How do Sport Organizations Market Towards the Hispanic Community?

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

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Abstract

This study is a thorough review of the way professional sport organizations market towards the Hispanic community. First, it assesses the Hispanic population in the United States and in certain metropolitan areas. Additionally, it takes into account the programs that professional franchises have already established that are geared towards the Hispanic population as well as any community outreach programs that are targeted directly towards Hispanics. Specifically, this examination takes inventory of marketing strategies geared towards Hispanics to answer the question: does the sports industry effectively target the Hispanic population? The results are mixed; some organizations do in fact target the Hispanic population with specific marketing campaigns while others do not. Further examination shows that marketing strategies differ from team to team and not from league to league.

Introduction

Recently, Hispanics have become the largest minority group in the United States, overtaking African Americans in the year 2000 (Factsheet, 2007). There are 31 million United States household residents, age five and older, that speak Spanish at home (Hispanic, 2006). According to University of Georgia’s Selig Center for Economic Growth, Hispanic buying power will increase 450 percent from 1990-2011 (Dodson, 2006). The same study states that Hispanic purchasing power in 2007 will be $847 billion a six percent increase from last year (Dodson, 2006).

Anthony Eros wrote in Street and Smith’s Sports Business Journal that, “Latino marketing initiatives in professional sports remain incremental and low priority items at best, are not properly staffed or budgeted and, in some cases, are merely public relations
campaigns” (2002). Eros also noted that, “Without Latino executives, efforts to reach the Latino market remain an afterthought for teams and leagues” (2002). There is a lack of high-level Latino executives in the sports world. The following table is a list of the percentage and number of Hispanic employees in the respective league offices. The data does not distinguish between support staff and high-level executives. See Table 1.

Landon Brockinton noted in 2003 that MLS planned to launch, “a major promotional program aimed at Hispanics” as well as a deal with Fox Sports that has them showing a minimum of 25 regular season games in Spanish and eight playoff games in Spanish (2003). In 2002, the NFL hired a Latino marketing firm, Lumina America Inc., to help turn Hispanics into its newest consumer (Brockinton, 2002). Marjorie Rodgers, the NFL’s senior director of brand and consumer marketing, state that, “The [Hispanic] data is very compelling. The audience is there. We need to tap into it” (Brockinton, 2002). In addition, data from a 2001 ESPN Sports Poll showed that among Hispanics 12 and older, 70.4 percent state that they are NFL fans, and that 11.4 percent of the NFL fan base 12 years old and up, is Hispanic (Brockinton, 2002).

This study investigates the Hispanic-geared marketing tactics as well as the materials that sport organizations have printed in Spanish. The following specific organizations: Major League Baseball (MLB), Major League Soccer (MLS), National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), and the National Hockey League (NHL) are all examined to see what marketing programs specifically target the Hispanic community.

Additionally, this study researches fifteen independent metropolitan areas to determine the amount in which sport organizations, located in those areas, market
specifically towards the Hispanic community. The metropolitan areas examined are: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Seattle, and St. Louis. These cities represent a variety of Hispanic populations, from two percent in St. Louis to 65.8 percent in Miami.

According to a survey conducted by Street and Smith’s Sports Business Journal, the sports industry is a multi-billion dollar business, generating over $213 billion in 2002 (Master, 2002). There are five main professional sport leagues that are components of that statistic: MLB, NBA, NFL, MLS and NHL. Each of these leagues, and the teams within the leagues, have many marketing and promotional events. Some teams sponsor themed game nights while others dedicate certain time periods to a specific topic. But, are these strategies effective? And, has the sports industry become cognizant of the increase in the Hispanic population and buying power of the Hispanic community? Have these leagues created programs specifically for the Hispanic market?

Methodology

The study examined the following cities to determine the amount of Hispanic outreach and marketing that exists within their respective sport organizations: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Seattle, and St. Louis. The cities range in population, amount of professional sports teams present, and Hispanic population. The current study explored the five major professional leagues’ websites as well as the individual websites of numerous teams. The study investigated to see if there were any links to the Spanish language present on each league and team website. The study
investigated the community programs and outreach sections of each website to see if there were any events that were geared specifically towards the Hispanics in those communities. In addition, the study examined census data to determine the demographic detail of each city. Specifically, the study investigated data that showed the Hispanic population and its characteristics to determine the percentage of Hispanics in each city and other such demographical information.

Results

The Hispanic Population

The Hispanic population in the United States has reached its highest point to date (Factsheet, 2007). This is to say the Hispanic population is ever increasing and that more and more Hispanics are living in the United States each year. Now, more than ever, sport organizations should notice this ethnicity.

In the year 2005, 14.5% of the United States population classified themselves as Hispanic or Latino of any race, the largest of all minorities (Factsheet, 2007). Hispanics are now the largest represented race in the United States just behind Caucasians. Currently, there are more Hispanics in the United States than African-Americans.

The cities examined through the census to determine the Hispanic population in each one respectively are: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Seattle, and St. Louis. Miami has the largest percentage of Hispanics living within the city with 65.8 percent of the metropolitan area describing themselves as Hispanic (Factsheet, 2007). St. Louis has the smallest percentage of all the cities examined of Hispanic population with 2 percent of its residents classifying themselves as Hispanic.
Over 8 million Hispanics live in New York City, and over 3.6 million live in Los Angeles (Factsheet, 2007). See table 2 for complete population data.

- Atlanta- the 35th largest city in the United States (Infoplease, 2005). The city is composed of mainly African Americans (58.6%) but its fastest growing community is the Hispanic community (Community, 2006). However, the Hispanic population in Atlanta is only 4.7%, nearly ten percent less than the United States average. (Factsheet, 2005).

- Boston- the Hispanic population is above the national average at 14.4 percent (Factsheet, 2005). There are nearly 85,000 Hispanics in the Boston area (Factsheet, 2005).

- Chicago- over a quarter (26%) of the population is of Hispanic origin (Factsheet, 2005)

- Dallas-home to over 423,000 Hispanics (Factsheet, 2007).

- Denver-the capital city of Colorado, is composed of nearly 176,000 (31.7%) Hispanics (Factsheet, 2007).

- Houston-has a higher percentage of Hispanics than Dallas, its Texas counterpart, with a total of 37.4% of the city being of Latino origin (Factsheet, 2007).

- Indianapolis- the population is only made up of 3.9% Hispanics (Factsheet, 2007)

- Los Angeles-Los Angeles is also home to over 1.7 million Hispanics (Factsheet, 2007).
• Miami—the highest percentage (67.4%) of Hispanics out of all of the cities this study investigated (Factsheet, 2007). Almost 120,000 of the Hispanics living in Miami are from Cuban descent (Factsheet, 2007).

• New York City— the largest Hispanic population at over two million (2,162,235) (Factsheet, 2007).

• Phoenix—composed of 34.1 percent Hispanics (Factsheet, 2007).

• Salt Lake City— home of the 2002 Winter Olympics is made up of 18.8 percent Hispanics (Factsheet, 2007).

• San Diego—home to 310,752 (25.4%) Latinos (Factsheet, 2007).

• Seattle—5.3 percent of Seattle’s population is of Hispanic origin (Factsheet, 2007).

• St. Louis—home to just under 7,000 Hispanics, which is two percent of the city’s population (Factsheet, 2007).

The Hispanic community possesses a lot of control over the economic status of the nation because they are the largest minority (Dodson, 2006). Dodson noted that, “Hispanic buying power in the United States will draw even with Africa-American buying power in 2006—at just under $800 billion—and is projected to exceed it in 2007” (2006). Although Hispanics became the largest minority in the early part of this decade, Hispanics have not passed African-Americans in buying power until 2007 (Dodson, 2006). Hispanic buying power has increased more than 450 percent from 1990 to 2011, while non-Hispanic buying power has increased at a rate of 176 percent over the same period (Dodson, 2006). Hispanics are gaining a much more expendable income which they may choose to spend on entertainment (Dodson, 2006).
Anthony Eros noted that, “In contrast to the general U.S. population and other minorities, Hispanics are predominantly male, and so are sports fans” (2002). Eros adamantly believes that sports and Hispanics go hand-in-hand (2002). The average age of Hispanics is eight years younger than the average age of non-Hispanics (Eros, 2002). Advertisers are attracted to a younger market to help establish brand loyalty, and Hispanics are a young market (Eros, 2002).

Hispanics are also more interested in sports than the average non-Hispanic (Eros, 2002). For example, professional football is watched by a higher percentage of Hispanics (64%) than African-Americans (58%) and non-Hispanic whites (52%) (Eros, 2002). Additionally, “Hispanics are 57 percent more interested in the National Basketball Association and Americans overall” (Eros, 2002). Additionally, almost 25 percent of all Hispanics have attended a Major League Baseball game and almost 33 percent of Hispanics ages 18-34 have seen a game in person (Eros, 2002). Hispanics do not just like baseball and football, but other sports as well (Liberman, 2003). See Table 4.

Eros also noted that, “Sports do a tremendous marketing job in foreign countries through sophisticated international divisions. Yet Hispanics in the United States have more disposable income than their families back home, are growing in numbers and are loyal to hometown teams and athletes” (2002). It makes fiscal sense to spend those international dollars stateside to advertise directly to the Hispanics living in the United States.

**MLB**

The MLB sponsors a plethora of league-wide promotions and community programs (MLB, 2007). One program called Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life, “is a
multi-curricular character education program developed by Major League Baseball. Using baseball-themed features, activities, and lessons, the program is designed to teach children the values and traits they need to deal with barriers and challenges in their lives” (MLB, 2007). In addition, Major League Baseball sponsors or is a part of: the Baseball Assistance Team, the Baseball Tomorrow Fund, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, FanFest, Pitch, Hit & Run, Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities, the Roberto Clemente Award, the Rookie League, and the Urban Youth Academy (MLB, 2007).

The Roberto Clemente award recognizes the player, “who best exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement and the individual’s contribution to his team” (MLB, 2007). Roberto Clemente, the first ever Hispanic player to be elected to the Cooperstown Hall of Fame, died tragically in a plane crash on his way to deliver aide to survivors of an earthquake in Nicaragua (MLB, 2007). Carlos Delgado, who like Clemente is from Puerto Rico, won the prestigious award in 2006 (MLB, 2007).

Additionally, Major League Baseball’s website does highlight specific teams’ community outreach programs. For example, the Minnesota Twins are sponsoring 34 youth clinics in communities throughout the upper Midwest (Official, 2007). The clinic “provides boys and girls...the opportunity to enhance their baseball and softball skills, while also hearing positive messages about staying in school and away from drugs and alcohol” (Official, 2007).

Major League Baseball does not sponsor any league-wide community programs specifically geared towards the Hispanic community (MLB, 2007). Many of their programs are targeted towards the inner city and urban areas, where Hispanics live, but
do not exclusively have programs for Hispanics. However, some individual teams do have programs designed particularly for the Hispanics in that area.

Major League Baseball has the highest percentage of Hispanic players out of all of the professional leagues in the United States (Lapchick, 2005). The percentage of Hispanic players in the MLB has steadily increased for the past 16 years except for 2004 (Lapchick 2005). See Chart 1.

Each Major League Baseball team website has a link to view the site in Spanish including the league’s website as well. It is the only league in which every team site has a link to view the page in Spanish. Moreover, most of the MLB team sites are designed similarly so the Spanish link is in the same format and location on each website. One does not have to search for the link; that is to say that the link is not hidden.

MLS

Major League Soccer provides a myriad of youth soccer and outreach programs. MLS provides: Jetix Kids Cup National Finals, MLS Futbolito, Covering Kids & Families Back-to-School Campaign, MLS Camps, MLS Insider, Verb Yellowball, ESPN’s Play Your Way, Hydration, and a variety of Grassroots Partners (Programs, 2007). The Covering Kids & Families Back-to-School Campaign is the, “nation’s largest initiative to reduce the number of eligible, uninsured children and adults through enrollment in Medicaid or the State Children’s Health Insurance Program. The Back-to-School Campaign reminds parents to put enrolling their children in low-cost or free health care coverage programs at the top of their back-to-school checklists” (Programs, 2007). Major League Soccer has also teamed up with the United States Department of
Health to help inspire kid to be physically active. Verb Yellowball helps youth think of innovative, creative, inventive ways to stay active (Programs, 2007).

Major League Soccer created Soccer United Marketing in 2002 to “manage sales, service, and broadcast production for MLS and English-language World Cup properties” (Major, 2007). Soccer United Marketing is in charge of promotional and marketing rights to the Mexican national Team’s games on U.S. soil, as well as the marketing, broadcast, and promotional rights to the eight-team Mexican club tournament InterLiga (Soccer, 2005). In 2006, MLS announced that they signed an eight-year deal with Univision and its family of Spanish-language channels. The deal includes a game of the week on Sundays (Major, 2007). Univision is “the leading Spanish-language media company in the United States” (Company, 2007). Univision includes television, radio, music and internet productions in Spanish (Company, 2007).

The website for major league soccer has an equivalent in Spanish as well. However, some of their team sites do not have Spanish translations, while others do. The translations are inconsistent; not all teams are required to have them. Also, because a Spanish translation is not mandated by MLS, the links to read the websites in Spanish are located at different areas on the web pages. This could prove to be difficult to find the Spanish web pages on multiple sites for people who have trouble reading English.

The MLS also provides a program called ¡Fútbolito! The program is a 4 versus 4 tournament that is the culmination of a daylong celebration. The event travels to sixteen different cities in the United States during the summer months (Home, 2007). Although it does not specifically target Hispanics, the name of the program is in Spanish, which inherently will catch the attention of Hispanics.
The NBA strives to be an ardent member of the community. The league established NBA Cares, “the league’s social responsibility initiative that builds on the NB’s long tradition of addressing important social issues in the United States and around the world” (NBA, 2007). During its first year, NBA Cares contributed more than 250,000 hours of volunteer work and raised over $40 million for charities (NBA, 2007).

The NBA encourages reading with their Read to Achieve program. Read to Achieve is aimed at combating global illiteracy and encouraging youth to develop a lifelong love of reading. In addition, the NBA encourages read-alouds between adults and children (NBA, 2007). The National Basketball Association has also established a Jr. NBA (NBA, 2007). The Jr. NBA, “encourages youth basketball participation through programs that stress basketball fundamentals and the value of sportsmanship and teamwork for players, parents, coaches and officials” (NBA, 2007).

Basketball without Borders is a global basketball development and community outreach program the NBA established to promote the sport on a global level (Basketball, 2007). The program includes NBA players coaching youth in foreign countries at one of the Basketball without Borders camps (Basketball, 2007). As of 2007, the program has expanded across four continents (Basketball, 2007).

The NBA does not have a direct link to translate its homepage into Spanish. However, if one clicks on global links then there is an option to see the homepage in Spanish. Moreover, less than half of the NBA teams investigated had websites viewable in Spanish.
NFL

The NFL has many youth programs: Teacher of the Year, Punt, Pass & Kick, NFL Youth Education Towns, NFL Junior and High School Player Development, and Play it Smart (Programs, 2007). Additionally, the NFL coordinates diversity and health programs: One World, Minority Coaching Fellowship, International Outreach, What Moves U, Play Safe and many others (Programs, 2007).

The National Football Foundation created the Play it Smart program to, “partner academic coaches with student-athletes in order to take a student-athlete’s passion for sports and intense dedication to their team and transform it into a force for greater good in their lives” (Play, 2007). The NFL Youth Education Towns is a program that constructs educational and recreational centers for youth in at-risk neighborhoods in Super Bowl Host cities (NFL, 2007).

The program called One World: Connecting communities, cultures and classrooms was designed in the wake of September 11, 2001 (One, 2007). The NFL had identified “the need to create a school curriculum to help young people appreciate diversity and ensure that the legacy of September 11th is not one of prejudice and hate, but one of unity, respect, and understanding” (One, 2007).

The NFL has a specific website geared towards Hispanic fans: nflatino.com (NFLatino, 2007). The website has a link to read the latest news from each team in the NFL in Spanish. In addition, it provides a biographical look at some of the Hispanic players in the NFL (NFLatino, 2007). Moreover, the website provides a list of every Hispanic player in the league. Even though not every official team website can be seen in Spanish, the NFL does have information about each team available in Spanish.
The NFL is cognizant of the demand to market to the Hispanic community. When the Super Bowl was held in San Diego in 2003, over $400,000 was spent reaching out to Hispanics. The outreach included a, “series of community-based programs in San Diego and in Tijuana, Mexico (Brockington, 2003).”

Marco Rivera, a guard for the Dallas Cowboys conducted a camp in Puerto Rico where over 500 youth attended (500, 2007). The camp took place at the Roberto Clemente complex, “a haven of instruction and practice for young Puerto Rican athletes” (500, 2007). Now in its seventh year, the popularity of the football camp has increased from 23 kids to over 500 (500, 2007). Rivera noted that, “Football is growing in Puerto Rico. It didn’t exist on the island before, but I believe it is here to stay now” (500, 2007).

NHL

Hockey Fights Cancer, Hockey’s All-Star Kids, NHL Diversity, and Teammates for Kids are the programs that the National Hockey League provides for the local communities. Hockey Fights Cancer, founded in 1998, raises money and awareness for the fight against cancer (NHL, 2007). Hockey Fights Cancer has raised more than $7 million to support local cancer research organizations and the American and Canadian Cancer Society organizations (NHL, 2007). Hockey’s All-Star Kids is a program that links hockey with the youngest victims of cancer and other horrible diseases (NHL, 2007).

The National Hockey League is committed to diversity. In 1995 NHL Diversity was founded to, “provide support and unique programming to not-for-profit youth hockey organizations across North America that are committed to offering economically disadvantage boys and girls of all ages opportunities to play hockey” (NHL, 2007). The
NHL provides backing to pre-established hockey organizations in diverse communities. Since the beginning of the program, more than $500,000 worth of equipment has been donated to diverse hockey programs (NHL, 2007).

However, the NHL does not have any options for reading their website or any of the teams' individual websites in Spanish. But, the league is aware of the benefits of marketing towards Hispanics. Susan Cohig, vice president of NHL Enterprises L.P., said that the NHL began a league-wide outreach to Hispanics in the year 2000 (Arnold, 2003). The NHL began working with their national radio partner to package Spanish-language programming and sell to major markets (Arnold, 2003). Moreover, the NHL advertises in the Spanish-language media; as a result of promoting an event in local Hispanic radio and print, they attracted more than 2,500 Hispanics to a Stanley Cup appearance (Arnold, 2003). As of 2004, there were only three Hispanic players in the entire National Hockey League (Lang, 2004).

Individual Teams

The five major leagues use different strategies to market towards the Hispanic community, the numerous teams in each league might have many different strategies as well. This study investigated 15 metropolitan areas and the professional teams from the five major leagues located in them. Do sport teams in cities with diverse populations market specifically to those populations?

Atlanta

There are four professional teams in Atlanta that were studied: Falcons (NFL), Hawks (NBA), Braves (MLB), and the Thrashers (NHL). Only one team, the Braves, has a website that can be translated into Spanish. The Braves also noted that they have
relationships with local Hispanic media partners, annual theme nights targeted towards Hispanics (i.e. Latin Night), and regular promotional appearances at local Hispanic events (i.e. Peachtree Latino Festival). The Braves also distribute pocket schedules and ticket information in Spanish (Braves Web, personal communication, 2007).

Although the Falcons do not have a website that translates into Spanish, they do have a specific program geared towards Hispanics in the community, Fútbol Americano presented by Ford (Community, 2006). They designed the program to, “teach the fundamental of the game to Hispanic children through a workshop teaching the basics of the game and a hands-on instructional clinic by Falcons staff” (Community, 2006).

**Boston**

Boston has a total of five professional teams: Patriots (NFL), Celtics (NBA), Red Sox (MLB), Revolution (MLS), and the Bruins (NHL). The Red Sox website is the only Boston area team site that is translatable into Spanish (Homepage, 2007). There are no community programs that any of the teams have that specifically target the Hispanic community, according to their websites (Homepage, 2007; New, 2007; Official, 2007; Celtics, 2007; Boston, 2007).

**Chicago**

Chicago has a total of six professional teams: Bears (NFL), Bulls (NBA), Cubs (MLB), White Sox (MLB), Blackhawks (NHL), and the Fire (MLS). Two thirds of their team websites are translatable into Spanish.

One major contribution the Chicago area sports teams have to the Hispanic community is Ozzie Guillen. Guillen, the manager of the Chicago White Sox, was born in Venezuela, and obtained United States citizenship in 2006 (Team, 2007). As of 2005,
when the White Sox won the World Series, Guillen was one of three Latino managers in the entire MLB (Lapchick, 2005).

Although the Bears' website is not available in Spanish, they do have a program specifically for the Hispanic community called Hispanic Day. Hispanic Day featured: a pizza party, a special visit from players Gabe Reid, Roberto Garza, and defensive coordinator Ron Rivera, a look at the team during training camp, an autograph session after the practice, a live broadcast from La Ley radio station, and other unique events (Underprivileged, 2007).

Dallas

The five professional teams are: the Cowboys (NFL), Rangers (MLB), Stars (NHL), Mavericks (NBA), and FC Dallas (MLS). Only the Rangers and FC Dallas have websites in Spanish. According to a release by the Texas Rangers, the team is increasing its efforts to be noticed by the Dallas Hispanic community. One of their programs is Héroes en la Comunidad (Heroes in the Community). This program, sponsored by Chevrolet, recognizes a Dallas/Fort Worth Hispanic Community leader each month in a pre-game ceremony. Each winner will receive six tickets to the Rangers game and $500 for a non-profit organization of their choice. The Rangers also have a partnership with the Consulate of Mexico. The Rangers hand out Spanish pocket schedules and fan guides at the Consulate office. Moreover, a Consulate family will be selected as Family of the Month and will receive complimentary tickets to a game. The Rangers will also provide tickets to be given out to visitors of the Consulate, as well as a Spanish video that will continuously run in the office that invites families and individuals to come see a game at the ballpark. The Rangers are also involved with local Hispanic baseball leagues, the
Hispanic Community advisory board, and with area Hispanic Chambers and organizations (Texas, 2007).

**Denver**

Denver is also home to five professional league teams: Nuggets (NBA), Broncos (NFL), Rockies (MLB), Avalanche (NHL), and the Rapids (MLS). The Colorado Avalanche is the only Denver team that does not have a website viewable in Spanish. The Rapids have a reading program called Lee y Marca un Golazo (Get a Kick out of Reading) that is intended to “create a bilingual, multicultural program that encourages, promotes and educates children and their families on the importance of reading” (Community, 2007).

The Colorado Rockies, a major league baseball team, has a Hispanic Adult Leadership Award that they grant every year to recognize an outstanding Hispanic leader in the community (Colorado, 2007).

**Houston**

Houston has a total of four professional teams: the Rockets (NBA), Texans (NFL), Astros (MLB), and the Dynamo (MLS). Each website has a Spanish equivalent, the only city that this study examined to accomplish this feat.

The Houston Texans hold an annual Football Fiesta during the summer to keep fans interested (Chavez, 2006). This past year, the Grammy award-winning group, La Mafia, performed (Chavez, 2006).

**Indianapolis**

Indianapolis is only home to two professional teams: the Colts (NFL) and the Pacers (NBA). The Colts’ website is available in Spanish while the Pacers’ site is not.
The Colts celebrated Hispanic Heritage month by teaming up with La Plaza, a not-for-profit organization aimed at serving the needs of the Hispanic Latino community of Central Indiana (Horseshoe, 2006). The Colts participated in a program called, Tu Futuro (Your Future). The program motivates Hispanic youth to go to college and provides one-on-one support the first year to increase graduation rates (Horseshoe, 2006).

The Pacers participate in a myriad of Hispanic community events. The Pacers are a part of Fiesta Indianapolis; a large annual Hispanic festival held in downtown Indianapolis and the Mayor’s Latino forum held each year. In addition, the Pacers provide books in Spanish through their Pacers Locker Room Library that are free to children who request them via the Pacers’ website (Kelli Towles, personal communication, 2007).

Los Angeles

Los Angeles is home to six professional teams: the Clippers (NBA), Lakers (NBA), Dodgers (MLB), Angels (MLB), Kings (NHL), and the Galaxy (MLS). Arturo Moreno, the owner of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, is not only the only person of color to own a MLB team, but also the only Latino in all of professional sports to be a majority owner (Lapchick, 2006).

The Los Angeles Lakers were a part of the program Es Tu Cancha (It’s Your Court). This initiative builds or renovates basketball courts in hopes to encourage children to get out and play in an environment that is both safe and fun (Es, 2007). As of December 17, 2006, the Los Angeles Galaxy had zero Hispanic players (Canales, 2006). However, three players and the general manager can satisfy the need for Spanish TV or radio interviews, because they all speak it. With the addition of David Beckham in
the summer, four players can satisfy the Latino media with Spanish interviews (Canales, 2006). However, the Galaxy, no matter how popular the team is with Hispanics, does not have any community programs that specifically target the Hispanic community (Community, 2007).

Miami

Miami is also home to three professional teams: the Dolphins (NFL), Heat (NBA), and the Marlins (MLB). Even though, there is a large percentage of Hispanics in Miami, only the Marlins' website can be viewed in Spanish. When investigating the websites of the Heat, Dolphins, and Marlins, there were no known community programs that targeted the Hispanic community specifically.

New York City

New York City has the largest number of Hispanics and the most professional teams at eight (Factsheet, 2007). The professional teams located in New York City are: the Giants (NFL), Jets (NFL), Knicks (NBA), Yankees (MLB), Mets (MLB), Islanders (NHL), Rangers (NHL), and the Red Bulls (MLS). The Jets, Islanders, and Rangers are the three teams that do not feature websites in Spanish.

Considering that New York City has the largest Hispanic population in the United States and such a wide variety of professional teams, it is interesting that not unlike Miami; there were no known community programs that specifically targeted the Latino community.

Phoenix

The Cardinals (NFL), Diamondbacks (MLB), Suns (NBA), and the Coyotes (NHL) all consider Phoenix their home. The Suns and the Diamondbacks both featured
websites in Spanish. The websites of Phoenix’s teams, too, did not include any specific programs that included community outreach programs particularly for Latinos.

**Salt Lake City**

Salt Lake City is also the home site of two professional teams: the Jazz (NBA) and Real Salt Lake (MLS). Although the Jazz does not have community programs designed specifically for the Hispanic Community, Real Salt Lake has abundance. Real Salt Lake is hosting a Budweiser Hispanic Heritage Night at one point during the 2007 season (Real, 2007). On this night Real Salt Lake awards two $500 scholarships to Hispanic students in need.

Real Salt Lake does most of their communication in both English and Spanish including: press releases, website, P.A. announcements at games, season ticket brochures, schedules, and advertisement. All of their games are broadcast in Spanish on radio via La Bonita 1600 AM. There are a couple of local channels (Telemundo, Azteca America) that broadcast a few of their games, as well as a Spanish-speaking crew. Real Salt Lake provides interpreters at press conferences (both English and Spanish) for when their Spanish-speaking players or other guests are on the microphone. Additionally, their receptionist is a native Spanish speaker as well (Jorge Perea, personal communication, 2007).

Real Salt Lake is also participative in the community as well. The team has relationships with the local Ligas (Hispanic soccer leagues) and has provided player appearances, youth clinics, and Real Salt Lake gear to the teams. Real Salt Lake also uses a street team to distribute flyers and game schedules in Spanish to local tiendas,
which are small stores where Spanish is just about the only language spoken (Jorge Perea, personal communication, 2007).

San Diego

The two teams that consider San Diego their home are the Chargers (NFL) and the Padres (MLB). The Padres produce publications in both English and Spanish, and the team tries to incorporate a multicultural dimension to their marketing and community relations' efforts (San, 2007). Both the Chargers' website and the Padres' website are observable in Spanish.

Seattle

Seattle is just about as far north from Mexico that one can get while still remaining in the United States. But yet, the professional teams that are located in Seattle are: the Seahawks (NFL), Mariners (MLB), and the SuperSonics (NBA). Both the Mariners' and Seahawks' websites are translated into Spanish. However, neither team publicizes any marketing promotions or community relations' activities that are geared specifically toward the Hispanic community.

St. Louis

There are three professional teams located in St. Louis: the Rams (NFL), Cardinals (MLB), and the Blues (NHL). The Cardinals' website is the only St. Louis team website that can be viewed in Spanish. The St. Louis Rams hosted Hispanic Heritage Day during Hispanic Heritage Month. The celebration recognized twelve outstanding leaders in the St. Louis community (Breckenridge, 2006).

After researching the major professional leagues in the United States, it is obvious that each league acknowledges the importance of marketing towards the Hispanic market
(Eros, 2002). But, is merely acknowledgement enough? The leagues have recognized the need and importance of directly targeting Hispanics; but yet, many leagues have not implemented effectual plans (Eros, 2002). Although there are some exceptions, many teams do not have Hispanic community nights, brochures available in Spanish, or even ticket order forms in Spanish (Eros, 2002).

Major League Baseball has the most active Hispanic marketing strategies out of the five leagues examined (Official, 2007). They also have the highest percentage of Hispanic players (29%) and every single official team website is viewable in Spanish, the only league to do so (Lapchick, 2005). Major League Baseball is cognizant of the need to market to and specifically target the Hispanic community (Eros, 2002).

The NFL has ten official team websites that are translated into Spanish as well as NFLatino (Official, 2007). NFLatino contains information about every team in the league in Spanish and about all of the Hispanic players in the league (NFLatino, 2007). Additionally, the NFL has a diversity program established after September 11, 2001 that is aimed at teaching kids to appreciate diversity (One, 2007). The National Football League coordinates a lot of programs that pertain to the Hispanic community compared to the amount of players they have that are of Hispanic descent (NFLatino, 2007). Less than one percent of players in the NFL consider themselves Hispanic and only nine employees in the NFL’s corporate office are Hispanic (Lapchick, 2005). However, over fifty percent of Hispanics consider themselves fans of the NFL (Eros, 2002) and as of 2002, Hispanics made up over ten percent of the NFL fan base as a whole (Liberman, 2003). The league does a lot for their Hispanic fans and athletes (NFLatino, 2007).
The NHL has the least amount of Hispanic players but yet they still recognize the need to reach out to the Hispanic community (Lang, 2004). However, neither the NHL website nor the NHL team websites are translated into Spanish, the only professional sport organization studied to not have a single Spanish translation (National, 2007). The NHL does have an extensive diversity program, but that is geared more towards African-Americans (NHL, 2007). The NHL only had three Hispanic players in 2004 (Lang, 2004).

Major League Soccer does not have as many marketing tactics as one might expect. Soccer and Hispanic society are two things that go hand-in-hand. In 2002, Hispanics made up nearly 20 percent of the MLS fan base (Liberman, 2003). The league’s deal with Univision and Soccer United Marketing helps reach Hispanics throughout the nation (Company, 2007). Certain teams within the league embrace the Hispanic market while others do not (Community, 2007). Just like the NFL, Major League Soccer does not mandate that each team have their website viewable in Spanish (Home, 2007). Only a select few teams had their websites in Spanish and English (Home, 2007).

The National Basketball Association does not have any programs specifically aimed at Hispanics (NBA, 2007). They do have campaigns designed to increase global exposure of the league, but not necessarily increase exposure within the nation (NBA, 2007). Fifteen percent of the NBA’s fan base was Hispanic in 2002, but the league does not have any programs that are specifically designed for Hispanics (Liberman, 2003).
Discussion

Although Major League Baseball is actively pursuing the Hispanic market, there is still room to improve. Major League Baseball could follow in the footsteps of Major League Soccer and strike a deal with Univision to broadcast games in Spanish to further increase the Hispanic community’s interest in the sport. Moreover, Major League Baseball should try to increase the amount of Hispanics they employ as coaches and in the league office. Nearly thirty percent of Major League Baseball’s athletes are of Hispanic origin while only thirteen percent of the league’s office staff is considered Hispanic (Lapchick, 2005). As of 2005, only three managers in the entire league were Hispanic (Lapchick, 2005), a miniscule number when compared to the number of Hispanic players. Obviously, there is a lot of baseball talent in the Hispanic community; the number of Hispanic coaches should reflect that.

The National Football League does have a substantial program established designed to reach out to the Hispanic community (One, 2007). However, the league could do a lot more. The NFL would greatly benefit from providing more information in Spanish on team websites. For example, on NFLatino, there is some information provided about each team in Spanish, but the amount does not compare with the abundance of information provided on the English websites of each team (NFLatino, 2007). Additionally, providing fantasy football in Spanish would help generate an even higher interest in the sport and reach out to the younger Hispanic generation. The National Football League does a great job of publicizing their Hispanic players. They should build upon the newfound popularity of players like Tony Romo, quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, who is of Mexican descent (Nava, 2006).
The NHL has the most room to improve with their Hispanic marketing strategies. As of 2004, there were only three Hispanic players in the NHL (Lang, 2004). Therefore, the league may not feel the need to directly target the Hispanic market because of the small amount of players. However, as of 2002, Hispanics made up over ten percent of the NHL fan base (Liberman, 2003). This percentage following is enough to merit some type of outreach program or team-sponsored community event. The NHL might find success in leading youth hockey camps that are geared towards inner cities and specifically Hispanics. If the children learn about hockey at a young enough age, there is a good chance they may become fans for life. As a result, their children will learn about hockey, and the cycle will continue. Moreover, if the NHL started putting information on the internet in Spanish, it would enable more people to read about the current status of the league.

Major League Soccer could effectively market to the Hispanic community better by providing more information on the league website and team websites in Spanish. Hispanics made up nearly twenty percent of the MLS fan base in 2002 (Liberman, 2003). It would benefit the league greatly if there was information on every team website in Spanish. The internet is very easily accessible, and by having that information in two languages, MLS would be able to increase their following greatly. Major League Soccer did a great thing by partnering with Univision and Soccer United Marketing. Univision helps promote the league specifically to Hispanics living in the United States (Company, 2007). Soccer United Marketing targets both Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike to make sure the league is well-promoted (Soccer, 2005)
The NBA would benefit greatly from team websites in Spanish, ticket order forms in Spanish, and television commercials in Spanish. In 2002, nearly fifteen percent of all NBA fans were Hispanic (Liberman, 2003) while only three percent of players were in 2005 (Lapchick, 2005). That is five times as many fans as there are players; enough of a difference to realize that those fans are interested in the game, not the individual players. Filming commercials in Spanish for the NBA would be a good way to keep all of the current Hispanic fans of the league as well as a way to gain more Hispanic fans. The NBA focuses more on a global marketing strategy than a specifically Hispanic guided one (NBA, 2007). Hispanics within the United States are not a part of the NBA’s global outreach Basketball without Borders; it is focused on the other continents of the globe (NBA, 2007). If the NBA created a program that specifically targeted Hispanics in the United States, there would be even more of an increase in the percentage of fans that are Hispanic. Ticket order forms provided in Spanish would be very beneficial to the league as well. They would actually encourage Hispanic fans to watch the games in person in addition to on television.

Overall, the sports industry is realizing the importance and benefit of marketing to the Hispanic community. Some of the leagues have hired outside firms to control the programs implemented specifically for the Hispanic community (Eros, 2002). Others recognize the importance and future of Hispanics and sport but have yet to employ successful marketing strategies. The five professional sport leagues have become cognizant of the need to market towards Hispanics but some leagues are more active than others. Hispanics are an ever-increasing market that the sports industry will greatly benefit from marketing towards.
Table 1.
Hispanic Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLS</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLB</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All data from (Lapchick, 2005)

Table 2.
Hispanic Hispanic Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Hispanic Population</th>
<th>Hispanic %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>18,741</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>84,836</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>753,644</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>423,134</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>175,820</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>730,865</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis</td>
<td>30,493</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1,718,091</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>238,505</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>2,162,235</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>449,972</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City</td>
<td>34,168</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>310,752</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>29,719</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>6,964</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.
Hispanic Athletes 2005-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLB</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLS</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHL*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Latest data available is from 2004 (Lang, 2004)

All other data from (Lapchick, 2005)
**Table 4.**

**Hispanic Fans**
Hispanics as a percentage of league fan base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLB</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLS</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHL</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sportspoll.com (Liberman, 2003)

**Chart 1**

**Major League Baseball Players**

![Chart showing % Latino from 1990 to 2010](chart.png)
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site: http://www.coloradorapids.com/Community/Programs.aspx


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http://www.nba.com/lakers/community/0607_Es_Tu_Cancha

http://www.mlsfutbolito.com/l/en

Major League Soccer Web site: http://web.mlsnet.com/index.jsp

Web site: http://boston.redsox.mlb.com/index.jsp?c_id=bos

Major League Baseball Web site:
http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/official_info/community/programs.jsp

Major League Soccer Web site: http://www.mlsnet.com/about/

Web site: http://www.nhl.com

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