



Public Relations Plan for Hockey Canada

Executive Summary

Hockey Canada is the national governing body of ice hockey in the Canadian Provinces. It is based out of Calgary with another office in Ottawa. Hockey Canada controls almost all competitive hockey leagues in Canada, including all amateur/youth hockey leagues and the Olympic teams. Every hockey player in Canada has likely interacted with this organization.

The purpose of this PR campaign is to create trust among players, parents, and coaches involved in Hockey Canada by creating a public plan detailing what Hockey Canada will focus on to fix the systemic issues that primarily fixate on consent, hazing, harassment, abuse, masculinity and toxicity. Players, elected officials and the public have heavily scrutinized Hockey Canada recently over claims of sexual assault, uncouth hazing incidents and harassment from coaches and players. McGill university published its very own hazing guide that includes 19 behaviors considered unacceptable. Hockey Canada can use this list to build its own anti-hazing policy.

Hockey Canada's strength lies in being *the* governing body of hockey in the country. They have all the assets, tools, people and resources necessary to perform a culture change. Their reach is global. Many players from other countries come to Canada to play hockey because they will receive more exposure.

Hockey Canada has been around for more than 100 years. Dating back to 1914, this governing body has secured its place as the overseer of amateur hockey. Because of this, the organization has no direct competitors. It understands how to manage hockey operations and grow the game. More than 500,000 play some form of amateur hockey in Canada in leagues sponsored by Hockey Canada.

The biggest weaknesses Hockey Canada has is lack of diversity among leadership and the inability to move on from poor leaders. After countless scandals involving sexual assault, hazing,

and discrimination, the Board of Directors held firm in their stance that no sweeping changes were needed among leadership. Changes were made only when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called for a new organization in place of Hockey Canada and when their largest sponsors suspended relationships. Refusing to acknowledge wrongdoing is not in the future of Hockey Canada, and under the action plan, this will be addressed.

The lack of changes has led to a lack of trust from the constituents of the organization, lack of accountability in any fashion, and preferential treatment for Canada's rising stars. Out of eight people involved in the 2019 sexual assault, six are currently playing in the NHL. In the reformed vision of Hockey Canada, the game will be above all else, and there will be no players who are not held accountable for their actions.

There are many opportunities to right the wrongs of the past while the organization rebuilds its' culture. High start-up costs to play hockey turn many kids away from ever getting a chance to play. By implementing programs that serve underprivileged communities, Hockey Canada can grow the game while becoming more accessible. This can lead to more prospects and more popularity for the sport.

Another opportunity for Hockey Canada is to build relationships with outside organizations to promote inclusivity, diversity, and education. Organizations such as Women and Gender Equality Center (WGEC) can promote equality between the women and men that compete.

Another organization that Hockey Canada should partner with is the Canadian Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) which aims to promote dialogue, action, and organizations that

are free of prejudice and discrimination. Diversity is an asset, not an obstacle, and working with these organizations will help keep Hockey Canada on track to complete their action plan.

The biggest threat facing Hockey Canada is losing funding from corporate sponsorships and the government and being uprooted in favor of a brand-new organization. The Canadian Prime Minister has already spoken in favor of this unless Hockey Canada can manage to right the ship.

Using the NHL playoffs as a launching pad for its new campaign, Hockey Canada can reach an audience already engaged in the sport of Hockey but is weary of being further involved. There are players from Canada on every team in the NHL and getting athletes on board to advocate for the organization will encourage kids to follow the footsteps of famous players and become more likely to play and grow the game.

Tim Horton's, Chevrolet, Scotiabank and many others have all suspended their relationship with Hockey Canada leading to economic questions for the future of the organization. Securing this funding is paramount to the future success of Hockey Canada and without it, the organization will fail.

Hockey Canada has a prime opportunity to rebuild its culture and change the narrative of hockey players. Jumping on this opportunity will lead to trust from the public it serves. The growth of hockey is of utmost importance and the organization needs to do everything it can to fix its image to attract new players. These changes must reach the foundation of Hockey Canada and by following the action plan laid out, the organization can avoid purely cosmetic fixes.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Brand recognition
- 109 years as an organization
- Has a massive following among Canadians with a wide reach in terms of programs, leagues, and tournaments
- World class development programs

Weaknesses:

- High startup costs
- Lack of diversity among leadership
- Sweeping issues in the league under the rug instead of handling them
- Preferential treatment to future stars
- Lack of accountability
- Lacking trust from the people involved with the organization

Opportunities:

- Underprivileged youth in surrounding communities
- Abundance of tools available to educate players, coaches, and parents on equity, anti-bullying, and accountability
- Indigenous community prevalence in Canada
- Huge player/prospect pool
- Vast number of outside organizations for potential partnerships (WGEC, CCDI)

Threats:

- Government officials who want a new organization in place of Hockey Canada (Trudeau, St. Onge, Lemire)

- Sponsorship funding being pulled leading to economic questions
- Potential players not signing up for a multitude of reasons (safety, scandals, brand decline)
- Undiscovered allegations/crimes
- Other established hockey countries filling the void or offering competition to Hockey Canada

GOST

Goal: To increase awareness surrounding the action plan implementation by Hockey Canada to renew the promise of a safe and inclusive culture for all players.

Objective 1: Increase approval ratings of Hockey Canada, currently 40% according to a poll from Angus Reid, by 10% before October 1st, 2023

Strategy 1: Gain advocates among current and former players

Tactics:

- Reach out to former players via social media, email, or phone and give them a summary of the action plan to gauge their interest in speaking at future events.
 - 1.) Players who have spoken critically of Hockey Canada are primary targets. Convincing Cale Makar and others to advocate is a huge step towards convincing future and former players that HC is making the right moves.
 - 2.) This step needs to be completed by May 31st
- Making videos and infographics for social media that summarize the action plan and list the dates of town hall meetings across eight cities across the country including; Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Quebec, and Winnipeg

Strategy 2: Gain a major sponsor (or re-gain)

Tactics:

- Hold events for corporate sponsors and present the changes in the Action Plan that show Hockey Canada is making strides to fix the organizational problems and align their values with the sponsors they are seeking.
- Have HC leadership work at charity events to show that change starts from the top. The new board of directors needs to align themselves with advocacy groups that fight the systemic issues plaguing HC.

1.) Charity work and donations to nonprofit organizations such as WGECC, CCDCI, the Trevor Project and other NPO's in this realm will show that HC is ready to educate themselves to educate the young men and women who will be a part of the organization in the future. Taking this step will show sponsors that Hockey Canada board of directors are working to change the culture of the organization.

2.) This goal has a completion date of NLT May 1, 2024

Assessment:

- Tracking the percentage of players contacted who have agreed to advocate and be a part of future events for Hockey Canada. Having many commitments from former players will help Hockey Canada understand if what the culture change is working as needed.
- Use Angus Reid ~~+++++~~ Institute to conduct another poll and compare answers from the first poll taken in August 2022. This gives HC a two-year window to see what has changed and what it could be doing better as an organization.

Objective 2: To ensure that hockey institutes a physically and mentally safe and healthy environment for every player.

Timeline: NLT than May 1st, 2024

Strategy 1: Begin initiatives that increase the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion based on ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Tactics:

- Reach out to potential partners nationwide to provide educational resources and give presentations to players, coaches, parents, and executives.
- Incorporate events at games such as Pride Night and Heritage Night while working with foundations that donate time and money causes specific to those things.

Strategy 2: Develop a new governance system that includes procedures for accountability and management.

Tactics:

- Implement a no tolerance policy on hazing. If a player is accused of hazing, then they must go through disciplinary action and based on the findings of the investigation the player can be restricted from any HC event.
- Total transparency throughout the organization that includes a detailed list of where team fees and funding is spent. This list will be emailed to all corporate sponsors, players, parents, and coaches.

Assessment:

- Compare the number of incidents from 2022-2024 and see how they compare to the number of incidents between 2019-2021. This data will show if the changes made by HC are working to create a safer environment.

- Hockey Canada will track the number of events held that incorporate disenfranchised communities and viewing the number of new partnerships gained since 2022 while comparing to the number of similar events held in the past.
- Measure the number of new players in Hockey Canada and view if the number has increased or decreased and if the demographics have changed across Junior Hockey.

Messaging

Hockey Canada will supply an inclusive space for all athletes and their families.

1. Hockey Canada provides educational resources to all players and families.
2. Hockey Canada is committed to growing the game and will use the NHL playoffs to reach its target audiences
3. Hockey Canada will begin working with charity organizations that serve disenfranchised communities.
4. Hockey Canada is committed to both on-ice and off-ice safety for all HC families.

Press Release

Hockey Canada Announces New Action Plan to Reform the Culture of Amateur Hockey

Ottawa, Ontario – Apr. 28, 2023 – Hockey Canada has faced several allegations over the past year and the organization has committed itself to reforming. The new leadership of Hockey Canada will begin its reformation project by partnering with charities that serve disenfranchised communities.

Hazing, sexual assault, bullying, and fighting have dominated the news involving amateur hockey and the new leaders of Hockey Canada look to heal the image of Hockey by rebuilding the culture from the ground up.

The new Chair for Hockey Canada, Hugh L. Fraser, stated that, “(Hockey Canada) believes in providing more opportunities, creating more friendships, inspiring more diversity, and having fun in a safe and welcoming environment.”

Hockey Canada will start creating educational resources to give to families, players, coaches and managers to teach them about cultural differences. These resources will be reviewed by the organizations Hockey Canada looks to align itself with.

Hockey Canada encourages all community members to become more involved with shaping the new culture and providing a safe space for the young men and women who want play hockey. The Action Plan is detailed [here](#) for anyone interested in finding out more.

About Hockey Canada

Hockey Canada is the premier organization for amateur hockey in Canada. With over 100 years of existence, the organization has successfully created a nationwide program that develops youth hockey players from all over the world.

References

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