Student Choice Assignment: Sport

Professional Interview

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Introduction

Talking to a sport professional can give you a lot of insight into the ongoing functions they perform. I interviewed the owner of a gym and I learned a lot. Being in Intro to Sport Management there was many things that they talked about during the interviewed that I learned in the class that I saw being applied in a real business.

Logistics

The interview was conducted at the Iron Pit Gym on November 20th. Iron Pit Gym is in southern Bloomington. The interview lasted a little less than an hour. The gym is owned by two people Matt Andrews and Doug Ballard. I interviewed Matt. I got connected to this gym by looking for options to write this paper over and I decided to contact some different places where I ended up getting no responses. I then emailed Dr. Hanks who gave me a list of about 5 different places that I could possibly volunteer for. I was originally looking to volunteer but when I contacted the places, they didn’t have any opportunities. When I contacted Iron Pit he said I wouldn’t be able to volunteer but I could easily have my questions answered by interviewing him so I arranged an interview a few days later. The sport professionals name is Matt Andrews. He is a co-owner of Iron pit gym.

The Interview

Skills
During the interview much information was conveyed about what Matt and Doug do and what skills they possess to help the business run effectively. Matt claimed to be referred to as the “Front Man” by his partner Doug which is referring to the fact that he is more of the face of the company. He said that he is very people-oriented and sociable. He claimed to know nearly all the names of the members of the gym just by seeing them. Matt claiming this and saying public relations are the biggest part of the job is one thing. “Many sport organizations use public relations as a tool to establish brand awareness and identity and to promote their products or services (Stoldt, Dittmore, Branvold, 2012). Being friendly with his customers will keep them coming back but it will also make them more likely to refer others to join the gym. Just through the duration of our interview I witnessed Matt perform these tasks greeting members who were walking in the gym and saying goodbye when they left. I can also recall a guy who was there on a one-day pass who he mentioned to me was from out of town and was there just to workout for the day, using that as an example for the public relations. This shows that he goes beyond just greeting and saying goodbye but knows these people more personally even if they are only on one day passes. Doug on the other hand isn’t as social as Matt but still is vital to the running of the company. Even though I didn’t get to talk to Doug while I was there, being that he wasn’t there, Matt gave me the run down on him. Matt said he would consider them to be sort of opposites. Doug does deal with members often, but he isn’t as friendly as Matt with them. He is more of the technically enabled side of the team. Doug has a carpentry background, so he fixes things around the gym.

Getting Started

Matt and Doug both have backgrounds in sport which influenced them to created their own gym. Matt grew up in Bloomington and attended high school at Bloomington South. While
at Bloomington South he participated in football and wrestling. After high school he attended IU where he began studying sport management, which was actually the first year it was offered at IU, but ended up dropping out his junior year. He ended up going back many years later after he already started the gym. He was always involved heavily in weightlifting due to his participation in sports and that has continued until now. In the past Matt was an amateur bodybuilder who competed and won a few major titles in Indiana. However he no longer competes he is still active in the gym. After his bodybuilding days he stopped working out but after a month he didn’t feel right. He said his body felt off. So, he started going back at Exercise Inc. where he became friends with the owner who gave him a management job there when one opened. This is where he met his future partner Doug.

Doug grew up in New Albany where he attended New Albany High school. There he participated in football eventually receiving a scholarship from the University of Indianapolis to play for them. While attending the University of Indianapolis he obtained a BS in business administration with a minor in physical education with a coaching endorsement. Doug became a professional powerlifter after college. He has competed all of the nation winning a national championship and even on the international level placing 2nd at the IPF World Championships. Doug also competes in Highland games to this day. Before the gym he was a manager at Kroger while he continued working out and competing.

These were all influencing factors for them to open their own gym. They always wanted to open up a gym together but couldn’t afford the expensive equipment and the facility. While working at Exercise Inc. Matt knew a man who was selling his gym and offered to give him the equipment he wanted for free. This was an amazing deal that he couldn’t pass up so he had the equipment put in storage while he found a partner, Doug, and got the funds saved for the
building where the gym would be. They also wanted to provide a service to the community with their business while also making a living off something they are very interested in and have spent large portions of their life involved in. A gym is a great way to stay active and they know and have experienced the benefits. Regular exercise improves peoples’ quality of life physically and psychologically (Fentem, 1994).

Needless to say, Doug and Matt are both athletic individuals with vast backgrounds in the world of sport. Doug and Matt owe their knowledge that has helped him to this point on his participation in sports. Without there experiences growing up they wouldn’t have the interest to do what they do today.

**Business Operations**

There are many different functions that need to be performed by managers at a gym that has been open for 25 years. Iron Pit has a total of 16 workers not counting the owners. This includes 10 trainers, who are there to help people meet the goals they set for themselves and make sure they have a plan to accomplish them, 2 janitors, who make sure the gym is clean for its members, and 4 interns who mostly do desk work for the company.

Daily operations of the company are split between the two owners. The gym is open 24 hours a day and only closed on major holidays. Members are free to come in as long as they have their key to scan and get in. However, Doug is the first worker to get there in the morning and make sure everything is in check. He runs the gym and works the desk and handles anything the gym needs until Matt gets there to take over later in the day. There shifts overlap in the middle of the day for three hours which gives them time to address anything that needs to be addressed by the two owners.
For the operations that go beyond the day-to-day they aren’t as split. Matt is the office manager who does bookkeeping, payroll, accounts payable and receivable, advertising, promotions, and meetings. As stated, before Doug fixes equipment around the gym that needs maintenance, but he also handles buying inventory and new equipment as it is needed. During the construction of their new facility, that was finished ten months ago and took six months to complete, Doug was not working in the gym as he was overseeing and helping with the construction of the new facility as his daily duties. The previous location was the first location and where they originally opened Iron Pit.

The gym offers many different amenities that not all gyms have. They have an in-house sauna and supplement store. These in house-groups will not only increase revenue but could also attract more people to join their gym (Hanks, 2019). They also have a physical therapist in the building connected to the gym that is not in-house but is outsourced to a physical therapist who pays rent to have a spot in their building.

These amenities not only provide services to their members, but they attract their target market. Their target market is anyone who is interested in and able to workout or is looking to stay in shape and can afford to consume the monthly fee (Hanks, 2019). From my experience speaking with Matt, they have been open for 25 years so this shows they have a consistent member base consuming their product to keep them afloat. They also have donated to charities which shows that they have excess money left over to give back to the community.

Conclusion

Not all businesses in the sport industry require a lot of hands to run. Iron Pit runs with only two people at the helm. Those two people both have backgrounds in sport and that is the
primary reason that they are where they are today. Doing an interview of a sport professional really shows you that the content that we learn in class is applied daily, even at a level as low as a local gym.


Appendix

Contact Information for Matt Andrews:

Email: Mattandrewsipg@yahoo.com

Cell Phone: (812)325-3931

Meeting Agenda:

**Interview Questions**

- Start with name
- What are your company’s values/mission?
- What is your position at iron pit gym?
- What does your position entail?
- What operations do you perform and manage for the business?
  - Such as planning, staffing, organizing, directing, logistics, or controlling and evaluating
  - Managerial skills necessary?
- What skills/education is needed for your position?
- What jobs did you have before?
- How did you get to that position?
- What got you interested in this type of business?

Text Exchange:
Thank you,
I appreciate the opportunity that you gave me to interview you. I completed my project with all the information I gathered.

Greatly appreciated,
Michael K.