
<td>Business to Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Customer Relationship Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgement

I would like to personally thank and acknowledge the help of all those who have assisted in making the production of this project possible. First off, Dr. Choi, whose ongoing suggestions, feedback and criticisms were invaluable as the project was honed and shaped into its final form.

To my partner in life, Crystal Patten, who has been a strong source of encouragement and inspiration to me throughout the MBA journey. Thank you for actively supporting me during the endless months and long nights of researching and writing.

Also, a special thanks to my parents, Margaret and David, who have consistently inspired and motivated me in more ways than I can list. They have always been fierce supporters of continuous learning and I will forever be grateful for their advocacy of post-secondary education.

To all of the members of my cohort, specifically Jeny Daoust, it has been a privilege sharing a classroom with you these past 21 months. This was an MBA Cohort full of community difference-makers and I look forward to hearing about your future accomplishments. In addition, my experience in the MBA program was only enhanced by the constant advice and reassurance from my work colleague and UNBC alumni, Brenda Schlesinger Herbert.

I firmly believe that life belongs to those who take action and go after their goals. The experience with the MBA Program at the University of Northern British Columbia is something I've always been grateful for and will never forget. Thanks to everyone who shared this journey with me.
Chapter I

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to research and establish the vital components of an integrated marketing strategy for the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre that help raise the sport and fitness facility’s internal and external brand awareness. Built in 2007, the NSC is a world-class community sport and fitness facility located at the entrance of the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George, British Columbia. In recent years, there seems to be a visible disconnect between the facility and the Community of Prince George, with the misconception that the NSC was built exclusively for the UNBC community and not the general public. This problem is significant and alarming to the NSC and will require research dedicated to exploring the process and benefits of rejuvenating a strong brand that eliminates confusion and increases positive perceptions, strong positioning and unambiguous recognition. This project is of great interest to all NSC stakeholders: staff, management, tenants, user groups, members, community partners, as well as UNBC and NSC Board of Directors. Being instantly recognizable to your target market through strong brand awareness allows the NSC to grow its membership base; raise the number of user group bookings; host more significant events and sporting competitions; increase revenue margins and engage community partners.

The first part of this paper, in addition to the research on brand rejuvenation and awareness, will review the relevance and effectiveness of traditional mediums of marketing compared to the revolution of digital marketing which has led to social media becoming a driver of modern marketing and communication efforts. This research will provide a discussion on evaluating the components of an optimal marketing mix for the NSC in the analysis/findings section, as well as recommending the execution of social media strategies that integrate well
with the non-traditional mediums. Social media now exerts tremendous influence over the way the NSC’s primary target audiences – individual members and user groups – receive and share information. This will allow an opportunity to explore the benefits, costs and risks associated with the NSC capitalizing on social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and other platforms that are growing in popularity and becoming entrenched in people’s lives. There’s no denying that social media channels will continue to play a huge role in the way people make decisions and receive information. Additional recommendations on how the NSC should respond to this ongoing change will be provided.

Continued investment to drive future growth is critical for the NSC and resources must be continuously reinvested to ensure that the sport and fitness facility is positioned to sustainably manage ongoing business operations. The framework of this paper will present a valid case as to why a substantial amount of this reinvestment should be allotted to marketing spend revolving around social media advertising made possible by the elimination of expensive print material (program guides, direct mail-out distribution, etc.). It may also lead to a better understanding of the aspects that must be considered in advertising online, such as best practices and Canadian legislation. This project will also research and subsequently recommend the best methods for other digital marketing mediums and activities that can be leveraged to help solve the brand awareness issue, with a thorough look at recent marketing trends and a final recommendation and rationalization of rebranding as ‘Team NSC’. In addition, the rising correlation between marketing strategy and information technology will be briefly analyzed, along with an explanation as to why this trend is important and relevant to the NSC. Lastly, recommendations will be provided for ways in which the NSC should take advantage of the benefits that can manifest from this connection.
Also found in this paper is a compilation of brief suggestions articulating how the NSC can leverage the use of a cohesive UNBC Ancillary Services department and how this can be achieved through cross promotions and by developing synergies with the multiple business units. This section details the activities, processes, vehicles, and strategies necessary to establish these synergistic relationships with the other divisions in UNBC Ancillary Services that creates positive dialogue, influences decision-making and exploits large volume advertising investments that maximize economies of scale purchasing opportunities. An overview of the NSC’s user groups, members and tenants will be discussed, with a brief timeline of special events, including the anticipated brand awareness benefits the NSC will receive for being an official host venue for the 2015 Canada Winter Games.

Equally as important in this section is the University of Northern BC’s plan to celebrate its 25th Anniversary in the year 2015 and how the NSC can participate in this event. The NSC can benefit from this event by submitting a proposal that is crafted and tailored towards both showcasing the anniversary’s theme (Growth, Renewal, Engagement, Energy, and Nature) and enhancing its engagement with community partners and stakeholders. The NSC will celebrate its 10 year anniversary in 2017. A section of this paper will discuss the significance of this opportunity to showcase the sport and fitness facility, which is supported by government funding, provided that this is also the year of Canada’s 150th birthday and the federal government is looking at ways to fund celebratory events in communities across the country. Finally, this project wouldn’t be complete without a discussion on some of the challenges that may emerge through the implementation of the integrated marketing strategy that relies so heavily on social media marketing.
1.1 Research Objectives and Motivation

The specific objectives of the research are focused on:

1) Recognizing the benefits of both traditional marketing and online marketing mediums when selecting the appropriate marketing mix to build internal (UNBC) and external (City of Prince George) awareness for the NSC;
2) Enhancing the NSC’s brand recognition through social media marketing;
3) Exploring the benefits of other mediums of advertising such as event marketing and corporate sponsorship;
4) Understanding the benefits of developing relationships with community partners and stakeholders;
5) Identifying important components to include in an integrated marketing and communications plan for the NSC, while keeping in mind its ongoing unique partnership with the City of Prince George and UNBC;
6) Identifying business opportunities, interdependencies, and synergies between the NSC and the various units within UNBC Ancillary Services, especially during UNBC’s 25 year Anniversary and the NSC’s 10 year Anniversary; and
7) Providing a final recommendation on the concept of rebranding using the slogan ‘Team NSC’.

1.2 Scope of Study

This project examines the untapped branding, partnership and revenue generating potential of the NSC. The NSC is ideally situated to take advantage of both traditional and digital marketing approaches, with an emphasis on incorporating a strong social media presence in its integrated marketing strategy. The increasing correlation between marketing strategy and
information technology is also an important trend for the NSC to capitalize on. Although academic research has been slow to investigate this concept, in the past decade marketing researchers have begun to thoroughly research the role of information technology in marketing strategy success; for this reason it is important for the NSC to understand that although its social media channels represent the sport and fitness facility's largest digital assets, strong information technology competency can lead to greater sales, performance optimization, successful interactive marketing, web system development and online customer engagement (see figure 1).

This will only become more pertinent as the NSC launches its new WebTrac integrated software, providing customers and user groups with the convenience of self-service inquiries and transaction processing, such as online membership registrations and renewals.

![Figure 1: Marketing Strategy and Technology Integration (Cambria 2010)](image)

The synergies between the NSC and UNBC Ancillary Services Division will allow the sport and fitness facility to build brand awareness through new groups of prospective
customers, which will ultimately increase the membership base, drive up the numbers for registered programming, and boost the number of user group bookings and special events; the amplified opportunity for cross promotional activities throughout the Ancillary units has never been greater. These opportunities can happen physically, through events being held at the NSC in conjunction with CES, or in the digital world, where UNBC Continuing Studies and the NSC share each other’s online social media content. The NSC can benefit from the individuals within each UNBC Ancillary Unit (appendix 1) as they have the opportunity to exert a lot of influence by raising brand awareness and contributing to lead generation, ensuring they hand off these leads to the appropriate staff members, with the intent of turning those leads into customers (members).
Chapter II

Literature Review

2.1 Building Strong Brands

Developing, implementing, and measuring marketing initiatives that enhance the brand awareness for a world-class sport and fitness facility such as the NSC can be very complicated. Perhaps the most distinctive skill of professional marketers is their ability to create, maintain, enhance, and protect brands (Kotler, Keller and Cunningham). There has been a substantial amount of literature written on issues relating to building strong brands, as well as how brands are built, measured and managed. In addition, there are endless studies devoted to defining brand equity, which Kotler, Keller and Cunningham describe as “the added value endowed to products and services, reflected in how consumers think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as the prices, market share, and profitability that the brand commands”. For the purpose of this paper, and to benefit the NSC, this section will focus on brand revitalization literature and its role in developing a branding strategy.

Ted Mininni wrote a paper summarizing a variety of comprehensive methods on how to revitalize, rejuvenate and reform a struggling brand; he suggests that “without any marketing support, brands will wither away and die” and that “companies that choose to revitalize brands must commit themselves to developing a comprehensive marketing and advertising program”. This assertion by Mininni echoes the sentiments of Danica Kwon who states that “brand revitalization requires a brutally honest look at your company, your culture, and your options.” Although this particular article tends to focus more on multi-national brands competing on a global stage, Kwon concludes her article by suggesting that “there are methods to bring a brand
back to life that include: redefining corporate culture; consistent execution of the vision; establishing true pride in the brand; bolstering renewed excitement for the brands; and allowing a willingness to let go of the past”.

Before developing a branding strategy, the NSC has to decide whether or not it should invest in the full revitalization of its brand. This is a decision that can be facilitated through consumer research. Mininni concludes his article by suggesting that researching consumers will uncover valuable information, and by surveying consumers who have long-term relationships with brands, the following data can be mined:

- What are the points of differentiation, or unique selling proposition of the brand, per their perception?
- What are the brand’s enjoyable assets? How many pleasant associations or experiences have consumers had with the brand?
- What are the negatives, if any, associated with the brand?
- What is the perceived value of the brand?
- Is the perceived value of the brand still active, or is it dormant? How does it stack up against the brands in those same categories?
- How relevant is the brand?
- What, in the consumer’s perception, can the brand do for them to add value or more desirable attributes?
- How much loyalty is there to the brand?

The answers to most, if not all, of these questions are extremely pertinent in determining whether or not the NSC requires a full-scale brand revitalization strategy. Kotler, Keller and
Cunningham, when discussing the subject of whether or not brand revitalization is necessary for a company, recommend a company ask itself the following questions:

- Are positive brand associations losing their strength or uniqueness?
- Have negative associations become linked to the brand?
- If the company decides whether to retain the same positioning or create a new positioning, which positioning should it adopt?

Perhaps the most pertinent literature from this source is when Kotler, Keller and Cunningham state that “to refresh old sources of brand equity or create new sources, two main approaches are possible: First, expand the depth and/or breadth of brand awareness by improving consumer recall and recognition of the brand during purchase or consumption settings. Second, improve the strength, favourability and uniqueness of the brand associations making up the brand image; this approach may involve programs directed at existing or new brand associations”.

Mei-Liang Chen published an article titled, “A Study of Rebranding” which complements this last discussion quite well. Chen attempts to relate the various factors that bring about the necessity of brand rejuvenation and the various methods available for brand rejuvenation, including the argument that in order to make successfully rejuvenate a brand, “we have to bring in a synergy between the vision and mission statement of the company, along with the strategies, facts and analysis”. Additionally, Chen contends that “management plays a significant role in the success of the brand rejuvenation process” and that the “ensuing goodwill from brand rejuvenation allows goals to be achieved with less resistance, effort and expenditure”. Similarly, it is important to note that whether a company goes through with a brand revitalization strategy or not, the future is highly unpredictable. Kotler, Keller and Cunningham propose that “changes in consumer tastes and preferences, the emergence of new competitors or new technology, or any
new development in the marketing environment could potentially affect the fortunes of a brand”. These issues are something the NSC must recognize as it contemplates a decision on whether or not to plan, develop and implement a full-scale branding strategy.

2.2 Integration of Marketing Strategy and Information Technology

There is a noticeable overlap between marketing strategy and information technology (IT). IT-enabled capabilities continue to find their way into marketing functions for companies such as the NSC. The combination of data, technology and strategy has the ability to provide readily available information to marketers and increase marketing and communications effectiveness. Parzek was one of the early adopters of seeing the integration of marketing strategy and information technology, affirming that “marketing and information technology are two of the most important aspects of any organization, even though they traditionally have opposing departments with different agendas, budgets and staff”. Parzek goes on to compare the strengths and assets of both marketing and IT, advocating the idea that “wise organizations leverage the process and power of IT and the strategic vision of marketing,” before outlining the potential impact and benefits of combining IT with marketing strategy (table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Analysis</th>
<th>Capture Customer Trends and Behavior, and apply the data to marketing strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalization</td>
<td>Develop online and offline marketing communication directly targets to individual consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Feedback</td>
<td>Design efficient and effective online surveys to gather feedback from customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>Develop and enthusiastic community of customers around your products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Relationship Management</td>
<td>Access and integrate the right tools for your organization and customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliate Marketing</td>
<td>Create a network of website and customers who resell products and services, and recommend to their friends and family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: Potential Impact of Combining Marketing Strategy with Information Technology

The power of IT to turn challenges into opportunities, to create new markets and industries, to disrupt the way work is done, and to make commerce more social and mobile stems from the creativity and talent of managers—not the capabilities of technology (Turban). Turban has identified four current technology trends that offer valuable business opportunities: social, mobile, cloud and data analytics and supports the idea that “these IT trends are often used in combination to gain a competitive edge, to expand market reach, and to develop new features or ways of doing business, making it easier and cheaper to connect with customers; however, bridging IT and marketing strategy can be a difficult process.

These days more people are becoming comfortable with sending and receiving money on the internet. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways through credit or debit cards, e-mail money transfers (EMT) or through global e-commerce payment merchants such as PayPal. For these reasons, the NSC has invested in the integrated internet software called WebTrac. This technology-driven decision is an attempt to encourage customers to purchase memberships and book the facility electronically through the NSC website. For this to happen, marketing efforts focusing on not only increasing website traffic, but making sure the NSC website reflects the brand experience, is imperative. When it comes to the goal to improve website traffic and increase orders and revenue—once the goal is communicated and the challenges are known—marketing can redevelop the content of the web site so that it speaks to the audience in a clear, action-orientated language (Parzek). Meanwhile, Parzek points out that “IT can explore ways to
capture the traffic that comes in and organize it in ways that marketing can use”. The WebTrac features (appendix 1) and optional capabilities (appendix 2) are compelling enough to motivate the NSC to pull some of its marketing spend out of traditional mediums and devote more resources towards the new WebTrac technology.

2.3 Traditional Marketing

The NSC has always been interested in the best types of marketing tactics and mediums that can drive higher levels of business. Traditional marketing activities (radio, print and television) that once worked well for the NSC — examples include advertising in the two local Prince George newspapers, developing brochures, sending out guides through direct mail, filming group fitness classes and attending local networking events - are still essential. However, the role of traditional marketing in the NSC’s integrated marketing and communications strategy may not be as prominent as it once was. Lavinsky argues that with so much buzz about digital and web marketing, many traditional business owners are asking themselves if traditional marketing is even still alive. Lavinsky follows this statement up by pointing out that “traditional marketing is alive and well. You just have to know where to look for it”.

Lavinsky clarifies that although many of the traditional marketing opportunities have either completely disappeared or changed dramatically, there are still opportunities available for those business owners who do not want to venture into an entirely new and unfamiliar world of internet marketing. Choosing the right traditional media to carry the message is always an essential step. Kotler, Keller and Cunningham illustrate the steps here are: deciding to reach, frequency, and impact; choosing among traditional media types; selecting specific media vehicles; deciding on media timing; and deciding on geographic media allocation. Then the
results of these decisions need to be evaluated. Lavinsky adds that to succeed in traditional and newer types of marketing requires that you pay attention to the following two keys:

1) Know who your customers are and target them. The best marketing messages in the world won’t resonate if delivered to the wrong customers.

2) Craft a compelling, unique selling proposition (USP) and offer. The offer you convey in your advertisement must stand out, and you must convey why you are unique. Are you better, faster, less expensive than competitors? And are you offering something compelling to get new customers to take action? If not, your advertising will be much less effective.

Lavinsky concludes that “traditional marketing still works for businesses of all sizes and these strategies can be reliable ways of keeping your business in the public eye and generating new business without breaking the bank”. He recommends to “just be sure you have a compelling USP and offer, target the right customers, and then put it all together in a marketing plan that you and your team follow”. There are always costs, advantages, and limitations in selecting the appropriate mix of traditional mediums to incorporate into the NSC’s integrated marketing strategy (figure 2).
Kotler, Keller and Cunningham decisively state that television is more expensive than newspaper and radio advertising. For a long time, television was the dominant medium. In recent years, researchers have noticed reduced effectiveness owing to increased commercial clutter, more viewer “zapping” of commercials, and the growth in cable and satellite TV, resulting in less reach for TV commercials (Posnock 29-33). Furthermore, many marketers are looking at alternative media because television advertising costs have risen faster than other traditional media costs (Betzold). However, Michael Stelzner argues that the visible impact of video simply has a great capability to capture and hold the audience more so than the more static mediums of print or radio and that television advertising offers a “terribly dynamic conveyance for delivering a message about your service or product to the widest audience possible.”

There are also many benefits when one considers radio advertising as a viable vehicle to spread the NSC’s message and build brand awareness. Astor and Small recognize the benefits of
radio advertising as cost effective and time efficient with measurable results that can “yield profitable new customers and an incredible return on investment (ROI). Astor and Small further explain that “an advantage of radio advertising is that the costs are greatly less than other forms of media and one of the clearer advantages of radio advertising are how cost effective producing and running a radio spot is.” Several other points made by Astor and Small as they outline the comparison of radio to TV and print are that those two mediums can take a substantial amount of time to provide real, measurable results that are impossible to track, while radio “provides accurate results quickly and on a daily basis”. Astor and Small also offer that the accuracy and swiftness of results obtained by direct response radio techniques may in fact be the most important advantage of radio advertising.

While many companies such as the NSC have shifted their advertising efforts to the web because of cost effectiveness as well as lead generation potential and convenience; print advertising is still prevalent in the City of Prince George with two local newspapers. While discussing the topic of how relevant present day print advertising is, Schollenberger argues that print still maintains its stance as a powerful and necessary component of an ad campaign through tangibility, credibility, branding, target marketing and overall engagement. Schollenberger explains that less print ads is actually a good thing: “with more and more businesses relying solely on the internet for their advertising needs, the decline of print publication can actually be used as a marketing advantage. The publications are less crowded, allowing more room for your ad to shine, and possibly even cheaper prices for that ad space (Schollenberger).

Schollenberger points out that “print ads are excellent for solidifying your brand identity”; he substantiates this by establishing that ads should have a consistent aesthetic in terms of font, colors and types of images to establish brand recognition. Finally, Schollenberger maintains that
consumers are more engaged when reading printed material, unlike websites, which are often skinned in as little as a 15 second visit, and that placing ads in publications such as specialty magazines effectively reach niche audiences that may be more difficult to target online; ‘the Scene’ from the Prince George Citizen would be an excellent example of this type of publication. Kotler, Keller and Cunningham, when discussing how the effect of exposures on audience awareness depends on the exposures’ reach, frequency and impact, specifically address the qualitative value of an exposure through a given print medium (e.g., a food ad in Canadian Living having a higher impact than in Canada Business).

2.4 Digital Marketing

As previously mentioned in this literature review, when it comes to elevating brand awareness, there’s a strong correlation between developments in technology and the evolution of marketing. Jones and Ryan argue that it doesn’t matter what business you’re in; it’s a fairly safe bet that an increasing number of your target market relies on digital technology every day to research, evaluate and purchase the products and services they consume; The Northern Sport Centre is no exception. Unlike conventional forms of mass media marketing, the internet is unique in its capacity to both broaden the scope of marketing reach and narrow its focus at the same time. Using digital channels you can transcend traditional constraints like geographic location and time zones to connect with a much wider audience. On the same token, digital technology allows you to hone your marketing message with laser-like precision to target very specific niche segments within that wide market; implemented effectively, it can be an incredibly powerful combination (Jones and Ryan).

Alan Smith determines that “while the internet is, perhaps, the channel most closely associated with digital marketing, others include wireless text messaging, mobile instant
According to Smith, simplicity and minimalism are already becoming the new standard in digital marketing and direct information is the key to success, along with content marketing. A great content marketing campaign is the best way to stamp your authority and earn your customer’s trust, while a good digital marketing strategy entails creating precious content on a large number of varied channels (Smith).

When evaluating the importance of building brand awareness through digital marketing, Kate McFarlin states that “as well as being an effective way to grow new customers, a technique known as article marketing is well-suited to helping build brand awareness with internet advertising.” McFarlin makes a recommendation to post articles on several article marketing sites and to promote them on social bookmarking sites. These social bookmarking sites rely on users to let others know about interesting topics and content, and therefore they should be used intelligently to help broaden the audience for your article and brand. McFarlin confirms that by continuing to write new and informative content that benefits your readers, over time you will build a much more solid brand. Article marketing is one tactic of digital content marketing that continues to grow in popularity.

Many different components go into creating a top-notch content marketing strategy, as illustrated by Pawan Deshpande when he discusses how important it is for marketers to prioritize their goals and know how to overcome various challenges in order to get the best results. Deshpande goes on to reference Curata’s third annual study, Content Marketing Tactics Planner 2014 (figure 3), to showcase insights into the top content marketing priorities and challenges.
Rank the following content marketing objectives for your organization in order of priority: (1 = top priority)

1. Drive sales and/or leads
2. Engage customers/buyers/influencers
3. Boost brand awareness
4. Establish/sustain thought leadership
5. Increase SEO and web traffic
6. Decrease cost of acquisition for new

Figure 3: Content Marketing Tactics Planner 2014 (Curata, 2014)

Among the two highest priorities are driving leads and increasing customer engagement, which are both a substantially important piece of the digital marketing environment. Deshpande goes on to point out that “getting consistent, quality content on your site drives a higher quality of visitors and in-turn, increases sales and the more recognition your brand receives, the more likely people will be to read your content.” First-class marketers know that engaging buyers and influencers is the name of the game in content marketing; once customer engagement improves, so will leads (Deshpande).

E-newsletters and e-mail marketing campaigns are also a substantial part of building brand awareness through digital marketing. One of the most successful forms of digital marketing when your goal is to attract, manage, build customer loyalty, and promote brand awareness is e-mail marketing (Moore). Shane Moore notes that “successful e-mail campaigns can achieve great accomplishments for your company: higher sales, increasing lead generation, building customer relationships, boosting traffic to your website or social media, enhancing SEO
value and generating a higher return on investment”. In discussing the additional benefits to email marketing campaigns, Moore suggests that user feedback is at the forefront, allowing people to give you a fast response on their experience. When you compare an e-newsletter to a traditional mail-out, you’re also eliminating hefty printing costs and it’s also a great platform for upselling and cross-selling your products and services on any internet-enabled device (Moore). From this literature, it is clear that signing up for an email marketing service is one of the best, and most certainly the least expensive ways to improve sales, promote your business, and increase the contact list at the NSC.

2.5 Social Media Marketing

What is social media? Jones and Ryan state that “social media is the umbrella term for web-based software and services that allow users to come together online and exchange, discuss, communicate and participate in any form of social interaction, which can encompass text, audio, images, video and other media, individually, or in any combination”. What has changed over recent years is the reach and penetration of these social media technologies, their adoption into the everyday lives of a mainstream audience, and the proliferation of user-generated content (UGC) and the peer-to-peer interaction that results from it (Jones and Ryan). When it comes to building and raising brand awareness on the internet, leveraging and embracing social media is clearly a different way of marketing. Annie Bellavance stresses the importance of offering value-added content through social media, indicating that “traditional hard-sell marketing is often a turn-off for internet users.” Instead, adopting a soft-sell approach, especially in social media messages, along with interesting, fun and educational content blended occasionally with direct marketing messages is recommended (Bellavance).
Angelova advocates for the importance of incorporating social media into an integrated marketing and communications plan in order to build strong brand awareness. Angelova affirms that “although a relatively new phenomenon, social media is rapidly turning into a vital part of the modern marketing mix”. Angelova further emphasizes that managing a flexible presence on each of the “Big Three” (Facebook, Twitter and Google+), has become a must for any marketer striving to bring his or her business up to speed; what better proof than 665 million daily active users on Facebook and over 500 million registered accounts on Twitter. In Figure 4, Angelova clearly illustrates that Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blog sites, and YouTube were the top 10 platforms used by marketers in 2013. Following close behind are social media channels such as Google+, Pinterest and Instagram, while mediums such as Q&A sites and daily deals ('Social Shopper' is the only daily deal site in Prince George) are near the bottom.

**Commonly used social media platforms**

![Figure 4: Commonly Used Social Media Platforms (source: Social Media Examiner 2013)](image-url)
Social media embraces the act of building brand awareness in a different manner. In fact, Bellavance offers that a well-implemented online marketing plan can propel your business to a new level by helping you find more customers and do a better job serving the ones you already have, turning the internet into a sales and marketing ally; Jones and Ryan concur. They explain that an extensive range of companies, small and large, now "leverage elements of social media to engage with their audience, and some, including a number of the highest-profile sites to emerge in recent years (the Facebooks and YouTubes of the world), base their entire business model around the burgeoning popularity of online social media, user participation and UGC".

In discussing the facts surrounding the tremendous role of social media in today's business world, Angelova offers a collection of imperative facts from the 2013 Social Media Marketing Industry Report:

1) A significant 86% of marketers said that social media was important to their businesses.
2) By spending as little as 6 hours per week, 64%+ of marketers see lead generation benefits with social media.
3) 75% of marketers reporting positive results in terms of traffic increase as one of the major benefits of social media.
4) A significant 89% of all businesses that have a dedicated social media platform as part of their marketing strategy reported an increase in their marketing exposure.
5) More than half of marketers who have used social media marketing for over 3 years reported an increase in sales over that period.

Angelova goes on to stress that if you understand the influence of social media on your target market, it's easy to discover the applied benefits it offers your business, such as: showcasing your brand; developing a loyal community of prospects; increasing digital exposure;
enhancing company trustworthiness; cut marketing costs; and boost traffic and search engine ranking. Bellavance argues that positioning your brand as a trusted advisor with content that is compelling and regularly updated encourages visitors to return to your web properties, while Jones and Ryan determine that “by engaging positively with people who already have a positive attitude about your brand, you can nurture passionate brand evangelists who will voluntarily advocate your organization through social media”. Encouraging your customers to share your content, which in turn helps your company rank higher on internet searches, leads to having your company found by a growing number of prospective customers and helps build relationships with them as a trusted expert in your field (Bellavance).

An extraordinary number of people use social networking sites, and those numbers are growing all the time as more people join and invite all of their contacts to join (Jones and Ryan). Social network sites are popular because they offer users the ability to connect with their families, friends, favorite brands and special interests; whether it’s on an international level or strictly local in Prince George and/or Northern British Columbia. Stelzner surveyed over 3,000 marketers in North America to gain an understanding of how they use social media to grow and promote their businesses. After analyzing the results from the survey, they discovered that the top two benefits of social media marketing are increasing exposure and increasing traffic (figure 5). In addition, it was noted that a significant 89% of all marketers surveyed indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses, while increasing traffic was the second major benefit, with 75% reporting positive results. It is also important to note that most marketers from the survey use social media to gain market intelligence (69%); develop a loyal fan base (65%); generate leads (61%); and improve search rankings (58%).
Having a presence on social media sites allows the NSC to set up their own profile pages in an effort to improve online exposure and enhance brand recognition. Jones & Ryan (2009) explain that your social media pages are “essentially a business hub within the network and can be a great way to monitor what consumers think about you, to find out more about them and to offer them valuable content in return”. “Content that keeps them coming back” is what Bellavance attributes to the online success of a company’s social media presence. Look especially at content that attracts lots of comments, likes or shares, and ensure that content is fun, informative and engaging through contests, videos and questions for visitors with just a “smattering of direct promotion” (Bellavance). Finally, Bellavance warns that companies shouldn’t underestimate how challenging it is to consistently generate appealing content on social media channels and keep at it month after month.

2.5.1 Facebook

There is no doubt that Facebook is the largest social media channel of them all. Facebook is a phenomenon that has grown exponentially in a very short time and continues to do so. It was
originally used mostly by college students to keep in touch with high school pals, but now recent statistics prove that it has moved beyond its original use and has become an incredibly powerful business networking medium (Camusio) Once you create a personal account, Facebook allows you to setup and link it to a business page. By having an NSC Facebook business page, the sport and fitness facility was able to create a social destination hub to post updates, pictures, videos, promotional items and contact information. Moreover, when a current (or prospective) NSC member ‘likes’ the Facebook page, it automatically notifies all of their Facebook friends through the home feed, resulting in a higher prospect for more people to like the NSC page as the word spreads throughout different circles of friends.

The key to building traffic on Facebook is posting compelling and informative content; the more interesting it is, the greater the chances are that visitors will like your site, and comment on and share your content with their friends (Bellavance). As a Facebook page owner, it’s important for the NSC to understand how its target audiences use Facebook and then optimize its marketing efforts accordingly. Stelzner points out a fascinating difference between Business-2-Consumer (B2C) and Business-2-Business (B2B) focused marketers by stating, “clearly Facebook dominates in the B2C space (67% of marketers select it as their number one choice), while in B2B, LinkedIn and Facebook are tied for number one at 29% each, with Blogging and Twitter playing a much more important role for B2B marketers” (figure 6).
Using Facebook for brand awareness requires that you understand how the platform works as well as how consumers generally use the platform. It’s important that you begin building brand awareness by laying down a solid foundation (Bailey). Marketers who buy ads on Facebook are more focused on building brand awareness than accumulating fans, according to a 2012 survey of Ad Age subscribers by Citigroup (Wolford). By an astounding margin, Wolford pointed out that advertisers on Facebook primarily purchased ads on the social media channel to build brand awareness. Bailey further explains that you should put a lot of work into building a strong brand identity before you move into social media because once you begin using Facebook, you can start reaching out to the community by targeting the demographics that are most likely to use your product. Bailey later offers an informative breakdown of how beneficial it is to use Facebook advertising for brand awareness:

Facebook has been promoting its paid advertising features lately, and for at least a few companies it has worked dramatically well. Paid advertisements on Facebook have an unprecedented amount of control; they can be targeted directly to a very specific
subset of Facebook users, and thus they allow you to cut right to your core demographic. While a paid Facebook advertising campaign may be more expensive than a purely social media campaign, it may very well pay off in the long run for a company that is trying to build its brand awareness. As with all types of brand awareness campaigns, Facebook advertising requires that the company have a solid brand and understand the platform very well. The advertising can be geared not only towards increasing brand awareness, but also conversion, and this makes it very useful for companies that want to increase both brand awareness and sales (Bailey).

Easier to update than a website, a Facebook page is an essential component to any company’s integrated marketing plan for building brand awareness. However, more and more local Prince George companies with Facebook pages are discovering that too much self-promotional material—a turnoff on social media—may yield negative results. Instead, posts that page followers are more likely to share and likely raise the most brand awareness should include things such as attractive photos, videos and engaging content that is related to the company’s brand. Bailey suggests that while Facebook is by far the most popular online platform, it isn’t the only one that’s important. A comprehensive brand awareness campaign requires multiple platforms working together to create a cohesive and focused strategy. Bailey identifies how to enhance brand awareness on Facebook by remaining consistent and developing a company voice:

Today’s consumers are extremely savvy about advertising, and they tend to be skeptical of anything that is overly promotional. As a primary social platform, Facebook attracts consumers that may react negatively to attempts to sell products to them. For that reason, a company needs to focus on maintaining quality content and creating a company
voice that feels authentic and natural to their consumers. Responding to and otherwise interacting with consumers in too formal a fashion on a social media platform is a fast way to turn many of them off. At the same time, it’s critical that a balance be struck: a company that is too casual in their conversational tone may be seen as unprofessional. A company will need to decide on its voice early on and remain consistent throughout. A company’s social media account should always be controlled directly by media professionals, as a single, unprofessional company response can quickly spiral out of control.

2.5.2 Twitter

With hundreds of thousands of new accounts created each day, Twitter is arguably one of the most powerful tools for increasing brand awareness. As the second-largest social media network; Twitter reaches millions of people every second with 400 million tweets a day (Sempo). To increase your brand awareness and promote your brand identity on this platform, Sempo proposes the following approaches to monitoring and managing a Twitter account: Stay in touch with hashtags; reach out and engage; exercise quality of quantity; incorporate Twitter into promotions; and promote a Twitter chat. Equally as important is the protocol of making it a priority to not only engage with happy customers on Twitter, but to leverage the social network as a medium to help frustrated customers as quickly as possible. Sempo goes on to state that by building a presence on Twitter, your customers will make a personal connection with your brand; this will lend to your business’s credibility and trustworthiness. To summarize what Twitter actually is, as consumers and businesses sometimes have a tough time grasping its concept, Bellavance offers the following description:
Twitter is a “microblogging” site on which users write short posts – called ‘tweets’ – that are no more than 140 characters long. Tweets can include links to articles, photos and other content. Visitors to your company’s Twitter page can subscribe to your tweets by becoming one of your “followers.” The site also lets visitors interact with you by sending comments and questions, or sharing (“retweeting”) your posts to their own networks of followers. Twitter can be a useful and easy way for business to engage clients with entertaining or informative items. It’s the digital era’s equivalent of the water cooler – a meeting place to catch up on what’s going on. The site can also be useful for handling customer questions and issues.

Jill Duffy reports that businesses use Twitter for a variety of reasons -- from marketing to customer service -- the way you use the social media network will vary based on your goal. Charlene Kingston points out that “a Tweet is like a short Facebook status update; however, with Twitter, every Tweet arrives at every follower’s feed, unlike the filters of Facebook’s Edgerank. According to ‘A Guide to Facebook’s Newsfeed Algorithm’, Facebook’s Edgerank is an algorithm that decides which stories appear in each user’s Facebook news feed. It would be completely overwhelming if a news feed showed all possible stories, so Facebook created this algorithm to predict how interesting each story will be for each user (www.edgerank.net). Finally, Bellavance recommends that “your Twitter feed should ideally be a mix of your own tweets and retweets of other people’s content and replies, and you should engage your audience with tweets about events, links to interesting content, surveys and contests.”

While there are definitely similarities between Facebook and Twitter, both containing strengths and weaknesses, Duffy illustrates that the Twitter community values interaction with real people. If the only thing you’re adding is a push to visit your website, you aren’t going to
have a strong and valuable reputation on Twitter. Several people will still follow you and click your links, but you’ll be leaving several unique opportunities on the table, untouched (Duffy). In comparison, Kingston emphasizes that your Twitter account and profile are the foundation of your Twitter experience and a chance to tell your business story to the Twitter community. Indeed, this brand awareness opportunity is one the NSC would like to capitalize on. Kingston goes on to state that nothing expresses your brand on Twitter more than your account username. This name appears next to all of your tweets, and is how people identify you on Twitter. It is important that your Twitter presence have the same look and feel as your other online tools. This helps people identify your business and builds trust (Kingston). Similarly, Sempo suggests quality over quantity when tweeting, in that a company should “use Twitter to give instant updates and insights regarding your brand, but not flood your followers with the same tedious message”.

2.5.3 YouTube

With more than 1 billion visitors per month, YouTube is the most popular site on the web after Google and Facebook (Bellavance). Whether it is a video tour, group fitness class demonstration or employee feature, YouTube is clearly a powerful way to engage visitors and build the brand awareness levels of the NSC. Bellavance goes on to report that “businesses can target traffic by creating their own YouTube channel – a free and easy way to reach potential clients with fun and educational videos,” while Phil Nottingham proposes that with the right content, those watching informational/entertaining videos can get to know your brand better and in a positive light while YouTube ads, precisely the TV advertising element, improve brand recall, perceived legitimacy, and overall reputation. Beswick maintains that YouTube’s viewership is nothing short of staggering and is actually higher than that of any cable network,
and millions of users are subscribing every day. Beswick proceeds to offer insight on how to get your company noticed in such a vast sea of video information:

A good branding effort begins with a branded channel with a personal branded message. You should choose a channel name that reflects what your business or organization is about and customize your channels with colors, links and other information related to your organization. It is important to add your company’s URL to the description of each video, as a reminder to viewers that you have a website, and do learn how to use tags on your YouTube channel to categorize information and annotations to encourage users to subscribe, sign up for your newsletter, or visit your website.

Additionally, Nottingham describes the secondary benefits to YouTube, which are social network integration; video remarketing opportunities; and more effective PR campaigns. The last one is the most noteworthy for the NSC in terms of building brand awareness through a combination of social media channels. Google+, Facebook and Twitter all integrate YouTube into their platform framework, allowing users to watch videos directly from their feeds without having to leave the social networks themselves (Nottingham). In summary, Beswick imposes that “once you create your content on YouTube, spread the word as much as possible.” This is where having multiple NSC social media channels is a major competitive advantage. Re-share your video on Facebook, Twitter and Google+, and your website or blog, and don’t be afraid to ask people to re-share your content (Beswick).

2.5.4 Instagram

Although relatively new compared to other social media platforms, Instagram, a simple photo-taking and photo-sharing app, has received a noticeable boost in popularity since its
inception in 2010. Frommer explains exactly what Instagram is used for: First, Instagram is for taking pictures, adding filters to make them look retro, and then sharing them with sites like Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr, and Facebook. And second, it’s a simple network of other people’s photos. You can ‘like’ or comment on the photos, and see what’s new. It’s easy and doesn’t take much effort and this is one of the reasons it has become so popular so quickly (Frommer). Since branding is much more important than just a logo and a slogan in the social media world, lots of local Prince George companies are turning to Instagram to show their audiences an example of their brand experience. This is obviously facilitated by leveraging the built-in account extentions to Facebook and Twitter, since most local company’s brands are already prevalent on those platforms.

In late 2013, Instagram announced the introduction of its paid ads option for businesses to capitalize on. A local Prince George company can now increase engagement and build strong brand awareness through the social media platform. In fact, Crider clarifies that if a company has visually appealing content and are interested in increasing brand awareness, Instagram ads could be very beneficial, providing marketers an opportunity to showcase their brand to new audiences. Scott advises that it is essential for companies looking to build their brand on Instagram to become regular users of the platform first, which helps them understand the “of the site’s functioning and how to interact with the community. Brand recognition is all about having a potential customer or follower favorably recall your business and using a modern social platform like Instagram gives you an advantage in doing so since it’s purely visual (Frommer). That being said, it is important for a sport and fitness facility like the NSC to come across as authentic on a social platform such as Instagram; otherwise, prospective target audiences won’t be engaged and will quickly lose interest in the brand. This is further reinforced by Drell who qualifies that “the
best advice brands get about branding via social media is to “be yourself” and show a human side to your brand.”

2.5.5 Pinterest

There are a number of clear reasons as to why brands should be using Pinterest: brand awareness, brand equity, and ultimately customer retention. Yet the defining factor that should sway brands into using Pinterest is its e-commerce and sales potential (Mead). This fact alone fits nicely with the NSC’s Web Trac online registration initiatives. While discussing the amount of time people spend on their mobile phones, (www.pinterest.com) points out that more than 75% of its users accessed the site in 2013 on either their phones or tablets, making the social media channel a great place to reach, inspire and convert prospective customers while they are on the go. With mobile marketing anticipated to take off in 2014, this makes advertising on Pinterest a viable option for the sport and fitness facility.

Pinterest, which is a photo collecting site that allows users to save images and categorize them on different boards, is becoming one of the hottest social platforms in the world to build your brand and increase your market share (Griffith). In addition to the social media platform’s recent surge in admiration amongst various user groups, Griffith proceeds to explain that the ultimate goal is to create interesting boards that have searchable descriptions to generate awareness, increase traffic, and build a loyal base of followers. Therefore, Pinterest acts as a straightforward advertising medium for the NSC, creating easy and intuitive ways to quickly expand audience reach, build brand awareness, and establish an even stronger digital presence when synced with the sport and fitness facility’s other social media platforms.
2.5.6 Google+ and Other Social Media Platforms

Google+ is a fledging social network platform that generated a substantial amount of buzz in 2013. Google+ is a powerful service, but it’s hard to determine how the NSC will gain value from the social network. Washington explains that Google+ is a “rapidly growing social media network thanks to its parent company and there are 359 million active users.” The evolution of well-known names (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) has raised the standard for which companies enter the arena and at what volume their branded messaging is delivered to prospects and customers (Washington). Bellavance provides a quality description for Google+, as well as some of the social network’s many features:

Google+ is a fast-growing social networking site that was launched in June 2011. The site features innovative tools allowing group meetings and video conferencing. It also allows you to easily organize contacts into various groups (called circles), such as family, friends and work associates. You can choose what information to share with each circle, making it easier to manage work and social interactions on one platform. The site also gives you easy access to all of Google’s other services.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is critically important to the NSC’s success in the digital world. Washington raises a very interesting point when he states that any brand promoted on Google+ is automatically enhanced and subsequently promoted by Google. By posting engaging content and branded messages on Google+, you receive preferential treatment from Google, which means Google+ posts can be keyword optimized with common terms that your target audience searches for online (Washington). Having an NSC presence on Google+ also allows the sport and fitness facility to take advantage of other Google tools and products. Lawrence Mak discusses the cross-product integration of Google+ by stating there are
opportunities abound with Google products like YouTube, Picasa, Reader, Documents and Calendar and companies can effectively integrate these elements into Google+ to engage followers even more deeply.” Often forgotten for its social-media influence, Google+ might just be the most crucial social network for businesses and professionals who want to solidify their positive online reputation (Boldt).

Although not an imperative social media channel for the NSC, it is worth mentioning the value of LinkedIn for a company looking to raise brand awareness and promote its services. In terms of networking and recruiting for human resource departments, LinkedIn is a social media site that is very popular. It has tools allowing you to easily and quickly build a large network of business contacts who will see your updates about your company and to whom you can send direct messages (Bellavance). Many local Prince George employers have noticed the fast growth of LinkedIn and have utilized the social network as a method of recruiting, thanks to its powerful job search tools and networking pages. As noted by Frasco, with over 200 million registered users world-wide, LinkedIn is a robust network of individuals representing employees in over 2 million businesses. Where Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest are more personal, LinkedIn is strictly related to business.

Other social media platforms, although not as popular as the aforementioned networks, include Tumblr, Flickr and Vine. Tumblr is a free blogging site that makes it effortless not only to type in the text, but to share photos, links, music and videos with an instant-post button to include quotes from other blogs (Boutin), while Terdiman explains Flickr as a new breed of photo site that offers users the ability to upload, store and organize digital photos, as well as automatic camera-phone shots to a blog, where other users can comment on and add descriptions. Vine, however, is best summed up by (Smith) as a social media channel where you
have six seconds in which to display your product in a video. Along with other sites where you can show videos, Vine is predicted to be widely used in the coming year. Snapchat and Instagram have included options for video in their apps because of the growing demand. These small bits of content have become popular and brands use them in short bursts (Smith). In terms of the NSC’s group fitness classes and registered programming, there are many advantages to incorporating this kind of video marketing technique to drive brand awareness.

### 2.6 Recent Marketing Trends

Marketing-to-Location is a recent marketing trend that will be of interest to the NSC. Almost all adults have their Smartphones close to them 24 hours a day and they are the ones who will be targeted by the NSC in location-based marketing campaigns. This mobile device based technology, which is already being effectively used by some local Prince George companies, will become even more popular next year as more and more people start using mobiles. Depending on their location, content marketers are now using GPS technology to supply multi-media straight to persons using mobile devices and in 2014 this trend will flourish as businesses become more tech savvy (Bellevance); this is why it is important for the NSC to note that marketing-to-location will become commonplace.

Corporate sponsorship and niche marketing are also huge drives for brand awareness. Lavinsky sponsorships of local and regional events can be very lucrative for business owners. They are typically relatively inexpensive, and can be tailored to your advertising budget. This is where you can capitalize, as you are getting your name out without spending a ton of money. The biggest potential payoff with this type of marketing is that your potential customers now associate you and your business with the community.
Kotler, Keller and Cunningham suggest that involvement in special and personally relevant events in consumers’ lives can broaden and deepen the sponsor’s relationship with the target market. Further, Kotler, Keller and Cunningham explain that daily encounters with brands may affect consumers’ brand attitudes and beliefs. They go on to say that markets report a number of reasons (eight in total) why they sponsor events:

1) To identify with a particular target market or lifestyle. Customers can be targeted geographically, demographically, psychographically, or behaviorally according to events. Choice of events can be based on attendees’ attitudes toward and usage of certain products or brands.

2) To increase awareness of their company or product name. Sponsorship often offers the sustained exposure to a brand that is necessary to build brand recognition. Skillful choice of sponsorship events or activities can enhance identification with a product and thus brand recall.

3) To create or reinforce customer perceptions of key brand image associations; the events themselves have associations that help to create or reinforce brand associations.

4) To enhance corporate image dimensions. Sponsorship is used to improve perceptions that the company is likeable, prestigious, and so on, so that consumers will favor it in later product choices.

5) To create experiences and evoke feelings. The feelings engendered by an exciting or rewarding event may also indirectly link to the brand.

6) To express commitment to the community or on social issues. Cause-related marketing consists of sponsorships that involve tie-ins with nonprofit organizations and charities.

7) To entertain key clients or reward key employees. Many events include lavish hospitality
tents and other special services or activities that are only available for sponsors and their guests, to engender goodwill and establish valuable business contacts.

8) To permit merchandising or promotional opportunities. Many marketers tie in contests or sweepstakes, in-store merchandising, direct response, or other marketing activities with an event.

It is significant to keep in mind, however, that Kotler, Keller and Cunningham also point out that “sponsorship also has a number of potential disadvantages: although an event’s success can be unpredictable and beyond the control of the sponsor”. They go on to suggest that “although many consumers will credit sponsors for providing the financial assistance to make an event possible, some resent the commercialization of events”.
Chapter III

Background

3.1 Introduction to the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre

Opening in the year 2007, the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre, with thousands of active members, links together education, sport and the community of Prince George. It can easily be considered as the premiere sport and fitness facility of Northern British Columbia. As the result of a unique partnership between UNBC and the City of Prince George, the NSC features a wide variety of sporting, educational and commercial facilities, and services that include fitness memberships, sports leagues, rental spaces, high-performance athletic training opportunities, fitness studios, squash courts, storage areas, an elevated 280m indoor running track and a fully operational concession. In addition, the NSC offers on-site services such as physiotherapy, sports medicine and massage therapy.

3.2 Overview of UNBC Ancillary Services

The NSC is one of nine divisions that fall under UNBC Ancillary Services. It is a priority for UNBC Ancillary Services to provide first class business services at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) that increase revenue and profitability, while providing genuine value for all UNBC stakeholders. UNBC Ancillary Services encompasses a variety of major units other than the NSC, including: UNBC Residence, UNBC Bookstore, Continuing Studies, Conference and Event Services, Food Services, Day Care, Copy Services, Survey and Research and Online Learning Services, which is currently in its infancy stage with plans to launch in the summer of 2014. UNBC Ancillary Services is committed to excellence in
providing a service-oriented operation that strives to enhance the overall quality of the Prince George and satellite UNBC campuses. Each Ancillary division has its own unique marketing mix containing both traditional and digital mediums. In the digital world, there are many cross promotional activities that can be leveraged to grow each division’s community of followers, increase sales, and drive website traffic. Generating new business leads can be achieved through common communication platforms that leverage the traditional and digital mediums of advertising found in the literature review, all of which offer these cross promotional opportunities found across the Ancillary units.

Each UNBC Ancillary Services division provides a distinctive service that supports and contributes to the overall mission and institutional values of UNBC, as well as the academic achievements of students’ and personal well-being and success of its staff, faculty, and residents from the Community of Prince George and Northern British Columbia. As a rule of thumb, all inbound and outbound communications and marketing material are set to be in complete compliance with the UNBC visual identity and graphics standards provided by External Relations. This includes all logos, colors, fonts and general articulations of the NSC. There are many opportunities for the NSC to leverage the interdependencies that exist amongst the various UNBC Ancillary Services units to enhance each other’s brand recognition. These marketing and communication efforts are designed to be synergistic in nature and have the ability to generate new business, or leads, for multiple units within Ancillary Services. This includes business referrals, cross promotions, joint social media campaigns and economies of scale bulk advertising purchases.

For example, UNBC Continuing Studies (UNBCCS) delivers a wide range of convenient and innovative programs with extended learning opportunities in Northern British
Columbia, particularly at the Prince George UNBC Campus. Just like the NSC, UNBCCS prides itself on being part of the best small university in Western Canada, and offers premiere certificate programs out of UNBC’s Prince George, Fort St. John and Terrace campuses. The Continuing Studies program at UNBC serves the needs of learners of all ages who wish to pursue academic, personal and professional development goals and objectives, including the Fitness Leadership Certificate, currently taught and facilitated by the current NSC Manager, Kevin Nowottnick. Advertising this particular certificate is facilitated by combining the strengths and overall reach of the NSC and UNBCCS social media channels. There are many similar opportunities like this for UNBCCS to offer courses, workshops and certificates through the NSC that incorporate members, user groups, and tenants. Through a joint effort like this, every dollar that is spent on advertising, regardless if it is traditional or in the digital world, will benefit both the NSC and UNBCCS.

Another division found within Ancillary that the NSC is familiar with is Conference and Event Services (CES), who offer comprehensive services to make events of all sizes on and off campus a success. Whether it is a large scale industry conference or a small meeting, the CES team of coordinators’ have the ability to promote the NSC for hosting all kinds of events. Since the CES unit plays a critical role in helping UNBC recruit and successfully host a wide variety of conferences, meetings, weddings and special events, they already have an established list of clients to reach out to. The adjacent and photogenic UNBC campus, along with the impressive architecture and the location of the NSC, offers a spectacular setting for all events, for both the internal and external booking audience. Through CES, the NSC has the opportunity to host events outside of the typical sport and fitness category, including convocation, student exams, comedy shows, movie nights and other events that will
raise the brand awareness of the NSC.

Online Learning Services (OLS) is committed to support the development and administration of high quality online learning opportunities and experiences through the programming currently offered by UNBCCS, as well as custom programming opportunities for internal and external consumers. There is an opportunity for the NSC, UNBCCS and OLS to work cooperatively and collaboratively to deliver fitness-specific online programming that will help individuals and groups achieve detailed learning outcomes through single-user, multi-user and customized organizational platforms. Furthermore, these videos could be promoted using both the NSC and UNBCCS YouTube channels (figure 7). These videos could include everything from personal training to nutritional tips, or something unique like complimentary Spanish or cooking lessons for NSC members. These value-added courses can act as a strong recruitment and retention tool for current and prospective members. OLS also helps organizations create their own learning environment, including: custom training courses, unlimited user access, content development and an enhanced user experience features, which could be used as a tool to increase the number of corporate NSC memberships being purchased.
UNBC Food Services is responsible for playing a critical role in not only providing various food and beverage options and locations for UNBC students, staff and faculty, but also catering to the CES unit and running the NSC Refresh Concession. UNBC’s food service contract with Eurest is expiring in June 2014, although originally scheduled to end in March 2013, at which point a food service committee at UNBC was formed to develop a strong Request for Proposals (RFP) that eventually elected Chartwells as the new Food Service Provider starting in Fall 2014. With the UNBC cafeteria being transformed into a dining hall, Chartwells will be obliged to provide an All-You-Care-to-Eat (AYCE) meal plan service for first year, first entry students staying in Residence, as well as any staff, faculty or other students who choose to purchase the meal plan. The NSC can capitalize on this new dining hall format by offering complementary day passes to athletes who are participating in tournaments and competitions at the NSC, which promotes the new dining hall and creates an added benefit for organizing committees who elect the NSC as a venue for their respective tournament or event.
UNBC Residence, conveniently located only a short walk away from the NSC, provides over 500 beds arranged in clusters of four, with some rooms scheduled to extend their capacity to five students in Fall 2014. In addition, the facility, in conjunction with CES Guest Services, provides an alternative accommodation option for families, groups, organizations and sports teams looking to visit the Prince George campus and/or community. This opportunity would come in handy for out-of-town teams traveling to Prince George to compete in a tournament or event at the NSC, especially during the 2015 Canada Winter Games. In addition, when the UNBC Timberwolves hold their high performance sport camps at the NSC during the summer months, UNBC Residence provides convenient accommodation within walking distance.

UNBC Retail Services are comprised of the following units: Bookstore, Print Services, and Vending. The UNBC Bookstore provides a wide range of products - everything from UNBC-themed coffee mugs to gift ware. However, the primary options are books, clothing and the provision of office supplies and materials. If the NSC were to launch its own brand of athletic apparel, they could rely on the Bookstore’s expertise in retail merchandising. Providing NSC members and user groups with the option to purchase customized NSC apparel would further enhance the sport and fitness facility’s brand awareness.

Three other Ancillary divisions for the NSC to enhance its relationship with include Print Services, Vending and Survey and Research. UNBC Print Services’ primary clientele is the UNBC campus; however, external opportunities exist and should be exploited by the NSC. In the past, the NSC has gone outside of UNBC to order their fitness brochures and activity guides. By going through UNBC Print Services in the future, the money stays within Ancillary Services and response time is quicker and more efficient. Vending, on the other hand, is a
contracted service and machines are located in a variety of locations throughout the NSC, while the Survey and Research division of UNBC Ancillary Services provides the NSC with market research surveys, as well as internal surveys for members and user groups to participate in.

There is no downside to a comprehensive communications plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of disciplines in each Ancillary unit – for example, non-traditional forms of advertising that target more than one division. A maximum impact of clarity and consistency can be achieved by developing Ancillary Unit synergy, especially amongst the various social media channels, through a wide range of communication tools, messages and audiences that will facilitate the shift in moving towards this approach. In order for this plan to come to fruition, all stakeholders, managers and staff found within the various Ancillary divisions will have to be on board with the plan.

It is critically important that expectations and responsibilities for positions found within each ancillary unit ensure efficient execution of their respective marketing and communications plans. It is equally important that the key people who will help facilitate the successful implementation of this plan work together in unison to create and foster a customer-focused, team-oriented working environment throughout UNBC Ancillary Services. These key individuals and stakeholders were identified in Appendix 1. The social media strategy that UNBC Ancillary Services develops should not only approve the ability to connect with the campus community, but place particular emphasis on creating opportunities for two-way interaction with the community of Prince George throughout all of the Ancillary units.

3.2.1 UNBC's 25th Anniversary and the NSC’s 10th Anniversary

UNBC will begin celebrating its 25th Anniversary in late 2014, with all members of the
UNBC and NSC community invited to participate. UNBC has invited all departments across the campus, including the NSC, to submit a proposal for an event, initiative or activity that they would like to present during the 25th Anniversary period, which will run from September 2014 to June 2015. These proposals must be eligible for partial funding, and should be crafted to showcase the anniversary's target outcomes. The External Relations department at UNBC is spearheading this initiative and will be hosting a series of open houses in spring 2014 for the campus community to attend.

The NSC is well-position to submit a valuable proposal, such as a Multicultural sporting event. Such an event or tournament would be easy to find partial government funding for through a grant, and would hit on all of the anniversary's target outcomes, while providing the NSC with a substantial amount of brand exposure. This type of event also falls in line with other exciting events in 2015, such as the Canada Winter Games and the City of Prince George's 100th Anniversary. In addition, hosting a major event in 2015 would be a nice prelude to the NSC hosting a major event in 2017, which is the sport and fitness facility’s 10th anniversary, which, coincidentally, happens to fall in the same year as Canada’s 150th birthday, a year in which the federal government will be looking to fund such major events.

3.3 User Groups, Members and Tenants

Members of the NSC are split between the Community of Prince George and UNBC staff, students and faculty. Tenants include Pacific Sport Northern British Columbia, UNBC Athletics and Accelerated Physiotherapy. User groups are primarily sport-focused, with leagues such as the BC Indoor Soccer League, Prince George Youth Soccer Association, Northern BC Whitecaps Academy, Prince George Youth Volleyball Association, PG Youth Volleyball Club, Prince George Minor Basketball League and PG Disc Sports Association. Other groups include
local adult and youth lacrosse, baseball, football, wheelchair basketball and intramural teams. Each member, tenant and user group is a major ally in terms of raising the brand awareness of the NSC, and the aforementioned are present on social media where engagement with the NSC is essential to showcasing what the sport and fitness facility has to offer the community.

3.4 Special Events

The NSC is constantly hosting special events throughout the year that raise its brand awareness in the community and across UNBC campus, including Storm the Hill, Mind Body Weekend, Free Family Day, High Performance Sport Camps, Free Demo Week. The NSC is also an official event venue for the 2015 Canada Winter Games. The NSC has the ability to leverage its social media channels prior to, during and after these events to build momentum and maximize the overall experience for attendees. Equally important is to engage people who have a big influence in the community who will be attending these special events and who are also on social media. Traditional marketing techniques such as sending out NSC media releases and contacting local media by email may still be somewhat effective, although boosting attendance for such events can be facilitated by utilizing Facebook's event marketing tool, using targeted paid ads that are guaranteed to reach the specific demographic and interested party list the NSC aims for.
Chapter IV
Analysis and Findings

4.1 Optimal Integrated Marketing Mix

Research for this project has proved that marketing on the internet is different from other forms of advertising; in fact, as previously mentioned, traditional hard-sell marketing is becoming more of a turn-off for consumers. Most marketers, including the competition for the NSC, use social media as part of their advertising mix. However, it is apparent that social media has the inclination to operate independently and is not well integrated into various marketing strategies and campaigns. Therefore, establishing the vital components of an integrated marketing strategy for the NSC will help raise the sport and fitness facility’s internal and external brand awareness. The benefits of rejuvenating a strong NSC brand are found in ensuring social marketing becomes an integrated, essential component of each and every marketing campaign.

There are many benefits to integrating traditional, digital and social media mediums of advertising in the overall marketing mix for the NSC. Recognizing this shift is imperative to the NSC. Just because social media marketing is becoming the vehicle of choice for modern day marketers, doesn’t necessarily mean that traditional forms of advertising should be ignored or completely eliminated. Establishing an optimal integrated marketing mix, therefore, becomes a vital component of the NSC’s future success in terms of generating brand awareness and expanding relationships with current and prospective members. Successfully integrating the NSC’s social channels into the sport and fitness facility’s other earned and paid media commitments has the propensity to increase the ROI on total marketing spend and help propel
For example, you can only fit so much information into a 30 second radio ad purchased by one of the many local Prince George stations. Instead of trying to overload it with content, the NSC can provide the most essential information with the intention of directing listeners to the NSC Facebook page for additional information. The same thing goes for advertising with traditional print. The NSC isn’t obligated to purchase large-sized print ads from the Prince George Citizen or Prince George Free Press anymore; instead, smaller ads can be purchased with the call to action focused on sending people to the NSC Facebook page. The money saved on smaller sized print space can be invested in Facebook ads, which are more targeted, controlled and cost effective. Similarly, significant marketing dollars no longer have to be allocated to expensive direct mail-outs for the quarterly NSC Activity Guide publication. An electronic copy can be sent out via the NSC e-newsletter using Campaigner (Appendix 4). For the demographic that is not online, print copies of the guide can be made at UNBC Copy Services and ordered in smaller quantities on an as-needed basis, controlling inventory levels and eliminated wasted guides. As an added benefit, the list of subscribers to this e-newsletter can achieve growth using targeted ads on Facebook, Twitter and RRS feeds on the NSC website.

The NSC’s brand visibility and total ROI on advertising spend is further enhanced by the integration of the NSC’s overall marketing strategy with new information technology capabilities. These strategies include implementing the new Web Trac online registration software, developing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and creating an NSC extranet. The extranet would be set-up specifically for NSC members to monitor their health and fitness progress, engage with other members, receive personal training tips from
NSC instructors and keep track of individual goals such as weight loss or total body mass index. In effect, by strategically integrating these capabilities – in addition to social media, search engine optimization, mobile, and traditional forms of advertising – the NSC is well-positioned to increase brand awareness. This strategy also allows the NSC to fully enhance the benefits of other mediums of marketing such as corporate sponsorship, cause marketing and event marketing.

A proficient, integrated marketing mix takes into account the key messages, objectives, target audience segments and strategies for the communications efforts of the NSC. The scope of the integrated marketing mix supports the growth of the NSC brand. It is recommended, providing the research rendered in the literature review and the aforementioned points, that the NSC focuses the majority of its marketing efforts through the sport and fitness facility’s Facebook Page. A successful Facebook page has the ability to empower the NSC’s brand presence through targeted ads that strategically reach current and prospective members and user groups. In February 2014, the NSC Facebook page hit 3,000 likes. No other gym or fitness center in Northern British Columbia has reached this milestone yet and it is up to the NSC to build on this online momentum and enthusiasm. To complement this statistic, average weekly likes for the NSC Facebook page, when compared to local competitors, is significantly higher (figure 8).

The ‘likes’ on the NSC Facebook Page will continue to grow organically (without paid boosts) by creating content that NSC followers want to share, like and comment on. New NSC customers are much more likely to try out the sport and fitness facility if they receive positive NSC brand touch points through Facebook and see that their Facebook friends ‘like’ the NSC Page as well. Another advantageous benefit for the NSC is that Facebook can determine which
region the likes are originating from (figure 9), as well as specific demographic percentages split between male/female and age group. There is also a tool on Facebook which allows the NSC to evaluate the where its page is being viewed (e.g., desktop computer, tablet or mobile device), providing valuable insight on where the NSC should target future ads. For example, creating content that is text heavy is better suited to be viewed on a desktop computer, laptop or tablet, whereas advertisements that employ a higher degree of imagery resonate more efficiently with mobile phones. The key for the NSC is to post a regular amount of both desktop and mobile-friendly content to Facebook and target the ads accordingly. To engage followers with this content, the NSC must share updates relevant to its brand, keep posts timely and respond directly to questions, comments and private messages within a short time frame.

Figure 8: NSC Weekly Facebook Likes Compared to Competition
With Facebook marketing being the primary component of the NSC’s integrated marketing mix, it is essential to further enhance it through the use of traditional and digital marketing, as well as other social media channels. Radio ads, print material and e-newsletter campaigns for the NSC should be consistently pointing current and prospective NSC members and user groups to its Facebook Page. Equally as important is for the content provided on the other NSC social media channels (Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Instagram and Pinterest) to strategically link people to the NSC Facebook Page. This allows the NSC’s brand to gain further exposure in the digital world through a variety of social media channels, not just relying on Facebook. There are many options to automatically sync social media channels, saving content managers time and effort. HootSuite, a social media dashboard, is a great example of a
company that provides this kind of service. HootSuite, a Vancouver based company, provides the NSC with an opportunity to manage multiple social media networks and profiles, along with continuous analytics and measuring tools such as per-post metrics (figure 10), under one dashboard.

**Per-Post Metrics Top 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Post Description</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Engaged Users</th>
<th>Talking About This</th>
<th>Virality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 13, 2013</td>
<td>Charles Jago Northern Sport...</td>
<td>37744</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 17, 2013</td>
<td>Charles Jago Northern Sport...</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 12, 2013</td>
<td>We're only a couple weeks away...</td>
<td>27504</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 20, 2013</td>
<td>Charles Jago Northern Sport...</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 20, 2013</td>
<td>&quot;Like&quot; this post if you'd like...</td>
<td>2663</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 12, 2013</td>
<td>Look what arrived at the NSC...</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 18, 2013</td>
<td>The Fitness Leadership...</td>
<td>22336</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 25, 2013</td>
<td>The best part about heading to...</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 12, 2013</td>
<td>Not only is Team NSC member Jag...</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td>Sep 15, 2013</td>
<td>Excellent job by NSC personal...</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 10: Hootsuite Per-post Metrics**

In addition, the NSC can also take advantage of the traditional advertising options that Facebook offers, where custom ads can be purchased that will subsequently appear in other users’ Facebook news feeds. The ads appear as promotional posts and automatically direct anyone who clicks on them to the NSC Facebook Page. This kind of interaction is beneficial to
the NSC, as any Facebook user who interacts with the NSC page will have this activity shown on their respective Facebook page. This process somewhat represents the modern day equivalent of word-of-mouth advertising in the digital world. One final recommendation is for the NSC to grow its social media audiences beyond their existing following by promoting its various pages wherever possible: roll up banners inside the sport and fitness facility, thank you cards to new members, staff business cards, email signatures, and all print marketing material.

4.2 Engagement with Community Partners and Stakeholders

The NSC was built as a four season fitness, sport and recreation facility that encourages and accommodates all sports in the northern area at various age levels. In turn, one of the main reasons the NSC exists is because of a unique partnership between the City of Prince George and UNBC. Because of this unique partnership, it is imperative for the NSC to promote and enhance this relationship at every available opportunity. Luckily, this is another endeavor that can be facilitated by having a strong presence in social media, especially Facebook. By consistently monitoring and engaging with UNBC and the City of Prince George’s social media channels – sharing and “liking” posts, retweeting tweets, mentioning their channels, promoting their events, etc. – this partnership can be frequently recognized, enforced and solidified. This objective also helps build awareness for all of the parties involved – UNBC, NSC and the City of Prince George.

Engaging with community partners, leaders and average citizens is also a vital component of the social media era for the NSC. For example, a single retweet from a local politician has the ability to reach over 10,000 people on Twitter alone. In addition, many different influences, brand advocates, media groups and local organizations can be found on social media. This is a great way to earn media by creating interesting and engaging content that
local radio stations, newspapers and television stations enjoy sharing. This kind of earned media comes at no cost to the NSC and generates a high level of valuable exposure for the sport and fitness facility. Also, local companies and organizations such as the PG Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Prince George, and Initiatives Prince George are all prevalent in social media. Ongoing interactions with organizations like these, as well as local companies and facilities, provide the NSC’s brand with a greater level of exposure and favorable perception.

4.3 Limitations in the Analysis

There are, of course, several limitations in the analysis and recommendations. The most apparent is the NSC’s ability to provide daily and engaging content through its social media channels. There are no designated Digital Content Strategists employed at the NSC or within UNBC Ancillary Services. Unfortunately, this kind of position is typically one that is hard to fit in an annual budget. Right now, the Marketing and Communications Office manages the social media channels for both the NSC and the other respective Ancillary divisions. It is also important to note that social media isn’t a typical 9:00am to 5:00pm job; social media is constant and doesn’t fit into any pre-determined work schedule. For example, a two week absence from Twitter can hinder growth (figure 11) and a neglected Facebook page can result in volatile engagement impressions and an overall negative reach (figure 12). Furthermore, even if a full-time Digital Content Strategist is hired to work during the week, the NSC social channels would still need monitoring and coverage during the evening and on weekends.

Another risk of having the NSC’s integrated marketing plan so heavily weighted towards Facebook and other social media channels is the older demographic population who may not be in tune or comfortable with using these recent online phenomenon’s. Active Aging and Boomer Fit are two registered programs at the NSC that are targeted towards an older population and this
is also a demographic that the NSC is working with the City of Prince George to engage and involve. Generating awareness for these programs (or the NSC in general) within this specific demographic will be a tough task to accomplish through social media. Using HootSuite to gain insight on analytics to see whether or not the NSC’s online social media content is reaching this target demographic is another challenge. As informative and important as HootSuite analytics are, they are extremely expensive and would not fit under the NSC’s annual marketing budget.

A final limitation is the NSC’s reliance on using the two local Prince George newspapers to get key information out to the public. Relying on print media in future marketing plans for the NSC is risky, provided that the future of the newspaper industry in Prince George is unreliable. With the Prince George Free Press cutting its newspaper distribution frequency down to once a week, and the Prince George Citizen witnessing the closure of its sister papers in Dawson Creek and Kamloops, there is no guarantee that these community newspapers will be around for the long-term. As much of a concern as this is to the NSC’s advertising mix, it also reaffirms the importance of building these digital assets and gaining an early advantage over competitors in the social media landscape.
The Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre is a community sport and fitness facility that sits at the entrance of the beautiful UNBC campus on Cranbrook Hill.

Figure 11: Flat-lined Growth on the NSC Twitter Page
Facebook Report: Northern Sport Centre

Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Likes</th>
<th>New Likes</th>
<th>People Talking About This</th>
<th>Weekly Total Reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,455</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>18,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑ 1.7%</td>
<td>3 (daily avg)</td>
<td>↓ -59.5%</td>
<td>↓ -31.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Daily Likes

Daily Post Feedback

Figure 12: Volatile NSC Facebook Page Reach
Chapter V

Recommendations

5.1 Team NSC Rebrand

A re-branding initiative has the opportunity to bring about positive change and breathe new life into the NSC. The main purpose of this re-brand is to further eliminate the disconnect between the City of Prince George and the NSC, whereby some community members and groups still feel the NSC is a sport and fitness facility built exclusively for UNBC. The additional benefits of rebranding will further position the NSC as a world class sport and fitness facility. It is recommended that the term “Team NSC” gets incorporated into all future advertising with the objective of enhancing the overall perceptual identification of the brand. The term “Team NSC” entails that anyone who is involved with the NSC – members, user groups, stakeholders, staff, group fitness instructors, tenants – are part of a team. Essentially, the new Team NSC brand communicates the importance of team work and people will feel like they are part of something more than just a sport and fitness facility when they join the NSC. This rebranding implementation strategy is also a great opportunity to tell the NSC brand story, including the NSC’s positioning, vision statement and values.

To ensure that this rebranding investment is successful, all NSC staff, management and stakeholders must be on board, while the logistics of the Team NSC rollout should be timely and consistent. Rebranding as Team NSC provides staff and management with the chance to get involved in creating a new, positive culture at the sport and fitness facility. The Team NSC rebrand won’t happen overnight - the entire process will take several months, if not years - and a significant amount of allocated advertising dollars dedicated towards signage, display graphics,
social media ads and possibly a PR campaign. Furthermore, an analysis of the visual, organizational and financial impacts of the Team NSC brand implementation is critically important and this should be undertaken as a significant project. Realistic goals and targets for the re-branding strategy must be properly communicated from the top down in order to successfully implement the Team NSC concept.

Initiating this rebrand enables the NSC to stay current with market trends in the sport and fitness industry, differentiate from local competitors in Prince George and reflect a new value proposition as a result of the Team NSC concept. Rebranding as Team NSC is also a chance to revitalize the NSC logo, choosing from a variety of different conceptual proofs (appendix 5). A new logo that is meaningful and reflects the essential components of the Team NSC rebrand association is highly recommended. Currently, the NSC Logo is a snowflake, which illustrates the NSC as being a winter-only facility, while in fact it is a four season sport and fitness facility. However, the snowflake has resonated well with members, user groups and the City of PG over the years, so it would be wise to somehow incorporate it in the new Team NSC logo. Through this rebranding exercise, the NSC has the potential to improve the relationship with its customer base in key areas such as emotional connectivity, preference, vitality and market differentiation.

It is worth mentioning that the Team NSC rebrand has the ability to create and sustain outstanding long-term value. In order to rebrand as Team NSC, the proper resources and human capital are required. This is especially essential in external communications to relevant stakeholders. This will not be possible by having only one Marketing and Communications Officer Position for all of UNBC Ancillary Services. Because of budgetary limitations, each unit, including the NSC, within UNBC Ancillary Services cannot afford its own Marketing and Communications Officer. A possible solution for this problem would be for UNBC Athletics to
become a unit of UNBC Ancillary Services. UNBC Athletics has a designated Sport Information Officer. I would recommend expanding this role so that this position covers the NSC as part of its portfolio. There is already significant overlap between these roles, with the NSC being the official home of the UNBC Timberwolves, and ample opportunities already exist for cross promotions, joint marketing campaigns, bulk media purchases, and social media synergies.
Chapter VI

Conclusion

The NSC is a huge asset to the City of Prince George and Northern British Columbia. The local community is stronger, literally and figuratively, by having access to this world-class sport and fitness facility. Greater levels of brand awareness for the sport and fitness facility will result in a larger amount of community members benefiting from the NSC’s existence. The integrated approach of incorporating digital, social media and traditional marketing techniques into the NSC’s advertising mix will yield a higher level of brand awareness as opposed to operating under a single-channel advertising plan. Offline and online marketing activity for the NSC will increasingly become inherently linked to the advertising efforts of other UNBC Ancillary Services divisions and the opportunity to build on these marketing synergies has never been greater.

In order to enhance the relevance in the modern digital landscape, the NSC’s traditional marketing mix needs to be restructured to incorporate social media. With an emphasis on Facebook advertising, the NSC can increase its profile in Northern British Columbia by encouraging existing and prospective customers to like and follow their page. Creating content on the NSC Facebook Page that attracts and retains followers is the key to a successful Facebook marketing campaign. Any kind of effective Facebook marketing is only as good as the sourcing, creating and publishing of quality content found on the NSC Page. Creating content that followers and circles of influence will voluntarily engage with helps optimize the maximum impact of the NSC Facebook Page. Before any content is placed on the NSC Facebook Page, content creators have the responsibility to clearly articulate why people should engage with the
NSC and that consistent message is used throughout the various NSC social channels. Primary target audiences include current and prospective members, user groups and stakeholders.

In an effort to implement strong brand awareness across all social and traditional advertising channels, creating a variety of engagement opportunities with local media groups is important. For example, media releases from the NSC have been traditionally launched by e-mail and/or on the website. In February of 2014, the NSC hosted two major events: Free Family Day (February 10th) and the Harlem Globetrotters (February 11th). Typically, the NSC would use a variety of mediums to communicate with its audiences and advertise these respective events. This year, however, the NSC chose to only advertise through social media, with Facebook being the channel of choice. As a result, both events went viral within the Northern British Columbia social circuits. Since these two events were receiving such massive exposure, local media groups recognized them as trending topics and started sharing them on their respective social channels, further increasing the reach. In the end, the Harlem Globetrotters game sold out and the Free Family Day event experienced over 1,000 visitors compared to the 150 guests from the year before.

In summary, a highly maintained NSC Facebook page allows for cost effective, targeted advertising, ongoing brand awareness and strong customer interaction, loyalty and support. To stay relevant and competitive, the NSC must also utilize the most relevant social media tools in addition to Facebook, such as Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram and a well-established e-newsletter through WebTrac. At its core, advertising the various activities and events at the NSC in the online world opens up communications with a broad range of audiences. An integrated marketing mix weighted heavily on social media advertising, in conjunction with a well-
executed rebrand, allows the NSC to gain a sustainable competitive advantage, accelerate performance, and enhance its unique partnership with UNBC and the City of Prince George.
References


*DeferoUSA*. blog. 30 November 2013.


*Social Media Today*. online blog post. 14 February 2014.


Frommer, Dan. "Here’s How to Use Instagram." 1 November 2010. 


Sempo. Social Media and Your Customers: Increasing Brand Awareness through Twitter. 27 August 2013.


Appendix

Appendix I: UNBC Ancillary Services Organizational Chart (April 2013)
Appendix 2: WebTrac Online Registration Features

WebTrac Optional Capabilities

- Option to require customer to accept a waiver or hold harmless agreement before allowing online enrollment or online registration
- Option to allow customer to make payment on outstanding RecTrac balances
- Ability to conduct online surveys and promotions to Web customers who opt-in. You set the open and close dates for promotions and control the automated random drawing for prizes. Conduct online surveys about your website or your recreation services.
- At the same time you have the option of entering survey respondents into a pool for a random drawing for prizes, services or gift certificates. Use seasonally to get feedback about your organization or as a way to thank your consumers for their support. No purchase necessary.
- Optional user-defined convenience fee or discount percentage applied to WebTrac transactions. Use the discount to encourage increased use of WebTrac.
- Optionally enable your customers to Change Household Data. Change User Name and/or PIN. Add/Change Family Members.
- You can choose to allow customers to add themselves to your database in 'real-time' mode for immediate use or in 'batch' mode that requires your prior approval before using or you can disallow adding new households via the Web.
- The Mobile RecTrac module enables staff to perform specific RecTrac functions such as pass-vail check-in using a WebTrac browser or smartphone.
- Current WebTrac customers have reported a great return on their investment since WebTrac processes between 20-80% of all registrations.

Appendix 3: WebTrac Online Registration Capabilities

WebTrac Features

- WebTrac online registration software uses established RecTrac, GolfTrac, and ManiTrac parameters and settings
- RecTrac parks and recreation software automatically updates the WebTrac online reservations software — no ‘uploading’ required
- WebTrac allows Guests to browse your ‘online brochure’ and other data without a login ID or password
- Multiple methods to assign customer ID & password
- As soon as user names and passwords have been assigned, your customers are allowed to view their accounts, add items/services to the shopping cart, proceed to checkout, pay by any approved online payment method, and display/print a receipt.
- Control which programs, facilities, memberships, etc. are available for WebTrac transaction processing.
- Control dates and times allowed for online registration by program, facility, membership, etc.
- System can be configured to require full, partial, or no payment for online transactions
- Reassign a forgotten login or password. If specific security questions are answered correctly.
- Customers can contact you via WebTrac or email to ask questions or provide feedback
- Unlimited number of splash pages can be created, completely user defined
Appendix 4: Campaigner E-Newsletter Key Metrics

Key Metrics:
- Number of posts
- Number of social shares
- Audience growth (unique and returns)
- Conversation rate
- Conversions
- Subscribers
- Inbound links
- Directory listings
- SEO improvements
Appendix 5: Team NSC Logo Concept Variations

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>