

**Changing the Narrative of the Washington Redskins Brand:
Improving Public Perception and Increasing Business**

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November 14, 2019

Prepared for
Dan Snyder, Owner, and Washington Redskins Front Office Staff



November 14, 2019

Washington Redskins Front Office Staff
21300 Redskin Park Dr
Ashburn, VA 20147

Dear Washington Redskins Front Office Staff:

We have spent the past month researching your brand and its impact on your franchise and fanbase. As Michigan Sport Management students, we have delved deep into the various brands that have similar Native American imagery so that we thoroughly understand your brand, why it is viewed negatively by so many fans and resulting opportunities we see to change the narrative of the Redskins brand. Based on our research, we have created initiatives to improve the brand perception of the Redskins and maintain its equity for the future. By implementing our recommendations, the Redskins will see an improvement in their brand value and will become a franchise that is heralded by their fans as a team that is culturally aware and socially responsible. We are proposing innovative solutions that will ensure a bright future for the Redskins.

The following report discusses the history Native American branded organizations across the country, as well as an analysis of the Washington Redskins current brand. The report details our findings of the opportunities currently facing your franchise: improving public perception, increasing revenue through brand revitalization, and revamping public relations tactics. It also addresses the causes of these opportunities as assessed via our research of the Redskins brand, current public relations strategies, and the information we acquired through researching various scholarly opinions on why the Redskins brand is often viewed of in a negative light. Based on this research, we are proposing recommendations for the franchise to revamp its current branding. These recommendations include cultural education and partnering with the Native American community.

Thank you for your consideration in implementing these ideas. If you have any questions or concerns about the following information, you may contact us by email. We are confident our suggestions will usher in a new era of the Washington Redskins brand and revitalize the franchise's brand to new heights.

Sincerely,

(signatures above printed names)

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Executive Summary

To: Dan Snyder, Owner of the Washington Redskins; Washington Redskins Front Office Staff

From: Gianna Carosone, Sami Jordan, Justin Moore, & Lukas Stauffer

Date: November 14, 2019

Subject: Improving Brand Perception of the Washington Redskins

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Dan Snyder and the rest of the Washington Redskins Front Office Staff to improve brand perception of the team. By implementing the following aspects of our trifold plan, both the public perception and the financial aspects of the business will be improved for the Redskins.

Improving the Washington Redskins' Brand Perception

Opportunity for the Washington Redskins to Change the Narrative of the Brand

The Redskins have the opportunity to learn what works from other Native-American branded teams without wasting resources. The Florida State University Seminoles, “benefit from a special relation with an indigenous nation, the Seminole Tribe of Florida (STF)” (Black & Billings, 2019). Similarly, the University of Utah Utes have received approval from the Northern Ute Tribe (Richards & Tanner, 2016), which is what makes their use of tribal names and imaging socially acceptable. Along with collegiate teams, the Redskins have the opportunity to learn from professional teams, such as the Cleveland Indians, and what they have done to increase fan loyalty and team pride.

By shifting public perception of the Redskins' brand, they also have the opportunity to increase business. Brand awareness and perception is crucial to the success of any business, and by improving the Redskins' brand, the team has the opportunity to also improve financial aspects of team business. Brand association is also a critical aspect of game attendance, and after seeing a 19% decline in attendance in 2018 (Camenker, 2018), the Redskins have an opportunity to bring that number back up by changing how the public views the team's brand, while also increasing the value of the team, which has dropped from third in 2015 (“Forbes Announces 18th Annual NFL Team Valuations”, 2015) to seventh in 2019 (Ozanian, 2019).

Another major opportunity for the Redskins is the potential to improve their public relations. This can be executed by connecting to fans of all ages and increasing community outreach, both of which will shift fan opinions towards more heavily favoring the Redskins. Additionally, community outreach events have been proven to be a great way to improve public relations (McQuaker, 2017). These opportunities combined provide the Washington Redskins a myriad of potential ways to improve their brand moving forward.

Recommendations to Improve Brand Perception

The first step the Redskins can actively take towards shifting perception of the team's brand is by implementing initiatives focused on educating the public on Native American history.

Another recommendation for the team is that they engage in more acts of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Team philanthropy, community and fan engagement, and environmental conservation efforts are all tangible ways Washington can positively impact the community. Initiatives include collaborating with the American Indian Society of Washington D.C., collecting school supplies for those of American Indian heritage as they have the lowest high school graduation rate in America (MENA Report, 2016), and making FedExField more sustainable.

The final component of our recommended plan is having the Redskins incorporate successful initiatives of similar organizations, specifically the Utah Utes and Chicago Blackhawks. Utah's Memorandum of Understanding lays out how the school works with the Ute Tribe to improve relations and educate the public (Memorandum of understanding), and the Redskins can apply these tactics in Washington D.C. The Blackhawks collaborate with tribal leaders to support nearby tribes in appropriate ways, something the Redskins should model in the future.

Benefits of Solution Implementation

The main goal of the aforementioned recommendations is to improve public perception of the Washington Redskins, and with proper implementation that goal is achievable. People respond emotionally to charity work, deepening their connection to that organization. Participating in

acts of CSR also generates free positive press and improves employee performance (Curtis, 2018), both of which positively impact the public's opinions of the Redskins.

Along with improved public perception comes increased business. The Redskins are more than a team, they are also a business looking to succeed financially. Acting on the recommended initiatives will allow the team to connect to a wider range of fans and provides more sponsorship opportunities, which ultimately improves business for the Washington Redskins.

Conclusion

The Washington Redskins are faced with the incredible opportunity to improve their brand perception and business through the implementation of a multifaceted plan. By facilitating public education of Native American history, engaging in more acts of corporate social responsibility, and incorporating initiatives that have been successful for similar organizations, the Redskins will reap countless benefits. Not only will the team strengthen their relationships with fans, but they will simultaneously improve their business and increase profitability.

Recommendations

Through the implementation of the following recommendations, the Washington Redskins can improve brand perception, which improves both public relations and team business, allowing it to return to being one of the most respected and profitable teams in the National Football League.

1. Encourage Redskins' players to post on social media about Native American facts and history to reach a large and varied audience.
2. Feature players in videos that will be played at games to educate the public of Native American history.
3. Collaborate with the American Indian Society of Washington D.C. to build a Native American Center in Washington D.C.
4. Set up donation drive bins to gather school supplies to donate to the American Indian Society of Washington D.C.
5. Make FedExField more sustainable by installing LED lights, using compostable or recyclable products, and sorting waste and demonstrate to fans how to be sustainable.

6. Utilize the University of Utah's Memorandum of Understanding to create a plan of how to most respectfully represent Native Americans.
7. Work with tribal leaders to gather accurate information about Native American tribes in the Washington D.C. area, and then utilize that information when planning future Redskins events.
8. Increase awareness of Native American Heritage Month.
9. Help with the restoration of Native American monuments in Washington D.C. to demonstrate the Redskins' dedication to respect the team's origins.
10. Have Dan Snyder visit with Native American communities to continue to build lasting relationships.
11. Bring members of Native American tribes or of Native American descent to Redskins' games to facilitate the continuity of their legacy.

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Introduction

Opportunity

This report analyzes the current branding, thus affecting the success and stature of one professional football organization, the Washington Redskins.

First and foremost, the mascot, logo and the culture of the Washington Redskins affects the daily interaction with the local community, the fans and the organization as a whole. We also see the opportunity to change the image of the Redskins brand through corporate social responsibility and shifting fan opinions. The opinion of an organization's logo and name varies on the team and the public perception of an organization is all dependent on how a team is portrayed.

Second, we see the need to improve the business functions of the Redskins through changing the narrative of Native American named organizations. Changing the narrative of Native American named organizations allows for fans and the community to better understand and represent the organization.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Daniel Snyder, owner of the Washington Redskins, to change the culture and the representation of the Redskins organization. This shift in culture and representation will result in numerous benefits for the franchise, including an increase in overall fan and community experience, resulting in a better representation of the Native American/American Indian tribes. The new culture of the organization will revitalize the image of Washington D.C., along with improving the franchise values and how the Washington Redskins are perceived.

Scope

Information for this report was gathered through various sources. Fan and community engagement, involvement with Native American/American Indian tribes, and information

regarding organizations with similar issues were all looked at. We also looked at the demographics of Washington D.C. and the surrounding community

We also looked at research regarding Native American/American Indian tribes and their perception of the Redskins organization. We found that most of these tribes have a negative connotation surrounding the Redskins organization because of their image that they have portrayed.

Lastly, we talked with Professor Kelli Donahue, a professor and the Associate Program Chair in the Sport Management program at the University of Michigan. We incorporated professor Donahue's insight and recommendations into conducting our research of the racial and cultural issues within the Redskins organization.

History of Native American named organizations

There are numerous collegiate and professional sports teams that are named after Native Americans. Five of these teams are the Chicago Blackhawks, the Atlanta Braves, the Cleveland Indians, the Florida State Seminoles, and the Utah Utes. These organizations have chosen the names to honor the Native American people.

One of the most prominent teams in the National Hockey League is the Chicago Blackhawks. The Chicago Blackhawks were founded in 1926 ("Chicago Blackhawks Team History", 2019). They are one of the original six teams in the National Hockey League. The organization is named after a famous Native American, Black Hawk, who was a member of the Sauk Indian Tribe (Street, 2015). The original name of the mascot for the Chicago Blackhawks was separated into two words, Black Hawks ("Chicago Blackhawks Team History", 2019). The organization changed the name to one word in 1986 ("Chicago Blackhawks Team History", 2019). The Chicago Blackhawks are a very successful franchise winning three Stanley Cups during the last decade: 2010, 2013, and 2015 ("Chicago Blackhawks Team History", 2019).

A prominent team from Major Baseball League that is named after a Native American is the Atlanta Braves. The Atlanta Braves organization was founded in 1871 ("Story of the Braves",

2019). The organization's original name was the Boston Red Stockings ("Story of the Braves", 2019). The original name remained until 1912 when the organization chose to change their name to the Boston Braves ("Story of the Braves", 2019). The organization played in Boston until they moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1953 ("Story of the Braves", 2019). The organization only remained in Milwaukee for 13 seasons before moving to Atlanta Georgia, which has been their home for the past 53 seasons. The Atlanta Braves are an organization that has historically had success both on and off the baseball diamond.

Another team that has utilized a reference to a Native American in their name is the Cleveland Indians. The Cleveland Indians organization was founded in 1901 ("Cleveland Indians", 2019). The organization's original name was the Cleveland Blues. For several years, the organization did not have a consistent name. Two names that were utilized by the organization included the Broncos and the Naps ("Cleveland Indians", 2019). The organization changed their name prior to the start of the 1915 season to the Cleveland Indians ("Cleveland Indians", 2019). The Cleveland Indians struggled on the field during the early years of their franchise. They made history as an organization when they hired the first African American manager in Major League Baseball ("Cleveland Indians", 2019). The Cleveland Indians are a professional baseball franchise with a storied history.

A famous collegiate team that has borrowed their name from the Native Americans is the Florida State Seminoles. Florida State began competing in collegiate athletics when they started their football program in 1947 ("Relationship with the Seminole Tribe", 2019). The origin of the name Seminoles is very unique. The students that were attending Florida State University selected the name of their school mascot ("Relationship with the Seminole Tribe", 2019). This name is well known among the mascots in collegiate athletics. The Florida State Seminoles compete in the Atlantic Coastal Conference (ACC). Florida State has experienced significant success in a variety of sports throughout their history.

Another collegiate team that utilizes a name from the Native American culture is the Utah Utes. The University of Utah established collegiate athletics in 1893 when they instituted their football program ("Utah Utes Athletic Department", 2016). The Ute is a Native American Indian tribe

that lived within the state of Utah (Richards & Tanner, 2016). The Utah Utes were originally a member of the Mountain West Conference. The Utah Utes will continue to evolve and succeed as an athletic program now that they have become a member of the Pac 12 Conference (“Utah Utes Athletic Department”, 2016).

Discussion

Opportunity for the Washington Redskins to Change the Narrative of the Brand

Through a thorough analysis of the Washington Redskins brand, we have identified the opportunities for the Redskins to change the narrative surrounding their brand. Due to the public perception of the current Redskins brand, effects of their brand on their business, and their tactics regarding public relations, the opportunities for the Redskins to improve their brand are immense.

State of Washington Redskins Brand

The Washington Redskins are a football team that competes at the highest level in the National Football League (NFL). The franchise is also a brand defined by a name and logo that is viewed negatively by Native Americans and by much of the general public. The Redskins brand, due to both the name and logo (See Figure 1 below), have the special opportunity to change the perception of their brand in order to maintain their historical franchise. A main sector of this regards the Redskins relations with both their fans and the media. The brand of the Redskins is a powerful, well-known, driving-force behind a franchise that is among the NFL's oldest and most valuable. The Redskins franchise was estimated to be the fourth most valuable in the entire world at an evaluation of 1.56 billion (Irwin, 2019).

Managing a brand as wealthy as this is a tall task for any management group. We recognize that the Redskins are faced with an even tougher task because their brand has an immense opportunity to improve.



Figure 1: Washington Redskins Official Logo
("Washington Redskins", 2019)

Currently, the Redskins brand is viewed in a negative light. The original opposition to the Redskins brand came from an obvious faction: Native Americans. Native Americans have faced systemic racism outside of sports for years, but unfortunately it occurs within sports through various offensive branding. The very imagery of the Redskins logo portrays the reason that the Natives oppose the brand; it depicts their people as “savages” rather than as regular humans like the rest of society. “If the most basic sense of morality, decency and civility has not yet convinced the Washington team and the NFL to stop using this hateful slur, then hopefully today’s patent ruling will, if only because it imperils the ability of the team’s billionaire owner to keep profiting off the denigration and dehumanization of Native Americans,” Oneida Indian representative Ray Halbritter and National Congress of American Indians Executive Director Jackie Pata, two of the leading forces in the campaign to change the name, said in a statement (White, 2014). This statement reveals that deep sense of racism that the Native American’s feel towards the Redskins brand. The main issue with this lies in the fact that because the very people you are named after are in opposition to your name and logo. Due to this, many other fans and even the greater general public are reacting in a similar negative fashion towards the Redskins brand.

The public perception of the Redskins has been struggling for years. Once again, the negative perception has stemmed from the brand itself. Johnathan Benson (2015), a Master’s student studying the Redskins brand for his thesis, found that the brand image of the Redskins, due to its logo and name are affecting the public's view of the team ownership. When the ownership is viewed in a negative light, that can trickle down to the rest of the organization. Eventually this blows the entire situation out of proportion. That is why we see the opportunity to improve the Redskins brand before it becomes a huge crisis. The name coupled with the Native American imagery in the logo, has set off many observers as racially offensive. With the fabric of social change and increased emphasis on higher education being at the forefront of society in the United States, it has become commonplace for fans to be socially aware and educated on the issues of racism. This has led to a magnification of the Redskins offensive branding in society. The increasing negativity surrounding the Redskins brand leaves us the opportunity to improve the Redskins brand and to use the franchise’s platform to solidify their brand for the foreseeable future.

Public Perception of Other Native American Named Organizations

Sports fans have pride for the team that they cheer for. This pride includes wearing team official merchandise and gear of players from their favorite sports team. This team merchandise includes jerseys, sweatshirts, sweatpants, hats, and other items that fans like to wear. Fans and players wear this merchandise to show their affiliation with a specific organization or team. However, the reaction that the fans have towards the team logo and name varies depending on the team. There are many Native American named organizations within the Collegiate and Professional sports leagues.

Collegiate Teams

The most well-known collegiate athletic program that uses a Native American Mascot is Florida State University. Florida State University's athletic department is one of the most well-known athletic departments in the country. Their Seminole logo is modeled after a Native American Chief that represents a symbol of pride within the Native American Culture. The University's official mascot is a Seminole. Florida State's Logo is modeled after a very famous Native American chief, whose name is Chief Osceola. (Black and Billings, 2019) The Seminole Logo is displayed to the right in Figure 2. During Florida State athletics events, the school has a mascot that dresses up as a Seminole and carries a spear. This mascot will plant the spear in the field during a football game and at other athletic events. The fans at Florida State University athletic events are encouraged to do the Tomahawk Chop during a game. The intent of the chop is to intimidate the opponent and allow for the Seminoles to have an advantage during that play or game. According to an article by Black and Billings (2019), "FSU's mascot situation is unique in that its school and teams benefit from a special relation with an indigenous nation, the Seminole Tribe of Florida (STF)" (para. 2) This relationship allows Florida State to maintain a



Figure 3: Florida State Seminoles logo
(Florida State Athletic Department, 2019)

positive public perception of their team name and logo because of the support that they have from the Native Americans within their own State.

When a team receives support from a tribe within their State on a Native American name this is a good thing for the organization. This could either be with a tribe within their own state or a Native American Organization that is close to the home of their organization. This will allow the organization an opportunity to possibly form a relationship and potentially partner with them for events during home games. This is something that every Native American organization should pursue in order to help them with their brand perception.

Another collegiate athletic program that uses a Native American Mascot is the University of Utah. The mascot for the University of Utah is a Ute. The Ute is a Native American Indian tribe that lived within the state of Utah (Richards & Tanner, 2016). Their team logo is very similar to the current logo that is being used by the Washington Redskins. The Utah Utes current logo is

pictured in Figure 3. The University of Utah also has a real-life mascot that attends all of their athletic events. Utah has already adapted to the concerns of many fans that tend to think that these real-life mascots are negative stereotypes of Native Americans. According to an article by Richards and Tanner (2016), “the Crimson Warrior took life: a student-white, always male- dressed in Indian garb who danced at halftime shows” (para. 1). This real-life mascot used all of the negative stereotypes of Native Americans. After the controversy began to arise, the university changed to a different mascot named Swoop (Richards and Tanner, 2016).

Swoop is a red-tailed hawk that attends all athletic events to lead in cheers and get fans excited for the game (University of

Utah Athletic Department, 2019). The Utah Utes receive a mixture of reactions when it comes to their fan base. Some fans believe that it is time to get rid of the name and others believe that the team name Ute is acceptable because the Northern Ute Tribe has stated that this term is culturally acceptable (Richards & Tanner, 2016). The Ute fans that want to keep the name take pride in



Figure 3: Utah Utes logo

(Utah Utes Athletic Department, 2019)

representing the Native American tribe from Utah and know that they are extending the legacy of the Native American Tribe (Richards & Tanner, 2016). The University of Utah fans that believe that Ute should not be used state that this is using the name of a Native American tribe for something that does not represent the true values and honor the history of the tribe (Richards & Tanner, 2016). Utah currently has a mixture of positive and negative public perception about the school logo and mascot.

Professional Teams

The Cleveland Indians are a Major League Baseball team that plays in the American League.

The controversy for the organization was not with their name, but was with their old organization's logo. The old Cleveland Indians' logo was named Chief Wahoo (Paré, 2019). Chief Wahoo was a negative stereotypical picture of a Native American Chief. Chief Wahoo is pictured in Figure 4. The organization decided to part ways with Chief Wahoo before the start of the 2019 MLB season (Paré, 2019). Chief Wahoo was a key part of the organization's brand image. He was used on the team's uniforms, marketing tools, and merchandise. The organization received a lot of positive feedback after parting ways with Chief Wahoo from their fans. This showed that the organization's awareness of the controversy that Chief Wahoo was bringing to the organization. The fans have begun to show more loyalty and pride of being a Cleveland Indians fan. This is very important to the brand loyalty of the Cleveland Indians and will allow for the organization's public image to continue to improve. The Cleveland Indians will continue to evolve as an organization and the overall public perception of the organization will continue to be a positive public perception.

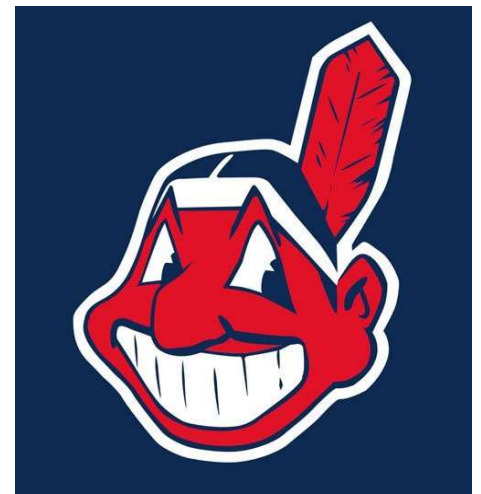


Figure 4: Chief Wahoo
(Paré, 2019)

Effects of Brand on Business

How a Negative Brand Image can affect a Business

Brand image is very important to the success of any organization that wants to make a profit. A company's brand image will determine how customers are going to view their brand. If a

company has a positive brand image, customers will want to associate with them and will continue to buy merchandise from them. If an organization has a negative brand image this will affect their ability to constant business with their customers. The biggest component that affects an organization's brand image is brand awareness. According to a 2019 article titled *How to Build Strong Brand Equity*, "Brand awareness is the concept that the more customers are aware of your brand, the more likely they are to become potential customers" (para. 3). Brand awareness and brand image of an organization are interrelated. When an organization's brand awareness is negative, they will often have a negative brand image.

When a company has a negative brand image, this will affect not only the perception of the organization but all of the other things that come with running a business. The customer's brand loyalty in a business is very important because this will affect if they will be a repeat customer for this business. However, the customer feedback to other people that they know is very important to potentially adding new customers. According to an article by Jana Barrett (2019), "60% of customers will refer friends and family to their favorite brands." (para. 10). This quote discusses the importance of brand loyalty, which will expand the number of customers that an organization is extend their target market. When a brand establishes a negative relationship, they will not be referred by their customers to their family members, which will decrease the target market that this company will be able to appeal to.

A new sensation that businesses have had to learn to deal with is social media and internet marketing. A lot of businesses have Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook accounts to promote sales and other things in order to attract customers to their store. Social media has become very important especially with younger customers in target markets for organizations. According to Jana Barrett (2019), "63% of new customers now expect brands to offer customer service on social media platforms" (para. 24). Social media is very important among the younger generations, which are very concerned with the number of followers that a business has on social media accounts. If a brand is not popular, they will not want to associate with them.

If a consumer does not want to wear a logo of a company because they believe it is a misrepresentation of a specific group of people, he or she will not buy any of the merchandise.

This will affect the brand loyalty of the fans of their organization. A decrease in fan loyalty will affect an organization's ability to sell merchandise. Fans want to show that association and feel a sense of prestige when they are wearing their favorite teams gear. According to an article by Robert Passikoff (2019), "Loyal fans are six times more likely to behave better toward the brand, are six times more likely to buy more of your products" (para. 5). This quote explains how brand loyalty is very important to the success of an organization. If there is no brand loyalty, the amount of revenue from merchandise sales for an organization is going to decrease. Fans and organizations want to a positive relationship, but if there is no loyalty this relationship will be affected.

Potential Obstacles with Redskins Brand

The Washington Redskins logo and name are one of the most controversial issues for an organization in all four professional sports leagues. This could potentially create obstacles for the organization that will expand beyond the playing field. The Redskins organization does not currently receive much positive attention from various media outlets that cover the team. This could affect the amount of money that an organization is able to bring in during a season. According to a scholarly journal by Jonathan Benson a Master's student studying the Redskins brand for his Thesis (2015), "Not only could the brand continue to lose sales and market shares, but its advertising will become less effective due to a decrease in consumer trust of the company" (para. 3). The loss of consumer trust that Benson talks about will be an issue that will affect not only the marketing strategies that the Redskins use, but will also affect the amount of merchandise that the team will sell.

When the Redskins fans begin to lose trust within the organization, this lack of trust could potentially cause their fans to stop buying season tickets, which will then decrease their revenue. The Washington Redskins have already begun to see a decrease in attendance at their games. According to an article by Jacob Camenker stated about Washington Redskins attendance (2019), "The team saw their attendance drop by 19 percent in 2018, good for worst in the NFL" (para. 1). This nineteen percent decrease in attendance could affect ticket sales revenue which could include season tickets and individual game ticket sales if the attendance issue for the Redskins is not addressed. When the attendance at games go down, this could also affect the

amount of revenue that they will be able to bring in from other sources such as merchandise sales, concession sales, and other game day revenue streams. If this drop-in attendance is not addressed in the future fans will not be likely to buy individual or season tickets in order to see the Washington Redskins play.

This loss of consumer trust could also potentially affect the valuation of the franchise for the owner. The Redskins have been falling in the rankings of team valuations due to an increase in social awareness of the origins of the name. They ranked third in the league in 2015 (“Forbes Announces 18th Annual NFL Team Valuations”, 2015) and seventh in 2019 (Ozanian, 2019). Something needs to be done to change the narrative and return the Redskins to being one of the most valuable teams in the league. This loss of consumer trust could potentially hurt the franchise’s reputation around the league and impact their potential sponsors. Potential sponsors for the Redskins will want to ensure that they are going to obtain a good return for their investment if they partner with them. When a sponsor offers the Redskins a sponsorship that want to make sure that the investment is worth the money that they are going to pay. For example, if the Redskins bring in 150,000 dollars from merchandise a good investor will not invest more than 50,000 dollars to help the Redskins with this merchandise deal (“Proving Your Value”, 2019). The sponsors want to make sure that they will get their investment back and receive some extra profit (“Proving Your Value”, 2019). If consumers are not buying merchandise the amount of merchandise sales will decrease, which will decrease the amount of money that the apparel companies willing to spend to become their official team sponsor (Benson, 2015). Jonathan Benson is a Master’s student studying the Redskins brand for his Thesis. The potential of losing sponsorship deals will hurt the amount of profit that will come into the organization. This potential decrease in profit will result in the Redskins organization losing money. The owners of an organization never want to lose money, but if the current state of the Redskins brand image is not changed this is a high probability.

Public Relations Tactics Analysis

The major opportunity we have identified and plan to execute upon is the improvement of the Redskins public relations. When franchises’ such as the Redskins are engaged with the general

public in a positive manner, they are more likely to maintain their powerful brand and withstand the occasional negative attitudes (Kim, Kwak, and Kim, 2010)

Connecting to Fans of all Ages

One of the key pieces in improving the Redskins public relations is to connect to fans of all ages. Demographics plays a huge role in marketing any product or brand and that is no different for the Redskins franchise. The Redskins have focused most of their marketing efforts for years on maintaining the already loyal fanbase that they have (Irwin, 2019). Much of the Redskins fanbase is comprised of older fans who are still living in the glory days of former players such as John Riggins and Joe Theismann. The lack of diversity among the majority of their fanbase, according to Bill Horgan (2019), has hindered the Redskins public relations tactics because they have not felt the need to change the narrative and improve public relations among all demographics.

One of the main demographic sectors that we see the Redskins could improve their public relations with would be through youth marketing. There is a growing trend among youth who have ushered in a new wave of expectations for brands, as seen in Figure 5, who wish to maintain their equity. The younger generations are focused on the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR has been proven to be critical for brands; Businesses that do not partake in CSR are

putting their brand and reputation at imminent risk. “Having a bad reputation socially and environmentally can create serious negative effects on the overall profitability and success of a company, as nowadays consumers want to spend their money on



Figure 5: Statistics about Millennials desire for Corporate Social Responsibility (“Corporate Social Responsibility Matters”, 2016)

products and services that they believe in, and engage with companies that follow ethical practices that meet their own beliefs” (“Why Corporate Social”, 2019). Lisa Curtis (2018) found that corporations that chose to not participate in CSR experienced a loss of business due to consumers not viewing the product as positively, compared to a corporation who does participate in CSR. The main aspect of the Redskins public relations towards youth is deflecting their attention to the positive initiatives that they participate in. Eventually, this will lessen the focus on the Redskins racially offensive brand.

Another key aspect of improving public relations between demographics is the ability to change the attitude of the older generations. The task of changing the narrative of the Redskins brand for older generations is much more difficult than it is for youth outreach. The Baby Boomer generation is known to be loyal to brands that exhibit a level of prestige, as found in an academic study by Rick Ferguson and Bill Brohaugh in 2010. Unfortunately, the Redskins have struggled in recent years to maintain their brand prestige, causing Baby Boomers to be less likely to respond positively towards their brand (Olenski, 2016). Improving brand perception to the Baby Boomers will provide financial benefits such as increased ticket and merchandise revenue. Baby Boomers are the generation nearing retirement who are often at the top of their careers; their salaries are at the peak as well (Ferguson and Brohaugh, 2010). Therefore, they have the most disposable income and have the most control over the U.S. economy of any generation (Ferguson and Brohaugh, 2010). This puts the Redskins in a great opportunity to capitalize on Baby Boomers and improve brand perception with this generation.

Increasing Community Outreach

Community outreach also plays a pivotal role in improving public relations. Currently, the Washington Redskins participate in various community outreach events. For example, the Redskins have previously hosted events targeted at building football leaders on and off the field. The Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation (WRCF) hosted a high school football forum that allowed younger athletes to learn from the Redskins players past experiences in life (Paige, 2019). Various players are



Figure 6: Redskins players speaking at a high school football forum (Paige, 2019)

seated in Figure 6, talking to youth at the WRCF event. An event such as this is a great way to improve public relations with the community (McQuaker, 2017). However, we beg the question of how much impact did this event have on breaking down the negative perception of the Redskins brand? In 2019, Sayer Paige, a contributing writer for the Redskins, wrote that the breakout session during this forum focused on financial literacy for youth athletes and was focused on entrepreneurship. We recognize that the Redskins can improve their community outreach and improve the positivity surrounding their brand by hosting events that directly educate individuals on the commitment of the franchise to social matters.

The best way to break down social barriers and stereotypes of the Redskins organization would be to allow the general public to interact personally with people inside the franchise (Thomas, Kaiser, Svabek, 2017). Thomas, Kaiser, and Svabek also discovered in 2017 that by sitting at a table and engaging with humans truly does help alleviate stereotypes. By meeting other humans, one can quickly find out that the Redskins are not operated by a bunch of ignorant racists. Rather, the people behind the Redskins brand are humans just like the rest of us, who deeply care about social equality.

Community outreach, in regards to public relations, requires a commitment from the Washington Redskins to realize that they cannot please every single person. When hosting various community outreach events, the Redskins could use the events to target certain people. In turn, changing the brand perception.

Shifting Fan Opinions

Binding community outreach and connecting with fans of various demographics, the ultimate purpose is to ignite a shift in fan opinions. We see the Redskins as a noteworthy brand with a strong reputation to uphold. We also see the opportunity to improve brand perception through shifting opinions.

The team's relationship with Native Americans is strained, thus causing many to question the franchise's integrity (White, 2014). The issue that fans have with the integrity of the team is a fixable issue that when addressed can turn a negative into a positive. By educating the public, we can rebuild trust and integrity. The reflection of this upon the Redskins brand will prove to be rewarding and will go a long way in shifting fans opinions.

Fan opinion is highly rooted in fan's tribal sense of community. Fanbases, including the Redskins, are like ancient tribes. They are often celebrating unique traditions and cultural aspects of the fan experience. For instance, Redskins fans can be seen wearing headdresses at games and singing the song, "Hail to the Redskins". More importantly, with the invention of the internet, these tribes of fans have the ability to communicate with Redskins fans around the world via social media and online messaging boards. The Redskins could seriously improve this sense of community among their fans which would shift their opinions of the team. Richard King (2015) discovered that, the franchise, because of its racially charged imagery, has struggled at managing the sense of community that most other sports franchises create. Much of the fanbase is divided on the teams branding and we see the opportunity to bind them together.

Another opportunity to shift fan opinions with the Redskins brand platform is through sustainability and environmental conservation. The Redskins have taken efforts to become more

environmentally sound and sustainable by adding massive solar panels to the outside of FedEx field (Casey, 2011). With the help of NRG energy, the Redskins have recognized the need for sustainability within the confines of their stadium. Unfortunately, the Redskins have not taken many steps since the solar panels have been installed. One key aspect that the Redskins could improve upon is in LED lighting. By replacing existing lights with LED lights, it allows for better conservation of energy and is also more cost effective (“LED Lighting”). Through taking greater initiatives to improve the environmental impact of FedEx field, the Redskins can help to shift the opinions of their fans and become known and well-respected for their initiatives. In turn, the Redskins brand will be viewed positively for taking these progressive initiatives to improve environmental conservation in their stadium.

Overall, the Washington Redskins have a huge opportunity ahead of them to change their brand narrative and usher in a new era of positivity surrounding the Redskins brand.

Recommendations to Improve Brand Perception

Educate the Public of Native American History

The fundamental difference between academic Native American history and Native American history from the native perspective is the medium through which the history is interpreted. Many native cultures, transmitting and understanding history has been through the oral tradition, as shown in Figure 7. For academic historians, the primary way of sharing and understanding history is through the written narrative. For many Native American people, whose voices and perspectives are rarely included in written histories, those histories are considered just another form of oppression and continued colonization (Wilson, 2000). This translates back to the Native



Figure 7: Education of American Indian Resources in Action (Yerdon, 2018)

American tribes and their views on Americans and how people perceive their culture and this has a lot to do with the Redskins appropriating the NA/AI culture.

This is a major issue that the Redskins need to address to their audience and eventually implement this shift in perception of history. The Washington Redskins and the Cleveland Indians are professional sports organizations that have been a major target of racial discrimination and bigotry. Many Americans are not educated on Native American history and it has been a major issue over the past few centuries. Being educated about Native American tribes' culture allows for accurate understanding of past history and it also avoids any cultural appropriation of the Native American tribes. When dealing with sports, this is especially important because it allows these teams and their fans to be informed and educated about the Native American tribes. The Redskins fans can improve their education of Native American/American Indian (NA/AI) history by getting involved directly with these tribes through community outreach events. Some examples of this would be inviting the NA/AI community out to the ballfield and letting them interact with the players and the local Washington D.C. community during the NFL season, at least twice a month to get to know one another and create a sense of unity between the groups. This will allow for the groups to learn more about one another and will allow for them to respectfully understand each other's culture. Another example of this would be inviting the Redskins players to local schools in the area and educating them on NA/AI history and why it is especially important to the Redskins organization. Being educated allows the professional sports organizations & the surrounding community to be properly and respectfully represented through sports. Furthering the education can eventually lead to positive interactions between the groups and allows for great community engagement opportunities amongst the teams, the fans and the Native American tribes.

Native American Values and Traditions

Another topic that should be implemented and discussed regularly, is the American Indian belief systems and their traditional practices. "Historically, American Indians developed societies with well-defined roles, responsibilities, government and economic systems, recreational and leisure styles, religious rites and ceremonies, social behavior in which group involvement, support and consensus played major roles. American Indian values lean toward a cosmic identity, a harmony

of the individual with the tribe, the tribe with the land, and the land with the spirit of the universe, as seen in Figure 8. Central to this quest for harmony is a sense of constancy – the timelessness and predictability of nature as the foundation of existence. This cycle symbolizes eternity- one reality, and it transcends everything in its absoluteness, giving respect to everything (Herring, 1989). American Indian culture emphasizes harmony with nature, endurance of suffering, respect and non-interference toward others, a strong belief that man is inherently good and should be respected for his decisions” (Vargas, 2019).

The Redskins implementing all of these values and traditional practices are especially important when representing any Native American tribe.



Figure 8: Native American Women Holding Hands in Solidarity. (“Traditions and Culture,” 2018).

Misrepresenting Native Americans and their tribes have been an issue in professional sports.

The Washington Redskins and the Cleveland Indians are prime examples of this. Both teams have used Native American tribes for their image and likeness incorrectly, and have faced a lot of repercussions for doing so.

Many American Indians have spoken up and expressed how they feel as though they are being disrespected. To many, this is a culture appropriation issue and has led to the decrease in fan attendance and an overall decrease in revenue. The Redskins solution should be to incorporate the values and traditions of the tribes into these professional sport organizations to avoid cultural appropriation and to bring the Native American identity into the professional sports world. We propose that the Redskins do this by inviting the local Washington D.C. tribes to FedEx field to get to know one another. This will allow for the NA/AI tribes to teach the players more about their cultural values and traditions that they could implement into their organization. Being educated on the Native American tribes and their culture and values allows for a better

understanding and respect for culture on both ends. This will create more unity and will allow the fans and the target audiences to see the connection between the two groups and will increase fan base, revenue and the overall image of the franchise.

How to Balance Team Identification and Native Culture

Finding the balance between team identification and native culture can be a challenge, especially in sports. As stated before, being educated on the Native American culture and values along with the history of the tribes themselves allows for a better balance of team identity and native culture on both ends. Many times, trying to find the team identity while balancing culture has been a major issue that has led to cultural appropriation and has made the perception of the team seemingly racist. A statement made by the American Psychological Association called for the “immediate retirement of all American Indian mascots, symbols, images, and personalities by schools, colleges, universities, athletic teams, and organizations” nearly a decade ago. Similarly, the American Counseling Association passed a resolution in 2011 calling on their members to advocate for the elimination of these stereotypes where they are employed, and the American Sociological Association called for the elimination of AI/AN names, mascots, and logos in 2007” (Stegman, 2014). The need to eliminate these misrepresentations and stereotypes is critical to the future success of the Redskins. Negative American Indian branding provides a misrepresentation of American Indian people that masks the very real and continuing hardships that these communities endure today. These issues can be solved through a stringent education of the cultural values of the tribes. We recommend that the Redskins implement our solutions to improve brand perception. They can do this by changing the narrative that has formed surrounding the tribes through the brand.

Native American Tribes in the Washington D.C. Area

Specifically, the Washington Redskins have struggled recently because of their poor brand perception. Getting involved with the local Native American community in the Washington D.C. area will allow the two groups to be involved with each other and this can lead to many community engagement opportunities. Some of these Native American tribes in the Washington D.C. area are as follows: Piscataway Conoy Tribe (Figure 9), Piscataway Conoy Creations,

Pamunkey Indian Tribe, Nentego (Nanichoke), The Confederation of Sovereign, Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes and the Mattaponi tribe.



Figure 9: Piscataway Conoy Tribe Logo and Mantra.
("Welcome to the Piscataway Conoy Tribe Website," 2017).

Overall, if the Washington Redskins can improve their name, image and likeness then they will have a positive perception of their organization. Becoming educated on the Native American history and their values and beliefs are a huge part of taking strides to change the culture of the franchise and how society perceives them. This will result in a multitude of benefits that boost the Redskins overall organization.

Engage in Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not only one of the hottest topics of conversation in the



business world today, but it is also a way for organizations to improve their public relations through a myriad of potential actions. Typically defined by four main categories (i.e., environmental responsibilities, human rights responsibilities, philanthropic responsibilities, and economic responsibilities) (Corporate Social Responsibility - types and business benefits) the Redskins have many options, as shown in Figure 10, from which to choose from when deciding how they are going to expand their CSR program going forward. When adjusted for ways that are specifically applicable to the Redskins, the potential for involvement in CSR increases substantially, and it comes down to deciding which opportunities are the most beneficial. Outlined below are three of the most

Figure 10: Corporate Social Responsibility Pillars
(IFA Paris, 2018)

impactful ways the Washington Redskins can involve themselves in corporate social responsibility, and the actions recommended they take.

Team Philanthropy

Some individuals are leaders and some are followers, and whether they like it or not players and staff of the Washington Redskins are seen as community leaders in the eyes of D.C. residents. Having them participate in acts of corporate social responsibility will not only provide opportunities for free positive press, but will also let the public know exactly what morals the Redskins stand for.

One act of CSR the Redskins' front staff can do is encourage their players to post on social media platforms pictures, captions, and tweets that educate their followers of Native American history and current events. These can be reminders about Native American Heritage month, supporting local Native American groups, or simple "did you know" facts about Washington D.C.-based American Indian tribes. Though the team does not have direct control over their players' social media accounts, they should be more than willing to post for the cause. Players are their own brands, similar to the teams, and by reminding their players how well received postings like these are by the public, the Redskins' front office should have no trouble getting players to participate in this outreach strategy. And, because professional athletes' have such large followings, as exemplified by Figures 11 and 12, their posts will be spreading information to a large and varying audience, making it a very efficient way of educating the public.



Figure 11: Dwayne Haskins, Jr. Instagram Following (Haskins, 2019)



Figure 12: Adrian Peterson's Instagram Following (Peterson, 2019)

Along with the posts on social media, another way to utilize players' platforms and followings is to have them be in videos focused on educating the public on Native American history, culture, and traditions. These videos can be played at the stadium before and during games, and can be posted to the Redskins' website. Due to the sheer number of people that come to the stadium for games, videos such as these get an extraordinary amount of attention. Including popular players will make them engaging to fans, and intertwining American Indian history within the videos will make them educational, allowing them to serve as an additional act of corporate social responsibility for Washington.

Another way to connect Redskins' players, who are arguably the most recognizable faces of the organizations, to the public in ways that are identifiably charitable, is to have them help build a permanent location for the American Indian Society of Washington D.C. Currently the Society does not have a safe space to call their own, and by working with them to create one, the Redskins would be putting on an incredible display of respect for their mission of "community support, cultural education, [and] common ground" (American Indian Society of Washington D.C.). Through collaboration with the AIS, the goal is to have a site built within the next 5-7 years, in or near Alexandria, VA, as that is where meetings currently take place (American Indian Society of Washington D.C.). Publicly working with the American Indian Society is such a visible display of support for Native Americans and all they represent. There are also countless events held to honor Native Americans in Washington D.C. annually, including the Center for Native American Youth's Champions for Change series (The Aspen Institute, 2017), the Reservation Economic Summit (Contify, 2014), and the National Museum of American Indian Ceremony. Building a Washington D.C. Center for them to gather in would be frequently used and much appreciated. Additionally, having players help with the center's construction in whatever way they can will put faces to the new building and strengthen the connection between the center and the Redskins.

Community Engagement Involving Fans

Fans are the heart and soul of any professional sports organization, and involving them in community relations events is an incredible way to connect with them, and to have a lot of good be done in a short period of time. Fans of all ages love to engage with their team, and providing

them an opportunity to do so while also helping others has a variety of positive outcomes for all involved. Not only do fans get the enjoyment of interacting with the Redskins, but the team gets to engage in corporate social responsibility while also assisting the Native American community in Washington D.C.

Facilitating fan participation in charitable efforts is another way the Redskins should be participating in corporate social responsibility. The United States Government provides Native Americans with a variety of financial, cultural, and housing assistance (USA.gov, 2019), but there are many resources that Native Americans in the local area are still desperate for, and that the Redskins' have the means to expedite gathering. Those of American Indian heritage are one of the most underserved communities in the country, and with "the lowest high school graduation rates of any demographic in the country" (MENA Report, 2016), something they would benefit greatly from is school supplies. Being adequately prepared for school lessens the barriers to attendance, so this is a way for the Redskins to better the lives of Native American youth. The Redskins' involvement is setting up collection bins outside the stadium and promoting the drive on social media and on the website. Allowing fans to be a part of this charity work not only strengthens fan identification, but it also allows Washington to do a lot of good relatively easily. These supplies will be donated to the American Indian Society of Washington D.C. who can distribute them as they see fit. The fans will know they are doing something good, American Indian youth will have an improved school experience, and the Redskins will be participating in an act of corporate social responsibility by fostering this charitable work.

Environmental Conservation Efforts

The Washington Redskins play at FedEx Field, which is already recognized as one of the most environmentally-friendly stadiums in the National Football League. In 2012, FedEx Field added over 8,000 solar panels to the design (Team green, 2014), putting it ahead of the curve in terms of stadium sustainability. With that said, there is still room for the Redskins to make changes that will lessen their environmental impact both by making the stadium greener, and by encouraging fans to do the same in their personal lives. Being known as an environmentally friendly team is something everyone will be excited to talk about, and will become part of the Redskins' legacy.

Stadiums all over the country are getting greener, and by combining some of the most successful environmental initiatives from around the United States, the result will be that Washington has one of the most ecofriendly stadiums globally. There are so many ways stadiums can reduce their impact on the environment; the following is how the Redskins can improve most dramatically. First, FedEx Field should install LED lights in all concourses, scoreboards, and field lighting structures. Not only are LED lightbulbs superior in quality - they last longer and are more durable than their counterparts - LEDs are also more energy-efficient. This makes them both better for the environment, but also less expensive because they require less energy and have to be replaced less frequently (“LED lighting”). This switch will save energy and money, and is something that should be done without a second thought.

FedEx Field also has room to improve in terms of how waste is handled, and there are two main realistic ways the Redskins waste management plan can be adjusted. First, a greater effort needs to be made towards converting to compostable and recyclable cups, plates, and utensils. With millions of fans coming to the stadium each season, the trash piles up fast. By swapping what is traditionally trash for something that can be reused or recycled, the environmental impact of concessions will be dramatically reduced. This is another time where the Redskins do not have to reinvent the wheel, they simply have to take initiatives that have worked for others and implement them in their own stadium. A second way the Redskins can improve their waste management is by placing recycling bins and compost bins alongside the trashcans throughout the stadium. Appendix A provides a guide for how to properly sort waste. This minor tweak has major impacts because it allows guests to participate in environmental efforts, without much changing for stadium staff. Sorting trash has the potential to reduce thousands of tons of waste from going to landfills, and will be an integral part of the Redskins conservations efforts. Being more environmentally conscious will positively impact both the planet and the finances of the Washington Redskins.

When it comes to promoting fans’ sustainability outside of the stadium, the platform for education and encouragement already exists; fans of all ages look to professional sports teams, in this case, the Redskins, to model appropriate behavior, and often follow what they see. By leading by example, the Redskins will be demonstrating to fans that being environmentally

conscious is simple and beneficial in more ways than one. Daniel G. Kelly II, Ph.D. and Faculty Director for the Sports Industry Management master's program at Georgetown University has spoken about the impact that sports have on society (Karr, 2016), and this could not be truer when it comes to environmental conservation. When the Redskins demonstrate how easy it is to switch traditional light bulbs for LED ones, sort waste, and avoid littering, fans will take what they learned at the stadium home with them. This exponentially increases the positive effect that the Redskins' changes have on the environment because not only are the changes happening in the stadium during the eight regular-season home games per year, they are now happening in the homes of millions of fans on a daily basis.

Incorporate Similar Organizations' Initiatives

According to the National Congress of American Indians, there are nearly 1,000 sports organizations that reference Native Americans in either their name or logo. Out of that number, no team's brand is more frequently discussed than the Washington Redskins. These other groups escape controversy not because of differing foundational aspects of team branding, they too have Native American inspired logos and team names, but because their work with the tribes they represent and participation in community education and involvement provides them a basis for their branding in ways the Washington Redskins have not established yet. Some of these groups, such as the University of Utah Utes and the Chicago Blackhawks and have worked in recent years to participate in programs that work to honor the tribes they are named after. These initiatives have received a lot of positive feedback and have been proven successful, and if the Redskins were to implement them in similar ways, it would go a long way in improving public perception of the brand.

These organizations do not do anything that is financially straining or contrary to their brand, rather it is adjustments to their community outreach plans and minor shifts in charitable spending that compose an overwhelming majority of these initiatives. The most impactful portion of what these other organizations do is their commitment to respectfully representing the Indian Tribes their brand is based on. Washington D.C. has a rich history of Native American tribes, giving the Redskins many incorporable options of cultural aspects to choose from. By applying some of what these other sport organizations do to the Washington Redskins' brand management plan,

the Redskins will improve their relationship with both the Native American tribe members they represent and the fans who are committed to honoring the legacy of their team.

University of Utah Utes

One of the most widely-accepted Native American brands in college sports is the University of Utah Utes, who represent the 2,970 members of the Ute Indian Tribe of Northwestern Utah (Ute Indian Tribe, 2019). After working to inform tribal leaders of the University's intentions regarding using the Ute image and name, and tribal leaders sharing their culture with the University, the two parties were able to come together in April of 2014 (Ute Indian Tribe and University of Utah renew agreement) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, with goals of "build[ing] genuine respect and understanding of the [Ute] Tribe's history, culture, and contributions to the state (past, current, and future)" (Memorandum of understanding). There are many actions listed throughout the Memorandum that the Redskins could implement in their own way as they expand their community outreach program.

The Redskins approach towards Native Americans should be to honor and collaborate with them, and this dedication towards improving community relations can be exemplified by working with nearby tribes. This allows the public to recognize that both the sport entity and the tribes are working towards the same goals of respect, education, and respectful representation, just as it does for the Utes. Right now, the Redskins have stated on their website that they are "continu[ing] to develop relationships" with nearby tribes and tribal leaders ("Washington Redskins to Celebrate", 2018), and by following portions of Utah's MOU, these relationships will only be improved.

The University of Utah's education campaign is another area that the Redskins can take inspiration from. It is known that the Redskins are dedicated to disseminating information about Native American history and educating the public on tribal traditions, however the implementation of that statement could be improved, specifically by doing what the Utes do, as outlined in their Memorandum of Understanding. The Redskins should dedicate time towards gathering accurate and comprehensive information about all of the Native American tribes that have origins in Washington D.C., get it approved by tribal leaders to ensure accurate

representation, and then disseminate that information to fans and residents of the D.C. area. Activation of this data sharing can take many forms: raising awareness of Native American Heritage Month, setting standards for fan behavior in the stadium, and including the information on the Redskins' website. These actions will have meaningful impacts, especially when done concurrently.

The final step in applying what has successfully worked for the Utah Utes to the Washington Redskins future plans is working more closely with tribal leaders. One way to do this is to have Native American tribe members work with the Redskins' marketing team to ensure that the organization is properly representing the history of Indian Americans. Utah does this by working with the Utah Tribal Leaders Council to appoint an advisor to the President of Native American Affairs and two advisors to the American Indian Resource Center (Memorandum of understanding). Due to the differences in institutional organization structure (the University is an institute of higher education and the Washington Redskins are a for-profit professional sports team), the same foundational ideas of inclusion of Native Americans can be transferred from one to the other. Additionally, the Redskins have an opportunity to take advantage of the timing of Native American Heritage Month - it is November, right in the middle of football season - and should dedicate one home game annually to celebrating the history and tradition of Native Americans. This can include specially designed jerseys, Native American tribe members planning and performing before the game and at halftime, and tribal leaders serving as special guests at the game. Not only will this provide an opportunity to promote a unique game experience for fans, but it also strengthens the relationship between the team and tribes.

The University of Utah has already proved what it looks like to successfully work conjointly with a Native American tribe to ensure traditions are being respectfully upheld, and it would be in the Redskins best interest to do the same.

Chicago Blackhawks

Another Native-American based brand is the Chicago Blackhawks. A member of the National Hockey League, the Blackhawks are structurally similar to the Washington Redskins in that they are both professional American sports teams located in heavily populated metropolitan areas of

the country. And, similar to the Redskins, the Blackhawks have also faced recent controversy regarding their team name and logo, however their responses have been more robust, and they have used methods that the Redskins could implement as well.

Redskins leadership should work more closely with Native American Tribe leaders, in the same way the Blackhawks have been working with American Indian communities in Illinois to form genuine bonds with tribe members. The Redskins also have the opportunity to mimic some of the Blackhawks actions, along with their relationship-building tactics, including restoring historic statues and collaborating with nearby tribes to see what actions would most benefit them, to prove their continued dedication to building lasting connections to tribe members. From helping the Executive Counsel for the American Indian Center in Chicago restore “The Eternal Indian” statue honoring Black Hawk, a Sauk warrior and tribe leader; to rebuilding portions of the Center; to building a sports complex (“Chicago Blackhawks developing real connections”, 2011), the Blackhawks are acting in tangible ways that improve the lives of Native Americans and honor their past. Actions like these are the reason the Blackhawks brand is supported by the Chicago-based American Indian Center (Inskeep, 2015), and why both parties are motivated to continue working together in the future. The Redskins also have the opportunity to participate in conjoined efforts such as these, and doing so would improve public and personal relations.

Professional sports in America are already seen as such a public platform, with the owners being one of the most recognizable and followed faces of the organization, so their actions are incredibly important to building a team’s brand. If Dan Snyder were to go out into the community and engage with Native Americans in ways similar to what John McDonough has done, it would go a long way towards improving Redskins-Native American relations. With Washington D.C. being such a hotbed for American Indian cultural history, there are so many options for ways that Snyder could get involved. Blackhawks President, John McDonough, has taken a proactive approach towards ensuring that Native Americans are appropriately represented by the team. McDonough and his wife have attended rituals performed by American Indians at the Chicago Center, Powwows, and consciously and continuously make an effort to educate themselves, and their fans, on the origins of the team’s name and logo (Neveau, 2013). He has publicly stated that he is committed to being respectful of traditions through accurate

portrayal of heritage and creating a platform from which tribes can share their viewpoints (Powers, 2017). Actions like these are replicable, and Dan Snyder has many opportunities to do so.

The idea of working with the Native American tribes a sport organization represents is not a new one, however the Blackhawks have done it in a way that could be easily replicated by the Washington Redskins. From bringing out tribe members or those whose heritage is of a Native American tribe with locational ties to the Washington D.C. area to sing at halftime, to having players avoid stepping on the mascot out of respect for what it represents, to Dan Snyder participating in owner-lead community outreach in the same way that McDonough has for the Blackhawks, there are many small but impactful things that the Redskins can do as an organization. Washington does not even have to go looking for what to do themselves, the plans have already been laid out by the Blackhawks, the Redskins just have to take action.

Benefits of Solution Implementation

Improved Public Perception

The biggest motivator behind implementing all of the aforementioned recommended actions is knowing that doing so will improve public perception of the Redskins. By utilizing their platform as a professional sports team to educate the public on Native American history and tradition, participating in more acts of corporate social responsibility, and strengthening relationships with Native American tribes located in the Washington D.C. area, the Washington Redskins will quickly become even more loved in the eyes of their fans than they already are. This plan has numerous benefits; not only are these recommendations relatively inexpensive, but they allow the Redskins to expand and improve in a multitude of directions without overextending their resources or personnel. Right now, the Redskins are on the cusp of defining what their team looks like to the next generation of fans, and by putting the recommendations into action, the team will see nothing but success.

Emotional Response Charitable Organizations

The Redskins are already an incredibly charitable organization, having put over \$23 million into the community through the Redskins Charitable Foundations since Dan and Tanya Snyder

became team owners back in 2000 (The Washington Redskins Charitable Foundation Mission Statement, 2019). That being said, there are still untapped benefits that lie in increasing charity work related to Native Americans, the inspiration behind the Washington Redskins' team brand.

Giving back makes people feel good, and supporting a team with a reputation for being actively involved in the community allows people to have those good feelings, without having to do any of the work themselves. And because Native American communities are known for being an underserved population in America, assisting them and bringing their issues to light only increases the positive emotional association people have with the Redskins.

Diversifying and increasing charity work, specifically by implementing the solutions explained above, will humanize the Redskins and allow people to connect with the team even more than they already do. So much of running a professional sports team is about fan engagement, and by giving fans something to connect to beyond the sport strengthens their identity as a Redskins fan. Facilitating the feeling that fans are part of something bigger than themselves leads to fans being more invested in the team both emotionally and financially. People are drawn to charitable organizations so not only does increasing charity work please customers, it is also the smart business decision.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Supporting brands that are bigger than their business is becoming increasingly important in the eyes of consumers, and participating in acts of corporate social responsibility, the Redskins are demonstrating to fans that they are dedicated to being more than just a football team. As Lisa Curtis explains in her 2018 article, corporations that are more socially responsible are not only more attractive in the eyes of consumers, but doing so is also just "smart business".

One of the main reasons being socially responsible is so important is because those who engage with products want transparency (Curtis, 2018) - they want to know what the company they are spending money on

stands for. In this case, fans want proof of the Redskins' team standards. As people get

more knowledgeable about the organizations they interact with financially, they need more tangible reassurance that their money is doing good, both on and off the field. And, as shown in Figure 13, people care about the emotional connection they have to brands more than the logical marketing campaigns of those organizations. Fans, who are the customers in the Redskins' situation, are likely getting curious to learn more about what the Redskins are doing to honor those who provided the inspiration for the name and logo that they so proudly wear when supporting their team. Participating in socially responsible acts in the community is incredibly beneficial to the Redskins organization because it allows them to show fans what they stand for, rather than just saying it. Having a fan base that appreciates Washington working with Native American groups is essential to retaining business, and the best way to do that is by being a socially responsible corporation.

Another benefit to participating in acts of corporate social responsibility is that it generates free positive press. (Curtis, 2018). The better one does, the more attention they receive. Considering sport entities rely so heavily on emotional factors to connect with and draw in fans, it is essential

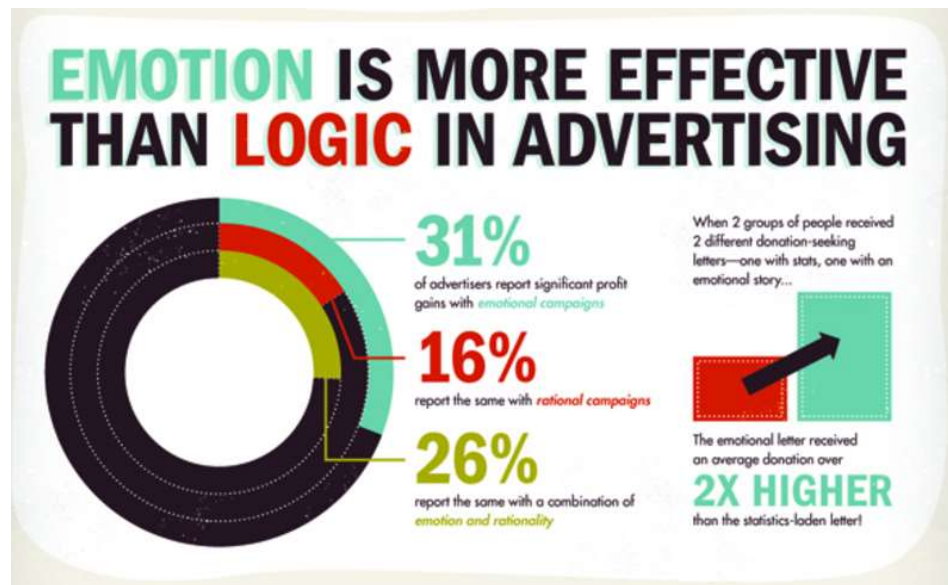


Figure 13: Business Benefit of Charity: Emotion is More Powerful than Logic (Vu, 2018)

that people associate the Redskins with positive qualities only. Charitable acts do just this by attracting attention in a good way.

The financial success of a professional sports team is partially based on the experience fans when in the stadium. It has been shown that one of the biggest motivators for employees to put in full effort when doing their jobs is the connection, they feel to the organization they work for; employees are driven by purpose, (Curtis, 2018), which comes from genuinely believing in their employer. The more socially responsible the Redskins are, the more employees will be proud to work for the team, and the better they will be at their jobs. Not only is it beneficial to have happy employees because it makes the lives of front office staff easier, but it also improves fan experience. Making a fan's time at FedEx Field as enjoyable as possible is incredibly beneficial because it is so profitable due to its power to increase fan loyalty, promote repeat attendance at games, and drive up concession and apparel sales on game day.

Increase Business

Through our various initiatives including creating a Memorandum of Understanding, the Washington Redskins will be able to see an increase in their bottom line. The overarching way that the Redskins will see an increase in their bottom line by implementing our various solutions is through building brand equity and value. When your consumer, in this case, our fanbase views you as a credible organization because of your engagement with the community that will be the first step to building brand equity (Sonnevald, 2013). Sonnevald (2013) also found that part of keeping a fanbase engaged requires the NFL franchise to show the incentive that they are improving. Most importantly, they are showing an effort to improve their brand by implementing incentives such as: building a center for Native Americans in the D.C. metro area and setting up donation drive bins to gather school supplies to donate to the American Indian Society of Washington D.C. These initiatives, ultimately, are the main driving factors behind improving brand perception and therefore, brand equity. Two main benefits of increasing the bottom line through building brand equity is the connection to younger generations and the opportunity to retain and gain new sponsorship opportunities.

Connection to Younger Generations

The future of the NFL market is the youth of America. Through implementation of our solutions, the Redskins can experience the following three benefits by connecting to younger generations: investing in future sales, low-cost advertisement through social media, and the ability to reach parental market through children's influence (McQuerrey, n.d.).

The NFL has proven that marketing to youth is critical for them to stay afloat, as shown in a study by Wilking, Golin, and Feick in 2015. The NFL has recently implemented initiatives focused on connecting with younger fans and capturing their attention before they become enamored with other direct competitors. One of these initiatives is their NFL Rush Fantasy initiative. The NFL has tried to capitalize on the spread of fantasy football in the digital age by marketing fantasy football to youth who are heavily involved in the spread of technology in sports. They have succeeded in doing so, as evident youth being more and more involved in fantasy every year as seen in Figure 14 to the right. Ultimately, what the NFL has done is to capture this young audience in hopes of them being consumers for the rest of their lives. The Redskins will experience the same benefits of having life-long consumers by connecting with younger generations. Ultimately, this shows the Redskins that investing marketing efforts towards youth can help garner that lifelong connection with fans that will provide a future consumer base as explained by Lisa McQuerrey (n.d.).

Also, the Redskins will be able to advertise through social media in a cost-effective manner. When young Redskins fans have a presence on social media, they are likely to spread their positive opinions



Figure 14: Poster targeting youth with the NFLRush program (Wilking, Golin, and Feick, 2015)

of their team, resulting in free-advertisement for the Redskins brand. This is common for youth to have this type of presence on social media platforms (McQuerrey, n.d.).

In addition, connecting to younger generations provides a direct path for the franchise to the parental market (McQuerrey, n.d.). Youth have the ability to pressure their parents into spending money on them. When youth are engaged with the Redskins brand, they can increase the brand equity of the Redskins by expanding the Redskins consumer base through interaction with their parents.

The Washington Redskins will gain these benefits by implementing our initiatives focused on improving brand perception among young kids through donation bins. Donation bins allow for youth to interact in a socially responsible manner with the Redskins franchise. Youth are much more likely to interact with an organization that is reputable and has shown a commitment to improving their community involvement (Nair, 2015), further leading to the various benefits of improving the Redskins brand and business.

Opportunity for Sponsorships

The Redskins will have the critical ability to recapture and also gain new sponsors and sponsorship deals, by implementing our initiatives. This is vital to the Redskins considering your recent past of franchise to corporation interaction. Corporations have proven that they will not partner with racially offensive brands who don't show any initiative to change the brand narrative. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation proved this point when they agreed to exclude the Redskins and the Chiefs from their annual positive community impact award on the premise that their brands were racially offensive, as reported by Anne Kniggendorf in 2018.

Our initiatives allow you to recapture old sponsors and regain new ones by showing our positive brand improvement strategy. Brand image and improvement is a key element that sponsors consider when entering a mutual agreement with a corporation, as found in the research of Reinhard Grohs (2016). The corporations will see the evidence of brand improvement, especially the education of the general public on the Redskins community involvement in increasing awareness of Native American History Month. By educating others on Native American culture

and its importance to the very mold of our society, everyone will see the progress that your franchise has made and will genuinely be willing to work with you. A key aspect of this is because of the Redskins fanbase. Once the fanbase is united because of the improved brand, that helps a great deal in attracting sponsors.

Another key aspect of this benefit for the Redskins is the ability to be creative with their sponsorship activation. Because many NFL teams already have an established brand and sponsor base, many of them have been activating the sponsors in the same way for years. With the revamped Redskins brand focused on social responsibility, there will be unique opportunities for young sport administrators to activate the new partnerships. By understanding that fans want transparency among the Redskins, as do their sponsors, the Redskins front office staff will be able to guarantee their sponsors a positive activation strategy because of their implementation of our recommendations. Overall, our initiatives and increased engagement with Native American organizations will allow for new sponsorship opportunities and activations which will increase revenue for the Redskins through sponsorship deals.

Concluding Comments

The Washington Redskins have an opportunity to change the narrative of their brand. The Washington Redskins have three opportunities that they can capitalize on in order to change this narrative. These opportunities are the public perception of their current brand, the effect that their brand has on their overall business, and their tactics regarding public relations. These opportunities for the Washington Redskins to improve their brand is significant.

The current state of the Washington Redskins brand is currently viewed in a negative perception. The negative public perception is a result of the organization name and logo. The Washington Redskins need to take advantage of this opportunity in order to remain a historical franchise within the National Football League. The Washington Redskins franchise is one of the oldest franchises, is very well-known, and is a valuable franchise in the NFL. The negative perception that the Redskins receive is from their own logo, which puts Native Americans in a negative light, and does not depict what they truly represent. Since Native Americans have a negative public perception of the Washington Redskins, this causes the general public to have a similar perception towards the Redskins brand. This controversy has led to numerous discussions about other Native American named organizations within the sport community.

There are many other Native American named organizations within professional and collegiate sports. The three teams most discussed are the Florida State Seminoles, the Utah Utes, and the Cleveland Indians. The history of the various logos and names of these organizations are very unique. The perception of each organization varies depending on the history and partnerships that each organization has with a Native American group or organization.

Brand image is very important when it comes to the success of a business. The perception that a brand's image portrays often correlates with the way that the fans of this company are going to perceive the organization. If an organization has a negative brand image this will affect the overall perception of the business, which could lead to a decrease in brand awareness and brand loyalty. A decrease in brand awareness could occur from not having a social media presence. This may result in the Redskins not appealing to the younger generations. When an

organization's brand awareness and loyalty decreases, this could also result in loss of merchandise sales, lack of attendance at games throughout the season, and possibly a loss of relationship with the fans.

The Washington Redskins brand may possibly create obstacles that the organization might have to deal with in the near future. Since the organization is not receiving a lot of positive public perception, the organization could lose the trust of the fans that are buying their merchandise, which will affect other areas of potential revenue for the organization. The Washington Redskins have seen a significant decrease in attendance in recent years. This decrease will affect the number of season tickets that are sold each season. Another potential obstacle is the loss of potential sponsorship deals for the organization because of the lack of attendance and sales. This sponsorship loss will ultimately lead to a decrease in the valuation of the Washington Redskins franchise if the potential obstacles are not addressed.

The first public relations tactic that the Washington Redskins need to take advantage of in order to remain a historical franchise is connecting with fans of all ages. One of the main age ranges that the Washington Redskins should focus on is the younger generation. If the Redskins pitch the positive initiatives to the younger generation, this will eventually decrease the Redskins racially offensive brand perception. The Washington Redskins will also need to change the opinion of the older generation of fans. This target market is referred to as the Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers are beginning to lose interest in the Redskins team due to the lack of prestige as an organization (Olenski, 2016). If the Redskins are able to change the opinions of these two generations, the brand perception of the Redskins will improve tremendously.

Increasing community outreach as an organization will also help to improve the brand perception of the Washington Redskins. Community outreach activities should include events that will teach the fans about the values that the organization have towards social matters (Paige, 2019). This will enable the fans to realize that the Redskins front office cares about equality and wants to improve the Washington Redskins brand perception. When the fans are educated, this will restore a sense of community amongst the fans. This will connect the Redskins fans around the world in order to unite the Washington Redskins fan as one unit.

The Redskins could also shift their fans opinion by incorporating sustainability and environmental conservation into their organization. The Redskins could install LED lighting at their FedEx Field. These LED light would help to conserve energy that could be used for later games, and decrease the cost of electricity at FedEx Field. This implantation of sustainability and environmental conservation would help the Redskins to gain respect around the league, and will help to improve their brand perception.

The Washington Redskins must educate the public about the Native American history. The Washington Redskins should set up a meeting with the local tribes. This will enable each tribe to interact and be educated about one another. These local tribes include the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, the Piscataway Conoy Creations, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, the Nentego (Nanichoke), the Confederation of Sovereign, the Nanticoke-Lenape Tribe and the Mattaponi Tribe.

These meetings will increase the awareness of the Native American people. The public would be educated about the Native American values and traditions that are important to their culture. Native Americans focus on creating harmony in everything that they do. When the members of a tribe take care of what they are supposed to individually, the tribe operates smoothly. When a tribe is united, they focus on being in touch with the land, which allows the universe to be in balance. The Redskins organization should incorporate the values and traditions of the Native Americans into the organization to help improve the public perception of their organization

Lastly, the Redskins can implement corporate social responsibility in order to take advantage of the opportunities that have been presented. The three corporate responsibility acts that the Redskins should implement are team philanthropy, community engagement involving fans, and environmental conservation efforts.

The Washington Redskins will use team philanthropy by directing that the front office educates their followers on social media about Native American history. These facts should include reminders about Native American history, “did you know” facts, and other things related to local Native Americans tribes. The players of the Redskins should also create educational videos that will be shown at FedEx Field and on the Redskins website. These videos will connect the Redskins most popular players with their fans to educate them about local Native American

tribes. Redskins' players should also team up with the American Indian Society of Washington D.C to create a center for them. This relationship will show that the Redskins care about Native American history. This will therefore improve their brand perception.

The Washington Redskins players must engage with their fans. Players should participate in charitable events within the community. A great event would be to gather resources for Native Americans in the Washington D.C. area. These resources could include school supplies for the children gathered by the player and the fans. The American Society of Washington D.C. will receive all of the school supplies that were gathered. This will increase the amount of youth participating in charitable work and allow for the fans to interact with the players on the team.

The Redskins organization could also increase their environmental conservation efforts at their home stadium, FedEx Field. The environmental conservation efforts would include adding LED lights to their field. These lights will last longer and will be more energy efficient. The Redskins should also reconsider how their waste is being handled. The Washington Redskins should begin to convert compostable. They should recycle the cups, plates, and utensils that are used at their stadium. This would eliminate the amount of trash that is being left at events. It would also allow for the trash at home games to be recycled in order to reduce the environmental impact at their field. The Washington Redskins should also place recycling and compost bins inside of their stadium. This will encourage fans to place recyclables inside of these bins instead of directly in the trash cans. These environmental efforts will be beneficial to the planet and will also be beneficial to their overall expenses.

The Redskins should incorporate other similar organizations' initiatives. The organizations that the Redskins should incorporate initiatives from are the: Utah Utes and the Chicago Blackhawks. The first initiative that the Redskins should incorporate from the Utah Utes is to honor and work with the Native American tribes. This relationship would ensure that the Redskins and the Native American tribes would have the same values of respect, education, and respectful representation. The second initiative that the Redskins should incorporate from the Utes is to dedicate time to learn about the Native American tribes that originated in the Washington D.C. area. This will show their fan base and the world that they truly care about the history of Native Americans,

especially the tribes with roots in their backyard. The final initiative that the Redskins should implement is to work with the leader of a local D.C. tribe. The Redskins should dedicate a home game during the month of November, which is Native American Heritage Month to celebrate Native Americans. This will create a strong relationship between the Redskins and the local tribes.

The Chicago Blackhawks have initiatives that the Redskins should also implement as well. The Redskins should work with local tribes to help them with their current lives and honoring the history. This will enable the Redskins to improve public and personal relations. Another Initiative would be to have the owner of the Redskins, Dan Snyder, to interact with Native Americans in a similar way that the Blackhawks president does. This will help to improve the relationship between the Washington Redskins and Native Americans. The Washington Redskins relationship with Native Americans would be improved when these initiatives are incorporated.

The benefits from implementing all of the recommended action stated above shall improve the public perception of the Washington Redskins. The emotional responses that the Redskins players will obtain from interacting with fans and other charitable initiatives will improve their public perception. The CSR will also help to improve the Redskins public perception. When the Redskins participate in initiatives that help the community, this will create an emotional connection between the organization and their fans. The Redskins CSR initiatives will be extremely beneficial to the organization by increasing their organizational pride within the Washington D.C. area.

The Redskins will also see an increase in business from implementing these recommended solutions. These plans will enable the Redskins organization to connect with younger generations and will increase the opportunities for sponsorships. The Washington Redskins will be able to connect with sponsors that they had previously and to gain new sponsorships. These sponsorship deals will result in an increase in revenue for the organization.

All of these opportunities, recommendations and benefits will help to improve the brand perception of the Washington Redskins. This improvement will again make the Washington Redskins a valued franchise in the National Football League.

Recommendations for the Washington Redskins

Through the implementation of the following recommendations, the Washington Redskins can improve brand perception, which improves both public relations and team business, allowing it to return to being one of the most respected and profitable teams in the National Football League.

1. Encourage Redskins' players to post on social media about Native American facts and history to reach a large and varied audience.
2. Feature players in videos that will be played at games to educate the public of Native American history.
3. Collaborate with the American Indian Society of Washington D.C. to build a Native American Center in Washington D.C.
4. Set up donation drive bins to gather school supplies to donate to the American Indian Society of Washington D.C.
5. Make FedEx Field more sustainable by installing LED lights, using compostable or recyclable products, and sorting waste and demonstrate to fans how to be sustainable.
6. Utilize the University of Utah's Memorandum of Understanding to create a plan of how to most respectfully represent Native Americans.
7. Work with tribal leaders to gather accurate information about Native American tribes in the Washington D.C. area, and then utilize that information when planning future Redskins events.
8. Increase awareness of Native American Heritage Month.
9. Help with the restoration of Native American monuments in Washington D.C. to demonstrate the Redskins' dedication to respect the team's origins.
10. Have Dan Snyder visit with Native American communities to continue to build lasting relationships.
11. Bring members of Native American tribes or of Native American descent to Redskins' games to facilitate the continuity of their legacy.

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Appendixes



Appendix A: How to Properly Sort Waste