



Real Salt Lake, Soccer Is Now

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2011

Case Study for LIME Marketing

<http://blog.getlimed.com/2011/04/real-salt-lake-soccer-is-now/>

Client

Who: Real Salt Lake (RSL)

Home Base: Salt Lake City, Utah

Year Founded: 2004

Industry: Major League Soccer

Backstory

The history of Major League Soccer (MLS) in the US is brief. It was founded in 1993 and kicked off its first full season in 1996 with 10 teams. Popularity for the league fell after the US national team finished in last place in the 1998 World Cup. However, at the 2002 World Cup the US unexpectedly made the quarter finals bringing a resurgence in popularity to the league. Today the MLS is growing in popularity.

Real Salt Lake was founded in 2004 and played its first full MLS season in 2005. Going on to shock the nation, RSL won the MLS Cup in 2009, cementing its place as the dark horse among the US club teams. Maintaining a dominating home-field advantage, RSL is the first major-league sports team in the US to feature a corporate sponsor on their jerseys (Xango). The RSL team has also formed a partnership with their namesake, Real Madrid (a world-renowned sports brand) and visits Madrid regularly for pre-season training.

Brand

RSL favors a logo featuring a crowned monogram symbolizing a tradition of royalty inspired by RSL's namesake, Real (or Royal) Madrid. The official team colors are claret red, cobalt blue and Real gold. And don't forget the team motto, *Audentis Fortuna Juvat*—Fortune Favors the Bold.

Fans/Real's Clientele

This paragraph on RSL's website states it best: "Utah's unique demographics make it particularly appealing to MLS. Boasting a significant soccer fan base, Utah has the highest per-capita participation in organized youth soccer, the third-fastest growing Hispanic and Latino population in the U.S., as well as a significant Eastern European population. Beyond just the sports entertainment value, Salt Lake's MLS team brings significant socio-economic benefits to the region" (realsaltlake.com/about ¶13).

Client Meets LIME

While speaking at a local event, LIME co-owner, Wes Chapman, met fellow speaker Davy Ratchford, RSL's marketing director. Having similar visions regarding the amazing potential of RSL, Davy and Wes struck a deal in which LIME embarked on a marketing campaign for the Salt Lake soccer team.

Client's Request

Though the international sport of choice, soccer has had a checkered past in the US having never previously been able to become financially and culturally viable. However, with the founding of the MLS this is beginning to change. The campaign requested by the client is one that champions not just Real Salt Lake, but soccer as a diverse yet unifying experience valuing "belief, passion, desire, determination, commitment and sacrifice" (realsaltlake.com/about ¶33). This campaign is "**Soccer Is Now.**"

The original objective, as outlined by the client:

- Promote the vision of soccer in Utah
- Spread awareness of the team
- Implement this awareness through a fan-driven campaign unaffiliated with the official RSL team

Where to start? With access to many of the RSL team's resources, LIME could feasibly tap into an already existing fan base and several media connections. The challenge then was brainstorming and orchestrating a number of ideas that would call attention to the team in a grass-roots, guerilla marketing sort of way. Besides being structured around the soccer theme, the tactics must also contain the potential to go viral while appealing to a wide range of individuals. This was just the sort of challenge LIME was built for.

Result

While we can't yet reveal the exact tactics decided upon, we can tell you that the scope of the project has expanded considerably. Though the original campaign was slated to focus only on the greater metropolitan Salt Lake area, it has now been expanded globally. So, keep an eye out for "**Soccer Is Now**" and get involved when it rolls around to your town!