

# SWOT

## Strengths

- Engaging with fans from start
  - Seattle NHL has launched an interactive fan portal and provides a “poll section” where it asks fans which name they prefer for the team and offers them a comment section to suggest a name, as well as asks their opinions on preferred arena music, uniform color, preferred arena food, and what the goal celebration sound should be inside the arena (Baker, 2019). Additionally, CEO Leiweke will be doing a live “Ask Me Anything” on Facebook on May 31s at 11:30 am to engage with fans and provide them with new information (Baker, 2019).
- Demand is strong in Seattle for NHL
  - Seattle held a ticket drive when it was first trying to become an NHL expansion team and received 10,000 deposits in 12 minutes and about 25,000 in total, which demonstrated that “The fans in Seattle have made it a resounding vote which is they are ready for the National Hockey League. They are counting on us to bring the NHL here” (“Seattle 'shell-shocked',” 2018).
- High amount of disposable income
  - Of the top 50 biggest metropolitan areas in the country, Seattle ranks 7th in Average income and is the 2nd highest average income city without an NHL team. Hartford has a slightly higher Average Income but roughly a third of the population of the Seattle area. The NHL has more sports fans who make more than \$100k every year than any other professional sport, with 1 in 3 fans making that much money every year (Singer, 2017).
- The NHL has sustainability goals
  - Which entices Millennials, since they are committed to implementing Sustainable Development Goals (“Play it Forward,” 2019) (Cheng, 2019).
- Passionate fan base in the Seattle market to tap into (Seahawks (NFL), Sounders (MLS), Mariners (MLB), and the WHL teams - Everett Silvertips and the Seattle Thunderbirds)

## Weaknesses

- Lack of concrete information
  - No concrete name, logo, or colors regarding the uniform, leading to some fan annoyance (“When?Where? Name?,” 2018).
- Delays and cost increases
  - Timeline for project pushed back a year and the cost of the project increased (Daniels, 2019)
- Lack of reputation
  - Being a new team means having to build up its reputation among fans

- Lack of knowledge regarding hockey in Seattle
  - New professional sport to the city, so Seattle citizens don't know much about it and will have to be educated ("When?Where? Name?," 2018).
- NHL has rapidly aging fans
  - Sports Business Daily published a report looking at the television audiences for 25 major sports, and it turns out the "NHL has some of the world's most rapidly aging fans, with the media age for an NHL fan in 2016 being 49" and back in 2000, it was 33, which demonstrates that the average NHL fan "aged 16 years over those 16 years" and "means there aren't any new fans coming through the turnstiles" (Lozo, 2017).
- Slow to adopt technology
  - In 2017, the NBA began live-streaming games on Twitter and in 2017, Mexico Liga MX live streamed its soccer matches on Facebook, while Yahoo's first live stream of the NFL got 33.6 million video streams, but it took until 2018 for the NHL to live stream the playoffs on FB and until 2019 for the NHL to live stream only the Stanley Cup playoffs on Twitter (Karr, 2017).

### **Opportunities**

- Lacks winter sports franchise & overall major sport teams
  - Seattle currently lacks a major winter sports franchise and by putting hockey in this market, the NHL believes it will thrive ("When?Where? Name?," 2018).
  - Seattle is the biggest U.S market that doesn't have either an NBA or NHL team ("When?Where? Name?," 2018)
- Even number of teams within Central and Pacific Division
  - Before, the Central Division had 7 and the Pacific had 8, now there will be an even number in each ("When?Where? Name?," 2018).
- Partner with local hockey programs to foster community interest
- Partner with WHL (minor team) to build on existing fan base and hockey community interest

### **Threats**

- Arena may not be ready in time
  - Delays to construction etc., may push back the completion date, which would potentially hurt the season start date of the new team
- Uncommon sport for this area
  - Foreign concept to some and fans/individuals in Seattle will need to learn about hockey and be enticed to learn about it ("When?Where? Name?," 2018).
- NFL is strong user of digital technology to improve fan experience
  - "NFL and its affiliates have certainly kept up with emerging trends and the needs of modern fans"(Spence, 2015). "Mobile engagement is becoming a strong contender for improving the fan's experience during commercial breaks and the game itself" (Spence, 2015).
- Lot of transplants - risk they will not root for Seattle, already have favorite teams

- Seattle has become a city of transplants due to the booming local economy. A hockey franchise would provide those newcomers a team to rally around, much like what happened when the Sounders of Major League Soccer arrived in 2009 — the last team added to the city's sport landscape (“The Puck Drops,” 2018).
- Possible economic recession - affect disposable income levels