

## Building and maintaining the relationship with football fans during COVID-19

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### Abstract:

Pandemic restrictions implemented by the government in order to reduce spread of illness with SARS-Cov 2 changed the face of Polish sport, including football. Matches without audience participation, or with a limited number of fans (25% or 50% of all available seats on stadium) and even suspension of PKO Ekstraklasa games changed communication with fans that moved to social media. The football clubs of PKO Ekstraklasa, which had already built their relationships with fans based, on social media, had an easier task during the coronavirus pandemic. How football teams used social media to build and maintain the relationship with their supporters during coronavirus pandemic? The aim of the article is an attempt to analyze the posts published on Facebook by the football clubs of PKO Ekstraklasa in the period from March 9 to June 19, 2020, focused on building and maintaining relationships with fans during the coronavirus pandemic. The analyzed data were divided into 4 thematic categories: promotion of safety, mobilization for financial support of the club, maintaining relationship with fans and actions taken by the club's fans during a pandemic promoted by football clubs. This allowed for a broad assessment of the activities of PKO Ekstraklasa football clubs in social media based on the reactions of Facebook users. The analysis of the most interesting posts and actions taken by football clubs during the coronavirus pandemic allows to develop a set of good practices for building and maintaining relationships with fans in difficult times using social media. The set of good practices could be put to good use in other industries also due to universal.

**KeyWords:** COVID-19, football fans, football industry, relationship marketing, social media

### Introduction

The football is the most-watched sport over the world with 4 billions of fans (Kloc et al., 2020). Furthermore, football has a leading role in large part of the entertainment industry, above any other sport (Carvalho and Fazenda, 2018). The presence of football fans on stadiums is very important for athletes, so fans are often called the team's "Twelfth Man". They support favorite footballers and clubs for fair play. Unfortunately, the coronavirus pandemic resulted the exclusion of fans from matches. The duty to stay at home and the home office style of work caused that usage of social media was the main way to communicate with others. As mentioned Kloc et. al the issue of the use of social media by sport has been discussed many times by researchers (2020). Review of the marketing literature brings a lot of examples of using social media in relationship marketing in football industry. Scopus base found 293 documents in article title, abstract or keywords for "football" and "social media". As mentioned, by Williams and Chinn, social media give huge opportunities to companies or sport organizations to achieve relationship marketing goals (2010). Gummerus et al. noted that the development of social networking sites (e. g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) has influenced the way sport organizations relate with their customers (2012). This is the main and the most important canal of interaction for consumers and brands (Dolan, et al., 2016). Social media make it possible for people to get involved in extensive brand-related activities (Hollebeek & Brodie, 2016). Pegoraro and Jinnah added that social media offer sport fans a place where they can interact with their teams, other fans and to share and generate content (2012). Stravos et al. (2014) argue that social media platforms offer a "valuable forum for sport organizations to better understand fan motivations and strengthen fan relationships". Kowalski and Łazorko mentioned that social media should not be used only as a way to send information, but also as a tool to build brand communities for fans, who are strongly involved in relation with the club (2020). Simultaneously with the advent of social media, there is an increase in interactivity between football fans and football clubs (Menon, Philip, 2018). Furthermore, social media has been recognized to play a huge part in the daily routine of its users (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). All these benefits of using social media make them a great tool to build and maintain the relationship with fans. From the report prepared by "We Are Social" and "Hootsuite" result that in January 2020 the number of people that Facebook reports can be reached with adverts on Facebook was 16 millions, and

one year later that number increased to 18 millions. The growth of the number can be a result of pandemic coronavirus and stay at home by football fans.

The coronavirus disease changed all the world even football industry. The top Polish professional football league PKO BP Ekstraklasa is contested by 16 clubs. The season 2019/2020 started on July 19, 2019 and concluded on July 19, 2020. On March 4, 2020 the first case of coronavirus in Poland was noted<sup>1</sup>. On March 8, 2020 Chief Sanitary Inspector suspended mass events including football game<sup>2</sup>. Two days later the board of PKO Ekstraklasa published a statement regarding organization of football games during the COVID-19<sup>3</sup> pandemic. Until further notice football games were played without fans on stadium to avoid disease coronavirus. On March 20, 2020 by the decision of the Ekstraklasa's Department of Logistics, the matches of PKO BP Ekstraklasa were postponed until the 26<sup>th</sup> of April<sup>4</sup>. On April 25, Polish government gave green light for football, and then PKO Ekstraklasa with Polish Football Association prepared a plan to restart the football game as presented below<sup>5</sup>:

- from May 3-4, 2020 – coronavirus tests for athletes and members of staff,
- on May 4, 2020 – training in the group of several footballers,
- on May 10, 2020 – team training,
- from May 29-31, 2020 – the league resumed from round 27 behind closed doors without any spectators.

On 19<sup>th</sup> of June the Polish government allowed fans to participate in football games, however no more than 25% of the number of available seats of a stadium, with coronavirus restriction like distance, mask and disinfection<sup>6</sup>.

### Material & methods

This paper used desk research methodology and concludes from content analysis of the Facebook and official clubs' websites of all football clubs from the PKO Ekstraklasa in the 2019/2020 season. To identify the Facebook profiles used by Polish football clubs of PKO Ekstraklasa the data were collected from official clubs' websites. Data from March 9, 2020 to June 19, 2020 were analyzed. The analyzed period is very interesting from scientific point of view, because it includes cancellation of all matches and football games behind closed doors. The football clubs were forced to change the communication with their fans, especially content. From the content analysis of the Facebook pages of PKO Ekstraklasa's football clubs result that the most common thematic category of posts from both sides (football teams and their fans) was related to football games. Content types relevant to game announcements, about game and the best moments from the game are the most popular category of content in the Premier League football clubs also (Obradović et al., 2019). The huge number of posts published on Facebook by football clubs from PKO Ekstraklasa did not allow to check each one from all of them. To find the most interesting posts relevant to four topics described in this paper I used Google Advanced Search for each website of football clubs from PKO Ekstraklasa. The next step was search of Facebook pages that included the keywords and hashtags (#) mentioned in the articles on the football clubs' websites. Hashtags allows users to create and follow a specific discussion and issues by prefixing a keyword with # symbol (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010). This paper presents the best practice to be used by other sport clubs and not only in the time, when the personal contact with fans and consumers is impossible. The quantitative study of selected posts allowed to describe the social reach and user opinion. Research and results from Facebook analysis were divided by type of content (promotion of safety, mobilization to financial support, maintaining the relationship with consumers, actions taken by football fans).

### Results

During the coronavirus pandemic, when the games were cancelled and the governments introduced restrictions, social media was the best way to communicate with hitherto fans to maintain relationship with them. All clubs competing in the PKO Ekstraklasa during season 2019/2020 have an official Facebook fanpage, a half of them for over a decade. The most popular belongs to Legia Warszawa which also won the league in that season and the least popular profile is of Piast Gliwice (on the base on the number of followers). Table 1 presents quantitative summary from Facebook (number of likes and followers), information about the date of establishment on that social channel and also a rank in season 2019/2020.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.pl/web/zdrowie/pierwszy-przypadek-koronawirusa-w-polsce> - access on March 10, 2021

<sup>2</sup><https://www.gov.pl/web/gis/informacja-glownego-inspektora-sanitarnego-w-sprawie-impres-masowych> - access on March 10, 2021

<sup>3</sup><https://ekstraklasa.org/aktualnosci/komunikat-dotyczacy-organizacji-meczow-pko-bank-polski-ekstraklasy-14549> - access on March 10, 2021

<sup>4</sup><https://ekstraklasa.org/aktualnosci/mecze-ekstraklasy-odwolane-do-26-kwietnia-wlacznie-14567> - access on March 10, 2021

<sup>5</sup><https://ekstraklasa.org/aktualnosci/plan-powrotu-na-boiska-zaakceptowany-14590> - access on March 10, 2021

<sup>6</sup><https://dziennikbaltycki.pl/kibice-beda-mogli-ogladac-z-trybun-mecze-od-19-czerwca-2020-roku-stadiony-beda-mogly-byc-zapelnione-do-25-procent-pojemnosci/ar/c2-14997373> - access on March 10, 2021

Table 1. Quantitative summary Facebook profiles

Club	Likes on Facebook	Followers on Facebook	Established on Facebook	Position in the PKO Ekstraklasa
Legia Warszawa	no data	over 893 thousand	November 5, 2008	1
Lech Poznań	634 372	618 674	January 23, 2008	2
Piast Gliwice	40 113	41 121	September 16, 2010	3
LechiaGdańsk	203 654	203 198	May 18, 2010	4
ŚląskWrocław	223 724	218 827	January 12, 2010	5
Pogoń Szczecin	159 503	157 930	June 19, 2012	6
Cracovia	107 773	107 171	September 16 2010	7
JagielloniaBiałystok	119 745	119 740	June 10, 2010	8
Górnik Zabrze	147 761	148 039	November 14, 2010	9
RakówCzęstochowa	38 622	41 264	April 26, 2010	10
KGHM Zagłębie Lublin	48 420	49 247	January 19, 2011	11
WisłaPłock	41 124	43 073	May 26, 2011	12
Wisła Kraków	291 098	284 729	October 21, 2009	13
Arka Gdynia	108 762	108 049	August 7, 2010	14
Korona Kielce	100 577	100 008	January 15, 2011	15
ŁKS Łódź	53 613	55 050	October 8, 2013	16

Source: own study on Facebook profiles. Access: March 11, 2021 – 21:00

From all posts published in the analyzed period I have selected those aimed to build and maintain the relationship with fans during COVID-19 according to four main topics.

### Promotion of safety

The topic relevant to promotion of safety by football clubs is very important because athletes have huge impact on fans. They can promote safe behavior necessary during the coronavirus pandemic.

On 16<sup>th</sup> of April, Polish government imposed an obligation to cover one's nose and mouth<sup>7</sup>. In response, the football clubs started production and sell club's protective masks. Some of them sold masks in the price relevant to the date of the establishment of the club (Korona Kielce – 19,73 PLN). Lech Poznań donated the whole incomes from the sold masks to the Greater Poland's hospitals (over 1,4 thousand reactions, 135 comments and 104 shares). WKS Śląsk Wrocław sold their mask for 25 PLN and 20% of the income was donated to a foundation care child with oncology disease (310 reactions, 64 comments, 33 shares). Some clubs like Górnik Zabrze, Cracovia or Zagłębie Lublin informed their fans about preparing masks before the government restrictions. On March 30, 2020 Zagłębie Lublin informed about next step of their #ZLKontraWirus [eng. *Zagłębie Lublin against the virus*] project regarding sewing the masks and donated to the most in need (192 reactions, 10 comments, 11 shares). On April 10, 2020 Górnik Zabrze informed that the club was preparing masks for fans in response to their needs. Part of the income from selling the masks the club donated to local hospital (636 reactions, 72 comments, 92 shares). On 14<sup>th</sup> of April, Cracovia informed fans that the masks will be available soon in its official shop (312 reactions, 25 comments, 17 shares). Very engaging post about masks was prepared Korona Kielce in which they have asked fans which pattern they like the best (895 reactions, 70 comments, 19 shares).

At the beginning the coronavirus pandemic in Poland people needed a professional knowledge about the new disease. On March 18, prof. Pawlaczyk, head of medical staff of Lech Poznań, answered all of question sent by the fans. Pandemic restrictions recommended to stay at home if it was possible. All football clubs used #Zostańwdomu [eng. *Stay at home*] to promote fans' safety. KGHM Zagłębie Lublin published a video in which the goalkeeper left the goal and the opponent scores. They added a text – “You do not have to? Do not leave. Now it concerns not only the goalkeepers” (732 reactions, 39 comments, 218 shares). A lot of football clubs promoted #StayAtHome presenting how their players spent time at home during the coronavirus pandemic. On 19<sup>th</sup> of March Tom Hateley from Piast Gliwice explained the meaning of English idioms (98 reactions, 2 comments, 3 shares). Ivan Runje from Jagiellonia Białystok on 26<sup>th</sup> of March presented a movie with his training at home (621 reactions, 15 comments, 30 shares). On March 26, WKS Śląsk Wrocław promoted staying at home with the usage of #QuizŚląska [eng. *Śląsk's Quiz*] game about club, team and history for fans (72 reactions, 37 comments, 5 shares). Even PKO Ekstraklasa prepared an action #ZostańwDomu with FIFA20 and organized an e-sport tournament, in which could take part each who has PlayStation or Xbox. The main aim of this action was avoiding leaving home.

Simultaneously with possibility to access fans at games a lot of clubs reminded about the obligatory restrictions like mask, distance and disinfection.

### Mobilization to financial support

According to the report published in October 2020 by Deloitte, 15% of all incomes of football clubs of the PKO Ekstraklasa in 2019 (Report, 2020) came from game days. The matches played during the period when spectators were not allowed into the stadium influenced players' salaries. Some of the clubs

<sup>7</sup><https://www.gov.pl/web/koronawirus/zasady-na-dluzej> - access on March 10, 2021

decided to ask for the support from fans. On 14<sup>th</sup> of May Pogoń Szczecin informed fans that club began to sell the virtual tickets for the games using #IdęNaPogoń [eng. *I am going to watch Pogoń play*] (338 reactions, 93 comments, 85 shares). On May 25, Wisła Płock started a similar project #IdęNaWisłę [eng. *I am going to watch Wisła play*] in which fans could buy a virtual ticket for the games (96 reactions, 13 comments, 10 shares). On 4<sup>th</sup> of April WKS Śląsk Wrocław started an action #WszyscyZaŚląskiem [eng. *Everybody is supporting Śląsk*] encouraging fans to purchase a voucher at a symbolic price (19,47 PLN) referring to the date the club was founded (411 reactions, 210 comments, 129 shares). On the next day the club informed it had sold 1786 vouchers (419 reactions, 56 comments, 23 shares). On June 2, 2020 the club expressed recognition to the support of their fans and informed about 5491 vouchers sold (247 reactions, 22 comments, 7 shares). On 17<sup>th</sup> of April Lech Poznań started an action #WGóręSerca asked fans for financial support (939 reactions, 6 comments, 51 shares). For some amount of collected money they prepared special challenges for the players e.g. for 400 000 PLN Dani Ramirez had to take on a challenge chosen by fans (over 1,6 thousand reactions, 8 comments, 1 share). The fans decided that Dani Ramirez should read the letter written in local subdialect (576 reactions, 18 comments, 8 shares). On 16<sup>th</sup> of June club informed that 5733 fans paid a grand total of 453 416 PLN and thanked for the support provided (794 reactions, 25 comments, 10 shares). On 20<sup>th</sup> of March Lechia Gdańsk runa #ZapełniamyStadion [eng. *We are filling the stadium*] initiative where fans could buy a virtual voucher and use it in either current or future season (192 reactions, 67 comments, 63 shares). On May 19, club informed about the end of this action – they sold over 6500 virtual tickets (166 reactions, 5 comments, 5 shares). The next club which asked fans for financial support was Jagiellonia Białystok. On 12<sup>th</sup> of March the club started #WspieramJagę [eng. *I support Jaga*] (184 reactions, 13 comments, 8 shares) and prepared a special frame on Facebook profile picture (159 reactions, 6 comments, 10 shares). The club prepared 5 variants of support and fans could receive points in the JAGA BENEFIT (JB) loyalty program as presented below:

- 5 PLN – since there were 5 major success in club's history – 5 JB points
- 12 PLN – as “Twelfth Man” of the team – 12 JB points
- 19,20 PLN – related to the year the club was founded – 19,2 JB points
- 42 PLN – a tribute to the soldiers of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment who founded the club – 82 JB points and 10% discount in Jaga's Fan Shop
- 100 PLN – to commemorate club's centennial – 140 JB points and 20% discount in Jaga's Fan Shop.

The club very often reminded about the action and invited to take part in it. #RakowMyZWami [eng. *We are with you, Raków*] was an action conducted by Raków Częstochowa, which started before game against ŁKS Łódź on 16<sup>th</sup> of March. Fans had a possibility to buy a virtual ticket for that game for the starting price of 17 PLN (161 reactions, 59 comments, 42 shares). On April 2, 2020 the club restarted this action, but that time the whole income was donated to seniors from Częstochowa as part of the action #RakowDbaoSwoich [eng. *Raków takes care of his own*] (86 reactions, 6 comments, 21 shares).

#### **Maintaining the relationship with customers**

The football clubs of the PKO BP Ekstraklasa during the coronavirus pandemic, especially at the beginning when the football games were suspended, managed a lot of projects and actions aimed at maintaining the relationships with fans using social media.

A lot of initiatives were prepared by the Wisła Płock club. On 15<sup>th</sup> of April club started a project #QuizujzNafciarzami [eng. *Quiz with the Oilers*], where fans could take a part in website quiz and test their knowledge about the club (16 reactions, 7 comments). During the analyzed period, the club published 10 posts with #QuizujzNafciarzami. On 17<sup>th</sup> of April the club started a #KuchniaNafciarzy [eng. *The Oilers' Kitchen*] series, where footballers presented their favorite meal and shared the recipes (92 reactions, 4 comments, 2 shares). Club published 5 posts with this # hashtag. On 18<sup>th</sup> April the club started another action, #MuzaNafciarzy [eng. *The Oilers' Music*], where players published their favorite music as a Spotify playlist hoping that good music will help fans to spend their free time (77 reactions, 8 comments, 1 share). The club published 10 posts as part of the #MuzaNafciarzy campaign. On 21<sup>st</sup> of April, the club started a new initiative: #NafciarzAnalizuje [eng. *The Oiler Analyses*] that summarized interesting and important events in the life of the club in the form of videos (59 reactions, 1 comment, 4 shares). The club posted 9 videos as part of this campaign. The club found also other ways to involve the fans. They asked their supporters in which from 12 different hairstyles the mascot of the team called Nafciarz looks best. The club created 6 polls where fans could choose. The winning hairstyles collected 2602 votes on Facebook, what indicates a great interest in the action.

On 9<sup>th</sup> of April, Cracovia published a post with periodic table and presented the properties of oxygen (125 reactions, 7 comments, 3 shares). Next to chemistry lessons, the club together with Young Council of Cracow prepared history lesson about the history of Cracow (164 reactions, 1 comment, 19 shares). On May 23, 2020 Cracovia started #PasujePomoc [eng. *Befit to help*], a special action for pass holder during which they could support players by text published on LED or large screen (253 reactions, 10 comments, 14 shares). The club also prepared some information for youngsters in the #CracoviaUczy [eng. *Cracovia teach*] campaign.

The presence of fans on the stadium during the game is very important for the players so on May 22, Lechia Gdańsk prepared special action “Fans on stadium”. Fans could buy a cardboard image with their photo (310 reactions, 53 comments, 18 shares). On 30<sup>th</sup> of May club informed that 200 cardboard fans joined them during the game against Arka Gdynia (871 reactions, 88 comments, 42 shares). On 26<sup>th</sup> of August, the club

informed that all fans who took part in the action can receive the carboards, signed by their favorite player (104 reactions, 16 comments, 4 shares).

On April 2, 2020 Jagiellonia Białystok published a post with #TęsknięZaTobąKibicu [eng. *I miss you, soccer fan*], asking that they will see on stadium when the coronavirus pandemic ends (266 reactions, 31 comments, 10 shares).

Lech Poznań on March 23 started a series of book and movie recommendations by the footballer to give fans ideas for spending time at home. On 25<sup>th</sup> of March, the club prepared a quiz “Kiedyś to było” [eng. *Things used to be different*] based on the rules of a pub quiz (144 reactions, 6 comments, 1 share).

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, WKS Śląsk Wrocław informed customers that they can use their advertising space on Facebook for 1 PLN. The action #WrócDoGry [eng. *Get back into the game*] was aimed at micro, small and medium-sized enterprises from Wrocław and the Lower Silesia (344 reactions, 10 comments, 29 shares). On May 18, the club informed about 60 companies that took the opportunity given by the club (99 reactions, 2 shares).

Wisła Kraków, same as Cracovia, prepared a history lessons for the youngest fans. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April (six days before Cracovia) the club published the first part of the series and presented several important events from the history of Poland from the club’s perspective (112 reactions, 5 shares). The club also prepared a set of materials for primary school students as support for parents (116 reactions, 3 comments, 4 shares). The club prepared also a series of movies for youngest fans and their parents to spend time actively. The first movie in that series was published on March 24, 2020 and presented a DIY way to make a football gate (189 reactions, 10 shares). On March 18, on its official website the club started an action Kwestionariusz Domownika (eng. *Home-dweller’s Questionnaire*) where short questions were asked to the players. On March 27, on the official website club started an action TOP5, where players presented their TOP5 in the following categories: music, film and place. On 13<sup>th</sup> of April, the club published on Facebook a link for club’s website to this action (198 reactions, 4 comments, 2 shares). On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, the club invited all fans to record and send a movie with them singing the club’s anthem (258 reactions, 1 comment, 11 shares). Before a game against Legia Warszawa on June 7, the club published a movie with singing fans on Facebook (920 reactions, 29 comments, 54 shares).

On May 7, Piast Gliwice informed fans that the board of club donated 50 000 PLN for the city hospital in Gliwice and hospice of God’s Mercy (294 reactions, 12 comments, 12 shares).

Legia Warszawa, the leader in season 2019/2020, has developed a whole program #GotowiDoPomocy [eng. *Ready to help*] to help the elderly. In part of the action, they engaged many celebrities and companies to support team and started volunteering. The club did not only launch a free helpline but also financed and delivered meals for seniors.

Very interesting action which involves fans was prepared by Piast Gliwice. The club on April 3, started #Zaświeć przykładem [eng. *Shine as the role model*] where a flying drone recorded fans flashing their torches on an earlier-established route. Published on June 3, the movie gained 56 reactions and 1 share.

Some clubs like Korona Kielce or Raków Częstochowa used the time during coronavirus pandemic to launch new communication channel, Tik-Tok, especially with the younger fans. Raków Częstochowa established a profile on Tik-Tok on 16<sup>th</sup> April (57 reactions, 14 comments, 6 shares). Korona Kielce launched profile on Tik-Tok on 20<sup>th</sup> April (125 reactions, 9 comments, 1 share).

#### **Actions taken by football fans**

During coronavirus pandemic a lot of people found themselves in a difficult situation. The community gathered around the football club took a number of actions targeted at those in need.

On March 28, Jagiellonia Białystok informed that fans from association “Dzieci Białegostoku” [eng. *Children of Białystok*] helped Children’s Hospital in Białystok and donated the necessary equipment (157 reactions, 5 comments, 7 shares).

On 15<sup>th</sup> of April Pogoń Szczecin informed that supporters from fans’ association Pogonia Szczecin “Portowcy” [eng. *The Dockers*] again helped hospitals in Szczecin (572 reactions, 6 comments, 38 shares).

On 24<sup>th</sup> of April, Zagłębie Lublin informed about an action prepared by fans from different groups (98 reactions, 4 shares). On April 30, the club published another post about an action prepared by fans (104 reactions, 1 comment, 1 share). On May 6, Zagłębie Lublin published next one post about action taken by fans (47 reactions).

On April 22, WKS Śląsk Wrocław informed about yet another institution, which fans helped during coronavirus pandemic (186 reactions, 9 comments, 22 shares).

#### **Discussion**

Coronavirus pandemic changed football industry. The lack of presence of the fans on the stadiums during football games caused that clubs lost a huge part of their income. Furthermore, the clubs could build and maintain the relationships with fans only via the Internet. Usage of social media in relationship marketing aspect was the best way to achieve it. On the base of analyzed posts published by football clubs from the PKO Ekstraklasa during the pandemic of coronavirus a set of good practices related to building and maintaining relationships with fans using social media was developed. First of all, the football clubs should answer to the needs of fans, both material (e.g., masks) and immaterial (e.g., mental support). It is worth getting athletes

involved in promoting model behaviors. According to the data collected by TradeWatch at the beginning of COVID-19 in Poland the interest of mask has increased<sup>8</sup>. The actions related to the preparation of clubs' masks for their fans were a very good move. Supporters also praised the donation for those in need. Sharing professional knowledge allows to build trust and loyalty in fans. Supporting fans in difficult times by identifying with them evokes positive reactions. This approach shows the everyday face of the athletes and brings them closer to their fans. Clubs that found themselves in a difficult financial situation asked fans for support, who were very willing to provide financial aid. All actions related to financial support used # hashtags to promote them in social media. Very important element is to offer something (discount in fan shop, free tickets for games or points in loyalty program) in return in the future. On the base of all analyzed posts results that the club should be creative, fast and meet the requirements of fans. Moreover, clubs should embrace their history. A good move in maintaining the relationship with fans is to get them to do something together. The clubs should be consistent in their actions. It is worth recognizing the actions taken by fans and promoting such attitudes in clubs' social media. Clubs should find new communication channel to be able to get the information to others. These good practices could be used by other sport organization and not only during difficult times.

### Conclusions

Usage of social media in turbulent time, where the face-to-face contact with the customers is prohibited, is a very good solution. All organizations that build and maintain relationship with others on the basis of feelings and attachment had to change the communication with clients during the coronavirus pandemic. The set of good practices developed on the basis of analyzed posts published by the Polish football clubs of the PKO Ekstraklasa could be put to good use in other industries, because they are universal. Marketing specialist should be creative, fast and respond to the real needs of customers. Clients who support the organization in difficult times usually remain loyal and committed customers.

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