

Customer for Life: Leveraging Fan Data to enhance Engagement & Sponsorship at swiss unihockey

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Thesis advisor : Adrian Stettler

Expert : Prof. Dr. Bastian Widenmayer

Industrial partner : swiss unihockey, Ittigen

Floorball (Unihockey) as a niche sport enjoys a passionate and growing fan base. Swiss unihockey, as the responsible federation, still faces untapped potential in marketing and sponsorship due to low media presence and fragmented revenue streams. This thesis addresses this gap and examines how digital innovations and data analytics can enhance fan understanding, long-term retention, and sponsorship value.

Introduction and Objectives

Floorball is a popular sport to play in Switzerland, but swiss unihockey is financially overshadowed by major sports such as football. The federation has a dedicated community but has only been able to exploit this potential to a limited extent commercially. This thesis analyzes the digital customer landscape by leveraging the central platform for digital fan engagement – the swiss unihockey Hub. The Hub creates opportunities to understand who the fans are, how they behave online, and where unused potential lies in terms of engagement, monetization, and sponsor visibility. Strategic recommendations will help convert fans into loyal supporters in the long term and increase the sport's appeal to sponsors to ensure sustainable growth.

Research Design

I chose a mixed-methods approach. Literature established the conceptual foundation for sports marketing, including fan relationship management, segmentation, and sponsorship in niche sports. I then conducted a quantitative analysis using exclusive data from the swiss unihockey Hub. Important key performance indicators (KPIs) were defined from app usage, ticketing, and streaming data to segment the fan base. I also conducted expert interviews with sponsorship specialists to validate the findings and the strategic direction.

Results

Swiss unihockey has built a digital fan base of over 80,000 registered users. Around 80% follow at least one team, and more than half have activated push notifications. Especially teenagers show high engagement, with 70% opting in for updates. User activity varies: a small group is highly involved and creates most content, while many use the app passively. This offers clear potential to increase engagement through personalized messaging. After introducing a payroll in live streaming games in late 2024, livestream views dropped by over 40%. By spring 2025, average numbers had recovered around the previous levels, showing resilience and willingness to pay for access. Ticketing and payment data highlight that most fans buy single tickets or streams. This supports ideas like targeted bundles, discounts for return users, or loyalty rewards to increase retention. The developed dashboard helps identify patterns and supports swiss unihockey in managing its fan base more strategically.



Nicolas Gottier
nicolas.gottier@bluewin.ch

Implications and Recommendations

The study proposes a segmented fan engagement strategy. Swiss unihockey should implement customized actions for each fan group to foster deeper involvement. Especially the large group of passive users can be activated step by step through personalized incentives. At the same time, fan data enables the development of targeted, data-backed sponsorship offers. The dashboard supports this by tracking fan activity and sponsoring KPIs in real time. The “digital customer for life” approach combines ongoing, personalized engagement for fans (B2C) with data-driven, transparent visibility for sponsors (B2B), boosting both long-term fan loyalty and the commercial attractiveness of the sport.

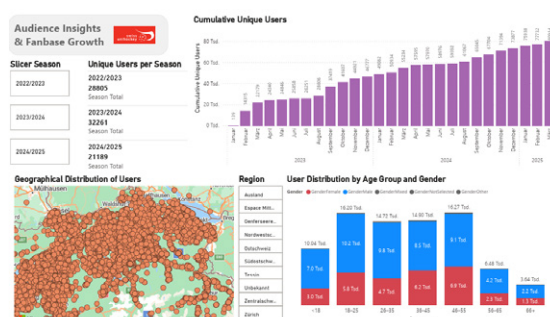


Figure 1: Audience Insights and Fan Base Growth of swiss unihockey Hub