

## **The Charlotte Hornets: Resurrecting a Brand, Rescuing a Franchise**

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### **Abstract**

Building brand equity can be a demanding task even in the most ideal circumstances. Building equity for a professional sports brand that was once adored, then disdained, then nonexistent, and now back again posed particularly daunting challenges. The National Basketball Association (NBA) Charlotte Bobcats/Hornets willingly took on the task.

This descriptive case illustrates the effective use of Aakers' (1992) theories on assets and liabilities of building brand equity for a professional sports team. As Aaker's theories have received significant academic use within Marketing Strategy and Branding applications, this case displays how the Charlotte Bobcats successfully transitioned its brand in returning the Charlotte Hornets to its original city.

### **Learning Outcomes**

The Charlotte Hornets case illustrates how a professional sports team effectively utilized Aaker's brand equity constructs. In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Evaluate a band resurrection strategy.
2. Explain the relationship between brand associations (as a brand asset) and brand loyalty (as another brand asset) within sports marketing.
3. Analyze how a professional sports team utilized Aaker's brand assets/liabilities to resurrect its brand equity.

### **Application**

This case is well suited for undergraduate courses in Sports Marketing, Strategic Marketing, Marketing Management, and/or Branding.

### **Key Words**

Sports Marketing, Brand Management, Brand Equity

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