

## GUIDELINES FOR MARKETING DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUBS IN CAMBODIA

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### Abstract

The research purposes were to study the audiences' opinions on professional football league club in Cambodia and to propose the guidelines for the marketing development of the professional football league club in Cambodia. The samples were 400 audiences from 148,310 populations. The key informants included 9 Thai's experts in sport marketing. The instrument for quantitative research was a questionnaire, and qualitative research was a semi - structured interview.

The research result revealed that the audiences' opinions on the marketing development of the professional football league club in Cambodia through each aspect of marketing mix, as overall image of 7 items, there was 1 item which reached a high level and 6 items were at the highest level, the mean of which was 4.71. When considering each aspect arranged in order from greatest to least; Place and Price, the mean of which was 4.93, Product, the mean of which was 4.92, and promotion, the mean of which was 4.90.

Regarding the guidelines for marketing development, there were the process of concept planning and managing, pricing, promoting, and the distribution of ideas, products, services, organizations, and events which should be exchanged to one another so that it will reach satisfaction of individuals and achieve the enterprise's purposes. Meanwhile, the Electronic Marketing Strategy was also added.

**Keywords:** Development, Marketing, Professional football league club

## Introduction

Today, Cambodia applies the 1<sup>st</sup> National Health Development Plan (2015 - 2019) as a framework and guideline for sports development to achieve the goals such as the Basic Sports Development, Sports for all, Sports for Excellence, and Sports for Professional, by using the scientific principle and sport technology, to reinforce the potentials of exercise and sports play so that people of all groups and classes will reach an opportunity to get exercises and do sports, to develop the basic sport skills correctly and continuously, and to strengthen health and good efficiency, and create the reconciliation of the people in the nation for excellence and profession as universal level. According to the National Health Development Plan, one of the major contents is about sports development for profession which aims at promoting and developing the universally potential sports, including developing the traditional sports, athletes, and sports personnel in terms of quality and ethics, as well as giving support to establish the institutes which produce the professional sports personnel, developing the system and mechanism for managing the professional sports competition to reach the universal standard, both central and regional regions, by building the rules and regulations involved with professions to be proper, and to develop the professional management system, by allocating the funds which promote the professional sports, especially football to become popular and widespread in Cambodia.

A professional football league in Cambodia has been operated as the competition continuously since 1982, which was named “Cambodian League (C-League)”. Later in 2014, its name was changed formally to be “Metfone Cambodian League” following the name of the present major supporters. There are a total of 12 clubs that join the Metfone Cambodian League supervised by the Football Federation of Cambodia (FFC). In 2008, the Asian Football Confederation announced its Vision Asia by setting the goal to let the Football Federations in Asia operate this work professionally. Each club shall be registered as a juristic person, profit organization, and company. Moreover, it has to establish an organization responsible for this match management especially. Due to this announcement, it affects the Cambodian football clubs to establish the Metfone Cambodian League to officially operate the football league in the country. For the league system adjustment, the Cambodian football club holds the policy of sustainable potentials development for the professional football league club and raise the league in the country to step forward and reach to become the ASEAN and Asia leading league. This begins with establishing the Metfone Cambodian League Company Limited by organizing the football league match within Cambodia under the organization of Metfone Cambodian League Company Limited, which is divided into 2 levels. The official name includes Metfone Cambodian League 1 (MCL), this is the highest level match of the Cambodian professional football league. In season 2019, the participating teams were from the 1<sup>st</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> team of the Metfone Cambodian League 1, season 2018, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Team from the Cambodian

League 2 (Hun Sen Club), a total of 12 teams, this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cambodian professional league match. In Season 12, all of 12 teams which joined this match were from Metfone Cambodian League 1 and the others were recruited from the 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> from 25 provinces, totally 16 teams then they were divided into 4 zones, 4 teams per each zone (Cambodian League, 2018).

As mentioned above, it can be seen that to achieve success through the management of professional football league, it is necessary to include the various components such as the standard of ability of the footballers and personnel, which include coacher, referees, including effective management in terms of match management and sport business, which include publicity, public relations, marketing and benefits, communication, etc. The most important is the professional football league club team has to organize the effective management, however, one of the problems and obstacles is that the Metfone Cambodian League still lacks standard in various ways, especially in terms of the professional football league standard. The operation result of the professional football league club has not been successful yet because it still lacks nice integration of knowledge as the professional do. Some clubs are still not able to self-survive in some cases such as fundraising, creating efficient footballers, match management, creating the publicity from locality, fan club establishment, and the building of incomes and fringe benefits.

Good marketing is essential for the success of both small and big business, no matter what it is a domestic or international business, a profit or non-profit organization. Furthermore, marketing takes crucial roles even at the personal level (Sit Teerasorn, 2012). To achieve success and goals through marketing, it has to rely on marketing factors that have to use controllable marketing mixes to respond to the needs of the targeted market. Such marketing mix comprises of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence, to suit the service businesses. This can be called as a whole as Marketing Mix'7Ps, according to the theory of marketing mix of Kotler (2003). The marketing mix is a basic concept, namely, it allows the services to be able to communicate with the service users then they will decide to use the services. Moreover, the word of the marketing mix, every variable has a relationship with each other and it has to be used mutually. The service users will bring the marketing mix to use for their success in marketing. Besides, it is considered as a crucial policy for a marketing plan, which has to bring such a marketing mix to determine specifically with each type of service. As statements mentioned above, it reflects that the marketing of the professional league football club in Cambodia these days, some clubs which are during the construction, they still cannot reach the level of professional, for example, they lack of the ability to make the clubs popular, the building of beautiful and attractive stadium which satisfies the audience, various facilities within the stadium, the advertisement and public relations are still not interesting, and some areas in the stadium still looks unprofessional enough, including the totality of decreasing audiences is considered as a crucial issue interested by the media.

From the situations mentioned above, the researcher is interested to study the guidelines for marketing development of the professional football league club in Cambodia to find out the guidelines for marketing development of the professional football league club in Cambodia according to the 7 P's service marketing theory of Kotler (2003) which includes Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence aspect of the professional football club takes a crucial role to urge the marketing and economy of the club to become concrete. Therefore, it can be said that the marketing development is considered as an essential tool to support the professional league football club in Cambodia to be successful on marketing and bring about progress and sustainability toward the club management.

### Research purposes

1. To study the audience's opinions on the marketing development of the professional league football club in Cambodia
2. To propose the guidelines of marketing development for the professional league football club in Cambodia.

### Research methodology 1

#### Population

The population used in this research included club executives, team managers, marketing managers, and professional football league audiences in Cambodia through all 3 clubs; Naga World Football Club, Bang Gate Football Club, Angkor Tiger Football Club, a total of 148,310 persons.

#### Samples

the researcher took randomization by using the Quota Sampling Technique, and Convenience Sampling Technique, a total of 400 persons, by finding out several samples that were appropriate from the formula of Taro Yamane (1973, p. 727). When substituting the population size of 148,310 persons at the level of errors 0.05 divided into the audiences of professional football league of the Nagaworld Football Club, a total of 133 persons, Bang Gate Football Club, a total of 133 persons, and Angkor Tiger Football Club, a total of 134 persons. The samples were collected from the audiences of the professional football league in Cambodia, in all 3 clubs, which are willing and welcome to give the researcher the information, and the questionnaires were given out 400 persons.

The researcher used the Quota Sampling Method and the Convenience Sampling Method to collect the samples from 3 clubs of professional football league audiences in Cambodia that were willing and welcome to give their information, and 400 questionnaires were given out.

## Research Tool

The instrument used for data collection in this study was questionnaires. The audience's opinions on the marketing development of the professional football club in Cambodia had the reliability equal to 0.93, and the Item - Objective Congruence Index (IOC) from 5 experts was equal to .95. Hence, it could be concluded that the questionnaires improved by the researcher were high precise which were suitable for sample data collection.

### Research methodology 2

The researcher emphasizes guidelines for the marketing development of professional football league club in Cambodia. This research was carried out by the Mixed Method, Quantitative Research, and Qualitative Research. The researcher operated as the following:

### Quantitative Research

The population included club executives, team managers, marketing managers, and professional football league audiences in Cambodia through all 3 clubs; Naga World Football Club, Bang Gate Football Club, Angkor Tiger Football Club 148,310 persons. Then the researcher took a random by using the Quota Sampling Technique, and Convenience Sampling Technique, 400 persons, by finding out several samples appropriate from Taro Yamane Formula (1973, p. 727). When substituting the population size of 148,310 persons at the level of errors .05 divided into the audiences of professional football league of the Nagaworld Football Club, 133 persons, Bang Gate Football Club, 133 persons, and Angkor Tiger Football Club, 134 persons. The samples were collected from the audiences of the professional football league in Cambodia, in all 3 clubs, which are willing and welcome to give the information, and the questionnaires were given out to 400 persons.

The researcher used the Quota Sampling Method and the Convenience Sampling Method to collect the samples from 3 clubs willing and welcome to give their information, and 400 questionnaires were given out.

The instrument used for data collection was questionnaires. The audience's opinions on marketing development had the reliability of 0.93, and Item - Objective Congruence Index (IOC) from 5 experts was .95. Hence, the questionnaires improved by the researcher were highly precise suitable for sample data collection.

### Qualitative Research

The Semi-Structured Interview language was used. The key informants involved with the marketing of the professional football league club included 3 club executives, 3 team managers, and 3 marketing managers.

The sample group was the key informants involved with the marketing of the professional football league club: 3 club executives, 3 team managers, and 3 marketing managers, 9 persons totally. The researcher selected a sample group to be the key informants by using Purposive

Sampling technique. Their qualifications included 3 years of experience up on marketing, knowledge, skills, and competency for the professional football league club in Cambodia.

Regarding the instrument used for data collection, the researcher brought the audience opinions on the marketing development from the quantitative research to use as question items in the Semi - Structured Interview to find out the guidelines for marketing development.

Concerning the data, the researcher collected the data of Semi-Structured Interviews using the recorder and concluded them and noted the crucial points for proposing as a composition to propose the guidelines.

### Procedures

Documents, textbooks, journals, and electronic media related research were studied and the purpose of creating a questionnaire was set to gather information about the views of audiences towards marketing development of professional league football clubs in Cambodia. A draft questionnaire was created according to the research conceptual framework. The draft questionnaire was brought to the advisor and the Thesis Control Committee in order to check the quality of the questionnaire and improve according to the recommendations of the advisor. The questionnaire was typed send to experts to examine the accuracy and content. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts as follows:

Part 1 is a question about basic information of respondents.

Part 2 is a questionnaire about audiences' opinions on the market development of the professional football league in Cambodia. The questionnaires were in the form of rating scales with 4 levels which were highest, high, medium, and minimal.

Part 3 Other suggestions regarding audiences' opinions on the development of the professional football league in Cambodia are open - ended.

### Data Analysis

According to the data analysis, for the quantitative analysis, the researcher got the data from the questionnaires and analysed them using the Descriptive Statistics; frequency, percentage, and mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), and standard deviation (S.D.), and for the qualitative analysis, the contents of the data were analysed from the interview using the recorder of the Semi - Structured Interview from 3 club executives, 3 team managers, 3 marketing managers, 9 persons totally, to create the guidelines for marketing development.

### Research results

In conclusion, personal information, mean, and standard deviation of the audiences' opinions on the marketing development pursuing the components of marketing mixes in each aspect;



According to all of the 400 samples, most of the samples were male (67.75%), aged between 25 - 29 years old (32.75%), holding the career of employees in the private sectors (41%), bachelor's degree (38.25%), and their monthly income was between 10,001 – 15,000 baht (41.75%).

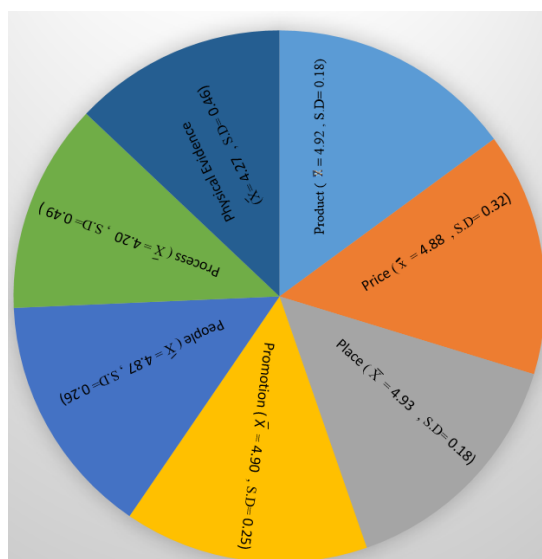
Regarding the mean and standard deviation of the audiences' opinions on the marketing development according to the marketing mix factors in 9 items of Products, the opinions level of the audiences towards the interest on having attractive and beautiful stadium, the mean was at the highest level (4.98). For the Price Aspect, there were 3 items; the suitable subscription prices at the highest level (mean = 4.93), Place; 5 items; having various channels for ticket distribution at the highest level (mean = 4.99), Promotion; 6 items; the advertising and public relations for the match was interesting at the highest level (mean = 4.96), People; 5 items; employees in the stadium gave services politely at the highest level (mean = 4.93), Process; 5 items; the ticket purchase procedures were not complicated at the highest level (mean = 4.28). Physical Evidence; 7 items; the atmosphere of the football match was exciting at the highest level (mean = 4.45). According to the marketing mix components of each aspect, considered as an overall image of 7 aspects, there was 1 item, the mean of which was at a high level, and 6 items at the highest level (4.71). When considering each aspect, from greatest to least, it included Place (mean = 4.93), Product (mean = 4.92), Promotion (mean = 4.90), Price (mean = 4.88), People (mean = 4.87), Physical Evidence (mean = 4.27), and Process (mean = 4.20), respectively.

Regarding the conclusion of question items through all 3 clubs about the guidelines of marketing development of the professional football league club in Cambodia can be concluded each aspect as follows: Product; all 3 clubs, the items concordant to one another; building the images and contents emphasizing the universality and professional through products and services, determining the standing points of the brands to thoroughly widespread to the customers in all levels, every type of products from the clubs ought to have the brands of the clubs, creating good images for the athletes to raise their values regarded as a crucial product of the club, proposing the images of the clubs, publicizing the products lists and souvenirs through television, radio, and social media, which are the strong point of the clubs, emphasizing the concept of localism to represent the images of the clubs. According to the proposal of the club images in terms of the Price for all 3 clubs, there was concordance of each club as follows: the determined price of the products according to the strength of the brand at that time, the organization of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) through activities mutually with the audiences to realize the needs and satisfaction levels of the audiences towards the products, receiving the information, recommendation of the audiences towards the products of the clubs via the online system of the club, consulting with the suppliers who are experts on determining the prices, meeting and exchanging the ideas with

the fan club leaders, calculating the cost prices of the products not much highly so that the customers in the lower markets can afford them. For Place; all of the 3 clubs, the concordant ideas in each club were as follows: focusing on the place which distributes the products at the stadium as the first level, there were 4 channels for products distribution, providing more convenience for the customers, distributing online products via famous online companies. For Promotion; all 3 clubs, there were the concordant concepts of each club as follows: managing the marketing promotion according to various important days in Cambodia, giving fringe benefits to the customers who subscribe as fan club or annual members of the club, holding the professional and universality to maintain nice images of the club, dividing time for giving discount promotion, and managing the products promotion. For People; of all 3 clubs, there were concordant ideas in each club as follows: considering the contribution by the experts of each service, building the mutual values of all staff in the organization, organizing the training for all club staff to increase their potentials to them, recruiting staff who are going to work with the club by having service-mind and are ready to give service all classes of customers all the time, always having a meeting to create the co - cultures in the organization, all of the staff in the club have to uphold the loyalty and pride on the club. For Process; all 3 clubs, there were concordant opinions in each club as follows: determining the service system by having international standard and professional by bringing the Cambodian culture to insert in the service, emphasizing all staff in terms of humbleness and friendliness to all classes of customers, organizing the shuttle for the customers who are going to join the match of the club, preparing the services really in accordance with the customers' needs via the vote from websites, facilitating the parking lots and products distribution to the customers in all areas around the stadium. For Physical Evidence; all 3 clubs, there were concordant opinions in each club as follows: having the policies and clear plans to present the customers to increase the reliability through the customers, having the policy to let all staff give service to all classes customers with the same standard, adjusting the landscape of the stadium to be harmonious with the club brand, and giving the wireless internet service, proposing the image of being a team which has long-term history of the club to the customers, representing the image of being a professional and localism, and adjusting the image by improving the scenery to be in accordance with the clubs.



Chart 7P's



### Research discussion

According to the research discussion of the Purpose item 1, to study the audience's opinions on the marketing development, it can be described as follows:

1) Product Aspect: the audience's opinions on the marketing development of the professional football league club in Cambodia in terms of questions on Product as overall image was at the highest level because of the attractiveness and beauty of the football stadium, the images and contents were created to emphasize the universality and professionalism through products and services, giving knowledge on products to the audiences. These could be impressed as services that affect the decision making for being back to use these services again. This is in accordance with the research of Prapat Suksawangwong (2016) about the factors affecting selecting the decision to use the service of the travel agency of Chinese tourists in Pattaya city which was found that the Product Aspect as the overall image was at the highest level. When considering each aspect, it revealed the 3 highest levels: 1) the product could be adjusted, added, and programed appropriately, 2) the residents in the tour program was reliable, which met the universal standard level, and 3) the tour program was interesting and in line with the needs, respectively.

2) Price: as the overall image, it was at the highest level. For each aspect, the audiences focusing on the subscription price considered as suitable, the Mean was at the highest level because the audiences wanted to see the match at the stadium which its price was not too high for their favourite football club. This is in accordance with the research of Rangsimant Teerawattananon. (2014) about the impact of marketing mix on sports newspaper consumer said that the changing price of newspapers would affect the purchase decision. Moreover, the

Place (distribution channel) of the newspapers was varied and could respond to the customers' needs.

3) Place: as overall image, it was at the highest level. And when considering each aspect, it emphasized such as location was comfortable, safe, and clean, and the service. This is because the club stadium was the main place the audiences visited to use the service, thus it is a key factor that creates a nice image of the club. This is in accordance with the research of Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler (2009) which indicated that a service occurred at the same time as a production and consumption and customers had to stay at the service place, including having direct interaction with their staff of company and being a part of the service production process.

4) Promotion: as the overall image, it was at the highest level. And when considering each aspect, the opinions emphasized the aspect of advertisement, public relations, and competition, the mean was at the highest level (4.96) because the promotion organization, advertising materials, booth activity, and interesting printing media use, made the audiences feel they were a part of the club. This is in accordance with Prapat Suksawangwong (2016) who studied the factors affecting the decision making to use the service of tourism business of the Chinese tourists in Pattaya, Chonburi that there was the overall image of marketing promotion which reached the highest level. Moreover, when considering each aspect, it was also at the highest level for the first 3 levels; promotion organization, advertising materials use.

5) People: the questioning on People as overall image was at the highest level with the mean at the highest level (4.87). When considering each aspect, the audiences were interested in the item of employees within the stadium that gave them the service politely, with the highest mean (4.93) because the audiences expected the convenient and quick services from the staff since these are considered as a factor which can make a difference to each professional football league club and it expresses the service image of that club. This is in accordance with the research of Thammachak Lekbanchong (2015) which identified good services which had to hold the principle of quick service and response according to the consumers' needs. Furthermore, it had to be careful and made errors the least because errors were interpreted as low quality immediately.

6) Process: as a whole image, it was at a high level (mean = 4.20). When considering each aspect, the opinions of the audiences were about the procedures of ticket purchase were not complicated, the mean was at the highest level (4.28) because these procedures which were not only complicated but also had certain rules and regulations of the visit determined by the professional football club for all audiences was a factor that can be satisfied them. This is in accordance with the research of Nucharin Nateerattanakamjai (2015) which said that the procedures or service process, rules, and regulations, as well as work methods involved with creating and offering the services to customers, were considered as a crucial factor for making an impression in service work.

7) Physical Evidence: as a whole image, it was at the highest level (Mean = 4.27). When considering each aspect, the exciting atmospheres of the football match, with the highest mean (4.45) because various facilities around the stadiums could make the audience's satisfaction towards the visit. Furthermore, it impacted the decision making for the revisit. Usa Srichaiya (2017) said that environments and facilities were crucial mixes in the service system because it is such a single component of the service system that can be seen and touched.

### Research recommendation

Since this research operated as overall image without emphasizing the details, therefore, the ability to analyze and describe the details of the operation in each item was still limited or uncovered because the components and data collection from the sample group was not covered enough. Hence, the research which should be operated in the future ought to focus on the details or emphasize the issue which will be studied in order to be able to determine the certain scopes more. Furthermore, in terms of quantitative research, this research still only operated the opinions for studying the possibility, thus in the future, it should be operated in terms of comparing the opinions on the marketing development of the professional football league club in Cambodia in order to indicate the marketing development of various clubs more clearly and appropriately.

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