



Customer-led business growth

Sports business success from remarkable customer experiences

Why do we play sport?

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New year is a great time to start or increase our sports participation. For a start there's safety in numbers, as "do more exercise" and "get fit" are high on the list of annual New Year resolutions.

But to create a new habit out of these resolutions, personal trainers will tell us we need some extra steps. To succeed we need to set a goal & get a "gym buddy" to help keep us going. We also need to understand and identify our motivation for doing it. Asking why isn't something we do enough, but only through really questioning ourselves can we understand why we want to do something.

Goals are good, but what happens once you've ticked off the race? Buddies are helpful, until they get injured or too busy at work. So if we don't have a good reason why, then the new behaviour is unlikely to stick long-term.

So why do we play sport? And do we play all sports for the same reason? There's plenty of research around, telling us the reasons people drop-out of sport or won't start. But what about the millions that do play? What gets us out of cosy beds or (hopefully) dry houses to ride, run or kick balls around? What drives our love affair for playing, not just watching, sport?

Digging beneath the responses of Sport England's satisfaction survey shows that we can participate in the same sport for a multitude of personal yet common reasons. For some it's about the competition & progression, for some it's about improving their health or fitness and for others it's purely social & not about the sport at all.

These motivations become important when we think about the competing activities. Those motivated by specific competition will be less inclined to play a range of sports than those driven to improve their general well being. Equally for those motivated by the social opportunity, a coffee shop or social media chat may be a competitor on a wet & windy day!

As for me, I play football because it's been baked into my DNA since I could walk. I no longer dream of playing for Fulham or Wales, but I still get excited when a tricky pass or move comes off! They remind me of why I had the dreams as a child.

I ride my bike to explore places while getting fit, I run to remind myself I used to be much faster, and I used to swim because achieving a big goal like a sub-3hr triathlon was impossible if I didn't.

So why do you play sport? Would you be lost without your regular fix, or will other fun activities replace it before the sun returns?



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I am passionate advocate of business growth through remarkable customer experiences, inspiring sports photography & Fulham FC. I work as a business growth consultant within the sports sector, and freelance as a sports photojournalist.

This article is a post from my blog 'customer-led business success' that can be found at [here](#) or via [LinkedIn](#).