Some Reflections on Tennis Promotion.

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ABSTRACT
Considering the fact that in the last years there has been a greater desire to attract a great number of people to the tennis courts all over the world. There are many things to take into account when trying to meet the objective of designing programmes to retain new tennis players. This article intends to provide tools for coaches to help them become real tennis promoters both in their clubs and their associations.

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INTRODUCTION

This is the formula:

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\text{QUALITY PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES + HIGHLY MOTIVATED AND INVOLVED TENNIS PLAYERS = RETENTION}
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It is impossible to consider promotion without considering education. It is necessary to learn how to perform quality promotional activities. It is necessary to consider education and promotion at the same time.

When we say education, we mean that those involved in carrying out these promotional activities must know what they are supposed to do and the role they are playing. To do so, they must be trained by a tutor who knows every single component of the promotional activity.

We know it is possible to train teachers to teach their lessons, but: who are the ones who take the classes? Are there enough students? Are there any students at the club? Are there many tennis players in the country?

And then?... it is necessary to devise tennis promotion programmes with people who are trained on quality promotional activities.

What do we do tennis promotional activities for? Obviously, to get more people to play tennis!

WHAT IS PROMOTION?

Promotion, as we understand it, is “a set of communication actions” in the framework of a general marketing policy (e.g. General Programme for Tennis National Promotion) mainly targeting to boost sales (increase the number of participants, e.g. of a tennis school, a country, a region) in the short or mid term”.

Two characteristics can be inferred from this definition:

• A tennis promotion action must develop within a whole institutional sport policy. It is not supposed to be a sporadic or improvised activity.
• But, promotion is useful in the short term.

The mass consumer is driven by simple motivations, pleasure, novelty, mimicry, etc. and that is exactly what promotions offer, so it is important to be very clear about the statement to really persuade people to buy our product: TENNIS.

What are the characteristics of a promotion action?

• A tennis promotion action is a “tangible” incentive within the product- tennis.
• If we speak of promotion to bring people to tennis, those who have tried our product must be satisfied. Let’s do our best!
• A tennis promotion action must be advertised. Advertising gives the product an “intangible” benefit (for instance, psychological). Promotion gives the product a “tangible” benefit. We can say that advertising informs and motivates to help promotion. On the other hand, promotion fosters immediate participation, it is a short term action.
• Advertising can be expensive in the short term but profitable in the long run. Promotion provides surprising results in the short term, but can become dangerous in the long term.
ADVERTISING THE PROMOTION

It is also crucial to advertise the promotion to inform about our promotional policy. At any rate, the promotion must be announced in the three fields of regular marketing policies: internal advertising, information advertising and advertising for the consumer:

Example: if we organize a mini-tennis meeting with other schools:

- Internal advertising: Even the door keeper and everybody involved must be informed about the event.
- Information advertising: The teachers of the clubs must receive information in due time.
- Advertising for the consumer: Our students as well as the other teachers’ students must receive the information of such event.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF PROMOTION?

Most of the people who were asked consider that the objective / target of a promotion is: to bring the product (tennis) closer to the consumer (future participant) or the other way about, as well as a short term increase of demand.

If we start thinking like a company:

- Get more cash in the short term (money now!)
- Hinder competition (do it first and creatively)
- Motivate the sales team (my teachers might earn more)
- Get greater productivity and profitability Market:
- Introduce a new product (e.g. mixed classes).
- Accelerate consuming habits (e.g. the second class 50% off).
- Increase our brand market share (e.g. organize a tennis clinic next to the hockey class).
- Suggest new uses of the product (e.g. for health, to get new friends).
- Impact the consumers and recover those who are not playing, reassure those who are not sure, etc.

Distribution:

- Extend our distribution (e.g. open new venues of the academy).
- Increase coverage (e.g. a better database with more information).
- Improve brand image for middlemen, distributors, etc., (e.g. win /win actions).
- Improve sales point exhibition (e.g. use the front court for classes so as to show the tennis school work).

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR PROMOTION

With some research and some common sense we can say that some principles are important for a quality promotion action.

1. Promotion must operate in a time frame.

Our promotion action has so much drive and so much communication temperature that we risk burning ourselves and losing its strength.

2. Our actions must differ from our competitors’ (other sports).

Originality and creativity in the application of promotion actions are key factors.

3. Planning must be simple and clear.

If the promotion action is complicated, the consumer will reject it.

4. Coordination with advertising.

Our promotion action must be coordinated with advertising which paves the road and summons the people; neither too long before nor to close to the date.

5. Promotion must concretely address the population we want to capture.
Segmentation is one of the keys to promotion which will help us to meet our target. Before launching a promotion we must know everything about our consumer.

6. Launch immediately after planning.

Use the surprise produced by the promotion and do not lose internal strength

7. Be honest with the participants.

Give what we promised in the ad, otherwise it will be a backlash against us.

8. The promotion action must be as attractive and honest as possible.

Use all your creativity, there are many competitors out there and we want people to choose us.

9. Optimize promotion with post promotion actions.

Promotion action is like a flare: “a very strong light that soon goes off”. Make good use of this sparkling moment for the product, optimizing promotion with other marketing elements and techniques.

10. A tennis promotion action must reinforce tennis image in general

A promotion action, even though it may help to sell tennis instantly, is not really “profitable” if it does not optimize the whole tennis image.

DIFFERENT TENNIS PROMOTION ACTIONS

The right education, -a first step-, together with an understanding of the concept of promotion, provide the following:

• Promotion actions focusing on starting to play tennis. (e.g.: school tennis).

• Promotion actions focusing on motivating tennis players (e.g.: promotional tournaments).

• Promotion actions focusing on motivating players and starting to play tennis. (e.g.: Play+Stay; Tennis x 2, Tennis x $1, etc.).

When you think of tennis promotion and retention it is necessary to consider some of the actors involved:

1- The players: People and children in particular like to be alike. So when thinking about promotion it is necessary to consider that the ultimate objective of a sport committed country is to have better players, they are the accelerators of all these ideas.

2- The media: There is plenty of information in the media about the success of the players and the actions of institutions. There is still more room for tennis in the media... this happens because players win and coaches do. People get enthusiastic and choose to play tennis.

3- The companies: The companies capitalize on tennis positive image in the country or club. A sport equipment store exhibits posters of other sports in the windows but chooses tennis as their image.

4- The National Association: A promotion action must be part of a global strategy that uses the NA as a protection umbrella to strengthen promotion and development.

5- The clubs: The clubs must have a tennis school and a tournament-based development programme designed by the heads and teachers and they must strive to have more tennis courts gaining ground before other sports.

6- The teachers: Tennis development in the country depends on the active participation of tennis teachers.

7- The students: They love tennis and share this passion with those who do not play tennis and invite them to play.

8- The population: Most of the people in any country who do not play tennis, of course, would like to do so. Some played when they were young. They must have a great opinion about tennis!

It is necessary to generate tennis. Let’s bring more people to play tennis. Let’s make tennis a sport for life. Let’s put tennis into the people’s heads. Let’s place our sport in a top position for the number of players. Let’s dream about having the best tennis school WITH MORE AND BETTER TENNIS!!!