

**Summaries of Selected Sessions from the
2008 AMA Winter Educators' Conference
(Austin, TX)**

March 2008

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8.4 Sport and Special Events SIG (Special Session)

Sports Marketing: A Different Type of Marketing Communications

Chair:

Jerome Denean Williams, University of Texas at Austin

Discussant:

Lynn Richard Kahle, University of Oregon

Participants:

You Complete Me: Relationships Consumers Have with Sports Teams and Players

Geraldine Rosa Henderson, Northwestern University

Nakeisha Ferguson, University of Texas

The Effectiveness of Sports Sponsorship as an Alternative Form of Marketing Communications

J. Joseph Cronin, Florida State University

Can a Hotdog, a Beer, and a T-Shirt Lead to Future Sales? The Behavioral Outcomes of Loyal Sports Fans

Brian Bourdeau, Auburn University

Sixty Years and Still at First Base: Major League Baseball and African-American Participation

John Fortunato, Fordham University

Jerome Denean Williams, University of Texas at Austin

Session Summary Writer: Kevin J. Cumiskey; Oklahoma State University

As sports have become increasingly popular worldwide, research has begun to focus on our personal attachment to the teams and athletes on the playing field. Henderson and Ferguson conducted 51 qualitative depth interviews to determine what factors influence our relationship with teams and players. The three connections that emerged included emotional, family, and national identity. The results suggest that a relationship with a team or player may be based on emotional attachment and expression, a family association, or a love of country.

Cronin presented his findings on sport sponsorship. In his examination of sponsorship, Cronin suggested that the effectiveness of the sponsorship is tied to the level of involvement the fans have with the team and that the audience has with the sport. If both conditions occur, the sponsorship will be effective.

Bordeau presented findings on fans who exhibit low involvement with a team or sport and suggested that these fans may become loyal customers (attending games) because of positive service quality and service experience.

Williams presented research on possible causes of a drop in African-American participation in Major League Baseball (MLB). The findings suggest the drop is due in part to the socio-economic level of African-Americans, the popularity of other sports in the United States, the marketing efforts of MLB, the cultural belief that baseball is a "white game," and the influx of Latin and Asian players to MLB. Suggestions to improve marketing communications between MLB and the African-American community were presented and included changing the availability of broadcasted games, instituting inner-city programs such as RBI, and partnering with brands that reflect the African-American culture.