

# St. Louis Cardinals Marketing Strategy Proposal

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### **A. Executive summary**

We were assigned to create a marketing strategy for single ticket sales for Gen Z customers for St. Louis Cardinals. We focused on Males aged 18-26, Female college students aged 18-22, and working Females ages 23-26. We recommend the following strategies, for the product strategy creating a fun area where Gen Z can gather and spend time with people in a similar age group. Additionally, creating a Girl's Night Out Night could increase Gen Z attendance. The goal is to have 5,000 Gen Z attendees per game on specific dates that aren't in high demand. Another strategy would be partnering with college universities within 25 miles and or corporations to give Gen Z a stress-free event. This could include providing students with a discounted ticket rate and reliable transportation could increase attendance. A partnership with Uber would allow Gen Z to get to and from the game safely. A partnership with Ballpark Village could benefit the Cardinals as well as the surrounding areas. Ballpark Village could host pre/post-game activities that could include trivia, Virtual Reality, and various food options. The next strategy we recommend is implementing the use of social media. Allowing Gen Z the interact online creates inclusivity making Gen Z want to come back to Busch Stadium. At certain events, Gen Z also would have the ability to submit recommendations and participate in surveys. This could include contests that give Gen Z the opportunity to submit their edited highlights from Busch Stadium or Ballpark Village. Our goal would be to sell 402,894 tickets for the 2024 season.

**B. Purpose:** The purpose of this report is to create a marketing plan for single-game tickets targeting the Gen Z demographic.

## C. SWOT

### S. W. O. T. Analysis

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Busch Stadium has a fun crowd and high-energy</li><li>• Busch Stadium offers a variety of food and beverages throughout the game</li><li>• Ballpark Village is a major asset for the pre-post experience</li></ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• tickets are expensive</li><li>• low usage of social media by the Cardinals</li><li>• limited financial resources</li></ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Audiences becoming closer to brands through online communication tactics such as social media</li><li>• Online influencers collaborating with large companies</li><li>• Attention of Gen Z is focused on short form video platforms such as TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels</li></ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alternative forms of entertainment are cheaper</li><li>• Gen Z is less interested in watching baseball</li></ul>

## D. Situational Analysis

The St. Louis Cardinals find themselves at a crucial juncture as they seek to engage and attract the Gen Z audience. The following analysis delves deeper into the team's current situation, building upon the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) previously identified.

### Strengths

- **Engaging Crowd:** Busch Stadium is known for its lively and high-energy crowd, which can be a significant strength in attracting younger fans. But it's important to consider whether this energy truly resonates with Gen Z or if adjustments are needed to match their preferences.
- **Food and Beverage Variety:** Offering a wide variety of food and beverages throughout the game is an advantage, as it aligns with Gen Z's desire for diverse and unique experiences.

## Weaknesses

- Ticket Pricing: Ticket pricing can be a barrier for Gen Z due to some being college students or just working to build their income.
- Limited Appeal to Gen Z: The Cardinals face challenges in attracting Gen Z due to the lack of tailored experiences that cater to this generation. The current focus on promotions doesn't effectively engage this audience of Gen Z as they are mostly promoted on platforms such as television instead of TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, etc.

## Opportunities

- Social Media Communication Tactics: With other large brands communicating to their audience through social media, it would be smart for the St. Louis Cardinals to start focusing more of their efforts into their social media platforms to reach more people. The Cardinals can follow trends and answer comments to interact with their community.
- Influencer Collaboration: Large brands are partnering with online influencers to bring that designated person's audience closer to the brand's products and services. The Cardinals could partner with an internet celebrity that has a sports personality that can match their needs to bring a new audience of Gen Z into the world of St. Louis Cardinals baseball.
- Short-Form Content: Ever since the social media platform TikTok became popular back in 2019, Gen Z's attention span has become shorter due to the intake of videos that last for only less than a minute long. This has made other platforms create their own form of short-form content such as Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. Because of this, the attention of Gen Z is mostly on these platforms which is why it would be smart for the St. Louis Cardinals to start making more short-form content on TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels for the different audiences of Gen Z to see. This would create more brand awareness for the Cardinals and videos that would show the experience of watching the games would create an incentive for Gen Z to want to go to a game themselves.

## Threats

- Changing Interests: Gen Z's interests may not align with traditional baseball watching. Understanding and adapting to these changing interests is vital for the team's success in attracting this demographic.

## E. Marketing Objectives

- 1) By October 1, 2024, 2,000 additional tickets per game will be sold to Gen Z buyers for the following home game dates of the 2024 season: April 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24; May 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26; June 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30; July 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; August 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29; September 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.
- 2) At the end of the season on September 29, 2024, have a total of 402,894 single-game ticket sales through only Gen Z in a regular season, averaging 5,000 single ticket sales per game.
- 3) By October 1, 2024, there will be a 30% increase in engagement (followers, likes, comments) from the St. Louis Cardinals' current engagement (5,000-50,000 likes a post, 100,000-200,000 views a post, 200-300 comments a post) throughout all social media platforms.

## **F. Primary Markets**

### **Primary Markets**

Gen Z individuals aged 18-26 who live, work, or attend college within 25 miles of Busch Stadium.

The Primary Markets are:

1. Male college students within 25 miles of Busch Stadium, 18-26
2. Female college students within 25 miles of Busch Stadium, ages 18-22
3. Working females ages 23-26 within corporations

## **G. Strategies**

### **a. Branding Strategy**

- Segmentation and Targeting: Understanding the segments within the target market is crucial. For example, Gen Z females and university students from around the area will have different needs.

- Maintaining Brand Presence: Since the Cardinals are well established, the primary focus should be on strengthening the existing brand presence. This means consistent branding throughout the company. This includes marketing and fan engagement.

- University Students from nearby colleges (e.g., SIUE, SLU): Since these students may not have a lot of connections to the Cardinals team, an effective goal should be to create brand preference. Through the following strategies:

- Tailored marketing: Customize marketing messages to highlight the Cardinals as a unique St. Louis experience, promoting the team's history, culture, and fan engagement.

- Community Engagement: Highlight the Cardinals' role in the community and their charitable actions through community events.

### **b. Product Strategy**

- Target Audience: The main target audience is single-game tickets. The dates would be focused on specific dates where seat capacity is more available. This would be for the games that aren't in high demand. These would be games that are Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday at night. Most of the time Wednesday games are during the day due to traveling.
- Seating Location: For Gen Z and socialization reasoning, placing Gen Z in sections where they can easily interact with other members of Gen Z would be beneficial. This wouldn't need to be the closest seat. This would be for the games that aren't in high demand.
- Creating a new designated area in the now Budweiser Terrace called the "F.R.I.E.N.D.S Zone" would benefit the Gen Z generation. This space would de-emphasize alcohol and be made to look more like "Central Park" with a few overstuffed (weatherproof) sofas, coffee drinks, and some screens to shade the area. There could be air conditioning units as well as heaters when needed.
- Defining the Experience: It's very important that the experience is engaging and fun for Gen Z. To accomplish this, there can be backdrops and photobooths around the stadium for people to take photos of and post online for others to see. The mascot can also walk around the stadium for people to find and take photos with. Additionally, this could also enhance their social media platform by tagging the Cardinals' social media accounts. This will create more publicity as Gen Z will be posting more about their experience online.
- Collaborate with universities: Partner with universities to create exclusive events and transportation to the games. These universities should be in a range of 25 miles from Busch Stadium so there is a collective environment of excitement for the St. Louis Cardinals.
- Enhancements: Enhancing the Cardinal's activities and entertainment in the stadium beyond the game itself, such as live music, interactive fan zones, and various food options.

- Ballpark Village Collaboration: The Cardinals could coordinate with Ballpark Village to offer pre-game and post-game activities and entertainment options for Gen Z. Creating contests like trivia games on mobile devices would create a more interactive environment for Gen Z in Ballpark Village. An example would be scanning a QR code on the ballpark screen to participate in trivia that would be displayed on that same screen. This would allow for more participants to be involved. Additionally, Virtual Reality would be a wonderful way to create interactive experiences for Gen Z. Creating a Virtual Reality environment that has to do with the user being placed onto the Busch Stadium field and playing in a game for the Cardinals can create some excitement and word-of-mouth marketing on how unique the experience is.
- Gen Z Female Cardinals Fans: These fans can be segmented into events such as "girl's night out." To achieve this:
  - Cardinals can engage them with event offers and highlight the unique experiences Cardinals games can provide for their events.
 The goal is for females to have an enjoyable experience at the game.

### c. **Pricing Strategy**

Increasing Ticket Sales at Current Margins:

- Offer social media contest that result in post-game meet and greets.
- Partner with colleges for student discounts.
- Increasing Margin Dollars Per Ticket Sold:
- Offer premium experiences and seating options.
- Personalize offers based on fan preferences.

### d. **Distribution/SCM Strategy**

Ensuring Safe Transportation to/from Busch Stadium:

- Public Transportation Partnership with St. Louis Public Transit System: The Cardinals should be encouraging people to take public transportation by providing information on their website and social media accounts. Having a special promotion available through colleges from mid-April to mid-May where students who buy a ticket can ride the Metro to/from the game for \$1. Additionally, you could trade this benefit for ad space on Metro buses and trains that serve lines near college campuses.
- Rideshare Services: Assist ride-sharing businesses by arranging pick-up and drop-off locations close to the stadium. Provide Gen Z ticket holders with perks like discounts. The rides could begin one hour after the end of the game and pick up Gen Z if they go to a post-game party at Ballpark Village.

Ticket Delivery to Gen Z Buyers:

- Ticket Alerts: The Cardinals should implement a mechanism that sends updates via the app to Gen Z fans regarding future games, ticket availability, and promotions.
- In-Stadium Connectivity: High-speed Wi-Fi and reliable cell phone service should be available everywhere throughout Busch Stadium. Fans of Generation Z would be able to use their mobile tickets and post about their experiences on social media thanks to this.

### e. **IMC Strategy**

Social Media: It's crucial to focus marketing efforts on social media platforms that members of Gen Z are on. To promote single-ticket sales and reach Gen Z customers, take advantage of social media platforms and customized advertising. For ticket advertising, the Cardinals should concentrate on using Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat.

- Spreading awareness of the different highlights throughout the baseball games through social media to give the consumer who is on the fence an idea of what the experience will be like (for example the audience yelling and screaming, giving out t-shirts to audience members, a big moment a player had during the game, etc.)

- Edit Highlight Content: The Cardinals should encourage fans to produce and share their own content that highlights their experiences attending games. The Cardinals could promote competitions through hashtags specifically to encourage Gen Z fans to submit their experiences at Busch Stadium games.

- Persuading Ambivalent Buyers:

- Highlight Experiences: Showcase the unique experiences and atmosphere at Cardinals games. Use the Gen Z generation to create content and show why Gen Z should become part of the Cardinal Community and attend Busch Stadium. This would also spread awareness.

- Utilizing Bally Sports Broadcast:

- The Bally Sports broadcasts may not be the primary source for Gen Z, however, social media campaigns throughout the broadcasts can help this gap. The Cardinals should utilize online interaction to point fans to social media platforms for special deals and competitions.

- Message Strategy

- Think: Gen Z should be encouraged to attend Cardinals games and participate in key components of St. Louis culture and as fun social occasions.

- Feel: They need to be experiencing joy and enthusiasm. It's crucial to guarantee their comfort as well. They will be able to have a sense of belonging to the Cardinals fan base thanks to this.

- Do: Encourage and motivate Generation Z to get tickets, go to games, and post about their experiences on social media. This will be implemented by creating new events that connect Gen Z with the Cardinals. Cardinals will work to implement new events and competitions to allow Gen Z no other option but to purchase a ticket. The Cardinals can post fans' Highlight content in order to show experiences and create more involvement.

- Segmenting Gen Z:

- It's important to recognize and understand the differences within Gen Z segments (college graduates, college students, non-college students) and adjust messages to their specific preferences. For instance, discounts intended just for college students might be well-received by them, but luxury experiences might be valued more by recent grads.

## **H. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the goal of this marketing strategy is to appeal to Generation Z by examining the St. Louis Cardinals' advantages, addressing their disadvantages, considering their opportunities, and lowering their risks. With definite goals and a situational analysis, the plan aims to boost Gen Z attendance and social media engagement.

Cardinals can make use of a plan that caters to Gen Z preferences, a targeted market, and an effective branding strategy. The goal of maintaining current pricing and distribution techniques is to enhance the fan experience.

The focus of the integrated marketing communications strategy is on social media and raising awareness through the Cardinals' distinctive features.

In summary, this marketing strategy offers the St. Louis Cardinals a clear way to engage with Generation Z, guaranteeing the team's success in an engaging environment for the younger generation.

Strategy Category	Strategy Description	Gen Z Market Segment	Structural/Tactical Activities to carry out the strategy	Target Date for Completion
Branding	Create an environment in the stadium that encourages more socialization	Gen Z Male/Females from the age range of 18-22 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customizing marketing messages on social media for Gen Z. This could include highlighting the team's history</li> <li>- Social Media platforms could also highlight the Cardinal's achievement</li> <li>- Community Engagement efforts which would show why Gen Z should come to Cardinal games</li> </ul>	· October 1st, 2024
Product Strategy	Make tickets that target college students and are easily accessible through the Cardinal's websites	College students, individuals aged 18-22 that attend college within 25 miles of Busch Stadium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increasing the number of sales for single-game tickets for Gen Z.</li> <li>-New Seating Location</li> <li>-create a website that offers nearby College discounts</li> <li>-Creating a new designated area in the now Budweiser Terrace called the "F.R.I.E.N.D.S Zone" would benefit the Gen Z generation. This space would de-emphasize alcohol and be made to look more like "Central Park" with a few overstuffed (weatherproof) sofas, coffee drinks, and some screens to shade the area.</li> <li>- Adding air conditioning units</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development and approval of "F.R.I.E.N.D.S Zone" October 1, 2024</li> <li>2. Collaborating with Universities by October 1, 2024</li> <li>3. Creation of a new menu, interactive games, and photo booth prompts August by 30th, 2024</li> <li>4. Approval of Collaborating with Ballpark Village October 1, 2024</li> <li>5. Create a website that allows college students discounts and access to pre/post game events</li> </ol>



			<p>as well as heaters when needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborating with Universities by creating easy transportation and exclusive events.</li> <li>- Collaborating with Ballpark Village by implementing new and interactive games and social media competitions</li> <li>- Photo booths could encourage fans to tag the Cardinals and enhance awareness and attendance</li> <li>- Defining a fun experience and offering enhancements such as live music/ karaoke</li> </ul>	
Product Strategy	Create an environment at Busch Stadium that targets females in Gen Z for a welcoming night out	College Females 18-22 and working females 23-26	- Cardinals can engage them with event offers, and highlight the unique experiences	1. Create Trivia/Virtual Reality games related to Gen Z females in this age group by October 1, 2024

Pricing Strategy	Increase Ticket Sales at Current Margin/Increase Margin Dollar Per Ticket Sold	All Genders Gen Z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer premium experiences and seating options</li> <li>- Offer social media contests that result in post-game meet-and-greets</li> <li>- Partner with colleges for student discounts</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalize Partnership with colleges by October 1, 2024</li> <li>2. Hire a social media team by August 1, 2024</li> <li>3. Send surveys out to gain knowledge about Gen Z by November 1, 2024</li> <li>4. Get discounts approved for colleges by September 1, 2024</li> </ol>
Distribution/SCM Strategy	Collaborate with transportation services and create an environment for High-speed Wi-Fi	All of Gen Z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partner with transportation services such as a public bus and make a deal to give St. Louis Cardinals fans a discount before a game</li> <li>- Partner with rideshare services such as Uber or Lyft to give fans a discount when asking for a ride that ends with a destination close to the stadium</li> <li>- Pay for reliable internet providers who can give High-Speed Wi-Fi for fans to use throughout their experience at the stadium</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalize a deal with public transportation by March 28, 2024</li> <li>2. Finalize deal with rideshare services such as Uber or Lyft by March 28, 2024</li> <li>3. Get new High-Speed Internet established in Busch Stadium by October 1, 2024</li> </ol>

## **Evaluation and Control**

To evaluate the number of tickets being sold to Gen Z for each game, the Cardinals should check the statistics of the people who bought the tickets and check their age through their date of birth. Since every person has to make an account on the Cardinals' website, the Cardinals will have the data to see how old each person is and if they are meeting their target market of people who are age 18-26 years old. They should check this around 2 weeks before every game to see if the targeted demographics are being reached. The goal is to sell an average of 5,000 tickets per game to Gen Z by October 1, 2024, so if the Cardinals do not hit that goal, they should adjust by spending more money on advertising through social media and locally at nearby colleges to further attract the attention of Gen Z. This would be included with the goal to sell an additional 2,000 tickets per home game in the 2024 season. If there are not more sales happening for home games, the Cardinals should consider other tactics of promotion such as collaborating with an online influencer.

For the 30% increase in online engagement by October 1, 2024, the Cardinals should look at their data received from each social media platform they have their presence in. There is an analytics portion on each platform that can tell you how many people are viewing your content, liking it, and sharing it. The analytics also go in depth to tell the user what percentage of gender is watching their content. The Cardinals can compare their analytics each week from when they started and see if there is any organic growth. The progress should still be slight as the Cardinals have a large timeframe of when they need this goal completed. If the Cardinals do not see an increase in growth in one of the weeks, they should do further research to discover what trends are going on that are popular and what all of the attention is on online so they can capture even a portion of that audience.

## **Branding Strategy**

In Branding Strategies, effectively targeting the right group is very important. The Cardinals can keep track of how well they are doing by looking at numbers and comparing previous years. The goal of the branding strategy is to get more people engaged and involved. The Cardinals could have the University that they've partnered with take surveys on a variety of questions related to Busch Stadium and after the game take the same survey. This would allow the Cardinals to see where they can improve and make changes.

It's important to make sure feedback is given to the Cardinals from the Gen Z generation. This way Cardinals can attract the Gen Z generation and ensure lasting relationships with this generation. Key Performance indicators are crucial to track progress in terms of evaluation. A great way to determine this for product strategy would be to see ticket sales volume. In terms of social media looking at the number of followers/likes would show how successful the strategy is.

## **Product Strategy**

To increase single-ticket sales it's important to have an effective Product Strategy. Partnering with Ballpark Village and nearby colleges to offer a better experience overall, offering premium experiences and seating options, personalize offers based on fan preferences, and offer social media contests that result in post-game meet-and-greets. Throughout these events, surveys could be offered for additional feedback. Surveys will allow the Cardinals real data to base from. For those who participate in the survey, they can be placed into a giveaway.