

Research on NBA Business Operation and Brand Development Strategy

– A Case Study Based on NBA Characteristic Event Concept

Ziyi Wang^{1,a,*}

¹*Jiangxi HanVos High School, Nanchang, China*

a. 631512345678@mails.cqjtu.edu.cn

**corresponding author*

Abstract: The NBA represents successful games around the world, even though the NBA is not the largest sports league in the world. However, the NBA's comprehensive and unique marketing strategy, as well as a sound competitive system, are the basic factors for its successful development. After more than 30 years of development, the NBA has undergone tremendous changes. In order to better understand and analyze the reasons for the success of NBA and some experiences. This paper will use case analysis, literature review and case comparison methods to summarize NBA marketing strategies and analyze some unique NBA events, and compare them with the CBA in China. In addition, this article will show some of the challenges and future trends facing the NBA and analyze why the NBA is moving in this direction. In short, it elaborates on the development strategy of the NBA and the impact that will occur after it.

Keywords: NBA, sports event operations, brand event management

1. Introduction

The NBA is a highly successful sports league in the world. With the increasingly successful development of the NBA, in order to better understand its development and operation, explore the successful experience of the NBA in research, and explore some special activities and subordinate leagues of the NBA. For example, draft conferences and the NBA Development League. This article uses case analysis and comparative methods to analyze some cases of the NBA and also compare them with China's CBA league to identify the reasons for the successful development of the NBA. In the following paragraphs, we will first introduce the NBA's marketing strategy. Afterwards, we will analyze the NBA's brand sustainable development strategy and how the NBA is developing globally. The operation of NBA events is also a very important part, and this article uses the NBA Draft Conference and G League as examples to describe how the NBA operates its events. Then this article also analyzes the problems faced by the NBA in the future and its future development and predicts the direction in which the NBA will develop in the future.

2. Overview of the NBA's Business Operations and Marketing Strategy

The American Professional Basketball League, or NBA for short, is a men's professional basketball league composed of 30 professional teams in North America and one of the four major professional sports leagues in the United States. The remaining three are NFL, MLB, and NHL. The NBA League is the largest basketball tournament in the United States and even globally. It has now become one of the most successful international marketing sports events in the world. The NBA is divided into the Eastern Conference and the Western Conference, with each league divided into three divisions, each consisting of five teams. The NBA draft will be held after the end of each season and before the beginning of the next season; The NBA Summer League, NBA pre-season and NBA regular season usually start in October. In February, there is a special performance event, the NBA All-Star Game. After the NBA regular season ended, the Eastern and Western leagues advanced from the top eight to the playoffs, determining the Eastern and Western championships and advancing to the NBA Finals. The best player in the performance won the Bill Russell NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Award.

Table 1: Timeline of NBA games and events.

EVENT	TIMELINE
NBA Draft	Every June
G League	Every year from the end of October to the middle of April of the following year
NBA ALL-STAR	Every mid-February
NBA PLAYOFFS	Every year from mid-April to early June
NBA REGULAR SEASON	Every year from the end of October to the middle of April of the following year

In terms of business model, the NBA league has been very successful. The NBA League has continuously expanded its brand commercial influence with its iconic Nike jerseys and peripheral products printed with the league logo. In sports events, the NBA League is a model of marketing strategy. NBA teams also sell their season tickets to boost their revenue, and the NBA league also vigorously promotes some so-called enemy battles and Christmas battles. In order to improve the attendance rate of the competition. For example, in the 2016 Finals, the Cavaliers faced the Warriors. The number of viewers for this game ranked third in NBA history, reaching 32.01 million. In addition, the 2016 Cavaliers vs. Warriors Christmas game was hailed as the most exciting Christmas in NBA history. The league will also create some star players as a facade for the NBA, and the league will take care of these stars as much as possible to ensure their ratings. Of course, they will sell their broadcasting rights to some sports platforms, such as ESPN and TNT, in order to obtain rich profits. In addition, the NBA's game system is also a way for them to attract fans. NBA games are divided into four major parts: pre-season, regular season, playoffs, and NBA Finals. The pre-season is a warm-up match for each team. The regular season is a round-robin between 30 NBA teams from late October to mid-April of the following year. Each team needs to participate in 82 games, with a total of 1230 games played by 30 teams. After the regular season, the teams with the top eight common season records in the Eastern and Western leagues enter the playoffs, and the Eastern and Western

champions who compete in the final playoffs enter the finals to compete for the championship. The intensity of competition in the playoffs is much greater than in the regular season, with more intense physical confrontations. Teams participating in the playoffs will not retain any strength, and their goal is only to win a championship. The league will vigorously promote the team that has won the championship, and the champion team will also create a championship ring for their champion members. In the first regular season of the next season, a ring collection ceremony will be held at home for the team. The championship flag will also be raised at home, and the promotion purpose will be achieved through live streaming throughout the United States. This sentence is too long and contains much content. It is recommended to split it into several sentences.

3. Brand Sustainable Development Strategy Analysis of NBA

3.1. Overview of the Brand Management Strategies of NBA

Sustainable development of brands is beneficial for improving product quality and corporate image and for products to participate in market competition. As Porter said, "Fierce domestic competition is a necessary prerequisite for enterprises to become winners of global competition. The more localized the competition is, the fiercer the competition will be. The pressure it creates will continue to upgrade the competitive advantage [1]. Firstly, the level of NBA competition is very high. The NBA teams and players are the best in the world, attracting a large audience every season. The NBA games are not only exciting and intense but also have high-level production and live streaming, providing fans with a better viewing experience. Secondly, NBA stars are also an essential component of their brand value. In the history of the NBA, there have been many legendary players, such as Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant and LeBron James. These players have not only performed well in games but also played an essential role in brand building. These football stars are not only idols of fans but also promotional spokespersons for various business partners, making significant contributions to the brand value of the NBA. Finally, NBA's marketing strategy is also an important component of its brand value. The NBA has conducted extensive promotion and marketing worldwide, such as live streaming of events, team tours and street basketball events. The NBA has its own TV and News Media Company, which produces more than 530 fantastic high-quality festivals every year and broadcasts them in more than 180 countries and regions around the world [2]. These activities have attracted a large number of fans and enhanced the NBA's brand awareness and reputation. In addition to its highly competitive level, the NBA also hosts some entertaining events, such as the NBA All-Star. All-Star Weekends will feature specific competitions, such as three-point and dunk competitions. And in the All-Star Game, fans vote to select the captains on both sides, and then the captains choose the players who make it to the All-Star list. After selecting the team members, both teams will first undergo an appearance ceremony and then engage in a performance competition. Players can focus most of their energy on attacking. There will also be some scenes that are rarely seen in formal competitions, such as super far three-pointers. Sports stars can increase their visibility through a large number of social media platforms. The most popular social media platforms in the world include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Sports stars should make full use of these platforms. These platforms have millions of users and can expand the influence and popularity of sports stars. Sports stars can also collaborate with brands to strengthen marketing promotion. Many sports stars have their own brand partnerships, and they can collaborate with world-renowned and well-known brands, which will better promote their image and reputation and help promote the brand. In addition to social media and brand collaboration, sports event live streaming is also an excellent opportunity for promotion and promotion. A large-scale sports event is like a grand mass event, with a large audience watching the live broadcast of the game. Sports stars promote their image through the game, making more people around the world aware of themselves. In recent years, video promotion has become increasingly

common, and its impact cannot be underestimated. Sports stars can record and share their daily life, training, and competition experiences through videos, which can evoke resonance and emotional resonance among people and enhance their influence. The NBA will also record the highlights of many star players on the game scene and create a collection to be posted on video websites. As Fisk pointed out, in the sports broadcast by the media, the male body is endowed with glory, and its power and flexibility are captured in close-ups and slow motion [3]. For sports stars, online promotion and promotion have become important ways to promote their brand image, enhance their reputation, and expand their influence. And online channels targeting these sports stars can provide a broad audience and a massive impact on brand and celebrity promotion, creating actual marketing value.

3.2. Global Development Strategy of NBA

With the development of globalization, the NBA has also begun to focus on overseas markets and implemented a globalization strategy. Velho pointed out that globalization can be understood as the direction the world is moving forward as a whole [4]. Bairner pointed out that, as the global sports scene (Olympic Games) and global sports multinationals (NIKE) have proved, many aspects of sports and globalization permeate each other [5]. The globalization strategy of the NBA mainly includes expanding overseas markets, cultivating international players and partners, and promoting basketball culture. The NBA is actively exploring overseas markets. In the 2003-2004 season, the NBA regular season events were broadcast to 212 countries around the world through 151 different TV partners in more than 42 different languages, and at least 3.1 billion people could watch NBA games [6]. The NBA has established multiple offices worldwide and promotes the NBA brand globally through various means. In addition, the NBA has also carried out numerous activities worldwide, such as NBA European Tournament. This activity not only attracted a large number of fans but also made significant contributions to the brand promotion of the NBA. The NBA expands its global influence by cultivating international players. Many excellent international players have emerged in the NBA, such as Dirk Nowitzki, Giannis Antetokounmpo and Luka Doncic. It is recorded that when the NBA's predecessor BAA was founded in 1946, Canadian Henry Biasatti was the first international player officially recognized by the NBA. In 1976, after the NBA merged with ABA, it began to attract more international players [7]. Their presence not only improves the NBA's game level but also lays a solid foundation for the NBA to expand its influence in overseas markets. The NBA is also committed to promoting basketball culture. The NBA conveys basketball culture to global basketball enthusiasts through various means, such as basketball movies, basketball culture exhibitions and basketball art. Broughton believes that the new media opens the door for NBA players, who can show themselves off the field on the new media [8]. In addition, the NBA also provides game news, live broadcasts, and other services to global fans through social media platforms, official websites, and other channels, enabling global basketball enthusiasts to understand better and deepen their understanding and love of the NBA. D-Schultz believes that integrated marketing communication is "taking all contact points between brands and enterprises as a channel for information transmission and aiming at the purchase behavior that affects consumers. It is a process of starting from consumers and using a variety of means to disseminate" [9]. For instance, the NBA will also hold the China tournament, which means that the league will arrange for two teams to come to China to play. At the same time, during the Spring Festival in China, the NBA will also hold some activities with Chinese cultural characteristics to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

4. Unique Event Operation Methods of NBA

4.1. NBA Draft

The NBA draft is an annual event for the NBA to select new players. At the draft conference, 30 NBA teams can select young male players who want to join the NBA, and the established players are called NBA rookies. All American players can automatically enter the NBA draft after their graduation from college, or they can announce their participation in the draft between their graduation from high school and their completion of college studies. Every year, the NBA sets two dates, and all players who wish to participate in the draft must announce their participation before the first date. Afterwards, the NBA will establish training camps for those players to showcase their abilities and skills to various teams. The second date, which is the last announced draft day, is one week before the draft conference. Any player can make a decision before this to withdraw their name and not participate in the draft that year. This data is vital for college players. If they do not officially announce their participation in the draft until the final announcement day, regardless of whether an NBA team selects them or not, they will lose the opportunity to study in college. Due to the significant influence of the NCAA, the annual talent show attracts much attention and attracts more people to learn about the show. And college players are also happy to be selected at the draft, and most teams also place their hopes on whether they can choose high-level players at the draft. In contrast, China's CBA draft conferences do not receive much attention because China's CUBA level is not high enough. CBA teams do not value the draft. CBA teams will establish their own youth training camps, and those players need to pay a certain fee to enter. This will also increase the pressure on families. Therefore, many teams will give up the draft at the draft conference and focus on cultivating their youth camp players, leaving players who genuinely have talent but are unable to afford youth training expenses out of reach. But there are a minority of people who can afford the money and have good basketball skills. So now, fewer and fewer players are participating in the draft and looking for a stable job. The NBA draft conference can bring a high level of topic heat, providing opportunities for audiences and practitioners to participate outside of regular games. The NBA draft conference provides players with opportunities for fair competition, mainly based on their data. They avoid being selected through relationships.

4.2. NBA G League

The NBA Development League is the secondary league of the NBA, which was established in 2001. Since 2017, the NBA Development League has officially changed its name to the NBA Gatorade League, or the NBA G League for short. Most of the players who serve in the NBA Development League are those who have participated in the NBA draft or pre-season games. Any NBA team can select players from the NBA Development League to enter the NBA or can send their own NBA players with no more than two years of experience to the NBA Development League for training. The free throw rule of the Development League is that each time you stand on the free throw line, you can only take one free throw. If it is a 2-point shooting foul, you can get 2 points from one free throw. Similarly, if it is a 3-point foul, you can get 3 points from one free throw. For a foul, you can get 1 point. In the last two minutes of the game, the previous free throw rule will be followed. Through the new rules, it can be seen that the Development League has undergone a significant change in the free throw system, where one free throw can earn 3 points. This has never been heard before, but for players who are good at making fouls, this rule is undoubtedly very advantageous. Although games are often held in small cities, and attendance has not been ideal, the NBA Development League has also maintained a low-cost, low-investment, and light operating model, never appearing as a loss in the NBA financial statements. In order to further alleviate financial pressure, the NBA has also been giving the green light to the commercialization of the development league. In order to better promote

the development of the development alliance. Most teams in the G league are directly associated with NBA teams, providing coaches and management teams. At the same time, the league has also collaborated with many well-known enterprises, increasing the team's commercial value and revenue. The G League, as an important component of the NBA, will continue to play an important role in the future. As people's love for G League continues to increase, the number of viewers and player strength will also gradually increase. The G League can be said to be one of the futures of the NBA. It provides a faster and more efficient way for young players to become excellent professional players and also provides a richer source of players for NBA teams, contributing to the development of the entire industry. Although players in the Development League nominally belong to various teams, they only sign contracts with the league. They are divided into A, B, and C levels based on their strength and seniority and can only receive annual salaries of 25000, 19000, and 13000 US dollars, respectively. In contrast, China's CBDL league does not have such a good advantage as the NBA Development League. Due to the fact that the attention of the CBA in China is far less than that of the NBA, the development league of the CBA has been neglected, and many people are unaware that China still has this league. The viewing value of CBDL games is not as high as that of the NBA Development League, with unreasonable game arrangements and unstable participating teams. However, the salary of the CBA Development League is pitifully low, and it can only sustain the players' own basic needs.

5. Development Challenges and Future Prospects of the NBA

The NBA league will also face many challenges as it develops. The salary of NBA players has always been a focus of public attention. Since the 2011 labor agreement, the total salary of NBA players has been increasing year by year, and players are increasingly aware of their value. This not only leads to a surge in the salaries of top players but also leads to a continuous increase in the salaries of mid-level players. This has a significant impact on the financial situation of the team, as they need to pay more taxes for players' salaries. In addition, the transfer market for players is also a complex issue. Players often choose to join teams with higher salaries, which can affect the competitiveness of some teams. This will result in some star players in the league going to teams with high salaries, while teams with small basketball markets and limited salary space can only sign some role players. Their competitiveness is not as high as those teams with a large salary space. The business model and culture of NBA teams also face challenges. With the changing needs and expectations of fans, the team needs to constantly innovate and improve its business model and culture. For example, teams need to better utilize social media and digital platforms to attract more young fans. In addition, the team also needs to better understand the needs and opinions of fans in order to better meet their expectations. This also requires improvements in management and operations for the team to better adapt to this rapidly changing industry. Teams can post some recent signing information and player training videos on official social media platforms for better promotion. The health and safety of players has always been a key concern of the NBA. As the intensity and speed of the game increase, the risk of injury for players also increases. Therefore, the NBA needs to better protect the health and safety of its players. For example, the NBA can strengthen training and rehabilitation support for players to reduce the risk of injury. In addition, the NBA can explore new technologies and equipment to improve the safety and comfort of players. The instability of referees' decisions is also a major issue in the NBA. NBA referees sometimes call off games with their own emotions. When they are in a bad mood, no matter how much reason you have, they will follow their own wishes. They believe they are always right. There is a lack of consistency in NBA referees' decisions, and the scale of calls and penalties varies between the playoffs and regular season each year. To better address this issue, the NBA can establish a dedicated rating system for referees. If the referee's judgment in the game is not qualified, resulting in a low rating, corresponding penalties such as fines can be imposed. It is not a problem that can be solved by issuing a referee's report after the game. The referee can't give the

player a technical foul at will. Sometimes the player will ask the referee, but instead of explaining, the referee will directly give the player a technical foul. When a player gets a technical foul, he will face a fine after the game, but the referee has not received any punishment for giving a technical foul at will. At this point, the role of the rating system becomes prominent, as players can score the referee's performance after the game. If the referee becomes impulsive, they will also receive corresponding punishment after the game. In the future, the NBA will continue to maintain its spirit of innovation and reform to respond to constantly changing market demands. The NBA will hold its first mid-season championship in the 23-24 season. The mid-season championship officially kicks off on November 3rd every year, with all 30 teams in the league competing in six groups based on the east and west parts, with five teams in each group competing in the group stage. Each team will play one game against the other four teams in the group, divided into two home games and two away games. After four rounds of matches, the team ranked first in the group will advance to the knockout stage, while the top players from the east and west of the remaining 24 teams will hold wild cards and form the quarter-finals with six top teams in the group for the final knockout stage. The prize money for each player in the championship team is \$500000, the prize money for each player in the team that lost the championship game is \$200000, the prize money for each player in the team that lost in the semi-finals is \$100000, and the prize money for each player in the team that lost in the quarter-finals is \$50000. In addition to the mid-season championship, the attention to NBA events will continue to grow in the future, and the influence of football stars will also receive more attention. The precise marketing strategy proposed by Philip Kotler points out the market of crowds. It will become a new foothold in marketing strategy [10]. At the same time, the development of new fields, such as esports and mobile technology, will also enable fans to better experience NBA events.

6. Conclusion

After more than sixty years of development, the NBA has formed a scientific management system and a sound competition system. The NBA actively explores the international market while also packaging itself as an international sports event. Through a series of operations, such as vigorously supporting the development of the NBA, more players who are unable to enter the NBA have the opportunity to participate in professional competitions and fair and just draft conferences, which have prevented many descendants of historical celebrities from relying on their father's relationship to enter the NBA. At the same time, the NBA is also trying to add new games to ensure that the games are more enjoyable to watch. There are still some limitations in the discussion of the corresponding business strategies of the NBA in this article. Firstly, this study focuses on the advantages of the NBA in its operational process while selectively ignoring most of the discussion of its disadvantages. Secondly, due to limitations in research methods, this study has not yet considered collecting corresponding first-hand data to prove the claims of some of the discussed content. In the future, we will also conduct more profound research on the operational methods and potential issues of the NBA in order to better understand this league.

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