

7205MKT Brand Strategy & Management

Assignment 2: Brand Audit

Queensland Weightlifting Association

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1. Introduction

Weightlifting is an Olympic sport that is practiced all over the world. The sport was included in the Olympics for men in the 1896 games, and for women in the Sydney 2000 Olympics. The first Australian team to compete in Olympic Weightlifting was sent to London in 1948 (Weightlifting, 2021). Over the past seventy years, the sport has become more streamlined and accessible for Australian athletes. The Australian Weightlifting Federation has a subsidiary in every state and territory, such as the Queensland Weightlifting Association (AWF History, 2021). The Queensland Weightlifting Association has over thirty affiliated weightlifting clubs throughout the state where aspiring lifters can train with coaches to perfect the snatch and clean and jerk (QWA Home, 2021). The oldest surviving club is the Sunshine Coast Weightlifting Club, established in 1970 in Nambour, and the Queensland Weightlifting Association is located in the Cougars Weightlifting Club in Chandler (Sunshine Coast Weightlifting Club, 2020; Cougars Club history, 2019). Despite weightlifting being a recognised sport since 1948, the Queensland Weightlifting Association was officially branded in 1997. Previously, the QAWA handled Queensland's weightlifting teams.

Currently, Australian athletes tend to only use weightlifting for conditioning, and don't consider it to be a sport itself. The Queensland Weightlifting Federation experiences severe indirect competition. Sports like rugby league and union, Aussie Rules, netball, swimming, and soccer are just some examples of popular sports for young Australians. By the time many athletes learn about the sport of weightlifting, they have already committed to something else (QWA Home, 2021). Weightlifting is a solitary sport, and the only real competition is yourself. The Queensland Weightlifting Association's target market is teenage athletes or lifting enthusiasts that may not feel that they fit in with other sports or sporting clubs. These teenagers might feel that they are burnt out from the competition or are just looking for a change of pace. They are an ideal age to start training and building the required muscle to be successful in lifting.

2. Brand inventory

When auditing the Queensland Weightlifting Association, it is important to take stock of the brand inventory. According to Keller, "the purpose of brand inventory is to provide a current, comprehensive profile of how all the products and services sold by a company are marketed and branded" (p 294, 2012). This audit will consider the core brand values, brand elements, brand communication, and secondary brand associations for the Queensland Weightlifting Association.

2.1 Core Brand Values

Strong brands utilise core brand values. Core values are the beliefs that a brand uses as a guide for their story, behaviour, and marketing (Keller, 2012). Unfortunately, the Queensland Weightlifting Association does not have their brand values listed publicly, but they do have the following information, "Our aim is to develop the sport of weightlifting in Queensland, and to strengthen the friendship and co-operation amongst competitors and officials both here and in other states" (QWA Home, 2021). Based on this quote, core values of sport and athleticism, friendship, competition, and co-operation can be inferred. As a sporting organisation, these values are relevant to promoting weightlifting. The Queensland Weightlifting

Association focuses on their weightlifters and their clubs, and providing education and resources for officials and coaches.

2.2 Brand Elements

The first factor of brand inventory are the brand elements. Brand elements are aspects that are trademarked and can be used to differentiate the brand from its competitors (Keller, 2012). The major brand elements identified for the Queensland Weightlifting Association are the brand name, URL, logo, uniform, merchandise, colours, and social media channels. The brand name, Queensland Weightlifting Association, is the most important element. Per Kunkel & Biscaia, “one of the most valuable assets a sport entity possesses is its brand” (2020, p. 1). The Queensland Weightlifting Association is sometimes shortened to the acronym QWA, which is seen in their branding. Members of the organisation refer to it as such, and the URL for the association is www.QWA.org. The Instagram handle is @qldweightlifting, and the Facebook page is called Queensland Weightlifting.

Similarly to other Queensland sports clubs, the Queensland Weightlifting Association uses the colours maroon and gold for all their branding and apparel, such as merchandise and uniforms. Uniforms, known as lifting suits, are only given to weightlifters that are selected to represent Queensland in national competitions. The merchandise, though, can be purchased by anyone who supports the Queensland Weightlifting Association.

- 2.2.1 Logo: The logo features a gold figure in the “split jerk” position with the words “Queensland” and “Association” in white font above and below the figure in a semi-circle. The words “Weight” and “Lifting” are featured on either side of the figure in white. The whole image is against a maroon background.



Credit: (QWA Home, 2021)

- 2.2.2 Uniform: The lifting suit is one garment that is sleeveless and has shorts. The top is maroon, with grey and black bottoms. On the front of the uniform, the logo is featured on the right, with the brand of suit on the left. On the back, the word “Queensland” is written in white.



Credit: (QWA Apparel and Merchandise, 2021)

- 2.2.3 Merchandise: Just like the uniform, the merchandise is maroon with the logo featured on the front. Some merchandise also features #strongertogether.



Credit: (QWA Apparel and Merchandise, 2021)

2.3 Brand Communication

Brand communication is vital for brand awareness. A brand communicates with the public through a combination of activities such as ads, sponsorships, and events (Keller, 2012). A brand must communicate effectively to generate interest and attract new consumers. The Queensland Weightlifting Association relies heavily on competitions, social media and word of mouth as their brand communication. Weightlifters that compete in Queensland must be members of the Association, so current consumers and weightlifters receive regular communication. However, most of the target market, in this case teenage athletes in Queensland, may not see communication from the Queensland Weightlifting Association. They most likely hear about the Association through friends and family that are members or by looking

at weightlifters on social media. This is a detriment to the Queensland Weightlifting Association, for sure.

2.4 Secondary Brand Associations

The last factor of brand inventory in this audit is secondary brand associations. Secondary brand associations are other brands or activities associated with the main brand (Keller, 2012). The secondary brand associations help to provide a bigger picture of the brand to consumers by indicating other similar organisations that the consumer can also look into or learn about. The Queensland Weightlifting Association has several secondary brand associations. All athletic groups are associated with the the brands that make their equipment, such as Eleiko or Rogue USA, two weight plate manufacturers. However, the Queensland Weightlifting Association is part of a larger system. The thirty weightlifting clubs in Queensland, the other state associations, and the Australian Weightlifting Federation are national brands associated with the Queensland Weightlifting Association (QWA Home, 2021). Globally, the International Weightlifting Federation, the Oceanic Weightlifting Federation, Commonwealth Games, and Olympic Games are also associated with Queensland Weightlifting Association (IWF History 2021). Members of the Queensland Weightlifting Federation can compete at this level if they qualify at their local competitions.

3. Evaluation:

3.1 Positioning

A brand's positioning is "an attempt to create, change, or foster specific images about a brand in the minds of consumers" (Lee et. al, 2018, p. 450). Positioning is key to success because the consumers' image of a brand will determine whether or not they will consider a brand or use that brand regularly. Brand positions are intended and perceived. Intended positioning is how a brand wants to appear to consumers while perceived positioning is how a consumer actually views the brand (Lee et. al, 2018). A brand should strive for the intended and perceived positions to match. The intended positioning for the Queensland Weightlifting Association is that weightlifting should be inclusive, accepting, and a fun and healthy alternative to other forms of athletics. Although this position is definitely true in some circles, the actual membership numbers point out that there might be a discrepancy.

The perceived positioning of the Queensland Weightlifting Association by consumers is that the brand is under the radar. Weightlifting is not highly promoted in Australia, which results in the beliefs that it is a niche sport, potentially inaccessible, and possibly dangerous. Studies show that a main barrier to sport in Australia is a lack of parental support (Reece et. al, 2020). If there is not a participating weightlifting club locally, lack of resources and high costs for individual equipment might also be deterrents. Weightlifting clubs provide the barbells, plates, and other equipment for members to share, but they are not cheap. Parents may also discourage children from participating in weightlifting because they have heard it is dangerous for their child (Hardy et al, 2010). Even though this is usually untrue, it could be enough to scare them away.

3.2 SWOT Table

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia is considered a “sporting nation” (McPhearson et. al 2015) • Weightlifting is a tight knit community, many weightlifters are friendly and compete together often (QWA Home 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand awareness for the Queensland Weightlifting Association is low • There has been little to no advertising done by the Queensland Weightlifting Association to increase awareness
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weightlifting is becoming more popular around the world, (IWF History 2021) • Social media has made it easier than ever to follow popular weightlifters and watch their competitive journeys • Over 50% of young Australians are involved in athletic clubs of some kind (Hardy et. al 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other sports are more popular, and therefore parents are more willing to spend time and money (Reece et. al 2020) • Weightlifting clubs may not be easily accessible, and coaches are a scarce resource • Misinformation regarding injuries and stunted growth keeps parents from encouraging weightlifting (Hardy et. al 2010)

3.3 Brand Equity

The Queensland Weightlifting Association’s focus is not on profit, but on developing a brand for athletes. The consumer-based brand equity model is therefore more relevant than the financial model. Consumer-based brand equity is, “defined as the ‘differential effect of brand knowledge on the consumer response to the marketing of the brand.’” (Cobbs & Groza, 2020, p. 2). If consumers feel that a brand has equity, it increases the implicit value that they associate with the brand. Consumers that resonate with a brand and feel that it has implicit value are more likely to return to that brand or tell others about it. Brand equity is a major factor for success.

As for the Queensland Weightlifting Association, members and weightlifters find equity in the community of the organisation. The Queensland Weightlifting Association organises clubs and competitions to help their athletes grow and learn more about the sport. A select few go on to represent the state or the country, and that would not be possible without organisations like the Queensland Weightlifting Association. These weightlifters would not dedicate their energy and resources if they did not feel that the brand had equity.

4. Conclusion:

The brand audit of the Queensland Weightlifting Association has indicated some major weaknesses in the organisations' branding. The brand has low awareness, and many young athletes are choosing other sports over weightlifting. This results in misinformation and low membership. Brand awareness is highly important for sports brands due to the lack of tangible assets (Wetzel et. al, 2018). Consumers base their opinions and decisions largely on the symbolic nature of the brand. On a basic level, the social media channels and website all use different names, and the lack of consistency is a major issue (Lee et. al, 2020). Their website also lacks any information about the brand, and an "About Us" section is missing altogether. The values were also not listed anywhere, and had to be inferred. The brand is so focused on disseminating information to current members that it is neglecting the opportunity to market their brand to potential new members. The current branding strategy leaves a lot to be desired, but it has potential to be as powerful as any other sporting brand in Australia.

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