

Washington Freedom 2008-2009 Marketing Plan DRAFT - 6/27/08

I. Women's Professional Soccer Mission Statement

WPS' mission is to be the premier women's soccer league in the world and the global standard by which women's professional sports is measured.

II. Washington Freedom Mission Statement

The Washington Freedom's mission is to be the premier team in Women's Professional Soccer. This success is to be measured by on-field performance, ticket sales, sponsorship sales, Washington Freedom Club Membership Sales and customer satisfaction.

III. Brand

The Brand image of the Washington Freedom is women's soccer. Whenever anyone in the Washington D.C. market thinks of women's soccer, the Freedom should be the first thing that comes to their mind. From early youth soccer to the Women's World Cup, the Washington Freedom should be positioned as the primary image of women's soccer. Everything about the Freedom and what it does affects how people see the Brand (Examples: Freedom Youth Teams, Freedom WPS team, Camps, Clinics, washingtonfreedom.com, advertising, customer service, community outreach, The Hendricks family, everyone who works for or volunteers for the Freedom, Freedom fans.)

IV. Product

The Washington Freedom is a professional sports team, but the product we are selling is entertainment. We must understand that we are not only competing against other professional sports teams (ex. DC United, Washington Nationals, Washington Wizards, Washington Capitals, etc.), but also against all entertainment and leisure activities (ex. movies, concerts, amusement parks, television, restaurants). This also includes other participant sports such as youth soccer (due to the time commitment or youth participant sports).

Our customers will remember, consciously or sub-consciously, the overall value and enjoyment they received from watching a Freedom game.

V. Positioning

The Washington Freedom wants to be positioned as "fun, affordable entertainment" in the Washington D.C. Metro Market. However, we also need to be positioned as "major league" and grow our fan base to support the move to a medium to large size stadium.

Conversely, professional sporting events are often seen as too expensive to be a frequent entertainment option for families and individuals. This position is reinforced by the publicity of multi-million dollar player contracts, luxury boxes, and player strikes and lockouts. Music concerts and other entertainment options are also quickly becoming positioned as too expensive for most people.

VI. Market/Situational Analysis

This is a description of where we are at today; and how, where, when and to whom we offer our product.

A. Market Research Results

Insert market research compiled by DC United. Include registered youth, coed and adult players in DC, Maryland and Virginia.

B. Market Demand/Attractiveness Analysis

In consultation with DC United, determine size of potential market and attractiveness of market.

C. Product Life Cycle Stage and Analysis

Women's professional soccer is in the growth stage of the product life cycle. Women's Professional sports is still a very new concept to sports fans and participants. WPS has social as well as entrepreneurial goals creating a legitimate competitive platform for female athletes, and showcases them as inspirational heroes to young girls and women.

VII. Competitor Analysis

A. Ticket Sales

In conversations with DC United, they characterize their biggest competition as, "getting people out from in front of their computer, television and video games." They really don't view MLB and other professional sports as their competition. I believe this is also true for the Freedom. Movies and other non-sports entertainment options are our major competitors.

B. Sponsorship Sales

The Freedom is competing with every other team for potential sponsorship, advertising and marketing opportunity. The Freedom will try to differentiate itself from other marketing options by stressing the unique opportunity that women's sports provides to impact youth and adult women players and their families.

VIII. Product Analysis

A. Major Strengths of the Washington Freedom

1. Committed/visionary ownership of John Hendricks
 - a. Founder of WUSA
 - b. Vision to keep alive the Freedom Brand
 - c. Determination to make women's professional soccer succeed in the United States
 - d. Forming partnership with DC United
 - e. Corporate contacts in the global media world
 - f. Contact network of potential local sponsors
2. The resources of Hendricks Investment Holdings:
 - a. Technology
 - b. Shared staff
 - c. HR infrastructure
 - d. Cross marketing opportunities with other HIH properties
3. Players
 - a. Accessible
 - b. Marketable
 - c. Fan Friendly
4. Expertise of The Washington Freedom Staff
 - a. Executive team
 - b. Coaching Staff
 - c. Volunteers

5. Washington Freedom Brand
 - a. Continued presence in DC market
 - b. Excellent reputation and perception
 - c. Two national championships (WUSA and WPSL)
 - d. Relationships with McLean, Bethesda, Free State and other regional soccer clubs
6. Partnership with DC United
 - a. Ability to access knowledge base of the most successful franchise in Major League Soccer
 - b. Ticket Sales Management
 - c. Sponsorship Sales Management
 - d. Communications Training
 - e. Marketing Expertise
 - f. Operations Expertise
 - g. Doubleheader games
7. Maryland Soccer Plex
 - a. Small intimate stadium
 - b. Ability to control stadium environment
 - c. Ability to control stadium revenues
 - i. Parking
 - ii. Concessions
 - iii. Merchandise
 - d. Ability to combine Freedom & Soccer Plex assets into Sponsorship programs

B. Competitive Analysis and Risk Factors/Barriers to Growth

1. Changing or adapting sports entertainment and consumption behaviors: other spectator sports competitors, both college and pro
2. Non-Sports: Entertainment competitors (i.e. family time, time with friends, time spent online, concerts, reality TV, the mall, movies and video games, new media and mobile communication. texting, online gaming, social networks)
3. Participatory sports, often multiple sports and activities
4. Maryland SoccerPlex
 - a. Location
 - i. Great for Maryland market
 - ii. Driving time tough for DC suburbs in Virginia
 - b. Facilities need improvement
 - i. Bathrooms
 - ii. Food
 - iii. Concessions
 - iv. Flow of traffic entering/exiting stadium
5. Barriers to accessibility of product (i.e. game day/times)
6. Perceived value; affordability of the product/tickets
7. Motivating key family purchasing decision makers
8. Emerging status of soccer's acceptance; uneven media coverage
9. Absence of recognizable stars and household names
10. Male bias against female sports

IX. Market Segmentation Procedures/Customer Analysis

A. Primary Customer Description

There are a number of segments that the Freedom will market to. However, we *must* focus on the two groups listed below:

1. Female youth soccer players, ages 12-16.

This group of players is located in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs of Washington D.C. Their parents are predominantly affluent with significant disposable income. This group is composed of competitive and recreational soccer players. It is important to note that the players in this group are playing at the highest competitive level and are going to be the most difficult to get to games. Much of their time is committed to training and they are often playing in multiple games in and out of town every weekend. Even if they are not at Freedom games, they are still a very influential group and we need to reach them through Internet initiatives and player appearances/connections.

Tools to reach them: youth club connection to a Freedom player, social networking sites, targeted e-mail newsletters, player appearances, targeted radio advertising, targeted female teen television programs, in-store displays at coffee houses, smoothie/ice cream stores, movie theatres, cellular phone stores; cool movie/music style posters distributed at events, advertising on women's national team telecasts, purchase soccer key words for searches by teen girls in DC market.

2. Female adult players, ages 21-27.

This group of players is located in Maryland and Virginia suburbs and in Washington D.C. People in this group primarily played competitive soccer until graduating from college. However, many played in college at the varsity or club level. They have been affected by Title IX and have been a part of the growth of women's sports as participants and fans. Players in this group are likely to organize groups for games including their women's or coed teams. They are also a great source for getting friends to attend Freedom games.

Tools to reach them: Create connections between Freedom players and their leagues/teams (clinics, player appearances); Player appearances at street fairs, music festivals/events, charitable/cause events; advertise in free entertainment oriented newspapers; develop a partnership with yelp.com and other D.C. metro online communities; advertise on women's national team telecasts, alternative radio stations, and at singles night events; market in grocery store.

Having these two groups attend games is critical in making the Freedom "cool." When we attract critical numbers from these two groups, they will influence other customer groups to come to the games.

B. Additional key markets:

1. Mothers of youth players

Mothers are a key part of the family decision to attend games. They have to be sold on the family-friendly atmosphere at games and that Freedom games are an affordable entertainment option. They are also the most likely group to organize teams/groups to attend games.

Tools to reach them: Grocery store marketing partnership; coffee house marketing partnership; soccer parent focused email newsletter.

2. Fathers of youth players

Fathers are also a very important part of the family decision to attend games. Although mothers make the majority of the decisions on where the family's entertainment dollar goes, fathers usually make the decisions on sports related entertainment. Fathers, who don't have sons involved in sports, but do have daughter's playing soccer, are a key market. They are likely to want their families to attend games, in part,

because they see professional women's soccer as one of the few opportunities for women to compete in professional sports.

Tools to reach them: soccer parent focused e-mail newsletter; advertising in sports section/website of local newspaper; advertising on ESPN Sports Center; advertising on DC United telecasts; father/daughter nights.

C. Primary Sponsorship Clients

The primary sponsorship targets for the Freedom will be companies trying to market to affluent suburban families. Grocery stores and companies whose products are sold in grocery stores (packaged goods) are the top sponsorship targets. Other key categories include cellular, cable/satellite television, banking/financial, fast food, automotive, security, military.

X. The Plan

A. Goals

1. Be the first thought that enters someone's mind in the Washington DC market when they think of women's soccer.
2. Sell fans a way to:
 - a. See the athleticism, beauty and grace of women's soccer
 - b. Have a great, affordable, entertainment experience
 - c. Be a member of a soccer club (European model)
 - d. Feel more connected to the game of soccer
3. Sell sponsors a way to reach passionate soccer fans in the Washington DC market

B. Primary Objectives

1. Generate average paid attendance of 5,000 per game for games played at Germantown Soccer Plex
 - a. 5,000 paid/game
 - b. X% venue capacity
 - c. \$XX ticket revenue
2. Generate \$xx dollars from doubleheaders played with DC United
3. Generate \$400,000 in local sponsorship revenue

C. Strategy

1. Set season ticket and individual game ticket prices

Strategies:

- a. Consult with DC United to determine suggested ticket prices
Primary Responsibility: Joe
Completion Date:
- b. Set and document ticket prices
Primary Responsibility: Joe
Completion Date:

2. Ramp Up Staff

Strategies:

- a. Hire Communications/PR/Web Manager
Primary Responsibility: John
Completion Date: July 15

- b. Hire Sponsorship Sales Rep
Primary Responsibility: John
Completion Date: August 1
 - c. Hire Season Ticket Sales Reps
Primary Responsibility: DC United/John
Completion Date: ?
 - d. Hire Customer Service Rep
Primary Responsibility: John/DC United
Completion Date: ?
- 3. Hold Joint Press Conference with DC United
 - a. Announce allocated players
 - b. Debut new logo
 - c. Announce partnership with DC United
Primary Responsibility: John/DC United
Completion Date: TBD based on timing of DC United Agreement
- 4. Develop Communications Plan
 - a. E-mail newsletters
 - b. Press releases
 - c. Washingtonfreedom.com
 - d. Freedom pages on womensprosoccer.com
 - e. MySpace, Facebook, imeem
 - f. Women's specific publications and websites
Primary Responsibility: Freedom Communications Manager/DC United – Doug Hicks
Completion Date: Upon hiring of Communications Manager
- 5. Create Grassroots Plans for working with local youth clubs
Strategies:
 - a. Freedom Coaches document all existing agreements with youth clubs.
Primary Responsibility: Jim, Clyde, Win, Drew
Due Date: August 15
 - b. Freedom coaches to develop plan for revising Freedom Club Memberships to include (general admission?) ticket(s) to all Freedom club games.
Primary Responsibility: Jim, Clyde, Win
Due Date: August 15
 - c. Freedom coaches to develop a plan to identify key leagues and clubs and build relationships.
Clyde has suggested having each player on the Freedom to be assigned to a club and build a relationship with the club.
Primary Responsibility: Jim, Clyde, Win, Louise?
Due Date: September 1
 - d. Assign each club a ticket sales rep who creates a relationship with the club/league and is the primary contact.
Primary Responsibility: Freedom Ticket Sales Reps/DC United
Completion Date: September 30
- 6. Launch Direct Mail Campaigns
 - a. Consult with DC United
 - b. August Mailing
 - i. Purchase Season Tickets Call to Action
 - 1. Current d-base of 12,000
 - 2. Direct response mechanism included

Primary Responsibility: DC United/Freedom Ticket Sales

c. Early Spring Mailing

i. Individual ticket and group sale call to action

1. D-base grows to 18,000

2. Direct response mechanism

Primary Responsibility: DC United/Freedom Ticket Sales

7. Launch Targeted e-direct mail offers

a. Partner w/ youth, women's, coed leagues, teams, clubs to send out monthly targeted e-mail offers for ticket purchases

Timing: Monthly starting in October

Primary Responsibility: Freedom Ticket Sales Reps

8. Create Master Appearance Strategy/Schedule

a. Consult with April at DC United on appearance strategy

Primary Responsibility: John/ Communications Manager

Deadline: September 1

b. Hire intern to report to April to manage appearance schedule

Primary Responsibility: April-DC United

Deadline: October 1

c. Hire group of interns to help run appearances

Primary Responsibility: April-DC United

Deadline: October 1

d. Soccer Events to consider

i. Large scale female oriented youth soccer tournaments

ii. Large scale adult female and coed tournaments

iii. VA and MD state cup play days

iv. Girls High School Playoffs

v. VA and MD state association shows

vi. Bars where adult women and coed teams go to in mass after games

vii. Screaming Eagles and other fan club meetings/events

viii. Non-soccer women's/coed sports leagues

9. Launch Mass Media Campaign that focuses on media to reach key customer groups but will also touch other groups

a. Consult with DC United

b. Use cool entertainment/music look

c. Online Media

d. MYSA/VYSA site/e-mail/print

e. Local Cable Television

f. Radio

g. Free weekly entertainment newspapers

h. DC Examiner

i. Combined buy with DC United for best price

Primary Responsibility: John/DC United

Timing: Initial push March, then timed around individual games

10. Distribute takeaway/schedule cards with Indy band look distributed at:

a. Maryland Soccer Plex

b. Indoor Soccer Arenas

c. Sponsor locations

- d. All Freedom player/public appearances
 - e. DC Metro area businesses targeting our 4 key customer groups
- Primary Responsibility: John
Timing: Final design and printing after schedule is finalized

11. Get the Freedom listed in all event calendar listings in print and online
- Primary Responsibility: Intern to be hired
Timing: As soon as 2009 schedule is released and then contact outlets weekly