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Print Media's Treatment of Corporate-Named Stadiums vs. Historically-Named Stadiums
in Major-League-Baseball Game Stories

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Professional Communication
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Professional Communication

by
Donald Ray Armstrong
December 2004

Dr. John King, Chair
Dr. Jack Mooney
Dr. Theresa Lloyd

Keywords: Stadium, Historical, Corporate, Baseball

ABSTRACT

Print Media's Treatment of Corporate-Named Stadiums vs. Historically-Named Stadiums in Major-League Baseball Game Stories

by

Donald Ray Armstrong

This study examined the use of historical names vs. corporate names of stadiums by newspapers in Major League Baseball Game stories. The study includes a sample of stories from seven major-league teams from the first season that each team played in a corporate-named stadium after playing the preceding year in a historically-named park. A content analysis of 725 newspaper articles was performed. The hypotheses and exploratory questions tested the frequency of use comparing the corporate name to historical name and also examined where in the sports section the names were appearing and where the names were being used in the stories. Also tested was how hometown newspapers of teams were handling the change.

The study found the corporate name was used nearly 70 percent of the time. Thirty percent historical may be a large enough number to concern corporations spending tremendous sums of money on naming rights.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents. Dad, thanks for always listening. It's great to have you not only as a father, but a friend. Mom, not a day passes that I don't think of you. Although you're no longer here, you're forever in my heart. Your positive influence will be with me throughout my lifetime.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Companies spend millions of dollars to attach their names to a sports stadium. The average cost and length of all the current naming rights deals for professional sports teams is \$54.6 million over 19 years, which works out to about \$2.9 million a year.¹ U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, formerly Comiskey Park, and Pac Bell Park in San Francisco are two examples. However, in the case of Pac Bell Park the name was placed on a new stadium. The facility did not have a historic name already attached. In the case of U.S. Cellular Field, the name Comiskey had a storied history with the White Sox. The stadium was renamed in 2003, but was it really? Fans still affectionately refer to the ballpark as Comiskey. Are the Chicago print media and other major papers going along with the name change? In game stories is the park being referred to as Comiskey, U.S. Cellular, or is the name being avoided altogether? U.S. Cellular paid a hefty price (\$68 million over 20 years) to get its moniker on the stadium. Has the investment been worthwhile as far as print media coverage goes?

When corporations buy naming rights for a new stadium it is different than a stadium that has been in a city for years and is a reflection of not only the team that calls it home, but of the city itself. For instance, Riverfront Stadium in downtown Cincinnati on the Ohio River, was home to two professional sports teams for 26 years.² In 1996, a utility company agreed to pay \$6 million over five years to change the name to Cinergy Field. Chicago and Cincinnati are by far not alone. "... Gone also are the Hoosier Dome, Joe Robbie Stadium, and Candlestick Park. Each arena and stadium was linked by name to its city and team as a site in the memories of myriad fans. Remembered by longtime

fans, the structures' names nevertheless fade into sports trivia, corporate advertisements for RCA, ProPlayer, and 3Com in their stead”³

The trend shows no signs of slowing. Boyd stated that as recently as 1990, no NFL or major league baseball stadiums and only two NBA arenas carried corporate names.⁴ Just nine years later, however, 20 NBA arenas, 13 football stadiums, and 13 baseball stadiums have changed or will soon change to carry corporate names. Boyd reported 46 stadiums in major cities once associated with historic names now carry corporate names. Why do the owners of the stadiums agree to the name changes? It is a simple question of economics. Boyd stated that while most deals bring the owners around \$1 million a year, some are far pricier. Pacific Bell is paying \$50 million over 24 years to put its name on San Francisco's new baseball stadium, and Continental Airlines is paying \$29 million over 12 years to rename the Nets' Brendan Byrne Arena in New Jersey. The Lakers, Clippers, and Kings have a deal with Staples that involves \$100 million over 20 years. “As witnessed in the Houston Oilers' recent move to Tennessee, owners have strong enough bargaining positions that they can demand new stadiums or increased revenue: selling the name of the playing space is one way cities can come up with extra revenue”⁵

Does the corporate name have the effect the companies desire? Do people recall the affiliation? Quester and Farrelly conducted a study on the sponsorship association achieved by companies involved in any or all four consecutive Australian Formula One Grand Prix events.⁶ For four years, the researchers conducted pre-and post-event random phone interviews with consumers selected from metropolitan Adelaide, Australia. The study concluded that the more visible a sponsor's name, the better the recall in the

interviews. “Those sponsors whose company or brand names are associated with the main race or whose logos are prominently displayed at the telecast races, fare significantly better than the less viable names.”⁷ If a sports stadium has its name on the facility, then the exposure may be considered to be significant. Quester and Farrelly found that the alliance between the sponsor’s company or brand name and the event “bears little significance to its entertainment value, to the point where respondents do not remember, or else retain information in such an ephemeral way that the memory of the association is lost soon after the event”⁸ If fans attending events in corporate-named stadiums would not recall the name on the stadium simply from attending the event, then it would be expected that corporations would place an emphasis on how much the name is being used in the media. The further reach of media would give the corporations a greater likelihood of getting the name on readers’ minds.

This thesis studies the frequencies that stadiums bearing corporate names but at one time carried historic names are getting those names in game stories in the cities’ major newspaper(s). A content analysis of the game stories of the first season a corporate name was in place is performed and a comparison is made of the frequency the stories use the corporate name as opposed to the historical name.

The study should prove beneficial because of the scarcity of this type of research. The number of sports stadiums with corporate names continues to grow and the companies’ intentions may not be fully realized if the name is not being included in the newspaper coverage of the stadium.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Branding

A primary reason corporations are spending the millions to put their names on the stadiums is to achieve brand recognition. If the name on the stadium helps people become more acquainted with a particular brand, then the thinking goes that sales of the product carrying that brand name will rise. If the brand recognition does not carry the weight the corporations hope, then there is an additional handicap before the newspapers get the chance to leave out or include the name. Pope and Voges conducted a branding study that tested corporate image and awareness by hypothesizing that respondents who believe a company sponsors a sport or sports will have a more favorable image of the company than those respondents who do not believe that the company sponsors a sport or sports.⁹ They also hypothesized that respondents who accurately believe that a company sponsors a sport or sports will have a more favorable corporate image of that company than those respondents who inaccurately believe that a company sponsors a sport or sports.

The researchers used the method of unaided recall, with respondents required to name the sporting code, team, or individual athlete being sponsored. The results led to rejection of both hypotheses. Believing that a brand was involved in sponsorship of sport had no significant relationship with corporate image, nor did it have any significant interaction with either prior use or the brand being evaluated. The researchers found no significant relationship between belief that a company sponsors a sport and the corporate

image respondents hold of that company. They also found no significant relationship between purchase decision involvement and corporate image. “While these findings surprised us, they illustrate that knowledge of sponsorship and how it works as a communications medium is limited.”¹⁰

In addition to the question of how much a brand is associated in the way marketers hope, the success of a brand also plays a major role. Placing the corporate name on a sports stadium creates the potential for that name experiencing the same highs and lows that the sports team experiences. “Perhaps the greatest challenge for the marketer is the fact that sport does not have the consistency that has become a prerequisite for a successful brand which grows steadily and without major trauma. ... In essence, brands say ‘quality guaranteed,’ but the very nature of sport means it can never duplicate this offer, at least at club level.”¹¹

Implanting the corporate name into the nation’s consciousness is no easy task. Household words such as Coke, McDonald’s, and Kleenex did not happen overnight. “Years of marketing and millions of dollars have been spent teaching the public to recognize, understand and embrace those names.”¹² Choosing a name that is easy to remember is also a challenge. PSINet Stadium may not necessarily roll off the tongue. With consumers being bombarded by thousands of brands a day as they watch television, listen to the radio, surf the Internet, and drive to and from work, the name recognition is even more difficult to achieve. “Because the average person can only digest so much information, many of those brands go unnoticed. The challenge for you is to make your brand stand out.”¹³ Placing the name on the corporate stadium is just one way corporations are trying to get their brands to stick in fans’ minds. However, if the name is

a difficult one to recall and because the sports teams playing in the stadium cannot have guaranteed success year after year, then it should be of utmost importance that the corporation is getting the name in the newspaper. An article in a business journal described a conversation between Al Michaels and Dennis Miller from an ABC Monday Night Football game to illustrate the problem of placing a corporate name on a stadium. “ ‘Dennis, you’re always looking for investment advice, I’ll give you some advice,’ the veteran sportscaster said to the comic while spouting off a few ballparks and football stadiums in addition to PSINet that are named for troubled companies trading ‘off the pink sheet.’ ‘As soon as a company gets naming rights for a stadium, start shorting its stock.’ ”¹⁴ Because there are obstacles to the success of the corporate name before it is printed in the paper once, corporations should be especially concerned if the name is not being printed in the sports stories.

Reactions to Name Changes

In the ever-blurring line between sports and sponsorship, newspapers may be avoiding the use of the corporate name altogether or not using it on a consistent basis. When the Denver Broncos’ new stadium was named Invesco Field at Mile High, the Denver Post refused to use the name Invesco. The paper said it would still use Mile High because that was the name people in the region had grown to love over the years. Rowe makes the case for doing so for nostalgic reasons.¹⁵ “We could restore the civic poetry of stadium names – the Boston Garden, the Polo Grounds, Ebbetts Field, Candlestick – in place of the grim commercial realism of Enron Field and 3Com Park, which are the

capitalist equivalents of Stalingrad and Leningrad. Sports writers could decline to use these corporate names, and should.”¹⁶ If a significant number of writers and editors are leaving out the corporate name, then the corporations who paid the millions in hopes of getting that name in print are not getting the most for their dollar.

When the move is announced by the owner of a particular team or stadium that a name change is in the works, then naturally the hometown newspapers will follow with their assessment of the coming name change – particularly if the name change is going to be one from a historically-named stadium to a corporate name. The reactions can be rife with criticism given the fact that the history of the stadium and team are attached to the very name being removed. In 1997, the reaction was particularly charged when Jack Murphy Stadium (where the San Diego Padres and San Diego Chargers played at the time) was set to be renamed Qualcomm Stadium. Qualcomm paid \$18 million to put its moniker on the stadium and the money was used for Super Bowl renovations at “The Murph,” the affectionate nickname given the stadium.¹⁷

Jack Murphy, who died in 1980 of cancer, was a longtime sportswriter and columnist for the San Diego Union. He was largely responsible for major sports coming to San Diego because it was his ambition that led to the stadium being built. San Diego was home only to a minor-league baseball team in the Pacific Coast League before Murphy convinced the city in the '60s to build the stadium.¹⁸ The Chargers, who were playing in Los Angeles at the time, agreed to move into the stadium. In 1969, the Padres were added by Major-League Baseball and made the stadium their home as well.

Because Murphy was not only instrumental in the building of the stadium but also was a sportswriter, the reaction to the name change in sports sections was less than kind.

“Jack Murphy wanted nothing more than to turn this small town into a major league city. And now that it’s big-time, San Diego has forgotten how it got there.”¹⁹

The San Diego sports writers were not the only ones to berate the name change. Reporters from across the country joined the criticism. The following were from the Atlanta-Journal Constitution and the New York Times, respectively. “To the list of stadium-name change atrocities – Candlestick Park to 3Com Park, Riverfront Stadium to Cinergy Field, Joe Robbie Stadium to Pro Player Stadium – add this indignity: Qualcomm Stadium.”²⁰

Did you know that Mets opened the season in San Diego at Qualcomm Stadium? In the sellout to corporate advertising, what’s next? The Ballpark at Microsoft? Would you believe Adidas Field at Yankee Stadium? Or the Swooshdome? Don’t laugh. It’s not funny. But, sadly, it’s probably inevitable. If anyone needs another reason why the image of sports is so money oriented, they have only to glance at the mercenary surrender to naming, or renaming, stadiums in honor of the highest bidder.²¹

The Qualcomm deal saved the citizens of San Diego millions in new taxes. The stadium was expanded to get it ready to host Super Bowl XXXII in 1998 and to keep the NFL Chargers in town. The project totaled \$78 million, \$18 million was paid for by Qualcomm for the naming rights and the other \$60 million in city-guaranteed bonds that will be retired with stadium-generated revenues.²² Despite the savings, a Pittsburgh sportswriter, who was in town covering the first game at Qualcomm Stadium, was not impressed. He ended his article with the following tongue-in-cheek response:

The national anthem has been sung for the last time at Jack Murphy Stadium and 5,000 Qualcomm employees are rapt with attention. . . . The new blue Qualcomm Stadium sign above the scoreboard lights up. Music from “The Natural” disappears in the thunder of fireworks. Hundreds of helium balloons are set free. Jack Murphy is dead. Long live The Q.²³

The reactions were just as uncomplimentary when Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati, home to the Cincinnati Reds, was renamed Cinergy Field. Cincinnati-based Cinergy Energy Corp. paid \$6 million in 1996 for the right to put its name for five years on 27-year-old Riverfront Stadium.²⁴ Steve Brash, a spokesman for the energy company, said the naming allowed the company to reach major markets in the country with that Cinergy name. “ ‘The energy industry is transitioning from a local highly regulated industry,’ Brash said. ‘We want to develop name recognition nationally for the Cinergy name during that transition period.’ ”²⁵ Sportswriter Chris Dickerson summed up his feelings on the move.

I have no problem with corporations buying the rights to have their name on a new stadium. But they should leave established venues alone. I mean I’m embarrassed to buy a ticket to a Red game because it has Cinergy printed on it.²⁶

With the feelings of sportswriters coming through loud and clear whenever a historical name is changed to a corporate name, one may think that the corporations would be hesitant to put their name on a stadium, given the criticism that is sure to follow. However, perhaps the corporations consider the price of criticism is not too high a price to pay when the benefits of getting the name into print, getting it on television, and getting it spoken by fans of the teams are considered.

Marketing

Major sports -- football, baseball, basketball, and to an extent hockey -- in America today are a multibillion dollar global business. Given the dollars at stake, it makes fiscal sense that corporations want their piece of that action by getting their name

out there as much as possible. Sponsorship is the way to get the name spoken and heard. One could argue that naming rights on a stadium is the ultimate sponsorship deal – it never ends for the course of the deal. Placing a name on a single event grabs the attention for that day or a few days but the name on the stadium does not change. The dollars to be made in the sponsorship game are ever-increasing. John Eckel, senior vice president for the sports and automotive marketing firm of Hill and Knowlton, said, “It used to be you’d hang a banner for awareness and that was enough. It has become so much more sophisticated. You must get into the right sponsorship and leverage it properly. Just buying sponsorships is never enough. It’s a \$20-plus billion sponsorship market and 80 percent of that is in sports.”²⁷

Sports marketing has not always been such a lucrative business because sports have not always been so attractive to the advertising dollar. Professional baseball has been a business since the first payment from owner to player was made in the 1800s; but its financial aspects boomed in the 1970s.²⁸ The jump to ultra-finance took so long because of the game’s relationship with the law. Ever since its beginning baseball was exempt from the laws that govern most big business, leaving the owners to rule their teams as they pleased. Players were property of the teams that signed them, bound by something called the reserve clause.²⁹ The reserve clause meant that the annual payment to athletes was a controllable figure. If a player did not like the amount of money his team was offering, his only option was to leave the game. “That was the law, and it applied to everyone.”³⁰

The rules and economics of baseball all changed when the reserve clause was successfully changed in court. Following the change, a baseball player was bound to the

first team that signed him for six years and thereafter was free to offer his services on the open market.³¹ Free agency has ballooned player salaries. In 1976, before the impact of free agency could take effect, the average major league salary was \$51, 500. By 1992, the figure had soared to nearly \$1,087,000.³² While some measures have been taken in recent years in an attempt to curb baseball salaries, the sky is still virtually the limit. In 2004, the team with the highest payroll was the New York Yankees. The Yankees' total payroll for 2004 exceeded \$184 million, with the median salary on the team at \$3.1 million.³³ The higher salaries make sponsorship dollars all the more important. Faced with the task of paying players more, teams were and are faced with the need to get creative in their marketing to maximize the amount of advertising dollars. Advertising in programs, scorecards, and inside stadiums and arenas, teams can add between \$500,000 and \$5 million a year to their budget.³⁴ Teams often put the rights to stadium advertising into packages to sell to advertisers. "The ad for a television or radio station may be part of a package that includes the sale of broadcasting rights. A beer ad could be part of the stadium's deal to sell that product. Or it could be even more complicated."³⁵ In the early '90s, Madison Square Garden had a sponsorship deal with Coke worth seven figures a year. Coke, however, did not just buy a sign. They bought a package that included: the sign, the right to be the only soft drink sold at the Garden, advertising spots on MSG Network, and sponsorship of programs at the Garden.³⁶ The Coca-Cola deal was just one example of the lengths companies will go to get that product name out there. With the name on a stadium, the possibilities are seemingly endless for use of the name. There is no major league stadium named for Coke. However, the name of any corporation could be applied in its place. Fans could say: "We're headed to The Coke to see a game."

Television: “Welcome to Coke Field.” Newspaper: “The Toads dropped the Scorpions in a 5-4 game at The Coke last night.”

The renaming of sports stadiums with corporate titles was not a marketing ploy that happened overnight. The role of advertising in sports has gradually grown into the lucrative market it is today. From beer to athletic shoes to even razors, the advertising campaigns have grown increasingly complex, creative, and expensive.

Miller-Lite beer launched an entire industry (low-calorie beer) with its humorous ads featuring retired athletes wanting a less filling beer that still tasted great. Jack “Hacksaw” Reynolds, “Marvelous” Marv Throneberry, Dwight Clark, Bob Uecker, John Madden, and many others appeared in memorable ads over a decade as Miller-Lite became one of the top-selling beers in America.³⁷

The entire multi-billion dollar athletic shoe industry is a prime example of the effects of sports advertising. “Slogans like ‘Just Do It’ and ‘Life Is Short. Play Hard’ are a part of society’s lexicon. Michael Jordan and Bo Jackson are as responsible for Nike’s prominent cultural status as its financial growth.”³⁸ Nike was the first to create a line of products based solely on the athlete. The Air Jordan is simply the most popular shoe of all time.³⁹

Sports promotions are often used as straightforward sales tools. Gillette introduced its Sensor razor in 1990 and planned to use Super Bowl XXIV as its introductory stage. The target demographic was the male audience, and Gillette spent \$3 million on the Super Bowl commercial purchases and millions more on print support.⁴⁰ “By focusing on America’s premiere event, and supporting the campaign in print, Gillette

sold out its Sensor inventory through February and March following the broadcast. The feedback encouraged Gillette to increase their 1991 shaving budget by 25 percent.⁴¹

All of the promotions boil down to getting a piece of that lucrative sports pie. The consumer is attending or watching televised sports events at an ever-expanding rate. The promotion goal, whether it be a Nike ad, a razor commercial, or a corporate name on the marquee, is to attract the attention of those money-spending fans. A 1993 study showed that America's spectator sports ticket purchases totaled \$6 billion and 4,500 different companies invested \$3.7 billion to sponsor events.⁴² The lucrative business shows no signs of abating. The sponsorship of sports continues to grow.

The springboard for all sports promotions is the competition. Sporting events predictably gather audiences in person and over the airwaves. Broadcasters know that over 130 million people will watch the Super Bowl, thirty billion (yes, billion) total viewers will watch the fifty-two World Cup matches, and Notre Dame will sell every seat (59,075 capacity) at each of its home football games. With so much interest focused on competition, shrewd sponsors pay to identify and interrupt the action to promote their products and services.⁴³

Focus on Stadiums

When a new stadium opens or a historically-named stadium changes to a corporate name, companies have competed with millions of dollars to earn the right to place their name on the facility. The winning company is willing to shell out the most money for that special privilege. But what makes the stadium such a hot commodity? Various factors go into the equation and they all equal more dollars for the city with the stadium.

Local governments are often compelled by sports franchises to subsidize stadiums. They back them financially by diverting so much tax money – public dollars – into the general fund of the stadium. They do so in hopes the sports facility will be a good investment – generating positive economic benefits for the city. An initial argument is that attracting and retaining a major league sports team is a valid end in itself because the team is valuable to local residents, above and beyond any contribution of the sports facility and the team to the local economy.⁴⁴ Chicago residents, for example, who live in the vicinity of US Cellular Field may feel a special connection to the city through the team. The draw of the team may be what keeps them in the city, spending their tax dollars in Chicago. The sports team helps provide an identity to the city, in turn helping to provide an identity to individuals living in the city. “The cultural importance of major league sports teams in American society most assuredly exceeds its economic significance as business.”⁴⁵

The economics of the sports stadium is perhaps the main reason local governments choose to subsidize the arena. The stadium as a worthy investment can, like any other public investment, be broken down into four general categories: direct benefits, indirect benefits, initial costs, and the costs of operation.⁴⁶ Direct benefits are the value consumers attach to the output from the public investment.⁴⁷ Indirect benefits include all of the additional consumption that takes place in response to the generation of any new income in the production of these consumer products.⁴⁸ For example, souvenir sales outside the stadium would fall into the indirect benefit category. Initial costs are the costs included in the construction of the stadium; and the costs of operation are the expenses for maintaining the stadium once it is in operation.⁴⁹ Costs of operation could include

anything from mowing the grass on the field to repainting the lines in the parking lot. If those four criteria are factored in and the stadium is still generating a profit at the desired margins, then it is more likely to be considered a sound public investment.

Another economic reason the local government may want to invest in a stadium is the potential for job creation. Of course, if a city builds a new stadium, then city officials hope it will mean more jobs for the community. Estimates of the impact of professional sports teams and stadiums on local and regional employment vary widely.⁵⁰ In rationalizing public subsidies for a NFL franchise, team owners in Jacksonville, Florida, asserted that their team would pump \$130 million a year into the Jacksonville economy and create 3,000 jobs.⁵¹ Those advocating a subsidy for a new NFL franchise in Baltimore estimated 1,394 new jobs.⁵² The potential for new jobs is definitely there. Construction crews, stadium maintenance crews, stadium vendors, and even souvenir shops outside the stadium will likely create employment. However, some estimates may not be as rosy as stadium proponents project. One report said the job creation in Jacksonville would likely be one-tenth as large as that estimated by the boosters.⁵³

An indicator of the positive effect sports can have on employment can be derived from the example of Indianapolis. In the '80s and '90s, Indianapolis worked to revitalize its downtown, including its sports arenas.⁵⁴ Over that period, the number of people employed in the sports sector in Indianapolis increased by almost 60 percent, ranking the city second among all communities in the United States relative to job growth in this sector.⁵⁵

In addition to job growth, new stadiums are projected to help the local economy through out-of-towners coming to the games and spending money on souvenirs and

concessions. They also are staying at area hotels, shopping at area stores, and eating at local restaurants. Others may argue that the fans coming to see the game may still come to the city for other reasons were the team and stadium not there.

Without public subsidies, private financing is necessary to build and maintain stadiums – thus the need for selling naming rights to stadiums.

The arguments for and against the stadium in regards to community image and economics are still going to be made but without public funding, private money is necessary or the stadium will not become reality. A principal argument becomes should those who care nothing for the sports and will never attend any games be forced to help pay for the stadium with their tax money?

When taxpayers are asked to pay for sports facilities, the economic returns received are far too small for the expenditures to be considered wise investments. The forecasts of hundreds of millions of dollars in new expenditures fail to note that most of these dollars already are in a region's economy. And even if a team relocated, new recreational opportunities might take up most of the slack resulting from a team's absence. Consultants who specialize in corporate locations do not believe that a team's presence or absence affects business locations. Even the intangible benefits generated by teams, though substantial, mean more to fans than nonfans. As such, charging fans more for their seats or charging advertisers more for reaching those fans is a far more equitable way to finance a sports facility.⁵⁶

Regardless of funding means – be it public or private – new stadiums are going to be built and sooner or later the need for new revenue is going to be necessary. Thus, the opportunity for more corporate advertising will be created, up to and including naming rights for stadiums. The corporations are going to spend the millions to get that name out there. With all of that money on the line, whether the media are going to carry that name over to broadcasts and game stories becomes a question worth answering.

Theory of Mere Exposure

Another reason a corporation should care if the corporate stadium name is being used by newspapers (and all media for that matter) stems from what is known as the theory of mere exposure.

The mere exposure effect is a psychological artifact well known to advertisers: people express undue liking for things merely because they are familiar with them. This effect has been nicknamed the “familiarity breeds liking” effect.⁵⁷

The theory would follow that the more exposure we have to a stimulus, the more we would tend to like it. By the mere exposure theory, simply reading the corporate name again and again in the game stories would cause a reader to like the corporate name, in turn causing the reader to like said corporation.

The theory was born in 1968 when R.B. Zajonc showed Chinese characters to people from one to 25 times, asking them to guess the meaning. The more they saw a character, the more positive meaning they gave.

Baker conducted a study to identify the circumstances in which affective conditioning and mere exposure based advertising strategies can directly influence brand choice. Affective conditioning can be thought of as a special case of learning.

“Successful conditioning requires sufficient attention to facilitate associational learning, but it does not require that subjects be aware of that learning or its persuasive effect.”⁵⁸

The study focused on brand recognition of motor oil and toothpaste. In testing brand recognition with equivalent familiarity, the brands where mere exposure was introduced were chosen significantly more than brands without the introduction of mere

exposure. The study was repeated with tighter statistical controls and similar results were reported.

The experiments suggest that an affective conditioning or mere exposure based advertising strategy can directly influence brand choice when the brands benefiting from these effects are competing against alternatives with equivalent familiarity and perceived performance statistics.⁵⁹

If the corporate names are being used in game stories, then it could be argued that the names are breeding familiarity. The familiarity, through mere exposure, would breed a positive impression of the corporation. It would follow that were the historical name still being used, then a positive impression of the historical name may be formed and when the actual name – the corporate name – is used, then it possibly would breed a negative impression of the corporation behind the corporate name.

The concept of the mere exposure theory is relatively simple: Repeated exposure to an object will produce an attitude of greater liking. The mere exposure effect has been studied often when related to advertising. If the effect is deemed important in the advertising field, then the significance grows when being used in the newspaper game stories of teams playing in corporate-named stadiums. Typically, advertising must be purchased by corporations. The corporate name in game stories amounts to free advertising.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This research examined print media's presentation of corporately named stadiums compared to stadiums that once had historical names within Major League Baseball. The goal was to measure any tendency to favor the historical name or the corporate name.

The research aimed, through the use of statistical data, to determine whether the media used the corporate name or the historical name a significant amount of time in the game stories involving teams playing in the corporate-named stadiums. If the study found the historical name used significantly more than the corporate name, then the sponsors may be getting a diminished return on their investment.

A convenience sample of 725 articles was selected for the project among a total of 35 metro newspapers. The newspapers were chosen from LEXIS-NEXIS and only the newspapers that ran game stories on the teams involved were included. The articles were taken from the first season a team was playing in the corporate-named stadium that once had a historical name. Only regular season games were included. The regular season was defined as the period from the first game played after the final spring training game and the last game played before the first postseason game. Spring training, because teams generally play in stadiums other than their home stadium, was not included. Postseason games also were not included because all teams do not make the postseason, thus all teams did not have an equal amount of postseason coverage. Only articles that were actual game stories were included as units of analysis, a breakdown of the action between the two teams competing on the previous day was included. Stories such as preview

articles, player profiles, and personal columns were not included for the purpose of limiting the research. Also, because the study was focused on how newspapers used the stadium names in stories, Associated Press, Reuters, and any stories from wire services were not included unless they appeared in the newspapers used in the study. Excluding stories directly from wire services also avoided over-reporting. Games involving all 30 Major-League Baseball teams were included. No steps were taken to limit the amount of teams included or to limit the appearance of any particular team or city in the study.

Table 1 Teams Included

Team name	Dates of season
Florida Marlins	April 17 1996 -- September 23, 1996
Anaheim Angels	April 3, 1997 – September 28, 1997
Cincinnati Reds	April 2, 1997 -- September 28, 1997
San Diego Padres	April 2, 1997 -- September 28, 1997
San Francisco Giants	April 2, 1998 -- September 29, 1998
Oakland Athletics	April 6, 1999 -- September 30, 1999
Chicago White Sox	April 1, 2003 -- September 25, 2003

The body of stories, the cutlines of photographs, and the placement on the front page or the inside of a newspaper sports section were included. Any references outside of the sports section were not included to focus the study. Magazine or Internet articles also were not included because the study was focused only on newspapers. For reference purposes, the date of the article was included and the research cases were placed in chronological order as they were recorded in the data.

Unit of Analysis

This quantitative study conducted a content analysis using LEXIS-NEXIS and SPSS software as the primary research tools. In order to limit the scope of the study, only newspapers available on LEXIS-NEXIS have been included. In LEXIS-NEXIS only the category of Arts & Sports News and the subcategory (news source) of Sports News were included to limit the number of research articles. Currently, there are 57 newspapers included on LEXIS-NEXIS when choosing these search parameters.

Seven Major-League Baseball stadiums that had undergone a corporate from historical name change as of the 2003 baseball season were included. The stadiums included Miami's Pro Player Stadium, Anaheim's Edison Field, Cincinnati's Cinergy Field, San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium, San Francisco's 3Com Park at Candlestick Point, Oakland's Network Associates Coliseum, and Chicago's U.S. Cellular Field.

Variables

The hypotheses were tested using Chi-square analysis. Independent variables included newspaper name, team name, and city published. Dependent variables include corporate or historical stadium name, page placement, and story placement. A .05 level of significance was used because of the sample size of 745.

Coding

An intercoder reliability test using two coders analyzed 50 research hits to test for intercoder reliability. The coding instruments were Coding Sheet A and LEXIS-NEXIS. The coders analyzed a sample of 48 newspaper game summaries from April 2, 1997, to May 31, 1997, involving the San Diego Padres to test use of the corporate vs. historical name and where (headline, body of story, cutline, section front) the name was being used.

Intercoder Reliability

The percentage of agreement method was used to determine intercoder reliability. Two coders examined 48 identical newspaper stories published in a two-month period in 1997. The time frame coincided with the first two months of the 1997 baseball season.

Disagreement only occurred in three instances. The intercoder reliability was at 93.75%. The name matched 100 percent of the time in all but three cases involving the placement of the name in the body of the story. The three cases were discussed and it was determined that one coder made a mistake on the three cases and did not follow the research definition of what constituted the body of the story and what constituted the lead. The problem was corrected by making sure both coders were interpreting the coding instructions the same way.

Operational Definitions

1. Identifiers

A. Newspaper name

- 1-Springfield State Journal Register (IL).
- 2-USA Today
- 3-The Times Union (Albany, N.Y.)
- 4-Washington Post
- 5-Baltimore Sun
- 6-Capital Times (Madison, WI)
- 7-Charleston Daily News
- 8-Atlanta Journal Constitution
- 9-Boston Globe
- 10-Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
- 11-New York Times
- 12-Seattle Times
- 13-Boston Herald
- 14-Providence Journal Bulletin
- 15-Telegram & Gazette (Worcester, Mass.)
- 16-Charleston Daily Mail (WV)
- 17-Press Enterprise (Riverside, CA)
- 18-San Francisco Chronicle
- 19-The Record (Bergen, NJ)
- 20-The Commercial Appeal (Memphis)
- 21-Tampa Tribune
- 22-Newsday
- 23-Daily News (NY)
- 24-Dayton Daily News (Ohio)
- 25-Tulsa World
- 26-Palm Beach Post
- 27-Denver Post
- 28-The Florida Times Union
- 29-Austin American Statesman
- 30-Ottawa Citizen
- 31-The Gazette (Montreal)
- 32-The Vancouver Sun
- 33-Pittsburgh-Post Gazette
- 34-Calgary Herald
- 35-Washington Times

B. Team Name

1. Chicago White Sox
2. Cincinnati Reds
3. San Francisco Giants
4. San Diego Padres
5. Florida Marlins
6. Oakland A's
7. Anaheim Angels

C. Stadium Name

- | Corporate | Historical |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. US Cellular Field (Chicago) | Comiskey Park |
| 2. Cinergy Field (Cincinnati) | Riverfront Stadium |
| 3. 3Com Park (San Francisco) | Candlestick Park |
| 4. Qualcomm Stadium (San Diego) | Jack Murphy Stadium |
| 5. Pro Players Stadium (Miami) | Joe Robbie Stadium |
| 6. Network Associates Coliseum (Oakland) | Oakland Coliseum |
| 7. Edison International Field (Anaheim) | Anaheim Stadium |

2. Independent variables

D. Stadium name

1. Historical
2. Corporate

E. City published

1. Hometown (where stadium is located)
2. Away city

3. Dependent variables

F. Page placement

1. front
2. inside

G. Story placement

1. lead (in first paragraph of story)
2. buried (anywhere else in story other than first paragraph)
3. cutlines (in text under photograph or graphic)

H. Stadium name

1. Historical
2. Corporate

Limitations of Study

The only newspapers included in the study were those available on LEXIS-NEXIS. A much larger study would be possible using newspapers other than those available on LEXIS-NEXIS. One major limitation was the lack of what were deemed home city newspapers. The only home city paper was the San Francisco Chronicle. A further study could include more home city papers. For instance, in the case of the Chicago White Sox, both Chicago papers – the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun-Times – would be beneficial to include.

Also not included were magazines or Internet articles because the study was interested solely in examining how newspapers were handling the name changes.

The time frame of the study was also a limitation. The only season included was the first year after the name change took place. The trend that papers followed in subsequent seasons would of interest for future research. The tendency could be to honor the corporate name more as the seasons mount since the change from the historical name.

CHAPTER 4

HYPOTHESES AND EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions and hypotheses were formed on expectations gained from the literature review. There were two research questions, two hypotheses, and two exploratory questions tested in the study.

R1: Will the city in which a paper is published have a significant effect on whether a corporate name or historical name is being used in the game story for a professional sports team?

The first research question came directly from the focus of the study. From the literature review, some home city newspapers tended to show an inclination for favoring the historical name even after the stadium had switched to a corporate name. The study examined if this was indeed a trend or simply prevalent in certain cases.

H1: The city where the team was located would use the historical name more frequently.

The literature review provided the basis for the first hypothesis in that it was expected that hometown papers would be less willing to switch to the corporate name in game stories.

The city published was the independent variable and whether the corporate or historical name was the dependent variable.

R2: Are newspapers using the historic name more frequently than they are using the corporate name?

The second research question was developed as a complement to the first. The question broadened the study from a focus on the home cities. The literature review showed widespread disdain from sportswriters for the name changes, regardless of how the names were actually appearing in game stories. Therefore, it became important to test whether this disdain was being significantly exhibited in game stories.

H2: Newspapers are using the historic name more frequently than they are using the corporate name.

Based on the disdain by sportswriters chronicled in the literature review, it was believed that the historical name would be favored over the new corporate name.

The second hypothesis compared frequency; therefore, there was no independent variable.

Exploratory Questions

To expand the study, two exploratory questions were formed. The questions were developed to test name placement within the sports section and name placement within the story. Nothing gained in the literature review gave any expected indication of results regarding this research, so only exploratory questions were formed.

EXPLORATORY QUESTION 1: Are corporate or historical names more frequently used on the front page of the sports section?

The front page was defined as the first page of the sports section. Any other page was considered an inside page.

The independent variable was the corporate or historical name and the dependent variable was the page placement.

EXPLORATORY QUESTION 2: Are corporate or historical names used more frequently in the lead?

The lead was defined as the first paragraph of the story. The name was considered buried if it occurred anywhere else in the story other than the first paragraph.

The independent variable was the corporate or historical name and the dependent variable was the story placement.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Introduction

The results section shows the data obtained when running frequencies and chi square tests involving the different research questions and hypotheses. The quantitative data are matched with each hypothesis to determine if the content analysis supports the hypothesis.

The frequency data are presented first to show an overview of the type of research conducted and to give a general idea of teams, newspapers, and recorded cases.

Frequencies

Stadium Name, City Published, Page Placement, Story Placement, Team Name, Publication Date, and Paper Name were each fulfilled for all 745 mentions of stadium names.

Fifty-six of the cases were in the home city of the baseball team for 7.5 percent and 689 of the cases were not in the home city of the team for 92.5 percent. It should be noted that all 56 of the home cases were in the city of San Francisco from the San Francisco Chronicle. The Chronicle was the home city paper of the San Francisco Giants.

One hundred five of the cases were in the lead (the first sentence of the story) for 14.1 percent. Six hundred nineteen of the cases were buried in the story (not in the first sentence) for 83.1 percent. Twenty-one of the cases for 2.8 percent were found in photo or graphic cutlines. Photos or graphics were counted as any illustrations that were not part of the main story. No headlines or pull quotes were included because no cases were found in headlines or pull quotes.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of each team and how many stadium mentions were found for each team. The Florida Marlins had the most stadium -name mentions with 187 for 25.1 percent. The Anaheim Angels had the fewest with 23 for 3.1 percent. The author did not consider any factors for why one team may have had more cases than another. All of the teams were analyzed following the same 162-game baseball season for the first year the team’s stadium carried the corporate name after having a historical name the season before. The Florida Marlins may have had the most cases because the Palm Beach Post, a Florida newspaper, had the most hits with 133 cases. Further study would be needed to determine any firm connection.

Table 2 Team Name

	Frequency	Percent
Florida Marlins	187	25.1
Cincinnati Reds	158	21.2
San Francisco Giants	135	18.1
Chicago White Sox	97	13.0
Oakland A’s	97	13.0
San Diego Padres	48	6.4
Anaheim Angels	23	3.1

Note: N = 745

Table 3 breaks down the stadium-name total for each of the 35 newspapers included in the study. The Palm Beach Post returned the most cases with 133 for 17.9 percent and the

Baltimore Sun, Charleston Daily Mail, and Vancouver Sun had the fewest cases, each returning only one case for .1 percent each of the study.

Table 3 Paper Name

	Frequency	Percent
Palm Beach Post	133	17.9
San Francisco Chronicle	126	16.9
Dayton Daily News	67	9.0
Daily News (NY)	49	6.6
Tulsa World	48	6.4
New York Times	43	5.8
Atlanta Journal Constitution	24	3.2
Austin American Statesman	22	3.0
Press Enterprise	22	3.0
The Record	21	2.8
Denver Post	17	2.3
Seattle Times	16	2.1
Washington Post	16	2.1
Florida Times Union	15	2.0
The Gazette	15	2.0
Tampa Tribune	15	2.0
Boston Globe	13	1.7
Boston Herald	12	1.6
USA Today	10	1.3
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel	7	0.9
Springfield State Journal	7	0.9
Washington Times	7	0.9
Pittsburgh Post Gazette	6	0.8
Telegram & Gazette	6	0.8
Providence Journal Bulletin	5	0.7
Charleston Daily Mail	4	0.5
The Times Union	4	0.5
Newsday	3	0.4
Ottawa Citizen	3	0.4
Calgary Herald	2	0.3
Capital Times	2	0.3
The Commercial Appeal	2	0.3
Baltimore Sun	1	0.1
Charleston Daily Mail	1	0.1
The Vancouver Sun	1	0.1

Note: N = 745

Table 4 illustrates the results for the first hypothesis: H1: The city in which a paper is published will have a significant effect on whether a corporate stadium name or historical stadium name is being used in the game story for a professional sports team. The home city will be significantly more likely to use the historic name than the not-home city. The home city used the historic name 100 percent of the time. However, the only home city in the study was San Francisco, and only one newspaper was included from that city – the San Francisco Chronicle. In cases where the publication was not in the team’s home city, the historic name was used 164 times for 23.8 percent and the corporate name was used 525 times for 76.2 percent. Again, in Table 8 it is clear the impact of the San Francisco Chronicle on the study. Eighty-three percent of the San Francisco Giants cases used the historic name. The lowest occurrence was with the Florida Marlins; 1.1 percent of cases involving the Marlins used the historic name.

There was not enough significance to support the hypothesis and it should be noted that, despite the fact that the San Francisco Chronicle obviously used the historic name 100 percent of the time in stories about the San Francisco Giants, the corporations shelling out millions for the name change should not rest easy. Throw out the Florida Marlins on the low end, and all other team cases have seen the historic name used at least 15 percent of the time. One would have to question whether US Cellular spent all that money to see cases involving the Chicago White Sox use the historic name 34 percent of the time (Table 4). A similar study with subsequent seasons of the name changes would provide further evidence if the use was a trend or simply attributed to the fact that it was the first season with the new name.

Table 4 Team Name vs. Stadium Name

	Historic	Corporate
San Francisco Giants	113/83.7%	22/16.3%
San Diego Padres	18/37.5	30/62.5
Chicago White Sox	33/34.0	64/66.0
Oakland A's	27/27.8	70/72.2
Anaheim Angels	4/17.4	19/82.6
Cincinnati Reds	23/14.6	135/85.4
Florida Marlins	2/1.1	185/98.9

Note: N = 745, $\chi^2=284.37$, df=6, $p<.01$

Table 5 shows the results for testing the second hypothesis: H2: Newspapers are using the historic name significantly more frequently than they are using the corporate name. In total as illustrated in Table 8, newspapers used the historical name 29.5 percent of the time and the corporate name 70.5 percent of the time. There is not evidence to support the second hypothesis. The fact that nearly 30 percent of the cases used the historic name may be alarming to the corporations paying for the corporate name. Again, the San Francisco Chronicle used the historical name more frequently than any other newspaper. In all cases for the 57 were historical for 45.2 percent and 69 were corporate for 54.8 percent.

Table 5 Paper Name vs. Stadium Name

	Historic	Corporate
Palm Beach Post	5/3.8%	128/96.2%
Denver Post	1/5.9	16/94.1
USA Today	1/10.0	9/90.0
Dayton Daily News	8/11.9	59/88.1
The Gazette	2/13.3	13/86.7
Milwaukee Journal	1/14.3	6/85.7
Washington Times	1/14.3	6/85.7
Boston Globe	2/15.4	11/84.6
Pittsburgh-Post Gazette	1/16.7	5/83.7
Washington Post	3/18.8	13/81.3

Table 5 (Continued)

	Historic	Corporate
Boston Herald	2/16.7%	10/83.3%
Florida Times Union	3/20.0	12/80.0
Providence Journal	1/20.0	4/80.0
Tampa Tribune	3/20.0	12/80.0
New York Times	10/23.3	33/76.7
Atlanta Journal Const.	6/25.0	18/75.0
Charleston Daily Mail	1/25.0	3/75.0
The Times Union	1/25.0	3/75.0
Seattle Times	4/25.0	12/75.0
Daily News	13/26.5	36/73.5
Telegram & Gazette	2/33.3	4/66.7
The Record	8/38.1	13/61.9
Springfield State Jour.	3/42.9	4/57.1
San. Fran. Chronicle	57/45.2	69/54.8
Austin Amer. States.	11/50.0	22/50.0
Capital Times	1/50.0	1/50.0
Press Enterprise	16/72.7	6/27.3
Tulsa World	47/97.9	1/2.1
Baltimore Sun	1/100.0	0/0.0
Charleston Daily (WV)	1/100.0	0/0.0
Commercial Appeal	2/100.0	0/0.0
Calgary Herald	2/100.0	0/0.0
Newsday	0/0.0	3/100.0
Ottawa Citizen	0/0.0	3/100.0
Vancouver Sun	0/0.0	1/100.0

Note: $N = 745$, $\chi^2 = 235.867$, $df = 34$ $p < .01$

Exploratory Question 1 asked: Are corporate or historical names more frequently used on the front page of the sports section?. The historic name appeared on the front page of the sports section 88 times for 40 percent of the cases and 132 times on an inside sports page for 60 percent of the cases. The corporate name was on the front page 317 times for 60.4 percent of cases and 208 times on an inside page for 39.6 percent of the cases. The first exploratory question found there was no significant difference regarding placement of the names.

Table 6 illustrates the findings for the second exploratory question. EQ2: Are corporate or historical names used more frequently in the lead? The historic name appeared in the lead 28 times for 12.7 percent, buried in the body of the story 189 times for 85.9 percent, and in cutlines or graphics three times for 1.4 percent. The corporate name was in the lead 77 times for 14.7 percent, buried in the story 430 times for 81.9 percent, and in cut lines or graphics 18 times for 3.4 percent. By far, the majority of the total uses were buried in the stories. However, there was no significant difference between the placements of corporate names vs. historical names.

Table 6 Stadium Name vs. Story Placement

	Lead	Buried	Cut lines
Corporate	105/14.7%	430/81.9	18/3.4
Historic	28/12.7%	189/85.7	3/1.4
Note: N =	745, $\chi^2=3.06$, $df=2$, $p<.001$		

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Summary of Results

Out of the 745 cases in the study, 525 cases for 70.5 percent used the corporate name. The historic name was used in 220 of the total cases for 29.5 percent. Fifty-six of the cases were in the home city of the baseball team for 7.5 percent and 689 cases were not in the home city for 92.5 percent. For story placement, 105 cases were in the lead for 14.1 percent, 619 of the cases were buried for 83.1 percent, and 21 cases were found in cut lines for 2.8 percent.

Seven teams were included in the study, with the Florida Marlins having the most cases with 187. The Marlins' cases accounted for 25.1 percent of the study. The Anaheim Angels were the smallest part of the study with 23 cases for 3.1 percent.

The first hypothesis tested whether the city published would have a significant effect on whether the corporate or historical name was used. The home city used the historic name 100 percent of the time. However, the only home city was San Francisco, with the San Francisco Chronicle being the only home city paper. In cases where the publication was not in the home city, the historic name was used 164 times for 23.8 percent and the corporate name was used 525 times for 76.2 percent. The hypothesis was not statistically significant. A further study with more home cities included would be useful.

The second hypothesis tested whether newspapers are still using the historic name significantly more frequently than they are using the corporate name. The San Francisco Chronicle used the historical name more frequently than any other newspaper. In all cases for the San Francisco Chronicle, 57 were historical for 45.2 percent and 69 were corporate for 54.8 percent. In total, newspapers used the historical name 29.5 percent of the time and the corporate name 70.5 percent of the time. Nearly 30 percent of the cases used the historical name. The second hypothesis was not supported

The first exploratory question tested if there was a significant difference in the use of the corporate vs. historical name on the front page of the sports section vs. the inside pages of the sports section. The historic name was used on the front page 88 times for 40 percent and 132 times on an inside page for 60 percent of the cases. The corporate name was on the front page 317 times for 60.4 percent and 208 times on an inside page for 39.6 percent. There was a significant difference regarding placement of the name when taken as a whole. The names appeared a significant amount of time on the inside pages. This result could be explained because often other sports events may have taken precedence for the front page of the section. However, there was no significant difference between corporate vs. historical names in placement.

The second exploratory question tested if there was a significant difference in where the corporate name was appearing regarding story placement (in the lead or buried in the story) and whether it was being used in cut lines for photos/graphics. The historic name appeared in the lead 23 times for 12.7 percent, buried in the body of the story 189 times for 85.9 percent, and in cut lines three times for 1.4 percent. The corporate name was in the lead 77 times for 14.7 percent, buried 430 times for 81.9 percent, and in cut

lines 18 times for 3.4 percent. When taken as a whole, there was significant difference for story placement with the names being used significantly more buried in the story than in the lead. However, there was no significant difference between story placements of corporate vs. historical names.

The study offers insight into the way the names of major league ballparks are being used by sportswriters in game stories. The sampling of newspapers provides a glimpse at how the historical name is sometimes still being relied upon as the identity of a given stadium. The corporate name was definitely not exclusively in use and the corporations with all of the money on the line could be expected to want exclusive use. They did not fork out the millions to have US Cellular Field still be called Comiskey in print.

The study is an important one because the corporate-name on stadiums is a trend that is not fading; it continues to see explosive growth. Two more new ballparks opened in 2004 with corporate names: Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia is now where the Phillies call home and PETCO Park in San Diego now houses the Padres. The St. Louis Cardinals will open a new park in 2006 and the New York Mets, New York Yankees, Oakland A's, Minnesota Twins, and Florida Marlins are all in various stages of developing proposals for new parks.⁶⁰ Corporate names likely will be attached to any of the new stadiums when they open and the sky seems to be the limit for the number of millions paid to name the stadiums.

The most important finding was that newspapers were still using the historical name almost 30 percent of the time. That finding should be of extreme importance to corporations that have already placed the name on the stadium or corporations

considering the possibility of placing a company name on the stadium. The fact that the San Francisco Chronicle used the historic name in all of its stories regarding the San Francisco Giants in 3Com Park should be taken into consideration. Still, the results should be taken seriously even if the Giants are excluded from the study. There may be evidence of a desire by some sportswriters and newspapers to defy the new name and use the historical name. While the list of historically-named stadiums continues to shrink, there are still some around and there always exists the possibility that they too will one day have corporate names. A study such as this one should be of use to any company considering putting its name over the historical one.

Suggestions For Future Research

During the course of the study, a number of additional study ideas came to light. There are several additional possibilities for modifying and expanding the study to further the research.

First, the study took a lot of direction from a thesis written by Gerald Johnson from Louisiana State University. The thesis conducted a similar study using NFL stadiums. A suggestion for future research would be to expand the focus to another major sport such as the NBA or possibly even the NHL. Sports such as golf or auto racing could also be studied with a different approach. Golf and racing have corporate names on individual events. College football bowl games could also be studied in this manner as they also have corporate names for individual events. The study could focus on whether the corporate name for individual events is being used in print stories about the events.

The research could be furthered by expanding the search field. For instance, more newspapers than just those available on a particular search engine could be included. A suggestion would be to include all hometown newspapers of teams that have switched from a historically-named stadium to a corporate name. The only hometown paper included in the study was the San Francisco Chronicle and one paper was not enough to give an accurate portrayal of how hometown papers handled the change. One possibility would be to include the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun-Times for the first season that Comiskey Park was US Cellular Field.

Another suggestion would be to broaden the study to include other media. A study of only online publications may be beneficial. With an ever-increasing amount of the general population receiving their news from television and online sources, that type of study grows increasingly credible. Magazines could also be included in a broader study.

An important follow-up study would be to include future seasons other than the first season that the park carried a historical name. That is a limitation of this study – only the first season was included. It is possible that newspapers grow more accustomed to using the corporate name in subsequent seasons. It would be suggested to conduct the same type of study but to include all seasons after the corporate name was put in place.

Also, an interesting study would be to examine corporate-named stadiums that have changed to different corporate-named stadiums. Are the old companies still getting their name in stories when a different corporate name is now on the stadium? The most recent example of a change somewhat along these lines is in San Francisco. The San Francisco 49ers, an NFL franchise, announced a change for their stadium effective Sept. 28, 2004. Monster Cable Products Inc. signed a 4-year agreement to change the stadium's

name to Monster Park in a deal worth approximately \$3 million each for the team and the city of San Francisco.⁶¹

The history of the park's name is convoluted and would possibly make an interesting study by itself. The city-owned stadium was originally named Candlestick Park and was called 3Com Park from 1996 to 2001 (the corporate name that was in effect for this study). However, when the 3Com deal expired, the name reverted to Candlestick Park.⁶² The San Francisco Giants left the park when Pacific Bell Park (now SBC Park) opened in 2000. So, the 49ers have been the sole professional sports team using the stadium since 2000. The variety of stadium name changes in San Francisco over the past decade could possibly be the basis for some type of study on how the media reacted to the various changes.

The possibilities are seemingly endless for conducting this type of research and there still is relatively little research in the area. The marriage between sports and corporate advertising grows stronger by the year and the amount of money at stake continues to expand. Corporations should be highly interested in any further research to ensure the billions spent on corporate advertising are being used wisely.

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APPENDIX
Coding Sheet

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