



Little League® Marketing Services

PA State Meeting
October 2013



What does marketing mean?

- To “market” means to **educate**, **influence**, **promote**, **sell** and **distribute** a product, brand, company, organization or service in order to affect decision making situations
- To “market” Little League means to affect the decision making of parents (players), volunteers and municipalities to consider, convince and “buy” Little League.



Focus of the Little League Marketing Efforts

1. To **keep Little League visible** as the leading youth sports property through marketing, branding, research and promotional initiatives
2. To **contribute to driving participation** through advertising and communications
3. To serve as a significant **contributor of revenue** to the organization and its annual operations
4. To generate relationships that offer a direct **benefit to the Little League membership** – member districts, leagues, volunteers, parents and players



Marketing Little League

Why are parents, volunteers, municipalities and corporations interested in Little League?

- Name
- Rich history
- Reputation
- Influence
- Events and activities
- Our audience (People we touch and talk to)



In short, they buy “Little League”

- Register their child
- Operate their community program
- Buy a corporate sponsorship
- License the name
- Volunteer



Food for thought...

- Would people say?
 - May I have a cola?
 - Pour the soup into the insulated mug.
 - Put on a bandage on that cut.
 - Ride up the moving walkway.
- Or would they say?
 - May I have a Coke?
 - Pour the soup into the Thermos.*
 - Put a Band-Aid on that cut.
 - Ride up the escalator*.

*Lost trademark. Now generic.



Is all youth baseball and
softball Little League?

No.



So...we must protect the Little League name (trademark) and we **MUST** promote the difference



In other words, we must protect what people “buy”



What is a trademark?

- A name, word, logo, image, tagline, slogan, that is used by an entity (such as Little League) to describe its product or service to distinguish it from others
- Trademarks are registered and great effort is taken to protect them from abuse or infringement



The worst thing that can happen to an organization's trademark is that it becomes **GENERIC**.



Little League Trademarks

- Encourage Leagues and Districts to use Little League trademarks
- Remember “marketability”; carries into local communities
- Little League + local league or district name in all instances
- No commercial association in any way
- Follow Operating Manual
- No permission granted to non-Little League entities (businesses, people, organizations, etc.)
- When in doubt, ask.



What can a DA do?

Help protect the trademark, Little League.

The worst thing that can happen to an organization's trademark is that it becomes **GENERIC**.



Switching gears back to
marketing...why market
Little League[®]?

Because all youth baseball and
softball is not Little League.



Because parents are
different today...



Because kids have more
choices today...



Do you remember the
research?



The Research Study - Summary

- Goal of the Study: To identify key ideas to get and keep more players in the program and in the sport

Simplified:
To get more kids to play Little League
and keep them playing longer



Remember what we learned



Kids (Parents) leave because...

- The US birthrate was on a steady decline since 2000, but has now leveled off. Birth rates are beginning to increase slightly meaning more parents may consider Little League for their children.
- The overall economy and recent changes in spending affect participation in youth sports activities. Many families are now dual-income households, leading to parents who have limited time and are often “over scheduled”.
- Baseball is less interesting to younger parents; parents are not actively following baseball at varying levels. If kids aren’t having fun, they will surely stop playing.
- More children are specializing in a specific sport, versus playing multiple sports. Specialization is occurring at early ages.
- The elimination of physical education classes has impacted the overall interest and participation in youth sports.
- Kids are devoting more time to gaming, social media and other technologically-driven activities, and less time to physical activity.
- Parents are focused on the goal of financing a college education for their children. Many are driven to help their children achieve a college scholarship in sports.



Kids (Parents) leave because...

- Little League is the most widely recognized and trusted name in youth baseball. It stands for the values that parents want for their children. Little League has a magic that other youth sports leagues do not have.
- Baseball skill mastery is hard. Coaching the fundamentals as well as focusing on a level of physical fitness is important to parents of participants. Unlike other youth sports, the level of strategy and physical fitness is not always apparent.
- Particularly at the more junior levels where parents are less involved, baseball/softball activities are perceived as long and not “predictable” with a definitive start and end.
- The time commitment for dual-working households poses challenging for parents, particularly for parents of players involved in the younger divisions of play.
- Parents are confused about the structure and the advancement opportunities for their children within the Little League program. Information on these common questions is difficult to find.
- Many parents desire the notion of more competitive baseball and softball for their children.



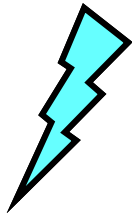
Youth Baseball Stress Points

When Kids Leave

DIDN'T JOIN ANY LEAGUE

43% of kids who considered baseball never got involved in any youth baseball program

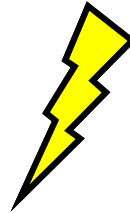
13 Million Kids



JOINED ANOTHER LEAGUE

21% of organized youth baseball players considered LLB but joined another program instead

3.6 Million Kids



LEFT LLB FOR ANOTHER LEAGUE

13% of LLB players left LLB for another baseball experience (Cal Ripken, Travel Ball, Select, etc.)

1.2 Million Kids



Acquisition



Retention



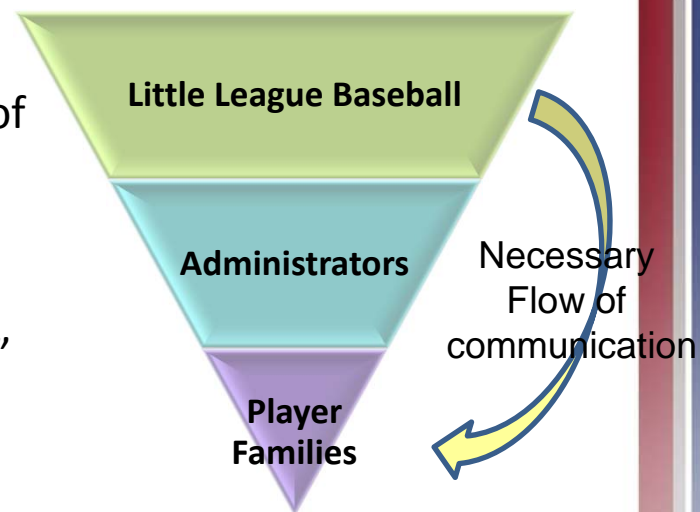
Little League *Magic*

The Good News

- There is a sense of connection that parents feel with Little League
- It's unique to Little League . . . Other leagues don't have it
- LLB has a *meaningful point of difference* that other leagues don't have
- The brand is stronger, it stands for all the good parents want

The Bad News

- The current flow of the LLB message of strength is not getting down Player Families, and is something that we need to resolve
- Need to reinforce “why Little League?” to parents





After the research...what did
we do?



What have we done...

- Developed a 5 year action plan
- New Tee Ball Program





What have we done...

- Tools for marketing the local league

CHARTERING AND MARKETING TOOLKIT

Like 0 Tweet 0 Share Print

The screenshot shows a webpage titled "CHARTERING AND MARKETING TOOLKIT". At the top, there are social media sharing options for Facebook (0 likes), Twitter (0 tweets), and a Share button, along with a Print icon. Below this is a navigation bar with four tabs: "CHARTERING & INSURANCE" (selected), "MARKETING & REG. TOOLS", "SPONSORSHIPS & FUNDRAISING", and "TECHNOLOGY". A banner below the navigation bar reads "Important Dates: October 25: Charter Applications/Toolkits mailed to all District Administrators". The main content area features a large image of a Little League team celebrating with purple balloons and a banner that says "Your League's Potential With MARKETING & Registration Tools". Below the image are four columns of content:

- CHARTERING & INSURANCE**: Everything your league needs to charter with Little League. Download the various forms and or visit the links below.
 - Chartering Instructions
 - Charter Online Now
 - Important Dates
 - Divisions of LL Play
 - Insurance & ASAP
 - Background Checks
 - Rules & Policies
 - Standardized Forms
- MARKETING & REGISTRATION TOOLS**: Tools to market your local Little League and drive registration. Download the various forms and or visit the links below.
 - Marketing Tips & Tools
 - Little League® Logo Usage
 - Advertising Templates
 - Business Card Templates
 - Brochures & Collateral
 - Photos & Imagery
 - Press Release Templates
- LEAGUE SPONSORSHIPS & FUNDRAISING**: Tips and tools to attain local sponsorships and drive fundraising efforts. Download the various forms and or visit the links below.
 - Sponsorship Policy
 - Sponsorship Practices
 - Fundraising Policy
 - Fundraising Practices
 - National Sponsor Info
 - Little League SupplyStore
- TECHNOLOGY**: Everything you need to manage your league's info and online presence. Download the various forms and or visit the links below.
 - Data Center Intro
 - Little League® Data Center
 - League Finder
 - e-Training Series
 - ACTIVE Online Reg.
 - ACTIVE Webinars

At the bottom of the content area are four buttons: "CHARTERING page", "MARKETING page", "SPONSORSHIPS page", and "TECHNOLOGY page". Below these is a dark banner with the text "★ 2014 Local League Celebration Guide ★" and a small "75" logo. The footer contains the copyright notice: "www.littleleague.org | © 2013 Little League Baseball, Incorporated. All Rights Reserved. Other registered trademarks are copyright of their respective owners."



What have we done...

- More educational resources for coaches
- Developed tools to communicate to parents directly on benefits of Little League program



The screenshot shows the 'The Parent Connection' newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 1, dated October 2013. It features a header with social media links for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The main content includes a welcome message, a photo of a group of people, and several articles: 'Have A Say In Your Local League', 'The Parent Guide To Little League Registration', 'Backyard Tips', and 'Little League's New Parent Committee - Get Involved'. A footer section asks if the reader found the newsletter helpful and provides a sign-up link.



What have we done...

- Created a new division (Intermediate) to help with transition and keep children engaged
- Video education on rules (for parents to understand and to keep leagues “in check”)
- Focus on umpire development...improve the game experience
- Soliciting feedback (e.g. coaches survey, parent input)
- More relationships to help leagues survive

...more to come



Now that we have explained why we need marketing, let us explain the “how and the what” we do



Revenue benefits districts and leagues

- Revenue generated from marketing services benefits member leagues in many ways

Supports free background checks (125/league)	Low charter affiliation fees (\$16/team)	Free Coaches Resource/ Training Center	Free Umpire Resource/ Training Center	Data Center Tool
Free league supply kits/ rule books	Camps/ Clinics	Support HQ shipping of info to leagues	Research Studies	Online chartering
Marketing of Little League program	Capital projects	Regional/ HQ Facilities & Upkeep	Charter & Marketing Toolkit	DA Training
Tee Ball Program	New Intermediate Divisional WS	League Incentives	Brings exposure to Little League	Keeps LL relevant in the minds of parents



Official Sponsors





Why don't these companies sponsor me or my leagues?

#1: They already support you.

#2: Many do try get more involved with support locally.

#3: Support is not always \$\$\$.

#4: Their offer may not appeal to you, but it may to others.