



The integration of corporate social responsibility into the digital transformation of the sports industry

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to comprehensive examination of the aspects that contribute to the sustainable digital advancement of the sports sector, with a particular focus on social and corporate accountability.

Methods and structure of the study. In the course of our research, we employed a variety of approaches, including system analysis, comparative analysis, classification, and a structural and functional approach.

Results and conclusions. The findings of the research led to a logical and scientifically sound conclusion: the success and effectiveness of the digital transformation in the sports sector is directly linked to the level of integration of corporate and social responsibility into the marketing and management strategies of both commercial and public organizations. The innovative and investment appeal of the sports sector is fostered and enhanced through the systematic development of customer-centric models of engagement with the target audience, which encompass both the elements of digital transformation and the holistic incorporation of corporate and social responsibility.

Keywords: *digital transformation, sports industry, corporate responsibility, marketing, social responsibility.*

Introduction. Formation of a positive, successful image and recognizable brand of a sports organization in the modern world plays a key role in attracting the attention of a new target audience and strengthening the company's position in the sports market. In the context of the digital transformation of the sports industry, when information becomes available through a variety of communication channels, and competition reaches its highest value, it is necessary to take into account new digital approaches to the promotion and development of the company's brand [4]. Positive, multichannel impact on public opinion and the formation of a positive image significantly contribute to an increase in sales of sports goods and services, as well as an increase in the brand value of a sports organization in various commercial segments, as well as positioning and promotion of services in socially significant areas (healthcare, education, etc.) [1]. In this context, «social and corporate responsibility in sports marketing is a fundamental principle and approach within which sports industry entities integrate con-

cern for society and the environment into their business strategy and marketing activities. This aspect of strategic planning of a sports organization involves the creation of a system of positive impact and influence on various social groups and spheres of society. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize that the pursuit of economic profit remains the most important and defining goal of commercial organizations of various types, but is no longer the only vector of long-term development» [6; 35 p.].

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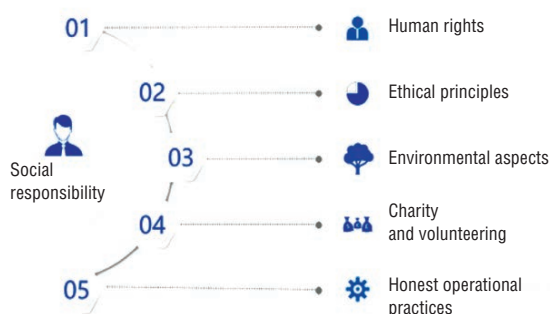
Methods and structure of the study. Since social and corporate responsibility have a direct impact on the brand and image of a sports organization, leading companies in the sports industry, in light of digitalization and digital transformation of the industry, strive to make every effort to improve economic and



social well-being. «Positioning oneself in the external environment as a socially responsible company is currently an integral attribute of strategic development» [3; 120 p.].

As part of the strategic promotion and positioning of aspects of corporate and social responsibility, leading sports brands and sports organizations openly and in an accessible format (using various social, mobile and digital platforms) demonstrate their care and attention to environmental issues, as well as a direct interest in the formation of an ethical and transparent business environment and ecosystem.

Technological digital innovations in sports related to the engineering of accessible key marketing communications and strategies update a set of principles and standards of social responsibility presented in (see figure).



Elements of social responsibility

Results of the study and discussion. The international standards that have been formed to date, defining the algorithms and procedure for the formation of corporate and social responsibility, as well as the form and criteria of non-financial reporting, determine the use of certain specific digital tools by key entities in the sports industry (federations, leagues and associations, professional and amateur clubs) [5]. This technological set of methods and tools ensures the systematic automation of processes, as well as effective interaction with all participants in the sports ecosystem.

Integration of the appropriate format of innovative social and corporate standards into practical and operational activities, as well as into the complex of the administrative and management structure of the organization, ensures the achievement, among other things, of commercial goals and objectives of the strategic development of a sports enterprise.

Thus, image and reputation factors become com-

petitive advantages of those entities in the sports industry that are ready to allocate administrative, financial, personnel and other resources to increase the social recognition of their brand in the external environment, positioning and promoting goods and services in the sports market. Social and corporate responsibility of sports industry entities contributes to strengthening GR-ties, that is, forms of interaction and cooperation with government agencies [2]. In the context of the specifics of financing and regulatory and legislative management of sports, this area is becoming very relevant.

GR in sports is, first of all, the ability and art of building mutually beneficial relations between sports business entities and the state, which helps the heads of commercial sports organizations understand the needs and interests of the authorities, as well as promote the interests of their business in government bodies¹.

An example of this type of interaction in the context of the digital transformation of the sports industry may be the cooperation of sports clubs with regional and federal authorities for the purposes of:

- developing sports infrastructure aimed at improving and optimizing conditions for mass and amateur sports, as well as digital modernization of existing and functioning sports facilities for professional sports;
- holding mass sports events with the involvement of a large number of people who regularly engage in physical activity and lead a healthy lifestyle through digital marketing;
- attracting the attention of the media to the issues of accessibility of sports grounds and the popularization of national sports through social networks, streaming platforms, and mobile applications;
- attracting large investments in sports, as well as government funding of social programs and the joint implementation of large-scale and long-term sports projects;
- supporting young and promising athletes, developing youth, school and university sports in the context of an accessible digital sports ecosystem;
- optimizing work with sponsors, advertisers and partners in order to increase the economic and social efficiency and attractiveness of a sports brand in the virtual space.

If we note the importance of globalization process-

¹ Strategiya razvitiya fizicheskoy kultury i sporta v Rossiyskoy Federatsii na period do 2030 goda.



es in sports, then in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, corporate and social responsibility in this industry has a positive impact on the financial, economic stability and prospects of sports organizations, providing them with new competitive opportunities for partnership cooperation with large international and socially responsible investors on more favorable terms.

Conclusions. Thus, a specific feature of entrepreneurial activity and commercialization of the sports industry is its pronounced social focus. Businessmen and entrepreneurs in this area not only strive to satisfy their financial needs, obtain high profits, but also to actively interact with society (with individual social strata, communities and groups), contributing to the transmission and dissemination of healthy lifestyle values, popularization of amateur sports events and, in general, the development of the country's sports culture. Such an approach allows not only to achieve commercial success, but also to have a significant impact on social development. In this regard, the public demonstration by sports companies of their commitment to the standards of innovative organizational structure and corporate responsibility, on the one hand, makes the approaches and principles of digital and social marketing particularly relevant in such key areas as retaining regular customers through loyalty programs, as well as attracting a new target audience and, consequently, new strategic partners from related industries. On the other hand, numerous social networks, websites, mobile applications and other digital platforms are becoming a powerful tool for focusing the attention of the attracted target audience on important issues, such as: observance of human rights and

freedoms; protection of citizens' health; protection of confidential information; combating racism and discrimination; counteracting crime; combating violence and poverty; supporting sustainable development; inclusion through sports; environmental protection.

Therefore, key stakeholders, investors and sponsors consider sports not only as a platform for making a profit, but also as a space for creating and broadcasting reputational values, a socially oriented approach.

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