Taylor Washington

April 21, 2014

8 Point Plan

Spring 2014

**The Richard Sherman Superbowl Campaign**

**Situation**

Richard Sherman is an American football cornerback for the Seattle Seahawks of the National Football League currently playing for the Seattle Seahawks after being selected in the fifth round of the 2011 NFL Draft. Prior to playing for the Seahawks, Sherman played cornerback for the Arizona Cardinals and college football for Stanford University. During his tenure in the NFL, Sherman has had numerous career highlights from being named the NFL interceptions leader in 2013 and NFL Defensive Player of the Month in September 2013 to being ranked #50 in the Top 100 Players of 2013.

On January 19, 2014, his career highlights continued to thrive as the Seattle Seahawks met the San Francisco 49ers on the field for the 2014 NFC Championship game. In the final seconds Sherman helped carry the Seahawks to a 23-17 victory as he deflected a pass intended for San Francisco 49ers receiver Michael Crabtree that would lead his team to Super Bowl XLVIII. In celebration of such a the hard-fought victory, Sherman got in a Crabtree’s face to say a few words. Crabtree then pushed Sherman’s helmet ending in Sherman gesturing the choke signal.

Minutes later, Sherman participated in a postgame interview with Erin Andrews of Fox that would trigger national media attention surrounding his angry rant. The rant was sparked as Andrews asked Sherman to walk her though his impressive interception from the pressure to his internal thoughts going on at that very exact moment. That’s when Sherman began screaming things such as “Well, I’m the best corner in the game. When you try me with a sorry receiver like Crabtree, that’s the result you are going to get. Don’t’ you ever talk about me”. He finished by sending the following message to Crabtree: “Don’t open your moth about the best or I’m going to shut it for you real quick”.

Immediately following the interview, football fans worldwide took their discrepancies to social media sites primarily including Facebook and Twitter. Many Seahawks and Sherman fans spoke of their disappointment in the lack of sportsmanship and humility saying that Sherman’s arrogant lash out completely took away from team’s newly acquired title as the 2013 NFC Champions during the 2014 playoffs.

Furthermore, the Sherman brand found itself on a decline immediately following the interview. A week after the NFC Championship win, all jersey sales went up in-store and online for Seahawk players by at least 10% minus Sherman, whose jersey sales decline by 5%. Additionally, Sherman’s personal website, foundation website, and social media sites experienced a decline in impressions by 15%. Of the interaction that Sherman did receive on social media, 61% of it has been negative feedback.

In conclusion, Sherman has now been left with a tainted image due to his unsportsmanlike conduct and lack of humility and respect for others. Sherman has now been tasked with finding a way to repair his image in order to maintain and regain a fan base that has been lost.

**Objectives**

Objective: To positively change public opinion and attitudes toward Richard Sherman by 30%.

**Target Audience**

The primary audience consists of Caucasian males. The age of this audience ranges from 18-54 with the majority being 35-44. They are college educated and employed full time. Their household income is $35,000 and above. They are typically married and have no children or one child in their household ages 17 or younger. They own a home and drive a luxury, compact car or domestic SUV or truck.

The majority of the audience lives in the West and Mid-West with the vast majority living in Washington. Heavy populations can also be found in the surrounding states of Oregon and Idaho. The audience is equally distributed amongst Washington. The majority of the audience in Oregon and Idaho reside in the northern area of the state directly surrounding the Washington borders.

The target audience is a fan of professional football with its favorite team being the Seattle Seahawks. They spend an average of one to 4 leisurely hours on the Internet with 25% of that time dedicated to researching sports scores and updates. They enjoy hard, psychedelic music such as Pink Floyd and Nirvana. They enjoy watching movies that involve action or adventure such as Star Wars and Batman. Seattle fans are “homers” when it comes to their favorite brands and prefer things that are native to Washington. They actively follow sports news on outlets such as ESPN and attend or tune into sports games weekly.

**Strategy**

Sherman will utilize Superbowl Weekend and social media to deliver key messages and create a buzz around his name in a positive manner. The key messages that will most actively be on display are that:

* Sportsmanship plays a key role in Sherman’s life as an athlete
* The relationship between Sherman and Crabtree has been mended
* There are more dimensions to Sherman than those receiving media coverage

The upcoming Superbowl between the Denver Broncos and Seattle Seahawks will be played at Metlife Stadium in Metropolitan New York. The stadium has a capacity of 82,500. This would make Super Bowl XLVIII the 9th most attended Super Bowl game in history if Metlife Stadium completely sells out. With the possibility of 82,500 sports fans making their way to New York for Super bowl weekend, this weekend becomes an effective time to reach our target audience that will be in town for the game. Furthermore, the Super Bowl is not only the biggest sporting event each year in the U.S. but is one of the largest televised events, with the previous Super Bowl reaching a viewership of 108, 690,000, making this another idea time to implement a campaign to reach our target audience.

**Tactics**

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1. Post Game Media Coverage – Sherman will utilize the post game media coverage to deliver key messages. A speech and talking points will be created for him.
2. Super Bowl Weekend Party – Sherman and Crabtree will host a party at the 40/40 Club in New York City where they will be seen having friendly interactions. Photo news releases will be published following the events.
3. Blog Post- Sherman will create a blog post to be published to his personal blog entitled the “5 Things the Media Won’t Tell You About Sherman” or “5 Things My Rant Taught Me”
4. Feature Story – Interviews will be scheduled with two of the top sports magazines, Sports Illustrated and ESPN the magazine, to deliver key messages through the interviews for a feature story.
5. Social Media Campaign – The social media campaign will be entitled #Shermanship and will encourage sports fan to show sportsmanship throughout the game by using the hashtag. A press release will be created and distributed to promote the social media campaign.
6. Super Bowl Commercial – Sherman and Crabtree will be featured in an AT&T commercial during the Superbowl that will emphasis the importance of sportsmanship between the two or Sherman will be featured in a Gatorade commercial that demonstrates all of his positive traits and behavior.

**Calendar**

*January 20, 2014*

8:30 am Commercial Pitch distributed

12:00 pm Interview Bookings for ESPN and Sports Illustrated

5:00 pm #Shermanship Press Release drafted and sent out

*January 22, 2014*

3:00 – 4:00 pm ESPN interview

*January 23, 2014*

7:00 pm – 5:00 am Commercial filmed

*January 24, 2014*

4:00 – 5:00 pm Sports illustrated interview

*January 31, 2014*

12:00 pm ESPN & Sports Illustrated Feature Story Published

3:00 pm Speech and Talking points created for Sunday press conference

5:00 pm Blog posted

*February 1, 2014*

10:00 pm – 3:00 am Super Bowl Party

4:00 – 5:00 am Photo News Release Drafted and Sent

*February 2, 2014*

9:00 am Photo News Release Published

~11:00 pm Press Conference

**Budget**

Super Bowl Weekend Party

*$*8,000

Total: **$8,000**

**Evaluation**

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Results will be measured using a poll conducted via [www.seahawks.com](http://www.seahawks.com) and [www.espn.com](http://www.espn.com). A poll will be constructed and published to the front page of both websites a week before the superbowl and stay on the homepage for three days. The poll will consist of questions that pertain to the target audience’s opinion of Sherman. The same poll will be published to the same websites the day after the superbowl and will remain for three days. The data from the two polls will be evaluated to gauge an attitude change among the audience as a result of the campaign.