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## A History of NASCAR: A Perspective

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# **A HISTORY OF NASCAR: A PERSPECTIVE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This study examined and described the reasons for the success of the National Association of Stock Car Automobile Racing (NASCAR), including its past, especially focusing on the recent years. An analytical framework utilizing a critical incident historical approach was used to determine, if the relationships among the primary actors have been and will continue to be a significant element in the success of the sport as measured by attendance, television ratings, new tracks and race dates, and gate and television revenues.

The National Association of Stock Car Automobile Racing (NASCAR) is one of the growing sports in terms of fans and venues. A NASCAR commissioned fan survey showed that 37% of the American population follows NASCAR racing to some degree and trails only professional football in popularity. "It's clear right now that NASCAR is the No. 2 sport in the United States," said senior vice president George Pyne. (Jenkins, 2002) "Here's a sport organization that has never experienced a lockout or strike by its athletes. Furthermore, NASCAR's drivers do not choke their coaches, beat their wives, get arrested for

using or selling drugs, brag about having children out of wedlock, or carry guns." (Bonham, 1999) With a 63 year history, the public eye is upon its' owners and the organization and the scrutiny of its followers is at a high level. "The pie is getting bigger and the stakeholders are jockeying for bigger slices. Stockholders, the NASCAR organization, marketers, racetrack operators, race team owners, TV networks, drivers, crew chiefs, mechanics, and truck drivers are all standing in line." (Poole, 2000, p. 13) The economy within the last two years has had a profound effect upon attendance and TV ratings. There has been a significant slippage in attendance. The economy down turn could not have come at a worse time for NASCAR because they were in the process of transitioning from a regional to a national sport. Long term management strategies have had to give way to short term and/or crisis management.

An examination of NASCAR history as related to its past and future development builds a foundation for understanding of the sport for planning. Significant events in its past, the cyclic nature of sport, and growth and popularity have been examined. This examination of NASCAR past and present leads to implications for the future.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the significance of the relationships of the primary actors in NASCAR to the success of the sport?
2. Why has NASCAR as a private entity been so successful?
3. What past and present variables have impacted the success of NASCAR?

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the reasons for the success of the National Association of Stock Car Automobile Racing (NASCAR), including its past sixty-three years. A critical incident approach was used to determine if the relationships among the primary actors have been, and will continue to be, a significant element in the success of the sport as measured by attendance, television ratings, new tracks and race dates, and gate and television revenues.

## CONTEXT

The significant characterizations by critical incidence were identified by actor and decade. The actors were NASCAR, teams and owners, drivers, fans, sponsorship, merchandisers, and media. The purpose of this type of analysis was to identify the basic influences of the patterns identified. For each of the patterns identified a critical incident analysis was performed on professional publications during the time period to develop an understanding of the relationships. The Critical Incident methodology (Butterfield, 2005) is factors which influences identified patterns. These critical incidents are the elements that bring the themes together and

are repeated. Once the critical incidents were isolated, information was sought on how and why they influenced patterns. It must be remembered that this study represents a longitudinal perspective and that changes occur through time. What is a critical incident during one period may not be a critical incident during another period. The study, therefore, identified critical incidents of two types: one was consistent through time periods and the other was critical incidents that were situational for a particular time period.

There were two media reviewed to identify critical incidents and variables related to success of NASCAR. Popular media was reviewed first to establish the tradition associated with NASCAR on the basis of folk lore. The second media reviewed was empirical studies to identify the variables associated with possible models to understand the folk lore in terms of established fact.

## POPULAR MEDIA

The analysis of the popular media depends upon understanding the popularity and demand for NASCAR and to the structure and history of the sport. (Amato *et al.*, 2010 & Brunt, 1922) It is an analysis that synthesizes variables and relations to understand the bigger picture.

## NASCAR

NASCAR since 1940's has seen the sport of racing grow from a regional to a national sport. Growth has been unparalleled in popularity. It has gone through three leadership periods and leadership has been identified as one of the reasons for the success of the sport. In the 1940's, NASCAR organized stock car racing into a unified association to

establish uniformity in the sport. The 1950's was a time of developing tracks and the development of relationships for the recognition of the sport. The 1960's was an era of control to establish the structure in such a way to develop leadership. The 1970's was the era of business. Relationships established in the 1960's had to be shown to operate on a sound basis to produce profits and develop a good show that sponsors would be willing to provide money to support the sport. The 1980's was a period in which there was growth in the sport to the general population. This growth was not exponential but at a steady rate. The 1990's was a period of demographic expansion and growth that was exponential as new fans realized the entertainment value. The 2000's has been a period of new audiences and new relations to expand the sport into a national arena that has attracted new sponsors and new investment. NASCAR political power even extended to the stimulus bill in section 317 which provided funds for cost recovery of tracks.

## POPULARITY

NASCAR as a motor sport has increased in popularity exponentially in the years from 1995 to present. (Oliver, 1995) In the 1990's it was America's fastest-growing professional sport. (Dunnivant, 1997) It was bigger and more popular than it ever had been in its 63 year history. (Howell, 1997) The demand for NASCAR racing, especially at the Cup level, was significant. Cup Grand National Racing is the epitome of American stock car racing. Cup races are the second most watched of the major sports, trailing only the NFL. (Frank, 2001) It is a goal of every race car driver, from midjets to sprint cars, to join the Cup circuit.

The fan base for Cup racing grows yearly. NASCAR realized unprecedented growth in 2001. (King, 2001) Tracking actual attendance has become difficult because NASCAR stopped releasing race attendance figures in 1998. (Frank, 2001) The final Goodyear Racing Attendance Report done in 1998 lists total race attendance at 6,310,027 with average attendance reported as 190,940 with 32 race dates (Goodyear Racing Attendance Report 1998). This was a 3.5% increase over the 1997 attendance figure of 6,091,356. The 1997 attendance figure represented a 9.0% increase over 1996 figures, with just one additional race. The 1996 season realized a 4.9% increase in attendance over 1995 with no additional races or venues. (Goodyear Racing Attendance Report 1996) The average race attendance in 1997 was 190,355, in 1996 it was 180,260. (Goodyear Racing Attendance Report 1997) Mel Poole (1999b) says there are four simple dynamics that explain why people are fans of NASCAR: "The show is good; fans are touched by and attached to the personalities in the sport; they view the Cup Series a dramatic continuum; and they feel a cultural affinity with the sport." (p. 24) (Canfield, 2003)

Since 1998, growth has been at a rate of about 3 to 5 percent and has grown to well over 11 million. This growth reflects the change from a Southern to a national sport. New tracks in urban areas were built where there has not been race availability. Growth in these areas has been good but not stable. In the past few years, some of the track attendance has been flat. Some tracks like California have not had the growth as expected. Gas prices and the economy have caused some problems. Many tracks have adapted and adjusted their programs to help fans. Demand is still being created but new strategies are needed to stabilize and expand it. The best source for public attendance,

since the Goodyear reports, has been Jayski.com under the title heading of race-tracks seating capacity and attendance chart. The records available are from 2000 forward. The attendance, that is, the most significant is from 2007 through 2009. The attendance charts were analyzed to determine the attendance numbers at each of the tracks for this period. The economy has been the primary factor that has influenced attendance. Even in the economy, a question that has been released is how has the attendance managed to retain and grow the population base. (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989) Examination of the attendance numbers has shown a significant down turn in attendance. Each track has a different approach to marketing retention management and growth. (Fredline & Faulkner, 2002) Many tracks have downsized their seating and many have converted some of their seats to more luxurious seats.

This increased growth also comes through in the media. In the television arena, Cup races (Sprint Series) were spread over the various networks with FOX averaging a 6.2, FX a 4.4, NBC a 4.9 and TNT a 3.8. These figures show increases over the 2000 season ranging from 8-25%. (King, 2001) The 2002 season saw NBC drawing 35 million viewers for the Daytona 500. This made it the most-watched race since the 1984 running of the Indianapolis 500. (Lee, 2002) Sponsors rated NASCAR and golf first in the 2003 League Report Card by Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal. Sponsor satisfaction has always been the focus of operations and is viewed as the financial base for the success of the sport. (Ryan, 2010)

New contracts were negotiated in 2002. At that time, ESPN replaced NBC. The growth was steady from 2003 through 2007. The average growth was 2 to 3 percent. In 2008

ratings were flat or slightly above the base. Different tracks have different ratings; the older track ratings have been stabilized and the new tracks are fluctuating but are holding their own. The older tracks with traditions are still popular. Owners have to develop solid traditions among the new track, especially in urban areas. In the examination of attendance from 2007 to 2009, 72% of the race venues went down in attendance. There were various patterns based upon the geographic location. Of the 72%, 35% went down significantly in terms of attendance. Significance in this instance was greater than 15%. Only 28% remained relatively steady in attendance. This means less than a 5% change. There was only one race that had an increase in attendance. A qualitative observation was that the traditional tracks were the ones that were more stable and managed attendance better. The downturn in the economy occurred just as NASCAR was expanding into new areas and had not had an opportunity to stabilize their position in the sports community in these urban areas. Because of their newness in the market they were the first to lose attendance numbers. It may be a good time to visit tracks and their performance in the reallocation of races. It definitely shows a lack of ability to manage numbers, develop new marketing strategies and take advantage of the opportunities of a downturn in economy.

Televisions rating for NASCAR have been strong. The television contract that allowed NASCAR to become the second largest revenue generator next to football was an exciting time. But, recent television ratings have not matched the revenue expectation from such an exclusive contract. The best source of the data is jayski.com under the menu title Sprint Cup TV Ratings. In the comparison made from 2007 to 2009, only certain races were used because schedule changes did not allow for direct comparisons based

upon consistency in reschedule. Only those tracks that had the same network affiliation and the same date and schedule were compared. It was found that the television ratings were down in 48% of the races. Most of these ratings were not a significant decline. Twenty-one percent of the ratings were equal or showed a slight increase. Twenty-four percent had a lower rating in 2007 and 2009, but had an increase in 2008. The television ratings were good news because the television is not decreasing as much as attendance. The television ratings were stable but may not be worth the revenues for the networks. Ratings for FOX and TNT showed a slight decline. These overall ratings of the network are only part of the picture because it is the individual races that show the patterns. The older races have a more stable rating. A logical assumption is that a decrease in attendance because of the economy may raise television ratings. This did not happen, which raises the questions about the popularity of the sport and the need for changes to stabilize the attendance and television rating.

An interesting analysis was the cross tabulations of attendance and television ratings. These results indicate that both attendance and television were down at 45% of the venues from 2007 to 2009. Attendance and television ratings were up at 26% of the venues. Television was up over attendance in 29% of the venues. These results indicate that with attendance being down and television up, viewing televised races is seen as a viable option to attending the race. Fans are still engaged, although, their engagement is in a different form. They are still loyal to the sport and support the sponsor

The real tribute to NASCAR is the sponsorship and during hard economic times sponsorship has been a bright spot. Sponsors rated NASCAR and golf first in the 2003

League Report Card by Street & Smith's Sports Business Journal. Sponsor satisfaction has always been the focus of operations and is viewed as the financial base for the success of the sport. (Ryan, 2010) NASCAR has been one of the world's 20 top promoters (September, 2009) and marketers (August, 2009) in Sport Business International. It has lost few of its sponsors and has had added many new ones. NASCAR has always been the premier sport for development and retention of sponsors. Its ratings are always the best when comparative studies are completed. The reason is fan loyalty to the sponsors--they buy the sponsors products and respond to their marketing programs. This type of loyalty is the base of sponsor development. (Ameson, 1997) The other dimension is investors and their willingness to provide capital for teams to improve the quality of competition in the sport. The investors are related to others sports such as baseball and football and recognize the value in motor sports. This has also brought a new competitive level related to management skills and the ability to develop quality organizations. Recognition is the essential element to money for development of the sport. Even during difficult economic times, it is essential to retain relationships with sponsors and investors because these are the individuals who are the foundational elements that are necessary for growth when the good times return. If you have worked with these individuals and helped them through the difficult times; they will remain because they understand that growth will return to the sport as the economy improves.

The top consideration of all tracks capable of Cup racing, regardless of its current phase of completion or incompleteness, is a Cup date. (Jewett, 2000) In 1997 season saw the opening of new tracks. Two of these tracks (Texas and California) were assured a Cup

Race date. Tracks built without a race date included those in Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Kansas; New Orleans, Louisiana; Madison, Wisconsin; and Pikes Peak, Colorado. (Sonderegger, 1997) Despite these openings, there was only one new race added to the already full 1997 schedule. The North Wilkesboro (NC) speedway lost the Cup race dates it held continuously since 1949, when new track owners Bruton Smith and Bob Bahre moved one race to Texas and the other to New Hampshire. One new race date was added in 1998 at a new track in Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1999, one new track with a race date, located in Miami, Florida was added. In 2001, there were two completed tracks (Mesa, Arizona and Boston, Massachusetts) that did not have a race date. There were also three proposed or in the process tracks in Oregon, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, New York, and Kentucky without race dates. There were two new race sites for the 2001 series, Kansas City, Kansas, and Chicago, Illinois. The 2002 season was the first in five years that opened without a new race site.

Since 2002, no new dates were added and it became apparent that races were no longer the right of new tracks. Law suits were filed in the recent past for a race date: one for a race date in Texas and Kentucky. The Texas law suit was settled with a re-adjustment of race dates and the Kentucky law suit was dismissed for a lack of jurisdiction. The question in both of these suits was a question of monopoly, that is, the sanctioning body and race ownership is under the same authority. The number of Cup race dates is limited due to the nature of the sport, meaning that all drivers vie to race in every race. There cannot be more than one race each weekend. The new approach is redistribution and not adding races. In a recent proposal, New Hampshire and California would

lose races and Kentucky and Las Vegas would gain a race.

There is a move to consolidate the tracks, media, and ownership. The primary reason is control. (Brockinton, 2001; Levin, 1997; & Poole, 1999b) The weather also plays a role. (Dunnavant, 1997) The same drivers compete in qualifying rounds for each race and points are accumulated based on finishing position and lead laps. (McCraw, 1997) NASCAR is always making changes to meet audience needs. The most recent change was adding a championship with the last 10 races determining the champion. The previous races are used to qualify for the championship. It has been very successful and has generated much interest. (Fryer, 2010)

Adding additional race dates is becoming logistically impossible due to the limited race season, so the answer for NASCAR seems to be to close the smaller, older tracks. The new tracks seat hundreds of thousands of people; the older historical tracks do not. Fan demand is great, and NASCAR strives to meet that demand. The dilemma of the increased demand therefore is knowing how to provide a top quality product with limited scheduling opportunities. Alan Middleton in Stock Car Racing states "Everyone wants to cash in on the popularity and growth of NASCAR. But the fact is, the schedule cannot and should not grow anymore." (February, 2001)

The questions being raised concerns the nature of change in the sport to meet the current demand in popularity without changing the product to the point of alienating the racing fan and causing a drop in popularity or demand. (Dunnavant, 1997) There is already much controversy among the traditional fans about ticket prices and money and its influence upon the sport. (Taylor, 1996) Even though this seems to be the "hey day" of the NASCAR Cup series, there

is still controversy and there are questions about the ultimate future of the sport. Demand is being met through the arranging of schedules and races. Even though demand is flat there still are requests for new races.

The popularity of the NASCAR Cup racing series is evident and documented. There has been steady growth in the sport in terms of both fan base and the dollars involved. The maintenance of this popularity and growth is key to the ultimate future of the sport.

## DEMAND

Demand, as defined by the Webster's dictionary, is "to ask for insistently", where popularity is defined as "widely liked or appreciated." A sport may be "popular" but not in demand. It is the demand factor that determines success. (Fizel, 2006)

It is important to recognize that most sports or activities have a cyclic demand curve in which there are periods of great popularity and periods where the demand for the particular activity or sport is flat or declining. (Agoglia, 1999; Gaylord, 1991; & Gaylord & Groves, 1993) Often the initial popularity is much lower than the final popularity in the flat phase of the curve. It is important to recognize the different types of demand curves and cycles that exist and how these factors influence planning for a sport or activity. One of the primary problems with individuals, who do not understand this particular type of demand in terms of cycles, is that they plan for the long term on a straight line increasing demand curve. (Gonclaves & Aguas, 1997)

The result is that the needed facilities to meet this demand are usually built because planning occurs right at the peak of the demand. As an example of demand, the Atlan-

ta track accounts for 50% (\$2.3 billion) of the economic impact of sport in the Atlanta area (\$4.5 billion) (Rofe, 1999) This exacerbates the problem in the downward phase of an activity or sport's popularity. The demand is down now and the facilities that have just been built are woefully empty. Nature of planning is extremely crucial to any sport or activity because you must provide enough to meet demand but not enough to exceed the seat capacity within a certain period of time because there may be a significant down turn in popularity. (Hagstrom, 1998)

The reality of single-entity ownership has been projected as one element that has helped in the steady growth of NASCAR. (Byrnes, 1994) The primary question is where is NASCAR on the demand curve and are they planning too many facilities for when there is a down turn in popularity. (Taylor, 1996) A more conservative approach of not building facilities before you know demand on a long-term basis is a prudent decision. The current philosophy in NASCAR is to build the facilities, the people will come and there will be a sanctioned race. This is the type of philosophy that has proven to be fallible in other sports and caused the over building of facilities. (Goncalves & Aguas, 1997)

NASCAR is at a crossroads of changing from a regional to a national sport and these changes will ultimately influence the popularity and demand for the sport. (Elder & Greene, 2007 & Taylor, 1996) It is important that NASCAR take precautions to continue to insure the popularity through the proper changes. There is also a need to generate the necessary excitement to keep the sport on an upward growth phase without reaching a saturation point that will ultimately cause a down turn in demand in popularity of NASCAR racing.



NASCAR needs to achieve long term stability in order to maintain its high level of success. Studying NASCAR's past and present utilizing forecasting and demand analysis enabled the researchers to make some guarded predictions concerning the future course of the sport.

### **STRUCTURE OF SPORT AS APPLIED TO NASCAR**

There are four major professional sports (football, baseball, basketball, and hockey) that have approximately a century lineage. The current structure of each of these sports is of an evolutionary nature and has developed and changed as the times and pressures of society have been placed upon each sport. Sport has been a central construct in the everyday lives of Americans, even in the earliest part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Jerome, 2008 & Young & French, 1995) It has played a significant role in the entertainment dollar and has had a significant impact upon the psyche of the American public. (Lame & Casper, 2007) An ESPS/Chilton Sports Poll released in November of 2000 shows that 85% of the population follows an average of five of the top 12 sports. (Lamm, 2000) Rich Lujer, the founder of the Sports Poll says of NASCAR: "Three years ago racing was a blip on the screen for kids, now [NASCAR] is clearly positioned to be the second appointment sport in the U.S. with the NFL being the first." (Lamm, 2000) NASCAR in comparison to other sports is weathering the economy down turn well and has become one of the major sports. The media has been a primary factor in NASCAR's increase in popularity. (Jenkins, 2010)

The popularity of NASCAR has continued to grow from a regional to a national sport. This growth is primarily seen in terms of

attendance, television ratings, and merchandise. In the past several years attendance at events has not increased but this is a direct reflection of the economy. Sponsorship has tapered a certain amount and the cause is the economy. Both attendance and sponsorship are strong but reflect the changing economy. The same trends are present in all sports at the current time; however, NASCAR remains stronger than most sports.

The sport has been stronger in some localities more than others. The structural change is not only nationalization but from rural to urban population. Many of the urban populations have close ties with their professional sports like baseball, football, etc. It will take time and the development of relationships for a new sport to be popularized in these urban areas. (Kusz, 2007) There is a new wind in NASCAR that baseball owners and investors are beginning to contribute to NASCAR. This type of relationship will help in urban areas. The change in structure has been successful but through time new strategies have to be found to continue the growth of the sport in urban areas.

The primary professional sport structure was developed by baseball and it is one in which there is an oligopolical structure. This structure involves a committee made up of franchise owners and it is the primary sanctioning body that sets policy. They hire a commissioner who implements the policy and is, in fact, a check and balance to the power of the owners. This system also borders on a monopoly structure. In fact, baseball is a recognized monopoly and has been sanctioned by Congress as a monopoly. Therefore, there is a public oversight function by Congress and its administrative agencies in baseball. Football, basketball, and hockey have all adopted similar structures and have been successful since the turn of the last century based upon popularity.

Motor sports have also been evolving since the turn of the century. The structure in motor sports has been similar to the other sports in that there has been a sanctioning body which has been basically controlled by track owners. The system in motor sports has been more open because there are many different forms and levels of racing. These levels include local and regional racing tracks. This allows for competition for the racing entertainment dollar.

Monopoly has been the prevalent form of organization for other professional sports. In motor sports in general, the labor, or the drivers in NASCAR's case, have not been an influential entity until recently. In baseball, football, basketball, and hockey, there are players unions which have been very powerful and able to negotiate a better position for their clientele.

This is also true in motor sports with an example being the Indy Racing League (IRL). There was a split in labor and management in the IRL. Management formed the Indy Racing League and labor basically formed the Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART). The recombining of the IRL and CART racing series was a necessary move for the financial stability of open wheel racing. (Plymire, 2010) This fusion has definitely helped from a financial and sponsorship point of view. More importantly, this recombining has helped eliminate the identity crisis in open wheel racing. It will take time for fans to come back to the sport. New ways have to be found to change the sport in relation to the society. If the same approach is used, NASCAR will continue their popularity and dominance. Prior to the split between these two fractions open wheel racing was more popular than NASCAR. The one aberration in motor sports has been NASCAR. NASCAR has been owned and

operated by one family and represents a private ownership corporation. The private corporation has the right to control and has no responsibility to answer to the public or to labor, only to stock holders. The control is absolute as a sanctioning body. The power authority of this corporation has been passed through the family and will continue to be passed to other family members in the future. The growth of NASCAR has not been a cycle as much as it has been linear and has grown steadily and exponentially. The tracks where the races are sanctioned are mainly public corporations, but the control and influence of the France family, the owners of NASCAR, has been absolute. There are far more tracks seeking sanctioned races than there are race dates available. The labor has also been controlled with an absolute power. Jeremy Mayfield case is a good example. He was suspended for drug abuse and no other racing operator will associate with him for fear of reprisal from NASCAR. There have been two driver uprisings and they have been subdued with minimal effect. This absolute power is reflected in the results of the Annual Charlotte Observer's ranking of the 25 most powerful people in stock-car racing. The France family is always ranked at the top. The survey was always conducted by Poole, but he passed away in 2009.

One of the primary questions is "Why has NASCAR as a private entity been so successful and what are the factors that have led to this success as it relates to increased demand and will this demand continue in the future?"

New sport leagues are constantly looking for structures or models because they are not limited by history with old forms of organization. One of the models that has been viewed keenly is private ownership or single entity theory. Several of these new leagues:

lacrosse, soccer, arena football, and UFL have all experimented with single entity ownership with some degree of success. The reason for the interest in this type of structure has been the ability to control, minimize barriers, and influences and promote strategic planning. Stability in structure, growth and ownership are important factors in the single entity theory.

Professional sports as entertainment has been and continues to be an important part of American life. The structure of the sport of NASCAR is different from any of the other major professional sport leagues. The single entity concept under which it is organized allows for total control unlike the franchise system of other professional sports. This control extends to tracks and drivers and appears to have been a major factor in the success of the sport.

## **HISTORY OF NASCAR**

One of the ways to address the issues of popularity and demand is to examine the significant historical events and determine the growth patterns of NASCAR through a historical analysis. By understanding the historical trends of the sport, a sense of the future can be realized. The following historical analysis gives an overall introduction to the sport from a historical perspective in order to develop a base of understanding for this study. (Yost & Salaba, 2007)

Racing cars was a sport long before the incorporation of NASCAR in 1947. Racing began with the development of the car and the desire for speed. (Lovell, 1992; & Oldfield, 1919) Determining who had the fastest machine as well as the best driving ability also became an important factor. In its initial phases, especially with Ford, the idea was to demonstrate the product through rac-

ing so there would be buyers in the showroom. The common motto was "Win on Sunday, Sell on Monday." (Hemphill, 1997, p. 123; & Golenbock & Fielden, 1997, p. xiii) Even though this was the initial concept from the very beginning, racing took on an entertainment value. The inclusion of the spectator led to folk heroes such as Barney Oldfield. From these humble beginnings, racing developed in many directions, including racing for speed and for endurance. The theory behind NASCAR was to modify and race stock machines that are production line based.

Even though the historical roots of NASCAR and its folk legends is running moonshine in the hills of the South, especially during times of prohibition. Stock car racing is actually much wider and represents a greater interest in modifying production cars. It has its roots in the production cars of Ford, Chevrolet, Chrysler and other car manufacturers. Today's NASCAR cars still have a great similarity and look to the production cars, but that's where the similarity ends. (Swany, 1997)

In December of 1947, William Getty France saw a need to establish an organization of promoters, drivers, and mechanics to regulate the sport of stock car racing. (Pierce, 2010) Up until this time, the sport was very fragmented and promoters often would not even deliver on the purses that were advertised. (Howell, 1997) There were many organizations and tracks that had their own rules and regulations. These variations made it very difficult to establish a national champion. Bill France believed that an organization was needed for the sport to grow. A consistent set of rules was needed to insure uniformity and equity of competition. (Golenbock, 1993) Therefore, in February of 1948, the National Association of Stock Car Automotive Racing was incorporated

with Bill France named as the president. This organization transformed the sport into a business. (Howell, 1997) This was an organization of individuals who represented the diversity of opinions in stock car racing that originally met with Bill France. Bill France emerged as the primary or dominant force at this meeting because of his organizational skills and vision. (Howell, 1997) Golenbock and Fielden in the Stock Car Racing Encyclopedia (1997) quote Daytona Speedway President Jim Foster saying:

Mr. France had something that none of the others had, and that was vision. Bill France was a visionary. He saw where the sport was going to go and he believed in it strongly, risked every penny he had. Without Bill France, there would have been no NASCAR; there would have been no racing as we know it today. (p. xv)

The development of NASCAR is an example of a sport that can change to meet the needs of the structural elements involved. (Buckley, 2005) Most institutions of sport are so structurally rigid that change is very difficult. But with the open, interactive, and cooperative nature that was established at this first meeting, there was an atmosphere that allowed for change based upon fairness and equity. Most of the members recognized that fairness and equity had to be applied so the organization established was given dominant position. If the established rules and regulations were not followed, then sanctions were permitted and everyone supported these sanctions. Without the rules and the sanctions the sport would fall into the anarchy of the past. This is where the structural elements of NASCAR were emphasized and their importance delineated under a banner of single entity theory/ownership. The organization was recognized as the institution that had to exist for the sport

to grow and be recognized as a legitimate sporting entity.

This does not suggest that the evolution of the sport was without problems. There were growing pains and periods that reflected the organizational development of a sport that was trying to gain recognition, and eventually did. (Howell, 1997) Constant change and attention to the needs of the various elements made the sport strong. Its focus was on producing the best product to put on the track as well as the best show possible for fans and sponsors. (Howell 1997) Since the sport is so tied to the structural elements and the delineation of the relationships in order to understand the past and its development, the structure and the relationships among these elements must be well understood.

The important structural elements that were identified in a study by Morais and Groves (1997) were NASCAR, fans, media, sponsors, drivers, car and team owners, and merchandisers. Mel Poole reiterates these same groups as essential elements all “jockeying for bigger slices [of the pie].” (2000) There are other structural elements, but these are the basic core elements upon which all of the other secondary elements depend. It is important to examine these structures in relation to their history and the relationships among one another to understand the evolution of the sport. Some of the significant events, as related to the structural elements identified above, are detailed in a historical timeline. (Table 1)

## **DEVELOPMENT OF NASCAR**

The important element in understanding history is the evolution of NASCAR. This has been a continuous process that has not been slow. One of the elements that has made this sport viable to its fans has been that it changes to meet the needs of the fans in so-

ciety. NASCAR is very sensitive to societal trends and how they impact their sport, especially the automotive industry. (Donovan, 2008) This is also true of the other sponsors and how the competition affects the drivers as spokespersons for the sponsors. Positive family images have been a trademark for the sport. Behavior that is not consistent with this image is not tolerated, especially in today's market.

In order to obtain a longitudinal perspective, it is important to take advantage of each segment's change in relation to the other actors and how NASCAR has welded administrative policy. An administrative policy in this context is a determining of what operation will be successful to maintain the goals of the sport and how these operations can be manipulated to improve the entertainment value. This entertainment value cannot decrease the importance of the competition level. The development of policy is a balancing act that NASCAR has done well through the changing trends from the forties to the present. These were five important actors: NASCAR, team and car owners, drivers, fans, sponsors, merchandisers, and media.

A common thread through the 1940's to the 2000's has been strong leadership and the consistent enforcement of the rules and regulations. Another of the elements has been a constant development of the entertainment value for the fan. There has also been an aggressive plan of expansion of the popularity of the sport through the media and education. An important dimension has been the finances and the realization of the importance of sponsors and investors. Many of the current problems are due to success and how to manage the demand for the product given the limited resources of tracks and time. There's also the need to balance the new and the old. The leadership is at a

crossroads between the future and the past and it may be the most difficult time for the management skills of those involved with NASCAR. (Gage, 2009)

Teams and car owners have been the second line of leadership that has caused the sport to prosper. The current team that has the most popular drivers is Hendrick. Hendricks has five of the most popular drivers: Dale Earnhart Jr., Kasey Kahne, Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Gordon, and Mark Martin. A team's primary concern has been competition and winning and the improvement of technology to improve the speed and performance of cars. There has also been a focus upon recruiting the best drivers for that person and machine can be matched for competition. The engineering of the car is only one aspect of the team operations. It is the business side where most progress has been made because it is realized that they are in business and must manage a team, drivers, sponsors, etc. to put an entertaining product on the track. NASCAR has operated not as a franchise as in other sports but as an independent business operation giving the teams freedom of choice and entrepreneurship. These freedoms have given rise to different approaches to engineering and business and have allowed the teams the ability to apply their ownership and determine their own destiny within prescribed boundaries. The one element that they do not have that other franchise sports have is controlled over the top leadership.

Drivers are at the core of the NASCAR experience. The fans have a natural attraction to their driver and follow their results and lives very closely. (Wann & Waddill, 2007) They also strongly endorse and buy the products of their drivers and teams. The drivers are the stars of NASCAR and they are at the center of the business model that has made NASCAR a success. Their cha-

racters and life stories are what make NASCAR unique. Other sports have their characters but motor racing is a sport that creates more friction and conflict which keeps the fans on the edge of their seats. Other sports are games but motor sports are an activity where lives are risked for the love of the sport. The one element that has been added to the mix is the necessity of the driver becoming a spokesperson for their sponsor. This takes a certain level of sophistication and understanding how sponsorship relates to business processes. Driving skills are important but the drivers are the key to creating business. Personality is extremely important in this process but the fan can detect honesty and dedication.

Of the actors, the fans are the most important because without them there would be no money in the system. Loyalty is a common thread through the years that has attracted the other actors into the system. (Arneson, 1997) Just as the drivers are dedicated to the fans the fans are very dedicated to the drivers. This driver and fan relationship makes the sport unique. (Hall & Hall, 2006) The one misconception about the fan is that it is gender driven. However, women make up a significant percentage of motor sports fans. It is family based and represents an all-consuming lifestyle. It is important to recognize in the expansion of NASCAR that many of the new fans have a social motivation and are not as dedicated and loyal as the older fan. There has been a separation between the new and old fans. The entertainment value and what is emphasized is not meeting the needs of the old fans. The fans desire to follow certain drivers is the same, but it is the motivation and the tradition that make the difference. NASCAR has to balance the diversity in the fans. The sport has an inherent attraction but it must be realized that new fans have a different motivation and a plan needs to be worked out to satisfy

the old and the new. The traditional fan is rural and the new populations tend to be more urban. These urban fans also have traditional loyalties to other sports. The question of popularization is how to approach these fans to develop loyalty to motor sports. This is going to be a difficult process but the future of NASCAR depends upon it.

Sponsors are the financial core of dollars for the teams and tracks. The focus of these sponsors has significantly changed. The sponsors at the beginning were local and focused upon the auto industry. Today, the sponsors are Fortune 500 companies trying to sell their wares to over 25 million fans. The evolution is a matter of audiences that are loyal in both the short as well as the long term marketing efforts. The prime properties are the drivers with the most wins, sex appeal, and the best personalities. The cost of sponsorship for the team has significantly increased which has left many of the older traditional sponsors behind. Innovative approaches to packaging the cars as rolling billboards are the only reason some of the teams remain in racing. The day of complete sponsorship for a season is gone because costs for racing are so high. The cost benefit ratio has to be very high for a complete season sponsor.

Merchandisers have been the mystery element of all the actors. Until recently, they have been small operations. Now, merchandising is a revenue stream that far outweighs winnings and sponsorship in some cases. The driver is a product and packaging is essential to the revenue to the income of a driver and/or team. The key word is exploitation. In the nineties, drivers like Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon realized these potential and developed businesses around their names and trademarks. This does not suggest that until this time merchandise was not important but the control over the prod-

uct did not occur until this period. After this period, NASCAR quickly centralized sales and licensure. They purchased the merchandising companies and set off into business integrating stores as well as other outlets and production. This vertical integration worked for a while but the merchandise has gone flat and Motor Sports Authentic has gone bankrupt. The demand is still there but the supply was too much. This does not suggest that there is no demand; it only suggests that the supply and form of the merchandise has moved into the realm of the ridiculous.

Media has a profound influence on the popularization of any sport. When NASCAR started the media was local and automotive. The primary form was print and some radio. As the sport evolved regional and national television realized the potential of the sport. Much of this has happened by accident. In fact, much of the airtime had to be purchased and sponsor sought through independent agents. Each track use to negotiate their own television deal. NASCAR centralized the process, so that the volume programming had power and the networks promoted the sport. In addition to television, national sportswriters reviewed the races. As a result, the media groups realized the attractiveness of the sport. The number of fans also helped to focus the media as the sport became more popular. The economic downturn has caused ratings to fall but not as much as expected because of the loyal fan base. Print and radio media have been hurt more than television and some print media reporters have moved to the internet because of the lost jobs.

## **EMPIRICAL MEDIA**

The empirical studies provide an objective perspective that helps by using an analytical approach that breaks down variables into their component parts and relationships. The function is to provide understanding from the bottom up.

## **FOUNDATIONAL NASCAR STUDIES**

There are few empirical studies that explore the foundation of NASCAR that give direction to the structure. They document only the public research that has been completed on NASCAR and provide direct evidence related to the subject. The limited topic specific research available gives credence to the research topic as a valid subject. Racing has been a part of the American way of life since the inception of the automobile. NASCAR has been around for 63 years, but, due to the nature of its' organization, the specific data documenting its' success has been kept private and unavailable. The studies in this area include a study by Morais and Groves (1997), which developed a typology of the sport in structural terms, two cultural studies done by Mark Howell (1997) and Ted Ownby (1998), and a descriptive project of tracks in Northwest Ohio. The primary focus of this study by Sharon Conrad (1992) was the importance of these tracks to the local Northwest Ohio area. Studies related to safety (Pope & Tollison, 2010; Dole, 2007; & Bothner, 2007) provide the basis for improving the sport by lowering risks.

The Morais and Groves research (1997) attempted to set a framework for structural studies of sport using NASCAR as an example. The primary contribution of this study was the identification of the actors that set the framework for the structure and func-

tion of NASCAR. Six structural groups were identified: controllers' (NASCAR), car and team owners, drivers, fans, sponsors, and media. Typologies of types or categories of individuals were established with each of the groups identified.

The primary idea behind this study was that it is necessary to understand the infrastructure and functions of each of the actors in order to effectively do business within each type of sports venue. The overall philosophy of the study is that different sports have different ways of doing business. It is important to understand the peculiarities relating to structure and function to understand and thus be able to effectively do business with this particular sport. It is important to recognize that from this initial study of the sport that NASCAR is different from other sports because of the single entity theory. The France family owns and controls NASCAR and this is the only major U.S. sport that has successfully operated on the single entity theory. Therefore, its structure is different from other sports because of the power structure and authority. The advantage of this infrastructural study is that it is based upon sub-categories where other infrastructural studies take a look at a group and do not distinguish between or among the various types within the sub-categories. For example, fans are often viewed as one category and not distinguished in terms of sub-category types. Another important difference in this infrastructural study was that it was based upon developmental perspective and the sub-categories had some type of progression and were related to important variables of development.

The Mark Howell study (1997) is a significant contribution to the field because it identifies the cultural significance of NASCAR in the American society. Howell identifies the cultural significance of NASCAR as a

response to the U.S. society's love affair with the automobile and to determining who has the best car for speed, endurance, etc. He relates to this basic need for racing in terms of motor sports and then relates it to NASCAR as one type of manifestation of the desire of the U.S. citizens for competition and speed. He states, "The sport of stock car racing revolves around legendary men and machines, while protecting many cultural myths that are important to understand what it means to be an American." (p. 15)

The Howell study documents the development of NASCAR from its roots nationwide, but notes its primary location of interest being the Southeast United States. Many stories emphasize the running of moonshine as the basic beginning of NASCAR, but the national movement to race production cars that had some modifications for speed that really fed the sport's beginning. The sport really took an important turn in the small tracks and local communities, especially in the Southeast United States where this sport has been immortalized.

The basic popularity of NASCAR is tied to linkages of the automotive industry and Chevrolet, Ford, and Chrysler being the pride of the American Manufacturing community. It is racing in the American style, using the patriotic elements to help the American public identify again with the automotive industry. Americans live their experience for speed and competition through their favorite driver. It is also important to recognize that NASCAR has come to stand for family values, independence, and, in short, the "American Way" of doing business. This represents apple pie and motherhood to its fans. The loyalty factor is seen as a direct response to the socialization of the family and the development of NASCAR as a socialization element in basic



family entertainment. "It is as if this activity embodies some basic rules for American living, some fundamental ideas that help us cope with the responsibilities and problems of American culture." (Howell, p. 17)

Ted Ownby (1998) conducted another cultural study focusing on the sport of stock car racing and its relationship to the white man in the south. His article is an examination of literature and sport in relationship to "southern manhood". He looks at three sports: hunting, stock car racing and college football. He attempts to answer the question of whether modern sports contribute to the southern male identity. He also discusses the various definitions of manhood. He identifies two of these definitions, the first coined by W. J. Cash, as the "hellavafella," and the second as the goal of personal independence as being the most appropriate in the sport of stock car racing. (p. 8) He finds it significant that stock car racing is one of the few mass sport events in which white people make up virtually all of the spectators and participants.

Ownby also discusses what he sees as myths in stock car racing. The first being that the cars are basically the same as the cars anyone can purchase. The second is in regards to the fan loyalty to the same make of car as the one they personally drive.

The Sharon Conrad study (1992) is typical of writings that are not of an academic nature. This study is descriptive in an effort to determine the status of a specific aspect of motor sports, the number and type of tracks that exist within a particular geographic region. The focus is to answer a very simplistic question based upon the status of NASCAR under certain circumstances. The question to be answered in the Conrad study was related to track types and their importance in the regional development of the

sport of NASCAR. The diversity of the number of tracks and the type of participation, that is, possible within one geographic region illustrates the active participation on a regional basis as well as the diversity of involvement that is possible within the framework of motor sports and NASCAR. The study illustrates the relationship between local and regional tracks and the NASCAR movement from a foundational interest in motor sports. These foundational studies are necessary to establish a baseline but the data is not timely because the status of NASCAR is always changing. The question is the same, but the results have very limited time in terms of their saliency.

NASCAR is a dangerous sport and a primary concern is risk and how it is managed for safety. One of the components of the risk is the Peltzman effect. (Pope & Tallison, 2010; Dole, 2007; & Bothner, 2007) As different rules are established they have a direct effect upon accidents. Rules and their regulation is essential for the controlling of accidents. Much controversy exists between a rule and its influence upon safety and entertainment value. Another factor that has a direct influence upon risk is an individual's position in relation to winning or keeping a seat in a certain car. The greater the perceived importance in position, the more risk that is taken. This is also true in relation to an end result such as the Chase. Those individuals that are on the bubble will take more risks.

The reviewed studies are important as they represent some of the available empirical literature concerning NASCAR. The qualitative research completed in these studies give a foundation of the scope of the sport. They define the sport in terms of participants in relation to structure and the single entity theory.

## **SPORT MANAGEMENT/SPECIALIZED NASCAR STUDIES**

A review of the Sport Management literature confirms the lack of direct research within the NASCAR arena. Two areas within Sport Management/specialized NASCAR studies relate to the NASCAR topic. The first is literature relating to demand, both economic and fan-based. The actual demand for NASCAR has been documented previously with attendance and dollar figures. The review of the sport management/specialized NASCAR studies literature attempted to explain the reasons for the demand for NASCAR. The second area of literature examined the organizational factors in sport, relating to cultural and structural elements, and leadership. Previous research has shown that these factors are essential elements in successful organizations. The structure of NASCAR is one in which the organizational and cultural elements are highly important and the literature review focused on these areas to interpret the reasons for the organization's success.

### **DEMAND**

There are two primary types of studies that focus upon demand relating to the general topic of sport. The first approach is trying to relate economic cycles to the general health of sport in terms of fan attendance and participation. This approach includes economic structure and its influences on the sport industry. The second approach is non-economic based and focuses upon developing fan interest and participation from a motivational point of reference. This approach focuses on fan identification and loyalty within the realm of sport and its effect on the sport itself.

## **ECONOMIC APPROACH**

The first example of the economic fan-based approach is best demonstrated by a study by Oga (1998). In this study, it was assumed that the sport industry would be more directly affected by the indices of family income. This analysis, however, showed that the patterns in the sport industry, exclusive of the pattern of the golf practice centers, were not related to family. It has been shown from this study that the general economy has a strong influence upon the sport industry. It is important, therefore, to grasp the general business fluctuations correctly and take some preventative measures in order to stabilize the demand using sound business practices and understanding of the relationship between trends in the economy and sport industry. They contribute to improve in forecasting and planning by sport related agencies.

A study by Bernthal & Regan (2004) focused on the economic impact of NASCAR on a community. This study revealed that NASCAR has an annual major economic impact on regions where races are held. The majority of fans were from outside the region of the race track and it was concluded that most of these fans would not have visited this region, if not for NASCAR.

Two other significant studies that represent the fan-based approach to demand are by Chalip (1992) & Hansen & Gauthier (1989). These studies indicate that demand is a polycemic phenomenon, that is, it has the ability to generate multiple effect responses and meanings from spectators. The polycemic structure of an event or sport, accounts for the multiple fan experience from just a passing interest to intense involvement. Understanding this polycemic nature of a sport is

the key to understanding the contemporary fascination with a particular sport.

Chalip has learned from the Olympics that sport has come to represent a great deal more than a game or contest. This approach details the marketing of the Olympic Games via the simultaneous presence of multiple narratives, imbedded genre, and layered symbols. This type of polycemic approach is very much culturally based and moves far beyond the initial understanding of fan interest based upon a pure understanding of numbers.

This approach has special appeal to understanding the sport of NASCAR. The Olympics have assumed a symbolic position in sport, so too has NASCAR and its ability to attract audiences across class, gender, and ethnic backgrounds. There are three approaches of a polycemic nature that may have direct application to NASCAR: a) the multiple narrative approaches, b) the imbedded genre, and c) the layered symbols. The multiple narrative approaches create stories about the sport. In NASCAR, the stories and their embellishment are part of the fan experience. The imbedded genre approach involves such arenas as festivals, rituals, spectacle, and games. This also has an importance for NASCAR because the event has taken on a life and nature of its own to develop fan meaning. Chalip defines the layered symbols as words, banners, flags, and uniforms that make the experience more than is represented by the fan's experience. It takes on a meaning such as freedom, childhood, etc. This has an application to NASCAR because the symbols are widely used to represent the nature of the fan's experience and relate this experience to other phases of the fan's life through a type of transfer process.

Mahar *et al.* showed the relationship between stock market response and performance and NASCAR. (Mahar *et al.*, 2005) The key to stock performances is related to success on the track as well a marketing campaign related to consumers. There was also a positive correlation with auto related industries.

The benefits of sponsorship are also directly related to the value of a sponsors stock. It has been shown that there is a direct relationship between sponsorship and value. (Durr *et. al.*, 2009 & Pruitt *et. al.*, 2004) This as not been perceived as a direct benefit but it is a plus that adds value to sponsorship. This is a process that is related to an association with the sport that has a high profile. This profile is directly related to image. Image in this context is the core of investment and is a commodity to be used along with the effect of business plan to increase sales and therefore value.

Another approach developed by Hansen and Gauthier (1989) sees attendance at professional sporting events as not being sport specific but related to more of the situational factors such as scheduling, team roster quality, price, competing forms of entertainment, fan amenities and conveniences. In this approach, there has been little relationship between the winning and attendance. The attendance is seen as a direct relationship between or among these situational factors and the developing of an attractive package to stimulate fan interest. This study examined four categories of variables: economic, social demographic, attractiveness of the game and residual preferences and isolated factors that seemed to contribute significantly to attendance. Some of the important factors related to attendance were: scheduling, quality of the team roster, number of star players, ticket price, etc. The

general consensus is that these factors are situationally related.

Regan and DaMante examined geo economic analysis to NASCAR attendance, dollar spent, etc. (Regan & DaMante, 1999) The findings suggest there are a number of patterns related to distance from a track. The closer the population centers to the track the less marketing dollars need to be spent. In those locations where individuals are more sophisticated, marketing strategies must be applied. It is important that the marketing strategy be tailored to the geographic location of the audience in relation to it's potential spending patterns.

The authors in this study examined the economic impact of the race event upon the North Carolina Motor Speedway. (Bernthal & Regan, 2004) The direct economic impact for two races was 29 million and the indirect was 16 million. These events in Darlington act as organizational and motivational tools for the stimulation of cottage businesses. These cottage industries are limited and seasonal in scope but have a lasting effect. The focus is on how to sustain this impact.

Connaughten and Madsen examined the economic impact of the motor sports industry upon North Carolina. (Connaughten & Madsen, 2007) The total economic impact was 5.9 million and it had a significant influence upon employment. The nature of the motor sports industry, in this study, is directly related to economic development and it is not an ancillary. Darlington is the cradle of NASCAR racing. The focus is on new businesses constantly being added such as the new NASCAR art museum which will multiply its economic impact significantly.

When relating the conclusions of the aforementioned studies, to the three model types:

economic, polycemic, and situational, the one that seems to hold the greatest implications for use in NASCAR is the polycemic approach detailed by Chalip. It is important, also, to recognize that the economic and situational variable approaches have a secondary impact. The polycemic approach sets the perspective and the economic and situational factors are secondary elements which will help understand the variations in data. There is a definite lack of sport management literature in the area of techniques to study demand, especially in relation to determining the factors relate current numbers to future strategic planning.

### **NON-ECONOMIC FAN-BASED STUDIES**

The non-economic fan-based studies reviewed, for this study, focus on motivational and loyalty issues and dealt with fan identification and sport popularity. These studies dealt with the societal issues in relation to sport fan identification and involvement with sport. They also related behavioral reactions and responses and their impact on fan demand. (Nelson *et al.*, 1992 & Miller & Simon, 2010)

A study by Smith (1988) focused upon demand from a societal viewpoint. The primary interest of this article was the socialization of the sports fan and why their loyalty and intensity to their sport is so great. The key is the vicarious nature of the sport as well as the cohesion that is developed as a result of the identity with a social group related to the particular sport. This article emphasizes the position of sport in society. Several theories are explored to explain the intense involvement of the sports fan. These theories include social integration, excitement and escape, the aesthetic factor, and the transmission of sport through the culture.

Each theory attempted to explain the popularity of the sport and the nature of the sport in relation to the quality of life, the cohesive factor and its effect on society. Sport is unique and has developed out of an eclectic position in most of the theories presented.

A study by Wann & Bascombe (1993) examined fans from an identification process. The purpose of this study was to explore the identification process in terms of behavioral, effective, and cognitive reactions. Persons who had moderate and high identification with sports teams display a more ego-enhancing pattern of attributes for the teams success, have more positive expectations concerning future team performances, exhibit greater willingness to invest larger amounts of time and money in order to watch and follow the team, and are more likely to believe that fans of a team possess special qualities. Fans with high involvement are predisposed toward aggressive behavior, the social nature of friendships that develop with individuals who have a common interest, and the personal nature of an involvement with a team's success and the distancing of a team's loss based upon situational factors. Demand, in this instance, is based not on understanding the popularity of the sport, but understanding the individual and their response to the sport and the relationship between the individual and a specific component of the sport, such as an individual or team.

Lapio Jr. and Morris examined marketing approaches and their effectiveness. The article points out that there is little information about marketing effectiveness of NASCAR. (Lapio Jr. & Morris, 2000) The focus of the article on the integration of television, the Internet, etc., is to create and maintain excitement about the sport. The effectiveness of a marketing approach is related to the attachment to this excitement and constantly

introducing new ideas, products, and services. The key element to success is involvement.

Dean focused upon brand and its attributes. (Dean, 2004) A unique methodology was used focusing upon desired attributes in a new product. Preferences were decomposed using a conjoint methodology. Results suggest that this method has potential if associated with simulation because various strategies can be tested based upon product preference.

Dalakas and Levin examined the negative influence of fan attitudes for a sponsor. (Dalakas & Levin, 2005) Primary findings indicate that a positive attitude toward the sponsors products had very positive results. If a fan has a negative attitude toward the sponsor, this directly translates to a negative feeling for the sponsors products.

Bernthal and Regen suggest that there is a consumer gap in perceptions in regard to NASCAR fans. (Bernthal & Regen, 2001) Findings confirm this gap and suggest that the gap is widening based upon changing conditions, especially related to the economy. The degree of the consumer gap is related to the type of fan, that is, casual, moderate, and hardcore.

Schackelford examined NASCAR from a perspective of cultural development. (Schackelford, 2002) These cultural elements include; secularism, equality of opportunity, status and roll, bureaucracy, achievement, and record keeping. Cultural elements that are usually studied are class, race, and gender. This examination illustrates a transition and evolution of NASCAR as an indicator of progressive cultural change, especially in the South.

Amato investigated the fan culture. (Amato *et. al.*, 2005) There are generally two types of fans: those that are deeply bonded and those who are pledged but showed less commitment. The key to management based upon culture seems to be related to the development of relationships.

Other studies also try to isolate demographic and psychographic variables to explain the NASCAR phenomena. (Kinney *et. al.*, 2008 & Gill, 2008) Educations, age, gender, the internet, attitudes toward NASCAR, and involvement have all been found to be significantly correlated. Other studies focus on identification and symbols and their influence. There have also been positive relationships between these factors and NASCAR. The one missing element in these studies has understood the NASCAR nation as a heterogeneous population. Each of the races has its own unique set of variables that influence the fans. A geographic approach may provide more understanding.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS**

There are two primary factors in the review of literature on organizational development. One is cultural and structural elements and the other is leadership. The purpose of both of these factors is to increase organizational efficiency to achieve the objectives of the organization. The primary question is which is most important, organizational culture and structure or leadership, or what combination of the two is best to achieve organizational effectiveness?

### **CULTURE AND STRUCTURE**

The first of the factors to be explored was organizational culture and structure. A study by Copeland (Copeland *et. al.*, 1996) raises

the question about the external relationships with sponsors as being a prime element in decision-making. The basic thrust of the research is that many times there is no continuity between the sponsor and the sponsoring agency and these results in a loss of the sponsorship. The key to these relationships is the benefits derived by the sponsor and how well the agency can communicate these benefits to the sponsor. One of the important elements is good communication.

Another study by Haggerty (1988) identified control as an important element through organizational culture and structure. This study established information links as the key to control. It is how the information is communicated, how it is carried or transferred, and how complex the communication. It is the basis of a system, and the cybertization of the system, that has the greatest impact upon the effectiveness of the organization. Those organizations that address the information processing and its movement in the various levels of the system or organization are the ones that are most successful.

A study by Flint and Eitzen (1987), argued that organization in sport is isolated from other types of institutions within society. Owners of professional teams tend to gravitate toward professional relationships with other sport enterprises and not other corporate entities. This study also suggests that the sports affiliations or relationships are more local than national or global. Relationships are very important to the success of traditional enterprises. This was not as evident as being a necessary element or condition for success in the sport industry. It was also noted that the sport industry is more driven by wealth than merit, but it is seen in many quarters as being a meritocratic system.

Hugenberg and Hugenberg examined the idea that NASCAR is rooted in the American values. (Hugenberg & Hugenberg, 2008) The primary focus of the article was dispelling the myth that the sport is primarily for white males from the South. The issue of nationalizing the sport is discussed as well as the dilemma of new fans versus the traditional NASCAR fan.

Newmann examined the ethnographic characteristics of the NASCAR fans. (Newmann, 2007) This study identified a process of how an individual becomes famous. Various issues were examined around the sport in terms of current issues about the sport growth. These issues have caused a changing landscape, especially as it relates to a conservative political and faith based perspectives.

Hurt explored the premise that the geographic expansion of NASCAR has significantly changed the sport. (Hurt, 2005) This expansion has led to the decline of the southern distinctiveness of the sport. The focus is on the loss of identity and its impact. Identity in this context is the loss of a uniqueness in terms of the development of cultural elements.

Alderman explored the transcultural nature of NASCAR racing in the South. (Alderman, 2003) Two different cases were cited as examples of change. One was the loss of the track at North Wilkesboro and the other was Charlotte. With the example of North Wilkesboro, the negative aspect of the change on the community and its loss of heritage and identity has been devastating. In the Charlotte area change has led to positive development. It is a repository of past traditions and a redevelopment of a new identity. The other is an example of how change can be used to stimulate business and a new

community identity and maintaining its cultural position in the South.

Spann examined NASCAR from the perspective of cultural development. (Spann, 2002) These cultural elements include secularism, equality of opportunity, status and roll, bureaucracy, achievement, and record keeping. Other cultural elements are social class, race, and gender. This examination illustrates a transition and evolution of NASCAR as an indicator of progressive cultural change, especially in the South.

Another element of research is the basic culture of NASCAR. There are studies that have tried to understand how the culture has developed utilizing different theories. (Newmann, 2010; Newman & Giardin, 2008; & Baucus *et. al.*, 2008) One theory is a Neo Liberalism which is directly related to capitalistic values and their influence upon the sport. The pursuit of corporate culture drives the sport and its influence as a negative effect based upon the political structure that has developed. One of the examples is the institutionalized cheating. (Norton *et al.*, 2008) This is a value that has pervaded the sport and puts forth the wrong image to fans, especially children. This type of culture needs to be changed and it can only be accomplished through recognition of positive values and a positive administrative leadership. Another of the cultural theories is the Southern roots of the sport and its relation to its confederate tradition. This is a problem, especially when the sport is trying to nationalize its audience. There is a natural conflict between the core values of the fans. (Shackeford, 1999; & Steinberg & Kinche-loe, 2009) The primary question is, does NASCAR give up its southern roots to accept a new image that sells better to a national audience?

## LEADERSHIP

Another element that must be examined is leadership. A study by Weese (1995), examined the relationship between leadership and organizational culture. The theory found that there was no direct relationship between leadership and organizational culture and effectiveness. There was a significant relationship between the organizational strength and organizational effectiveness. It should also be noted that the type of leadership being examined was transformational, which is the process of influencing major changes in attitudes and assumptions of organizational members and building commitment for the organizational mission and goals. Weese also found that those organizations that possess strong organizational cultures and transformational leaders focus upon cultural building activities that are consumer related. Those relationships that were found to be significant are important at all hierarchical levels within an organization. The hierarchical structure does not seem to have an important impact, especially when the organization has been well saturated or integrated with a transformational leadership approach.

One of the leadership studies was by Daniel Soucie (1994). The primary focus of his study is the isolation of what makes an effective leader in a sport organization to the achievement of success of an organization or the achievement of an organization's goals and objectives. The primary thrust of the research was identifying leadership influences and power, leadership traits and skills, leadership behaviors, situational leadership, and charismatic and transformational leadership. The results indicate that empowerment of subordinates, to establish goals and objectives that are realistic and the development of plans, is instrumental in the success of sport organizations.

Warren Bennis completed a study (1984) in which 90 effective leaders in sport, politics, industry, and social organizational developers were surveyed to quantify their traits and characteristics. He identified four components: management of attention, management of meaning, management of trust, and management of self. The common characteristic or the primary thrust of the leaders was those that were visionary or transformational. These leaders inspire followers by uniting them toward a common goal and creating the social architecture (organizational culture) embodying unity of purpose, excitement, and challenge.

Nalbandian in a case study examines the political issues associated with the development of a NASCAR track. (Nalbandian, 2001) He gives insight to the type of political leadership that is needed to bring such a project to a successful conclusion. The primary framework is related to vision and the ability to negotiate the political system and show the benefits of such a project. NASCAR in this context shows great adaptability to individualizing the development of a track to a specific region. It is also well understood in this case study that the future of such an endeavor depends upon a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere to develop a fan base in traditional four days geographic location.

Levin examines sponsorship from a brand attitude and recall bases. (Levin *et. al.*, 2001) The recall was higher through the use of a logo than brands exposed through traditional ads. The most effective approach was combining traditional marketing with logo development associated with recognition of car color, number, etc.

Pruitt examines sponsorship and shareholder wealth/stock value. (Pruitt *et. al.*, 2004) There is an increase in shareholder wealth



for sponsorship. Successful NASCAR sponsors were examined using a multiple regression analysis. A team that is directly associated with the automotive industry is directly correlated to value because of an attitude toward the stakeholder in regard to success. One of the interesting variables that was negatively correlated was cash flow per share.

The Marcopolos study recounted the development of the construction the Nashville, Tennessee speedway. (Marcopolos, 2006) The primary focus was on the history of racing in Nashville and the cost of the speedway. The success of this endeavor can be directly related to community support for such a facility.

Sponsorship is not a given and it depends directly upon promotions and a sound business plan. Just because a sponsor is affiliated with the sport does not mean that there will be direct benefits. (Levin *et. al.*, 2008; DeGavis *et. al.*, 2009; Levin *et. al.*, 2004; & Dees, 2010) Current sponsors have an advantage over new ones because of their longevity and the establishment of relationships with fans. Identification is the key element to developing brand loyalty. There must also be a good fit between the product and the fan. Relationships are the key to capitalizing on sponsor investments.

The literature reviewed in sport management reveals important factors that may impact the present and future success of NASCAR. The overall influence of the general economy may affect the demand in relation to ticket prices and overall event costs. Also important for the fans is the factor of maintaining connections. The use of symbols in NASCAR is and will probably continue to be important. It is important for NASCAR to realize the polycemic nature of the sport

and the varying degrees of fan involvement and demand.

## THE EVOLUTION OF NASCAR

The evolution of NASCAR has been over different eras of development. The 1940's, especially the late 40's, was the period of organization. The 1950's was the period of development of circuits and tracks. The 1960's was the driver era during which many of the folk heroes and legends were established. The 1970's was the era of the manufacturer. The car manufacturers realized the benefit of racing to selling cars. If their car won on Sunday; people would show up in the showroom on Monday morning. The 1980's was the era of the sponsor and the 1990's was the era of the media. (Golenbock & Fielden, 1997) The 2000's was the era of the investment of outside interests.

Bill France was primarily a promoter and organizer of races. There were many other promoters and organizers on a number of circuits that were in direct competition with France. It was evident there was a need for a national association to insure a racing standard and bring fairness to the competition. (Butterworth, 1971) Seeing this need, in 1948 Bill France incorporated and developed the initial structure of NASCAR under the single entity theory. (Oliver, 1995)

NASCAR was in direct competition with other organizations as sanctioning bodies for races. What made NASCAR most successful was the ability to develop a competitive product, insure the fairness of racing at a highly competitive level, and offer a good entertainment product. During this early period there were obvious forces, especially in the driver category, that resisted standardizing the rules and sanctions of NASCAR.

The NASCAR organization had to walk a tightrope during this time because they had to develop a product to attract race fans as well as to insure fairness of competition. They also had to be competitive among other organizations that were trying to organize stock car racing. One strategy that developed was a firmness of action and not tolerating any other opinions, and yet having a willingness to change to make the sport more competitive and to develop a better product for the race fan. (Howell, 1997)

In order for NASCAR to establish itself in the late 40's and early 50's, new rules and regulations had to be developed. Even more important was that tracks had to be built. The forging of cooperative relationships with track owners was also important in order to develop a sanctioning system in the circuit that would allow interested drivers to compete and provide a highly competitive product for the fan. The new super speedways were quickly becoming the premier tracks and attracting fans. The short tracks were giving rise to these super speedways where more speed could be obtained and drivers and cars could be tested so that better entertainment could be provided for the fan. Even though the entertainment value was prized, there was a constant striving to improve safety and equipment. (Craft, 1993)

The 50's was a time of change for organizational restructuring to insure the continuance of NASCAR. The realization of the vision and the firm establishment of the reputation of NASCAR in the motor sports arena was the goal. Even though there was success, it was limited during this period and those that were in the sport were primarily involved because of love of the sport and the competitiveness of racing. This was a time of promotion, selling the dream to drivers, fans, and track owners. It involved convincing all the actors and groups that the investment

would eventually flourish and their visions could be realized. (Fielden, 1990a; & Fielden, 1990c)

At the end of the 50's and beginning of the 60's the drivers were beginning to establish reputations and becoming folk heroes in and among the various actors. (Girdler, 1988) The refinement of the entertainment product was beginning and there was now a firm product in the car as well as the driver that could be sold to race enthusiasts. The investors were individuals who had a keen interest in racing and in the level of competition. This was a time of development and growth. This was the era of drivers and the beginning of legends. This was one of the most colorful eras of NASCAR because of the array of characters that raced during this period. (Fielden, 1989a & Fielden, 1990b) An individual in a small shop with limited resources could become a winner in any NASCAR race with dedication and determination.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the manufacturers realized the potential of NASCAR and became heavily involved, especially in the development phases. This represented a need for a larger investment as well as a greater technical knowledge to develop a winning product. (Fielden, 1989a) Ford and Chevrolet have been consistently involved in NASCAR. Chrysler had a dispute with NASCAR over the hemi-head engines and was out of racing until 2001. The manufacturers not only realize that NASCAR is an excellent place for testing but also that winning car brands sell to the public. There is a very close relationship between car dealerships, manufacturers, and NASCAR racing. Manufacturers have always been a strong contingency and an important influence in racing. This influence is not only in the base product but relates to

the America's love affair with the automobile.

The automobile is one of the elements of lifestyle that have radically changed life in the United States. Individuals' love of their automobiles has been almost legendary. With the invasion of the Japanese cars, this love affair has been somewhat tarnished, except in the NASCAR arena. The American public identifies with the NASCAR cars that look like the Fords, Chevrolets, and Chryslers, that they drive. The relationships among manufacturers in NASCAR's roots run deep. These roots extend especially into the sales and development arenas. The primary element among the manufacturers is ego and pride. (Craft, 1993) Ford is one of the initiators of motor racing and it is hard to believe that in an American sport like NASCAR that their roots have not run deep. NASCAR had to sell the manufacturers in the 70's and since this time they have been an integral part of the infrastructure of NASCAR.

After selling the manufacturers in the 1970's, the 1980's was the era of the sponsor. The primary reason for sponsor involvement is the vast fan base and loyalty that NASCAR has garnished. (Kate, 1995) Without the money from big time sponsors such as Busch, RJR Reynolds, Proctor and Gamble, Coke, etc., the high-tech nature of the sport would not be possible. With the increase in money come greater technology, greater speed and competitiveness and, therefore, more fans. One of the success stories of NASCAR has been their ability to cultivate long-term relationships with sponsors and use this as a money base to drive the sport. (Morrison, 1996) Many of the sponsors, in essence, help NASCAR because their logos appear on their sponsor's product and their driver is constantly promoting the product. Therefore, NASCAR is

promoted through the sponsors, which during the 80's became the driving forces. The key element here is the loyalty of the fan. Fan loyalty runs about 72% whereas most other sports run about 30-35%. (Howard, 1995) NASCAR fans tend to be very loyal to their drivers as well as their sponsors. (Kate, 1995) Fans can get closer to the drivers than players in any other sport. The sponsors are an integral part of getting the fans close to the drivers by sponsoring special events for their customers. These events put the fan at the center of attention. The drivers know how important the fans and sponsor are to the sport. They actively promote their fans and sponsors. In response, by supporting their favorite driver's sponsor, fans believe they are directly helping the driver. (Fielden, 1990b; & Lee, 2002)

As the popularity of NASCAR increased, the 90's became the era of the media. All aspects of the races were covered, qualifying rounds, happy hours, practice sessions, anything that says NASCAR and has a potential for an audience, was being exploited by the media. (Dunnivant, 1997) All of the major networks plus ESPN, TNN, TNT/TBN, had extensive coverage of motor sports, especially NASCAR. FOX and TNT/TBN had six year \$1.2 billion deals with exclusive rights to one half of each season. (Brockinton, 2001) In terms of the growth of attendance, it is the most popular sport in the United States. (Jenkins, 2002) The NASCAR Cup series is the success story of the 1990's with a 91% growth in ticket sales since 1990. (Poole, 2000) Media exposure shows no signs of slowing down, as long as the fans are there, the media will be there.

The 1990's was also the era of the merchandiser. The television exposure brought with it, the opportunity to merchandise. Products ranging from power tools and household items to the basic t-shirts and hats were

“hawked”. Television was being used during races and other time slots to sell merchandise. Merchandise is sold in retail stores, restaurants, racing facilities, etc. NASCAR expected merchandising to top \$1.26 billion in 2000 after generating \$80 million in 1990. (Poole, 2000)

The 2000’s continue as an era of the media and sponsorship. Sponsors are willing to pay the dollars for the race especially in the television venue. Thomas Lee writing for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch states, “anyone and anything associated with NASCAR is hot.” Increased television and media exposure means more fans and a continuing increase in the popularity of NASCAR. The 2001 season was the inaugural season on FOX TV, the telecasts reached an average of 19.9 million viewers. NBC covered the second half of the 2001 season and their ratings for NASCAR were 34% higher than 2000. (Fielden, 2003) Mike Helton, NASCAR executive, notes: “The NASCAR Cup Series is the second most watched regular-season sport on TV. Our sport ranks third in licensed merchandise. Of the 20 most attended sporting events in 2002, 17 were NASCAR Cup races... In simple terms, there are more people watching NASCAR racing today than ever before.” (Fielden, 2003, p. 444) The end of the era has been influenced by the economy. There has been a significant down turn in merchandise, attendance, TV ratings, and there has been an increase in investment by outside sport interests and venture capitalist. This is a good time to invest while the sport stabilizes itself. There is still a strong interest from sponsors. Investors and sponsors still see the value in NASCAR (Fielden, 2010).

The empirical research suggests that there have not been enough comprehensive studies to provide a model for the development

of a framework to provide a comprehensive understanding of the sport. (Newman & Beissel, 2009 & Horrow & Swatek, 2009) No doubt history gives an indication and information is needed to provide a sound theory to explain the success of the sport. It has had success over six decades and has been in a positive growth position. Times have changed and NASCAR has evolved to meet the needs of the fans. Causal understanding is needed to gain a perspective and provide a base for good planning not based on intuition.

The review of empirical studies has revealed little. Of the studies that are focused on NASCAR, few are empirical. The lack of available research on the topic implies a need for research to provide a basis of understanding for the reasons for the success of NASCAR. This understanding may allow for other sport businesses to benefit from the success of NASCAR.

## CONCLUSION

The history of NASCAR provides an understanding of the foundation of the sport and how it began. There is an inherent entertainment value in auto racing. The sport has maintained a competitive level and provided an interesting story line. It is one of the major sports in terms of attendance and television rating. NASCAR has, through strong leadership and sensitivity to fans, developed an entertaining product that has been recognized as a major sport. A culture has developed that supports over 25,000,000 fans and national events every week. Fanage is growing but at a slower rate because of the economy. Loyalty in this culture has been seen in few other sports. This loyalty is not short term but lasts a lifetime.

There has been little empirical research completed on NASCAR. Direct research involving NASCAR includes an eclectic series of studies. There are corporate studies that have been conducted, but this information is not shared because it is either of an organizational or company nature and used to make decisions regarding sponsorship and advertising. The information is protected through corporate policy so as not to give competitors an advantage by using a company's own database. There are descriptive studies and many articles, especially about tracks and drivers. But, these studies provide little information as to the important variables that have influenced NASCAR's development through the years. There has been much written about the history of NASCAR. Most of the information is of a folklore nature and provides some of the best data about the importance of the status of NASCAR, especially its importance to cultural development.

These areas of review are all contributory for different reasons. They individually explore the variables related to the single entity theory and identify significant studies that contribute to the structure of the research. The single-entity theory is an important issue as it defines the structure of NASCAR and its' uniqueness as an organization.

NASCAR has been, and continues to be, an extremely popular sport; the demand continues to grow on a yearly basis. Examining the variables impacting this growth provides an understanding of the future direction and past success of the sport and provides a model for future sport businesses. The NASCAR structure is rich in history and tradition and operates under a single-entity concept. The past will impact the future as the organization continues to change, grow, and evolve.

**Table 1**

**Important Incidents/Variables -- By NASCAR Group and Year**

NASCAR

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 1940's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organization period</li><li>• National champion established</li><li>• Uniform rules established</li><li>• Fair payout</li></ul>  |
| 1950's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Era of the tracks</li><li>• Move away from stock cars</li><li>• Factory involved/dictates rules</li><li>• Building of Daytona</li><li>• American Automobile Association departure/removed biggest hurdle NASCAR faced</li></ul>                                |
| 1960's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Era of control</li><li>• Factories pull out/can not control</li><li>• Drivers try to organize</li><li>• Growing pains</li><li>• Safety issues/rules change</li></ul>   |
| 1970's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Era of business</li><li>• NASCAR good business</li><li>• Corporate sponsorship</li><li>• Modern era/concentrate on best events</li><li>• RJR enters and revitalizes sport</li><li>• Factories out because they can not control rules and competition</li></ul> |
| 1980's | Introduction to General Public <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Period of growth</li><li>• '79 television/CBS</li><li>• Madison Avenue becomes important</li><li>• Fans different/diverse</li><li>• Cable TV coverage</li></ul>   |
| 1990's | Demographic Expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Period of growth</li><li>• Growing pains to become a national sport</li><li>• Biggest period of new track construction</li></ul>   |
| 2000's | New Audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mainstream media</li><li>• Expansion into urban areas</li><li>• Format change</li><li>• Car of Tomorrow</li><li>• More control</li></ul>   |

## Team and Car Owners

- 1940's
  - Garage period
  - Small operations
  - Drivers more skilled
  
- 1950's
  - Team concept developed by one owner/took to extremes/driver curfews
  - Driver important element to winning
  - Technical improvements
  - Mercury Outboard/improve quality of operation, i.e., transport systems
  - Factory into racing/Motor City 250
  - Ford Thunderbird super charged engine
  - Factories went to teams/owners
  
- 1960's
  - Driver is part of a team
  - Technical improvements
  - Pit procedure improved/Wood Brothers
  - Drivers organize/Curtis Turner and Tim Flock
  - Dodge and Ford dominate
  - Ralph Moody/developed standardized chassis
  
- 1970's
  - Need for improved equipment/learning
  - Business becoming important
  - Drivers as owners/beginning of end
  - Lee Iacocca -- Ford out
  - Driver's strike in Talledaga
  
- 1980's
  - Team concept/more testing and information
  - Corporate spokesperson
  - Manufacturers back in sport
  
- 1990's
  - Teams and drivers as stars
  - Drivers come from everywhere
  - Team skills improve
  
- 2000's
  - Era of expansion
  - New investors
  - Team consolidation
  - Outside money
  - Growing need for money to keep up

## Drivers

- 1940's
  - Bragging period
  - Curtis Turner
  - Moonshiner involvement
  - Colorful drivers
  - Individuals more important than teams
  - Level of competition reason for participation
  
- 1950's
  - Moonshine/Outlaw Era

- Fireball Roberts
  - Joe Weatherly
  - Junior Johnson
  - Herb Thompson
  - Tim Flock
  - Lee Petty
  - Marshall Teague
  - Colorful Drivers
  - Individuals more important than teams
  - Holman -- Moody, very important
  - Focus on car makes
- 1960's
- Fred Lorenzen/good looks and articulate
  - More business like
  - Ned Jarrett
  - Richard Petty
  - Driver attractive "personalities"
- 1970's
- Richard Petty becomes icon and folk hero
  - Star period begins
  - Sponsorship spokesperson/especially STP
  - D.W./upscale promotion and team mode
  - Change from care to driver promotion
- 1980's
- Dale Earnhardt/icon and folk hero
  - Bill Elliott winning Winston million
  - Corporatization of drivers
  - Drivers becoming public heroes -- loss of personalities
- 1990's
- Dale Earnhardt/icon and folk hero
  - Jeff Gordon/icon and folk hero
  - Jeff Gordon winning Winston million and 2<sup>nd</sup> National Championship
  - Dollars reason to participate
  - Drivers attract women/mechanics attract men
  - Fan focus is now on driver
  - Businessmen first, drivers second
- 200's
- Super star era
  - Money a prime motivation
  - Skills important
  - Less equipment
  - IMAX important
  - Safety important

### Fans

- 1940's
- Stock car enthusiasts
- 1950's
- Factory popularity
  - Fans primarily males



- 1960's
  - Motor sports enthusiasts
  - Loyalty/try products because they support racing
  
- 1970's
  - TV popularity
  - Different tracks/different type of fan
  - Loyalty to sponsors
  
- 1980's
  - Mainstream/regional
  - New breed of fan/money and behavior
  - Upgrading of facilities
  - Women become fans
  
- 1990's
  - Mainstream/national
  - Focus on drivers and cars
  - World-Wide Web -- means of staying connected, being on the inside of the sport
    - individual driver sites
    - team sites
  
- 2000's
  - Social era
  - Entertainment products
  - Fan unrest
  - Image

### Sponsorship

- 1940's
  - Local sponsorship/especially auto suppliers
  
- 1950's
  - Factory sponsors
  - Mercury outboard/first of non-automotive sponsors
  - Marshall Teague
  - Pure Oil
  
- 1960's
  - Auto sponsorship/regional/need money now that factories are out
  - Goodyear
  
- 1970's
  - Corporate sponsorship/moving billboards
  - STP/Petty
  - Unicol "76"
  - Pepsi/Petty
  - Coke/Bobby Allison
  - RJR marketing model
  - Made sport lucrative and appealing
  - Gatorade
  - Tide, Hanes, and other sponsors appealing to women
  
- 1980's
  - TV/National sponsorship
  - Fan loyalty tied to sponsorship
  - Sponsorship dedication important to success
  - Wrangler/Integrated marketing
  - PG/new marketing methodology/especially for women

- 1990's
  - Sales/Merchandising
  - Sponsors help popularize NASCAR in community

- 2000's
  - Image
  - Sales
  - Profits
  - More Fortune 500 companies
  - Left some old companies behind

### Merchandisers

- 1940's
  - Souvenirs and local sponsored products/i.e., calendars
- 1950's
  - Souvenirs and regional sponsored products/i.e., calendars
  - Kiefhopher/Mercury
- 1960's
  - Give aways/Hats & T's
- 1970's
  - TV discovers NASCAR
  - Fine points of contest\*
  - Popularity drives merchandise -- Maxx cards, Racing champion & Matchbox car models
  - Learned how to broadcast
  - Women becoming fans
  - Drivers exploiting merchandise
- 1990's
  - Icons of sport influence
    - race merchandise
    - corporate merchandise
    - period of collectibles
  - Corporate approach/fans & drivers
  - Big business
  - Earnhardt/made \$30 million selling his rights
  - Renegades
  - TV sales--QVC, ESPN, Shop Talk
  - Internet sales
- 2000's
  - Icon Era
  - Diversity of products
  - Obsession
  - Driver part of family
  - Over production of merchandise

### Media

- 1940's
  - Auto media
  - Local newspapers
- 1950's
  - Auto media
  - Bill France cultivated media/writers
  - Regional newspapers

- Radio
- 1960's
- 1961 Firecracker 250/Wide World of Sports
  - Big City Newspapers
  - No Media box in 60s/only observation platform\*
  - Low person on newspaper staff was racing editor
- 1970's
- TV tapes/Wide World of Sports
  - Print media
  - "79" CBS/high television rating
  - More knowledge becomes racing's move to more important positions
  - Recognition of safety needs for media (and fans)
- 1980's
- 1984 CBS/beat winter Olympics rating
  - 1984 Petty and Reagan picture in National press
  - ESPN/Cable (FOX, TNN/TBN, etc.)
  - Knowledgeable print
  - TV and electronic media professionalized
  - Readership survey indicated popularity of NASCAR
- 1990's
- Mainstream TV
  - World Wide Web
  - Some major newspapers still do not cover
  - 7 different cable shows dedicated to NASCAR
  - Centralized Media
- 2000's
- Own Network/Speed
  - Internet Important
  - Ratings revival over other Sports
  - Create programs/reality
  - Coverage of everything
  - More control of media

### Trends

- 2000's
- Chase
  - Sport Change
  - Law Suits
  - Slow Down
  - Change in Management
  - Outside Investment
  - Bad Economy/Low Attendance
  - TV Numbers Down