

Abstract

This thesis is focused on marketing of the National Hockey League (NHL) from 2005 to 2015. The NHL, having been founded in 1917, is the oldest and most famous ice hockey competition in the world. The aim of the study is to investigate the role and the impact of marketing and its techniques on the NHL. I start with 2005 because the then season was completely cancelled due to disagreements among players and owners of the clubs. It is considered to be a turning point in the history of the NHL since a salary cap has been introduced and clubs could spend limited amount of money on players.

The main attention of the thesis is directed at single marketing activities of the league – television broadcasting, outdoor games, sponsors, All-Star Games, lockouts, the salary cap and revenues. Considerable space is devoted to comparison with the biggest competitors of the NHL on the North American sport market. The findings from the research show that management of the league uses marketing and its tools very extensively. Marketing helps the NHL to fulfil its plans, bring new fans and attract lucrative sponsors. The study concludes with a prediction what the future will bring to the league. An extension of the NHL into new markets in Las Vegas and Quebec is set to happen together with growing revenues.