

## SMA Tampa/St. Pete Case Study Bowl 2023

### Super League Tampa Bay Case Study

#### Building a Fan Community

#### **The Client**

In May 2023, the new United Soccer League (USL) Super League picked Tampa Bay as one of the markets to launch a new women's professional soccer league to create more access to players, fans, and communities. Tampa Bay is one of the original clubs that will begin play in August 2024 and will feature 8-10 markets throughout the country. Women's professional soccer in the U.S. currently only has one other professional league (National Women's Soccer League – NWSL). In the next few weeks, there will be a team name announcement. For the case, they will be referred to as Super League Tampa Bay (SLTB).

With any new league/organization there are challenges especially in the Tampa Bay market which has seen recent championship success. In 2020-21, the Tampa Buccaneers (NFL) and Lightning (NHL) won their respective league titles while the Tampa Bay Rays (MLB) were American League Champions. In fact, the city was deemed as “Champa Bay” and named the best sports city in the country in 2021.

SLTB will be competing for discretionary income in the Tampa/St. Petersburg market. Your marketing team is tasked with building a fan community from scratch.

#### **Building a Fanbase for Super League Tampa Bay**

SLTB is looking to build a fanbase through grass roots initiatives over the next 10 months. They currently have no brand markers or attachments but anticipate a team name in the next month. The goal is to cultivate the fanbase through a series of initiatives that tell a story about SLTB. These strategies and initiatives will drive revenue through ticket sales and provide value for

sponsors. The strategies and initiatives are essential to recruit new fans, create buzz and develop a connection to the new team (Dwyer et al., 2015). An early connection to the team can help create loyalty and consumption (Heere & James, 2007). At the point of no team or contest, new franchises that are able leverage their new fans through recruitment incentives, marketing materials to disperse, or through merchandise to display (Davies et al., 2021; Dwyer, et al., 2015).

### **Case Study Questions**

1. What are three initiatives that SLTB can implement to build a fan base. Provide a timeline to implement up until the first game in August 2024. Be specific when examining various demographic profiles.
2. For new leagues/franchises it is important to tell the story of the brand. What can SLTB do to differentiate their brand story?
3. How can SLTB create, develop and cultivate their supporter group?
4. What are some corporate and local sponsorship opportunities that SLTB can leverage?

**The club story:** [Tampa Bay Club Story](#)