NFL’s Domestic Violence Outreach Campaign

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## Internal Memo

The document below outlines a detailed outreach plan for your success. The NFL is a beloved organization that can recover from the negative press they have received. The fans and sponsors need to understand that the NFL believes and supports domestic violence prevention. The outreach detailed below will be at no cost to the consumer and will be a healthy move to garner support and consideration from your target audience. This plan forces not only the directors and senior staff of the NFL to come together but all 32 teams to stand with a united front. Domestic violence is a terrible and frequent occurrence that needs to be recognized. The NFL has the potential to make some incredible changes using the guidance below.

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## Executive Summary

The National Football League (NFL) is under tremendous scrutiny from fans and sponsors regarding the way they disciplined players committing acts of domestic violence in the households. The league did not have any formal punishments or penalties established for their players. As such players were given lenient consequences for damaging behaviors. These events led to a lack of support from fans. Additionally, the NFLs target market has an increased disapproval rating. The NFL needs to make decisions and develop a plan to regain support. Not only are fans losing support for the NFL, sponsors are pulling their previous agreements until the NFL makes changes.

The objective of this organization is to implement an effective outreach plan that will regain support from fans and sponsors of the NFL. This plan utilizes the internet via social media and webpages, a 24 hour call center will instant resources, and a personalize presence in the form of kiosks at every NFL venue. These kiosks will provide information and people to answer questions. These groups will become a significant part of the local communities by attending events and providing information. The combination of different methods of reaching the fans and sponsor will generate future support.

## Mission Statement

The National Football League has a mission statement that focuses on creating players and teams which “attract the broadest audience and makes NFL football the best sports entertainment in the world” (NFL, 2014, p. 1) while using the values of integrity, performance, teamwork, tradition, innovation, diversity and learning to achieve their mission. Today, this mission is under scrutiny as players are being benched for the behaviors. The NFL must engage the personal issues of players in order to enhance the performance and ability on the field. The mission of this domestic violence prevention campaign is to educate, encourage communities to acknowledge these acts of violence, and hold people accountable for their behaviors. The NFL needs to influence changed. Regardless of profession or fame, domestic violence is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

## Corporate Objectives

Recent acts of domestic violence by professional football players have left the NFL in a position where they need to develop a marketing communications plan. They are losing financial support from sponsors, consumers and their latest target audience – women (Harwell, 2014, p.1). The National Football League wishes to gain back their legitimacy and continue to target women as their main audience. The issues with domestic violence have severely handicapped their forward progress connecting with their target audience. The objectives of this outreach campaign are to legitimize their position on domestic violence, provide punishments that shows the consumers that the NFL stands firm on their position and education on domestic violence resources. The NFL must change public opinion to retain their fans and sponsors.

## Marketing Audit

The NFL is made up of 32 football teams and 1,696 football players. Each football player earns on average of 1.8 million dollars a year (NFL, 2014, p.1). Overall the NFL teams have 6 billion dollars to split amongst the 32 teams, averaging 187.1 million dollars per team (1). The income and revenue generated by the NFL is through sponsorships and fans.

External

Sponsors such as Proctor and Gamble pulled their support of the NFL based on the lack of response on the issues of domestic violence. P&G had agreed to provide pink crest mouth guards for October’s breast cancer awareness month (Harwell, 2014, p.1). It could be damaging for P&G to associate with an organization that does not stand up against domestic violence during a women’s health month, it could appear to be contradictory. This level of sponsorship is significant and can reduce income drastically.

Women have been the target audience for the NFL and have potential to lose revenue as well as fan ship. Currently, women make up 45 percent of the 150 million NFL fans (Harwell, 2014, p.1). The NFL’s target market has been women through the areas of defining merchandize geared towards women, stories and articles that are better grasped by women and pop up merchandize kiosks at games (Boudway, 2013, p.1). Stereotypically men buy only a few items with their team logos but women tend to buy more. This is a big market that has to be brought back in order to continue to extend their revenue production.

Public opinion is in important concept for the NFL to understand. The situation of football player Ray Rice punching his wife in a public elevator, rendering her unconscious should have created a different response by the NFL (McManus, 2014, p.1). The fans look to the NFL to be the stewards on disapproving behaviors of this nature and when they did not it caused the public opinion to change.

Lastly, the NFL is considered a sole source component which leaves fans with a particular problem. They cannot choose to watch a different football league; they have to choose NOT to watch football. This is a benefit for the NFL as it is hard for a fan to stop watching when they have been loyal to a team for so long.

Internal

The NFL must develop this community outreach plan because they did not have a defined discipline procedure for players that were charged with domestic violence. They did not act quickly to talk with their fans or assure them that the proper action would be taken. They awarded lenient punishments that caused the fans and sponsors to pull their support. The importance and value of this campaign has been generated by the internal organization.

The NFL has always been good at creating a brand, marketing that concept and growing the brand. If the NFL uses this outreach plan the same way that they do the NFL product, there is great potential to move forward and reach the fans. As the NFL moves forward it has to be conscious to make decisions that the public will understand and create the sense of honesty to the fans/sponsors. The integrity of the organization is compromised and the NFL needs to clearly identify what their organization stands for to employees, fans and sponsors.

## Market Overview

The target audience of the NFL is an every growing group. Previously the NFL initially catered towards middleclass men 18-49 (Comcast, 2014, p.2). Now the NFL is expanding their target demographic to include women and children. Through the support of women, the NFL can grow and increase revenue. Domestic violence is often considered violence against women. If the NFL does not come forward denouncing players responsible for domestic violence in their homes, it can be perceived that the NFL is not supportive of women. Ironically, the NFL desperately wants to keep women as their target audience and has to define their role against domestic violence. Through outreach, the NFL will be able to demonstrate their consideration for women.

## SWOT

SWOT analysis is important as it outlines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associate with this campaign. These are important things to consider moving forward with an outreach and awareness campaign. This outreach plan can provide opportunities to share information and resources to the fans, understanding that there could be resentment and push back at first. This analysis will highlight the different areas that need to be evaluated for this campaign.

Strengths –Despite the behavior of some players and the organization – consumers are still buying tickets that will insure a turnout to the outreach events scheduled at each game. With the perception that the NFL sends mixed messages about domestic violence, having a campaign at the stadiums will allow the consumers to understand their perspective first hand. They will not have to read about it in a press release or watch it on the news. Consumers will have the opportunity to ask their questions to representatives of the NFL and get information on how to combat domestic violence in their communities.

Weaknesses-Domestic violence is a nationwide issue, which creates an annual average of 5.8 billion dollars (Lien, 2003, p.1) on health care expenditures. Not only is it costly, it is recognized by everyone at varying levels. The outside effects of a single incident can expand to multiple people and outside families. With this significant problem already happening in the United States, the NFL has to understand the importance of their lack of response to this behavior within their organization. Since they did not respond immediately with a defined message about the importance of preventing domestic violence, their legitimacy as an organization has been compromised. This is a significant weakness moving forward, but the true reason an outreach campaign is essential to the future growth of the NFL. With the potential loss of women in their fan base, there are significant financial repercussions that have to be understood.

Opportunities –As part of the strengths, the NFL has the opportunity to reach it consumers the right way. Fans of the NFL are truly vested into the organization and into their teams. They do not want to be mad at the organization. This allows the NFL the opportunity to right its wrong through the outreach campaign. They can provide answers and information to all who ask. They can develop an identity that is focused on domestic violence prevention.

Threats – The NFL can develop a campaign and outreach plan, but if the football players do not stop abusing their spouses or families than there is no point to continue. Fans will not believe the sincerity of the organization if their players contradict what the outreach plan represents. This is a tremendous threat to the organization as a whole. Hiprocracy does not support the mission of the NFL and can damage it significantly.

## Assumption

Assumption 1 - Women are the most affected by domestic violence. Therefore the perception of women on the NFL will be more disapproving then men. If the NFL is supporting players that beat their spouses, than they do not support women. Despite the NFL’s previous attempts to target women, they have to start fresh in order to justify behaviors and gain support from this audience. The disapproval rating can significantly impact the growth of that target group.

Assumption 2 – The NFL generates a tremendous amount of revenue each year and can fund an extensive community outreach/education plan. The money that the NFL receives each year comes from the sponsors and fans of the organization. Since these stakeholders are the main contributors to the success of the NFL, they should be the ones targeted with the outreach plan.

Assumption 3 - Consumers believe that the NFL has handled not only the Ray Rice case but other domestic violence cases inappropriately. Domestic violence has increased amongst NFL players and consumers are concerned about the way these behaviors are going to be handled. Fans and Sponsors want answers on the future direction of the NFL on the topic of domestic violence.

Assumption 4 – Consumers believe that NFL players are not held to the same standards as “regular” Americans. The NFL is losing support, and revenue because of the circumstances that surround the NFL’s relationship with domestic violence. Public Opinion has changed and the NFL needs to find ways to regain public support for their organization. Through the development a communications plan, the NFL can change the perspective of the consumers and develop policies that humanize the players. This will regain support.

## Marketing Objectives and Strategies

Product Strategy

For this outreach campaign, a product that the NFL will develop is a 24 hotline that can be accessible by all consumers who need to speak to professionals about domestic violence. This single phone number will have nationwide accessibility. A person from Phoenix could call the hotline which would be housed in New York City. The phone dispatch would have contacts and connections that could route assistance in phoenix for the individual calling. The online NFL presence will have a more localized approach on their website and social media avenues. Consumers will be able to find local assistance at their fingertips. With the push of this 24 hotline the NFL will develop an education plan to insure domestic violence resources are in the hands of consumers who need that information.

The NFL will affectively train staff to support this call center. This staff will provide support services, direct local resources to the caller and be advocates for those who call. Additionally, there will be a tab on the NFL website that links consumers to a specialized NFL domestic violence page that will provide additional resources, information and links to forums where consumers can find groups. There will be links to social media resources and an application created that can upload to cell phones that have local domestic violence resource information instantly available. The NFL will have logos and slogans attached to the application, so that the consumers know these products are part of the domestic violence prevention campaign.

Price Strategy

The cost associated with this campaign is relatively low to the consumer while it does require funding from the NFL organization. The NFL has a large income and can easily designate specific funding for this campaign. Many outside organizations that support victims of domestic violence are considered non-profits. This can be a benefit and tax write- off for the NFL. As the NFL moves forward with their educational outreach plan, there will be a requirement for each football team to pay for the construction of their onsite domestic violence educational kiosk. They will also have to hire staff to run the information center and gather local community information to provide to the consumers. The NFL will make this a mandatory component to the franchises which reduce initial set up costs and still keeping these services free to the consumer.

Promotion Strategy

The NFL will promote their 24 hour hotline by providing educational booths with information and resources for local facilities to receive assistance. This form of outreach can be used as a means of getting resources to consumers who need it. Information should be easily accessible and displayed in an approachable environment for consumers. In order to gather this information, the NFL has to develop partnerships with local domestic violence centers near NFL stadiums. Here NFL players can give back to their fans through community service. This behavior will demonstrate the organizations objectives while promoting the outreach campaign showcasing football players as an important part of a healthy community. The unity created demonstrates a community that fights back against domestic violence.

With the promotion of this outreach plan and 24 hotline, a logo and slogan must be created which exemplify the NFL’s commitment towards supporting those who are victims of domestic violence. The logo and slogan can be placed on every promotional tool which will be recognizable to consumers seeking information. The NFL can fund the overall marketing aspect of this campaign with the support of the football teams.

## Estimate Expected Results and Identify Alternative Plans and Mixes

Product Strategy Results/Measurement

The education outreach and resource support for this plan is essential. The 24 hour hotline will receive calls from victims, abusers and loved ones affected by domestic violence searching for help. The productivity will be measured by the number of calls that the 24 hotline receives and how the services are used. With the addition of a website and social media, the effectiveness will be determined by polling the consumers through social media. There may be other resources that consumers want with the 24 hour hotline, and it is important to ask them. For the outreach portion of this project, employees running the kiosk will be charting how many consumers stop by for information. These numbers will be compiled at the end of the month to determine effectiveness. This will work towards rebuilding the relationship between the NFL and the consumers.

Price Strategy

The cost of the program will be greater than expected with the additional staff focused on providing services to fans via social media, call center and educational kiosk. The importance regaining integrity is worth the financial strain of providing the services that are needed. After an evaluation, there are several options that can be brought in to supplement the cost. Sponsors who feel that they want to be a part of the NFL campaign can provide funding to continue the programs. Perhaps, with this movement of domestic violence prevention, Proctor and Gamble would be interested in coming back to the sponsorship component of the NFL. This is an educational campaign with free services. The price point for the consumer is zero while the NFL will be paying for the education, training, facilities and products.

Promotion Strategy

Through the development of a domestic violence prevention logo, the NFL will have a strong visual representation. Consumers will associate this logo with informational kiosks, websites, Facebook pages and events sponsored to fight domestic violence. It will be an international brand defending victims and standing up to offenders. This campaign will be evaluated on its effectiveness to promote the product of the 24 hour hotline. The logo and other advertising material generated will have to draw people to the education kiosks to gather information. This promotional strategy carries the responsibility of reaching the consumer at a different level. The logo needs to tell the consumer what the NFL is doing with one glance. This strategy will be evaluated by the amount of consumers that visit the websites, tweet relevant information, come to the kiosks, gather information and use the call center.

Place Strategy

By putting domestic violence kiosks at every stadium and NFL event, consumers will have the opportunity to receive the information. The information is accessible to those who attend the events. The information will be accessible to every corner of the market. By placing a kiosk at each football stadium, the location is essential to getting the most foot traffic possible. The location will be evaluated by the measurement of how many people stop at the kiosk. Additionally, the employees will gather feedback from the consumers that stop to determine if they felt that the kiosk was easy to find and accessible. With the addition of the use of social media and the internet to push the message, the measurement of how many people access these sites will define the effectiveness of the product placement.

## Budget

Product Strategy

The NFL will have to hire an overall manager for the domestic violence prevention campaign. This person will oversee the components of the 24 hour hotline call center, website creation, social media outreach, and the person to person interaction at the educational kiosks. The 24 hotline will require a facility and 24 staff that have resources to reach all communities nationwide to provide assistance. With the outreach and advertisements this staff should consist of 10 people per shift and increase based on the volume of calls. The website will require a designer to create a user friendly and interactive site. Social media sites will be developed and updated. The staff for these will be significant in the beginning but once it is established, the sites can be updated in addition to the other NFL pages. This would also be true for the development of the application. The cost of creation would be in front of the product and would be reduced once the production is complete. The kiosks and staff will be funded by the individual team owners. The NFL will provide consistent products to be given away.

Price Strategy

This campaign will be at no cost to the consumer which means that the NFL will incur all costs. The NFL will look to local team owners for localized support of the domestic violence campaign. Sponsors will be sought to provide assistance with cost. Educational kiosks will require products that will be given away and not sold.

Promotion Strategy

Calculate the cost for a marketing professional to design the campaign logo and handouts with staff to create local relationships for domestic violence centers. The NFL will be a link for people to find outside resources. They will not have a specific facility just a referral center. Hire an overall outreach coordinator to insure that the communication and information is reaching the consumers.

## First Year Implementation Program

First, call a meeting with the team owners to announce the direction that the NFL is going and ask for their support and mention to the team owners that the NFL will call on them for unified support as the process moves forward. Next begin recruiting and hire an outreach coordinator who will manage the overall program and the individual outreach at each stadium. Press releases and interviews need to happen regularly to let the public know that the NFL supports domestic violence prevention. Once the outreach coordinator has been hired, a marketing firm will be selected to develop a logo and slogan for the campaign. This needs to be a very significant and effective marketing tool that will be used nationwide. This same marketing team will be responsible for developing a web page with information and resources that can be connected the NFL webpage. Additionally, they will have to create social media avenues to communicate with the public. This is an immediate connection to the consumer that the NFL can have while other parts of the plan are being worked out. It will be essential to hire staff members to run the social media and the NFL web presence for this campaign. These people will be responsible for the outreach campaign online.

With the creation of the web presence, a physical presence needs to be developed at every NFL venue. A design for a kiosk needs to be approved that will be replicated at all of the stadiums. With the football season already underway, the realistic timeline for the completion of the kiosk will be for 2016 pre-season. Teams have to be hired to created relationships with local community domestic violence centers to gain information on resources. In addition to the kiosk, the call center staff will have to be hired and trained. Using a previous existing NFL office site in New York City, the 24 hour call center can be started by January of 2016. The employees need to attend a month long training class on how to answer crisis calls. The local crisis center in New York will be able to provide personnel to teach this class. Once the staff is hired and trained they can launch the 24 hour call center. The NFL will have to hire enough personnel to have 10 operators, 24 hours a day. There will be adjustments based on the amount of calls the hotline receives. The manager has to be aware of what the numbers are so that they can adjust to make the call center the most efficient possible.

Once the kiosk designs have been approved, slogan and logos created, and call center started, the NFL must present the requirements to the team owners. All of the teams have to stand together for the NFLs campaign against domestic violence. They will be tasked with determining a location for the kiosk, building it and staffing it with people who can provide information to the community. The teams will be asked to participate in local community events that promote the safety of women and the prevention of domestic violence. The staff interacting with consumers at the kiosks will also attend events on behalf of the NFL to garner support from the community.

With the timeline set for the opening of the kiosks for the preseason of 2016, the outreach manager will continue updating the press about what the NFL is doing to educate the consumers. They will send press releases, and use social media to get the call center number out to the consumers. From January until August, construction of the kiosks and partnership development with outside agencies will be essential. For the first set of NFL preseason games, each home team will do their own ribbon cutting for their domestic violence prevention kiosk at their stadium. It is important to invited local community members from outside agencies and the media so that they can help spread the news that the NFL is serious about prevention and creating avenues for education. Evaluations of this campaign will be ongoing throughout the year to maintain a high level of performance.

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