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**MKT 1414**

**Research Proposal**

**Background**:

The Cleveland Browns are part of the National Football league currently playing at First Energy Field in downtown Cleveland, Ohio. A charter team that joined the NFL back in 1945 and had won 4 championships early on. First in the inaugural season of 1950, 1954, 1955, and 1964. It has been historically pointed out that they have made the playoffs 17 times since and have not won a single championship. In 1995 owner Art Modell moved the Browns to Baltimore to become the Ravens.

Huge protest and lawsuits ensued by outraged citizens and businesses and the NFL gave the Cleveland area a second franchise in 1999. Since the Browns have returned they have only had 2 winning seasons in 17 years. To date, their record is 87-185. However, they have not had a problem ingratiating themselves with the local community and become culture. During a time of analytics, demographic analysis, and research about potential future growth, it made me draw the question as to the impact of the Browns. Other teams in the low revenue grade of the NFL are trying to get new stadiums and this year the Rams have already relocated to Los Angeles. This drew great intrigue to me as to how a team that has moved once in the middle of the night, and not won anything in over 40+ years, has some of the most loyal fans. They even fought city hall to get their team back. This drew a lot of questions in my mind as to how come.

**Marketing Research Question**

Through the research I hope to attain a better understanding of the economic impact to the city that the Browns have. I also want to get the feeling from local residents who are fans and those that don’t even watch football and gather more in depth thoughts. Through the research, the Browns will be able to understand more of what they have going for them right, what things they could improve on, and data to back up some of the future choices they will consider making.

**Research Objectives**:

* How do you get the fan base that shows up to the games to spend more money? How can you entice them?
* In a league of revenue sharing and parody, how do you create new marketing ideas for a team and fan base that wants to stick to the same schemes and traditions? This is applicable to the recent uniform and color changes that looked a lot like the previous.
* With so much off the field issues, what players going forward do you market to your fans?
* What is the deal between the City of Cleveland, the Browns, and their stadium? What is the economic impact of their business relationship when it deals with marketing revenue generation?
* Do the Browns have a lot of outside revenue, tax incentives, other forms of revenue to compete in the NFL market?
* With backlash of the new uniform changes, managerial changes, can the Browns organization really go completely bold and have it work, or fold?

**Secondary Research**:

The US Census site is a great place to start. By searching the Cleveland area and gathering demographic data, I will be able to get a clearer understanding of what the city is comprised of. Using this information, I can create target areas for better sampling, also be able to provide to the Browns information as to how many people they can reach and in what kind of markets. This is a great place to gather quantitative data fast.

The Browns have drafted a few busts in the past couple of years and now have another lottery pick this upcoming year. They have fired the General Manager and Coach and just hired Colts executive as president of player personnel. This is documented in a new ESPN article. Showing that they are following the Browns daily shows that this will be a great place to find other articles with opinions, as well as researched facts from ESPN Stats & Info.

NFL.com would be a great news and information site to be able to collect data on the other 31 NFL franchises. I would use other stable winning franchises or profitable ones as comparisons with the Browns. Examples would be the leading money makers like the Dallas Cowboys and New York Giants. While I could compare market analysis from other teams that do great with the fans such as the Seattle Seahawks or New England Patriots. There are plenty of articles posted yearly from power rankings in every position, including management.

**Research Approach**:

To gather the information needed for this research will take an extensive team and a lot of planning. I think we will start with a big picture approach and go the quantitative route. The first thing I would like is to gather demographic data pertaining to business impact locally around First energy field, ages and averages of participants in events Cleveland Browns pertinent. The first kind of interaction I want to have with the local populace is a written introduction via mail to see if how many people want to participate. I will work with a mobile marketing company to create ads and media about an upcoming research project discussing the Cleveland Browns. Conducting survey’s with more willing participants should yield better defined results. I will also have people go into venues undercover and take the pulse of events. Visit local bars and take the opinions of random bystanders. Different approaches will bring me closer to a final solution.

**Sample**:

Targeting people that live and work around the area is more important than hitting the suburbs. Although, the suburbs and rural areas have season ticket holders and businesses too, reaching out to them might return less surveys than asking right in front of where the question is being asked. Another group of people that will definitely get asked about our survey are season ticket holders, as well as lists of people that have attended a game within the past three years. The last group I am really interested in hearing from is local business owners, from small to corporate. To get a hold of corporate I will contact marketing firms that do research that already have connections to the Cleveland Browns. This is vital to establish a relationship with businesses that wish to help share information but are reluctant due to market competition.

For such an important move or non-move of an NFL franchise I would like to have a huge sampling of the population near Energy Field stadium. I think, based on a 20-25% survey return, that sending out 100,000 surveys to local residents is vital. To get around 8 to 10 thousand responses to get an idea of the entire population would be best, with the lowest for some good data being around 5,000 surveys completed. The demographics are shown in my survey which is either gender, aged 13 to senior citizen. I want to get the feeling of the people of the city of Cleveland and their relation to the Browns. Personal interaction will be videotaped and recorded, with permission. I want to have a video reel presentation to show the Browns leadership coming straight from Browns fans.

**Research Instrument**: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18ddpLrxlNaYyotRqL8XnxRUGeJ8qJpKkDbIY1OQLcns/viewform>

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