



teamliquid

Team Liquid - Professional Esports Organization

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Overview

Esports are currently becoming larger than ever before, and with the global pandemic COVID-19 causing many sports and other events to be cancelled, many esports organizations are being given a unique opportunity to do good and get good PR in return.

Team Liquid is a relatively older organization in the esports scene, but has kept its relevance through the improvement of esports, its working conditions, and their continued dominance in many large esports game titles.

Research


The Client

Team Liquid began as an esports news site back in 2001, mainly covering the game Starcraft at first. As time went on, Team Liquid became larger and larger and amassed hundreds of thousands of clicks. Then, in 2012, they started a DoTA 2 team and shortly after created teams for even more games. In 2015, Team Curse Gaming merged with Team Liquid leaving each previous owner now co-owners of Team Liquid. This merger proved to be massive for Team Liquid as their fan base grew largely over the years after this, alongside the quality of their teams and players improving as more money flowed in.

In 2016, a majority interest was sold to aXiomatic gaming(www.axiomaticgaming.com/), an investment group including people like Earvin "Magic" Johnson Jr. and the Golden State Warriors co-owner, Howard Peter Guber. This large influx of cash allowed them to build a training facility with the help of alienware, pay their players more, and buy out some better players to add to their teams rosters. With Team Liquids recent and past dominance in major esports titles like League of Legends, CS:GO, and DoTA 2, their popularity is hitting new peaks which gives them a unique chance to do something to impress all these fans and keep their loyalty.

The Esports Sector

With the recent explosion of esports in North America, we have seen the rise of many organizations centered around maintaining not only multiple esports teams and players, but also hiring and sponsoring content creators like youtubers and streamers. Alongside




the franchising of many esports leagues also came big mainstream sponsors like coca-cola, Toyota, Honda, Intel, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, and much much more. This big burst of money has allowed companies like Team-Liquid, Cloud9, Team Solo-Mid, and many more to start acting more professionally and expand their ventures into much larger projects like arenas, content-creator events and more.

While many of the larger tournaments in this sector are franchised and run with a full production crew, cast, hosts, analysts, etc, there are still tournaments run alongside them either by the community or other tournament hosting organizations like ESL or DreamHack. These community run and smaller tournaments are a very important part of this scene though, there are pro-am tournaments, tournaments featuring content creators or allowing the chance for fans to play against their favorite players.

PR and Social Media in Esports and in Team Liquid

Public relations in esports may seem very similar to sports team's public relations strategies and social media, but there are some key differences. The primary difference between public relations and social media in sports compared to esports is the fanbase and how online they are. Since esports are based on online play and viewed online, the entire community is already engaging in the online community just by watching the live events on sites like youtube and twitch.tv and viewing chat and chatting themselves. This extremely large online fanbase of esports makes the social media channels of many teams become flooded whenever something happens with the team, if they are in a tournament, if a player does something, etc, there is always something happening online for the PR team to interact on social media with. Due to this largely online, young, and social fanbase, organizations with esports teams will constantly be putting out a stream of content on twitter, youtube, instagram, twitch, and more with photos of what the players are doing that day, funny video clips of players, sponsored content featuring their teams, etc. As the years have gone on and more money has gone into esports, this content has come a long way and led to the creation of professional looking documentaries on teams.

In 2016, Team Liquid in a partnership with HTC released a nearly two hours long documentary about the falling apart of their League of Legends team which performed very poorly and below expectations that season. The documentary, aptly named ["Breaking Point"](#) amassed nearly 500,000 views within the first year of its release which for the time was very good for a piece of content that long in the esports scene of 2016. The transparency that this piece allowed for gave some really good PR for Team Liquid after a terrible season in LCS filled with lots of drama. Team Liquid's ability to be honest with its fans, but not so soon as to disrespect their staff and players is definitely a strong suit and something that is reflected in the co-owner Steven "LiQuiD112" Arhancet's attitude in the



documentary and in general. Content like this that is already mainstream in sports is making its way to esports now and things will only become higher in budget and have higher stakes the more popular esports become. Team Liquid has built up a brand on their teams and social media that has garnered many fans across different games, which has been a huge success.

Problem

The main issue that Team Liquid currently faces is gaining new fans with mediocre performances as of recently, specifically with their league of legends team losing their star player Yiliang Peng to another team. They have already posted a video about the situation and who will replace him, but Team Liquid could be doing much more right now with the huge spotlight being put on esports that would also help them garner good reputation and a larger following. Alongside this, the lack of in person events they can do now isn't helping the fact that they already rarely hosted live online or just online events in general which other organizations like Cloud9 have done.

Objectives

Team Liquid's strong suit is in its way they can connect with fans and allow outsiders to feel like they know what is going on internally. They should use this to their advantage and with everyone being stuck inside because of the quarantine, do something to help out the community, and at the same time get the fans involved in some sort of online event.

Smart Goals

Online League of Legends Amateur Tournament

An online tournament for fans, casted by content creators and Team Liquid staff.

Fundraise to Fight COVID-19

With the effect COVID-19 is having on the fans and people all over the world, this a big opportunity to give back and get fans involved.

Involve Fans and Community in Social Media

There is a distinct lack of community involvement on Team Liquid's primary twitter account which could be getting fans to send pictures, enter small fanart competitions, etc.

Campaign Goals

Online League of Legends Amateur Tournament

Hosting an online tournament for all of the bored fans stuck in quarantine during the offseason leaves an enormous opportunity for Team Liquid to use its large amount of resources and fanbase to host a tournament for league of legends where any fan could enter with their team of five players. This series could be casted by Team Liquid players, staff, and any other online content creators Team Liquid has connections with to bring in as many people as possible. Since the guests would help cast over the internet with mics and webcams, there is no need to meet up in person for anything, which will make it easy to do during quarantine. This tournament could also help to raise money to fight COVID-19 which would bring in even more good PR for TL.

Fundraise to Fight COVID-19

There is some fundraising that could be set up fairly easily for TL to give back as just mentioned. With all the effects of COVID-19 on many fans' lives, it is important to give back especially with all the money coming into esports recently and with the large reach Team Liquid now has with content creators, celebrities, etc. The goal of this is to give back to the community and improve the Team Liquid brand image even further.

Involve Fans and Community in Social Media

Many fans of Team Liquid are more than willing to and want to interact more with the team, players, and staff. All the fanart and excited fans now spending so much freetime at home make this a perfect chance to get more active on social media channels like twitter and start up some fan competitions with even simple prizes like merchandise. Involving fans more often will allow fans to feel more connected to TL which in turn creates more diehard fans which are harder to come by in esports where teams are not linked to physical locations.

Output Objectives

The end goal is to produce and broadcast a successful online tournament under the Team Liquid branding. It would be ideal to get as many popular guests as possible to help cast and run the tournament to bring in as much viewership as possible. The tournament will be clearly named that it is helping to fundraise money to help fight COVID-19 as well. Alongside this, the social media teams should be running mini contests for fanart for

example in order to engage fans in other ways on the side, many of these side competitions could be shown on the broadcast when a winner is chosen for example. Overall, the goal is to run a large successful event to be streamed online during the offseason where content creators play with teams and celebrity hosts in the esports scene are brought on to cast.

Impact Objectives

Short Term:

The short term goal here is to get a large number of viewers for a tournament of this size during the offseason, especially with the content creators' fanbases wanting to watch as well. Another goal is to have the short term interaction with Team Liquid social media accounts increase by a margin of 200% or more during the tournament and all of the competition and increased outreach.

Long Term:

Long Term goals are also quite similar in that a social media interaction increase should be seen over the next year as TL hopefully keeps up with posting and interacting with it's fanbase. Team Liquid should also hope to increase its brand image and awareness over the next year due to the good they will be doing and the hopefully large amount of money they will raise. Positive social media posts about TL should increase by ~20-60% since TL is already thought of pretty positively as an esports organization.

Programming

Tournament

This tournament will need to be carefully planned and thought out in order to get the most positive outcomes overall. Care needs to be taken not to rush anything or go in without any backup plans.

Pluses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Garner a larger viewership- Gaining a larger following on streaming sites- Increase Team Liquid brand recognition	Potentials: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Potential for a repeat tournament every offseason if this one goes well- Potential to increase brand image- Increased networking opportunities with more celebrities and players
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Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the tournament goes poorly or has technical issues, people will complain about TL as the hosts - Running an online tournament efficiently and fast takes careful planning and could run into online issues with internet 	Overcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use a professional crew to run the live stream - Hire event coordinators to plan out everything and leave in extra time in between - Have backup plans for if some people have to bail out or if something goes awry
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COVID-19 Fundraiser

A charity will need to be chosen based on merit and donations will need to be counted and by matching all donations to some extent, Team Liquid can show how they give back to the community.

Pluses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will increase Team Liquids positive correlations with their brand image - Shows what Team Liquid uses some of their money for helping out 	Potentials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition in mainstream media if a large amount is donated - Celebrities donating large amounts as well to join in and increase viewership with their fans
Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charity chosen could be shady - Some may think Team Liquid is just trying to look good and doesn't actually care about giving back 	Overcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have TL co-owners come onto the live stream and talk about why they want to give back and make it seem more personal - Do careful research on the charity being donated to

Social Media Interaction and Competitions

Running competitions on social media for fanart, pictures, and more with rewards like merchandise will help boost social media interaction and give TL more genuine fans for life.

Pluses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher interaction on social media - More community interaction and giving fans a way to feel a part of 	Potentials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential to inspire fans - Potential to create many diehard fans
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Team Liquid	
Concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contests may not be fair or have fair rewards - Contests may look like TL looking for free work 	Overcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that all contests are fair and have well worth rewards by creating a team to check this - Do not ask for too much or for things that should be paid for

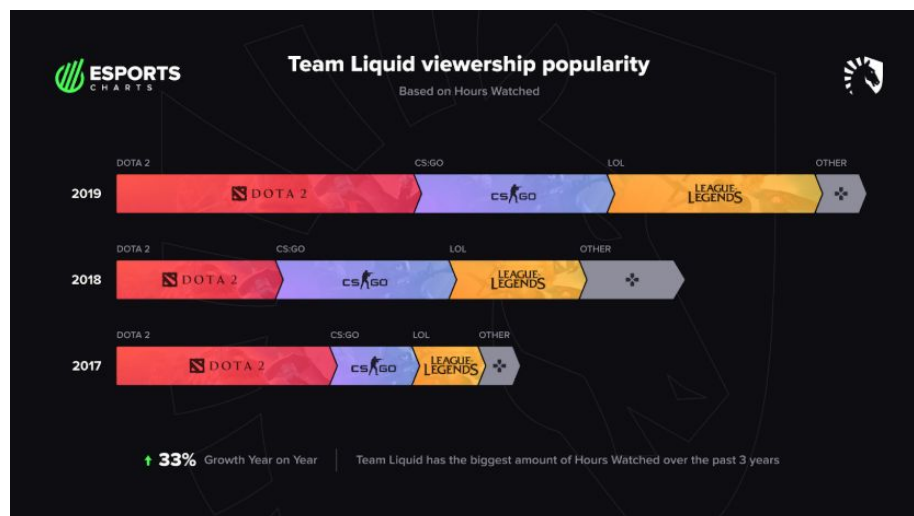
Evaluation

Due to the nature of esports, there are many great ways to measure the success of these events.

Viewership Numbers

Viewership numbers for the event should obviously be recorded and compared to other similar community events and fundraisers to check how well it did against others with the amount of money put into it.

For the long term fan increase, TL can also look at the average viewers for their teams when games start up again compared to their previous viewership. [Team Liquid previously partnered with Esports Charts](#) to get a sense of how much they have increased their teams' viewership in esports over the past few years. Certainly partnering up with them again would be great to see the future growth these events could cause.



Social Media Interactions

This is a multifaceted evaluation, with all of the social media TL uses, data can be looked at for short term and long term in many categories. First off, short term and long term data for total and average social media interactions should be recorded and compared to previous years. This way TL can see the overall effectiveness of this event and the competition's effects on fan interaction online. After this, the total positive and negative interactions and posts on social media should be looked at and recorded to see if people will tend to think better of Team Liquid after the fundraiser, and if not, find out why people are complaining. There are so many ways nowadays to track these sort of social media analytics, that TL will be able to see just what everyone online thinks about the event after it happens.

Conclusion

Overall, this time during a pandemic is a great time to give back and show that Team Liquid cares for its fans and local communities and is more than willing to pour resources into something if it means doing good in tough times. It is also a great chance to gain respect from many and prove the TL values to others that may not even know about esports. If the event gets large enough, this can be brought to mainstream media even and show the good that esports can do.

Citations

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