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Individual Project - Element 3
Module Code - (BMTP6015)
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Project Findings -

Overview and Analysis -

This project is an MMA event set to be held in Cardiff's Principality stadium on the 17th of January 2026. The card for this event was based around Welsh fighter Oban Elliott. This will be his first main event in the UFC as well as Cardiff's first UFC as a host city. The main objective for this event is to boost global Pay Per View (PPV) buys for the UFC in future events. Through the aims and objectives and strategic marketing this project has the guide for the UFC to be able to expand its fan base even more globally. The expected attendance to the event will be 74,500 as this is the capacity of the Principality stadium which the UFC is hoping to sell out. This event will feature up and coming UFC fighters competing on an action filled 15 fight card.

During the course of undertaking this project there were many valuable skills which I have developed. One of the key knowledge that I gained was the importance of strategic planning. This is because of how important this is for the scale of this event as it's planned to be a fully sold out stadium. The strategic planning for this event was based around an event strategy. This included i had to analyse the target market for the event. This went from everything from choosing the event venue based on the project's aims and objectives. This was then aligned with the marketing for this event. Because of the location of this event and celebrating Cardiff hosting for the first time this event will promote a lot of Welsh and other european talent. This is why Oban Elliott was selected as the key figure to plan and market this event around. I also created an action plan for this event which created a detailed timeline for when certain key dates relating to the project were. These included the date of the announcement, the date of the ticket sales and the date of the event taking place. I also improved my understanding of the challenges which large scale events face. An example of this occurring in the project was realising that the UFC has a strict venue layout policy which ruled out many possible venue options as they wouldn't be suitable. Throughout this project there were many different things which I learnt that I didn't know beforehand. The main takeaway that I got was how difficult it is to actually run an event on this scale. I learnt how important the strategic aspect of event planning is. I learnt how to structure an event plan in order to ensure the main objective is met. For example designing not just local but more global aims and objectives, this was to help ensure that the main goal of the project is realistic. Through learning more about the strategic aspect of event planning I also learnt how to segment the target audience.

I also learnt the skill of applying data driven marketing. This was another essential skill which I improved for this project as I needed to be able to help my strategies efficiently work. For this project I established clear KPI's that aligned with my original objective for this assessment. This was a very successful strategic decision for this event.

Evaluation of Projects Success -

This project had many main goals that i set out to achieve within this project, these were the aims which i set previously which was everything that I wanted UFC Cardiff to set out to potentially be able to achieve. The main objective was to boost the global PPV numbers of the organisation. In terms of this goal the project's impact would definitely be successful, this is because through my research I have come to the realisation that PPV numbers are driven through superstars within the UFC. A large portion of the research that I did for this project was about UFC Dublin and also UFC Paris and realised the difference between these two events and their PPV numbers. UFC Paris hosted their first event and received an economic impact of 33.4 million Euros, UFC (2023). However they only received an income of 3.4 million Euros directly from the event's ticket sales. In comparison UFC Dublin was hosted in 2014 using McGregor as the unique selling point for this fight night as everybody wanted to see him compete. This event made less money from PPV buys and ticket sales however made a much larger overall economic impact although it was over a longer time period. The gate revenue from this event was £1.4 million from ticket sales as the event was also on a smaller scale than the Paris event with a total attendance of around 9,500. However because of the strategic marketing in the UFC Connor McGregor went on to have the 6 biggest Pay Per View of all time including the largest being against Khabib Nurmagomedov with a revenue of £180 million from PPV buys alone.

This proved that strategically marketing a superstar would be an essential aspect in achieving the goal of increasing the UFC's global PPV buys. At the time where this event occurred Connor McGregor was also in quite a similar situation to Oban. With them both being undefeated prospects with a large following from their respective regions there is a lot of informative information from the way the UFC marketed McGregor.

Future Adjustments -

The changes which I would implement if I was to complete this project again would be to tie in more of the local identity into the event. Although the event is being promoted as Cardiff's first ever UFC, maybe more cultural aspects of the country could've been integrated within the event. This could've been things like more Welsh culture and also Welsh music and phrases on the poster. These different marketing and promotion strategies could be highly effective for the economic impact that Wales has after this event.

It is also important for events to market using different promotional techniques, this event mainly used digital marketing through platforms like instagram and youtube as they have the largest reach with the lowest cost for the organisation. The other type of marketing strategy mainly used was PR and media coverage for content such as interviews and podcasts. This was to create more of a personal feel between fans and fighters competing on the card.

Presentation - (In Appendices)

Report

Executive summary -

This project explores the potential of Cardiff as a host destination for hosting their first UFC event. With the growing interest of the UFC and also MMA, this project The report details a comprehensive plan including marketing strategies, stakeholder engagement, risk management, budget allocation, and project outcomes to ensure Cardiff becomes a regular feature on the UFC's global calendar. This project also explores the significance of marketing specifically through up and coming Welsh fighters. This is through looking into Gibbs (2018) framework for qualitative data analysis. This focuses on interviews, media representation and commentary in relation to Welsh UFC fighters.

This project had the original goal of boosting global PPV numbers and analysing the impact which the UFC hosting the first event on Welsh soil would have. The Principality is the largest and most Central stadium within the Capital city of Wales. It also has great infrastructure and travel links. After the feasibility study was completed, the Principality was seen as the most suitable venue to use for this project as it is one of the few stadiums around the world which has the ability to close the roof. This is something that is crucial to determine whether the event could be hosted at the Principality stadium. The closing roof of the stadium was deemed to enhance safety of the event. The principality stadium can also accommodate 74,500 fans. This event is projected to be the second largest UFC event in history above UFC 243's event held in the Marvel stadium in Melbourne Australia which had an attendance of 57,127 MMA Hive (2022). The main goal of this project was to leverage Wales as a host destination to increase pay per view buys from around the world and the stadium selected for the project was a key part in making this happen. This report will evaluate the project's process and its findings and conclusions after reviewing success against the predefined goals and aims and objectives.

Project Process -

There were many different phases within the process of this project to ensure that enough research had been done and measures put in place in order to ensure this is a successful event. The first process of this was to think of the key aims and objectives which this event strives to achieve. Firstly looking at the aims. There were 5 main aims that this project had the goal of achieving. Firstly, increase global PPV buys through more strategic social media marketing (include reference). This was the primary aim that this project set out to achieve. The other aims were

- Increase the star power of Welsh up and coming MMA prospects through this event
- Wales to be a regular host of more events
- Analyse the different international fan bases globally to be able to strategically market to different target markets effectively

These goals were set out in order to have a clear method to creating a successful event. The idea of theming this event around the star power of Welsh fighters was guided by Gibbs (2018) theory of analysing qualitative data. This is why many interviews of previous UFC fighters such as Connor McGregor were analysed for their prior events in their home countries. Gibbs theory states the importance of staying closer to the data during the planning stages of an event. This is why data such as interviews were closely analysed in the planning of this event to follow the prior success of events such as UFC Dublin.

Most of the UFC's data is found by mainly looking at qualitative data. Interviews and media commentary is the biggest way that information is made available to the public. After reviewing the current data available to benefit with the project and considering the different aims and objectives an event budget was created. According to an article from TwentyFourOwls (2023) forming aims and objectives during the event planning process is a key part of the event being successful. This was an extremely long and detailed process which firstly involved evaluating the feasibility of this event taking place. This was the first process of the project which looked at whether the Principality was the right venue for this event and whether the stadium can comply with the UFC's guidelines and maintain good organisation.

Through research from looking at past UFC events this is a key step in ensuring that the event is run successfully. One of the UFC events with the most number of issues of all time was UFC 283 in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. This event had multiple issues of fan behaviour during the title bout of this event. This consisted of fans displaying unsportsmanlike behaviour. This raised many questions about the venue's safety procedures as chaos erupted in this event. This event shows the true importance of venue safety and crowd management in large scale events. Other issues which can also occur at large scale events that threaten the safety of the event is the issue of terrorism. This is a large issue in 2025 and it is highly important to consider this whilst planning events

This looked at whether the Principality stadium had the necessary things that the UFC needed as it is a stadium and not your typical venue for this kind of event. It also evaluated how suitable the venue was going to be for the desired outcome of fans attending. There are several key event planning theories which I have used to help during the creation of this project. During the planning of this event, the strategic planning process theory helped me support my aims and objectives and make me create suitable goals for the event. This theory emphasises data driven decision making and also increased goal clarity. According to Team E (2024) decision making is crucial in events planning as it leads to desired outcomes. This is why it was essential to ensure the decision making strategy was suitable for this event. The qualitative data collected at this point in the project was crucial for helping make decisions for the event. All of this data used was primary data as the benefit of up to date content which has the most information as this is the way the organisation already markets their events. This method clearly works due to their success in America, however this project can have the potential impact of this success eventually being matched in Europe.

After the aims and objectives for the project had been decided it was a start of the planning process of the essential elements of the event. Firstly the stakeholders were decided for the event. The UFC was already the main stakeholder for this event as the majority of the budget available was the organisation's money. However the Welsh Government and Cardiff council were also chosen as the other two main stakeholders. The Welsh Government also supplied funding for the project. However this was £2 million to use as a contingency fund in case the event ran over budget. This was an important addition made to the project as it is extremely important to set up contingency plans for the event. An article from Ford (2002) explains the importance for contingency plans and how their purpose is to manage risk and achieve project goals. This is why it was essential to integrate a financial contingency plan within the event.

The next stage for the process of this project was to create a timeline for this event. For this important dates were selected in the planning stages such as the event announcement, date of ticket release and the events date and take of taking place.

These were the key dates decided for the event

- Event announcement (7th September 2025)
- Ticket release date (1st October 2025)
- Event date (17th January 2025)

These were the key dates decided for this project and they were strategically decided. The event had originally started being planned in September 2024, this meant that there was a full year of time in between the planning stages of the event and the announcement. This gives enough time for adequate planning and strategy to be applied to the event to increase the project's goal of achieving its objective. Efficient time management is key to the success of events and organisations. Having these dates confirmed is also key information for any stakeholders for the event, having these dates confirmed also increases the likelihood for the objective of the event to be achieved as goals are being actively pursued.

The next stage of the process was to decide the resources needed for this event to be able to take place. This included deciding what staff were needed at the venue such as security and bar staff. However a lot of the focus for this stage of the planning was focusing on ensuring an adequate number of medical professionals are at the event. This will generally be provided by the UFC by roles such as cut-men however UK paramedics will be the medical service responsible for the event.

There is also a lot of infrastructure that was decided was needed for this event, this included the octagon, personalised seating for fans as the layout of the venue has to be altered to comply with the organisations strict venue policies. It will also include other guest areas, extra technical equipment such as lighting and media areas.

Integrating efficient risk management was also a part of the event planning process. This looked at the operational risk that could happen in the event. This included risks such as fighter injury or withdrawal. Venue issues were also another risk which were highlighted in the risk management process. There were also other types of risks that were found in this process. These included financially such as over budgeting, reputationally if the event was not perceived very well, and finally were the logistical risks for this event. This included the impact weather disruption can have on transport to the UK for European fans prior, and also fans attending the venue on the day of the event.

This is where the contingency plans for the event were decided. This included another 2 million in funding in-case of over spending, and also contingency plans for evacuation in-case of the risks of fire, terrorism, crowd control and medical emergencies. In order to mitigate all risks of potential failure of the objective being met for this event were countered with a success criteria which was part of the process for planning this event. According to an article published from Lamprou, A. and Vagiona, D.G. (2022) making a success criteria is one of two fundamental components of project success. This is why such an important part of the planning process for this event was to create a success criteria in relation to the project. This criteria included -

- Ensuring the operations of the event ran smoothly. E.g. event time doesn't over run
- Strong contingency plans including backup fighters for the event, evacuation plans
- Efficient strategic marketing in order to ensure a noticeable rise in global PPV numbers

Key findings -

After completing the process of planning the project these were the key findings.

- Strong market potential. This is due to the rise of MMA within the UK and Europe. As a result this has produced talent such as Oban Elliott who is an extremely marketable individual for the UFC and Welsh tourism. This was found from research about Connor McGregor's quick rise to the top of MMA becoming the most popular fighter of all time. McGregor was largely marketed with qualitative data techniques such as media content from himself or being interviewed. This method of success was found to be extremely effective as it made McGregor the richest sportsman in the world in 2021 making 180 million that year alone. CBSsports (2021)
- Biggest UFC events have all been marketed by superstars for PPV buys. This is why it is so important for the marketing strategy within this project to efficiently market Oban to make him an even more marketable personality to increase PPV buys over the medium term 3 - 5 years.
- Importance of a suitable venue for this project. As it wants to incorporate Welsh culture into the event a venue with a lot of capability is needed. This is similar to the UFC Sphere event which used their technology to promote Mexican culture celebrating Mexican independence day
- Cultural integration increases fan experience. This is clear through the UFC Sphere event. The cultural storytelling used throughout the course of this event was an extremely effective tool the organisation has not used before.
- Localized marketing also boosts PPV numbers. Featuring fighters from the host region on the card is normally what the UFC will decide to do in order to promote their talent in the most effective way possible.
- The importance of proper risk management including contingency plans. It is hugely important to expect all different types of risks to take place. Being unprepared in the event of a crisis can lead

Project Outcomes -

Looking at the potential outcomes based on the aims and objectives of this project, the plan for this project and the method in which it was carried out would ensure the UFC meets their aims in order to positively impact the Welsh tourism industry. As this event has not yet actually taken place firm outcomes can not be decided

Looking at each of the aims and objectives it is important to determine which ones could have been met as an impact of the event happening. The main goal of this event was to boost global PPV numbers through this project. This will analyse how successful the event could be based on the aims and objectives set.

Firstly looking at the economic impact of the event and the outcome that this project could potentially have. The economic impact that would be generated from this event would be absolutely massive and very beneficial to Wales' economy. Looking at a UFC event which happened in Paris we can see the impact that this would create. According to the UFC, Paris made an economic impact of 33.4 million euros. This was Paris' first UFC event that was not fight night meaning that it was on a larger scale. The actual event gate was a total of 4 million, however money was generated elsewhere for the tourism industry within Paris. The attendance at this event was 15,449. This event would be on a smaller scale as Cardiff's aim is to sell out the principality at 74,500 to make it the largest UFC event of all time behind Melbourne's.

The total budget for this event was a total of 20 million raised by the UFC with a contingency of funding from the Welsh Government. However, with this large contingency funding from the Welsh Government they also do expect a good level of return on investment (ROI). This is important for stakeholders to also positively benefit from this project which would ideally be more events within Wales to boost profits for the tourism and hospitality sectors. Although the main objective is to boost PPV buys globally for the organisation it is still key that stakeholders and the host city also have many positive outcomes as a result. Comparing the numbers expected for this event it is clear that UFC Cardiff should have a significantly larger economic impact because of the scale of the event. This will also mean higher PPV numbers as the budget for this event is higher than the majority of other UFC cards.

This meant that there would have been huge interest from not just the Welsh MMA fans but a large number of European fans. America has an extremely high number of PPV events held each year as it is an American organisation. The key areas of the market demand were the growing popularity in MMA around the UK, the untapped Welsh market including the regional loyalty. The regional loyalty was a vital part of the market demand as historically as Wales is a small nation it has waived a huge amount of support when the country has decided to shine internationally. An example of this happening was the 2016 Euros where many Welsh fans who weren't interested in football were captured by the marketing of Wales such as the team spirit and national pride. The target market to promote this event to boost global PPV sales will mainly be the European fan base. This is because the sport is already very popular in America whilst only continuing to grow and expand in Europe, this is why it was chosen to mainly market this event to this part of the audience through mainly digital marketing techniques such as social media marketing.

The marketing strategy for this event was chosen to be mainly social media marketing, this is because of its success for past events for the organisation and the fact that it has a global reach making it easier to achieve the objective of the project. This was one of the largest parts of the marketing strategy as Welsh fighter Oban Elliott will be the first ever Welsh fighter competing in the main event. He will be largely promoted using interviews published to social media platforms such as instagram. The support that localizing an event can generate is massive and can have a significant impact on the success of an event. According to a blog from WeGlob, localisation is the process of adapting a brand or product for a specific local context. Oban will also be marked using this strategy as Welsh sporting fans now have something to relate to, an up and coming prospect from their nation who they can follow and support.

The desired outcome that this project will have is that as a result of the strategic marketing and planning within this event global PPV numbers will rise as fans from Europe and mainly Wales will have been more exposed to the organisation. As a result this will hopefully create more fans out of America expanding the organisation and therefore the sport. This will also create more talent within the sport as more people will be inclined to try it themselves. This can also create the outcome of more clubs being opened within Wales. This will improve MMA infrastructure within the country which is another selling point for Wales to host future UFC events. It is also hoped that the marketing strategy is effective. The media content posted during fight week will hopefully get fans to know a little bit more about the Welsh fighters fighting on the card. This will boost their profiles by gaining them more of a fanbase by giving them more of a platform.

Limitations and challenges -

Although this event has the potential and strategy to ensure its effectiveness it still doesn't mean that this event does not have any limitations or challenges that it could face. One of the largest limitations for this project is the fact that the timezone is not as usual for this event as it is within Europe. While the main objective of the event was to increase PPV buys globally the marketing strategy focused on European and largely UK fans. The fact that the UFC's fan base is predominantly American was the key factor for mainly marketing towards the European audience, America has a much larger UFC and MMA fan base in general therefore to increase global PPV buys it is more efficient focusing on the marketing of destinations such as the UK where the UFC isn't as popular.

To counter this it was ensured that the fight card was good enough to be able to get the MMA fans of America to stay awake just like European fans do most weekends. This is to give people who haven't come across UFC events the opportunity to watch it to see what it's all about. This was the best strategy to implement as it captures the interest of new fans whilst also still having the American fan base tune in. Another challenge that this event has the potential to face is superstars not living up to the hype. In the UFC fans mindsets are largely unfair on fighters basing how good they are only off of their most recent fight. For example if Oban Elliott lost in the main event by getting knocked out within the first round he wouldn't be seen as a good of a prospect as he previously was. This can affect his marketability and potentially create disinterest in fans and potentially harm the desired outcome of this project. This issue is out of anyboys hands but the fighters, however it is still an important challenge that this project could face. Overall the main outcomes are hopefully to continue and speed up the growth of MMA globally, this will come through PPV buys from a larger target market then predominantly the USA as the different marketing strategy being used will ensure more inclusion of the European fanbase.

Reflections and Conclusion -

After completing this project with a goal of boosting global PPV buys for the UFC these are some of my thoughts after. Firstly I thoroughly enjoyed creating this project as it's something which I'm extremely passionate about. I think Wales actually needs a project like this for the significantly positive impacts that it can have on the country's tourism industry. The sport is currently on the rise and it was a great experience to be able to plan this project as it's something which could happen within the near future. The UFC has been in talks for the last few years about hosting an event in Cardiff. However the organisation still has so many other destinations it was to make its debut event such as South Africa and Spain. This is crucial as these two countries will have priority over Wales as they both have their own well established champions. This will most likely mean that an event like this in Cardiff will be unlikely to take place within the next year, however this is why the strategic marketing of Welsh fighters within the organisation is key to gain them the opportunities to become UFC champion and build themselves more of a name and fan base. If I was to complete this project again with all of the knowledge that I have now gained, I would focus a bit more on the technical aspects of the event. For example in my research I looked in depth at the Sphere event for UFC Noche. This used effective animations and other visual techniques for fans to watch during the show to deliver a more immersive experience. This would've been the main thing I'd have implemented into this project if I had more time to complete it again.

In conclusion this project would set out to achieve its goal of boosting global PPV buys by promoting to a wider audience than usual. This would be done through the in depth research on how to market Oban during this event and also other techniques such as the localized marketing strategies and other USP's of the event. To conclude the desired long term goal of this event of this project would be achieved. I really hope this is something the UFC decides to actually host this event within the near future. It would have such a positive impact on Welsh MMA and the growth of the sport globally.

Appendices

UFC Cardiff 2026

**Increasing Global PPV
buys - Project Findings**

UFC Cardiff 2026

This project is for Cardiff to host its first ever UFC event. As a result of the strategic planning prior to this event there were many potential positive to be gained from this experience. In this presentation the findings of the project will be discussed to look in more detail at the projects development.

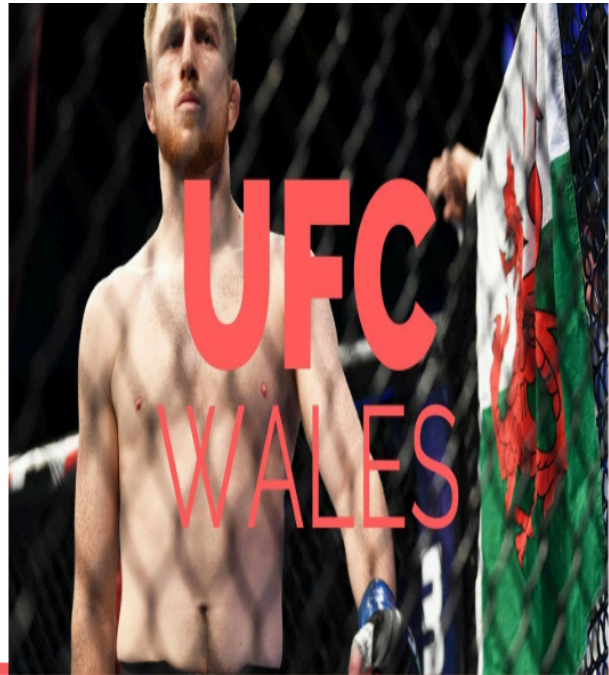


Prior to the event –

This event was to host the first ever UFC event in Wales. The Principality was the host stadium selected for this event as it offered many valuable features to the UFC.

The goal is to grow MMA within the UK and Wales specifically. It also has the goal of helping local businesses within the tourism industry such as restaurants and hotels.

According to [TwentyFourOwls](#) creating aims and objectives is key to ensuring successful event planning. The first process of the event was to come up with clear and concise aims and objects for the project to set as goals.



Projects Aims/Objectives

Aims

- Increase the UFC'S global Pay Per View buys
- Increase Welsh fighters profiles within the UFC through strategic marketing
- Wales to become a regular host of future UFC events
- Assessing the potential Wales possess as an events destination to determine its value
- Analyse the difference between different fan bases in order to be able to market to the public most effectively



Objectives

- Create a detailed analysis on what venues Wales could possibly use for similar events (if applicable) explain what the best venue is and why
- Identify key cultural aspects of Wales as a destination and how this could potentially attract more interest from the UFC
- Break down the target market in Wales in order to market to different demographics more efficiently.
- Explore the different media sources which will be the most effective tools to market Wales as a host destination
- Design a marketing campaign tailored to Wales including different promotional strategies.

Key Findings



Event Overview -

Announcement - 7th September 2025

Ticket Release - 9am 1st October 2025

Event Date - 17th January 2026

£20 million budget

£2 million contingency (funded)



Event Venue -



Principality Stadium Pro's

- 74,500 Capacity. Principality (2025). *Facts and Figures*.
- Adjustable roof ideal for this type of event.
- Unique selling point USP for the venue.
- Iconic and has a central location



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Importance of Stakeholders

- A stakeholder is any individual, group or organisation which has an interest in the activities, objectives or policies of a business or project. Fernando, J. (2024)

- Funding source for organisations to potentially use. For example the Welsh Government partially funded this event as they hope to see some return on investment back (ROI)

Event return on investment is a metric used that can assess the value And effectiveness of an event in terms of the investment made. Event Investment (ROI) - Event Always.



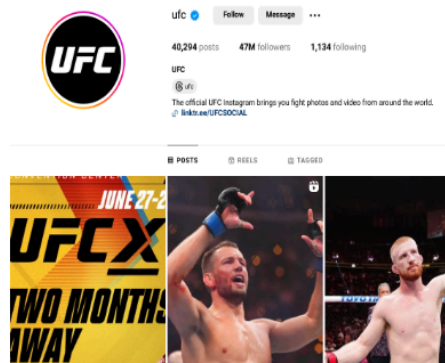
Marketing Strategy



A marketing strategy refers to a businesses overall plan to convince customers to buy its products or services. (Barone A 2024)

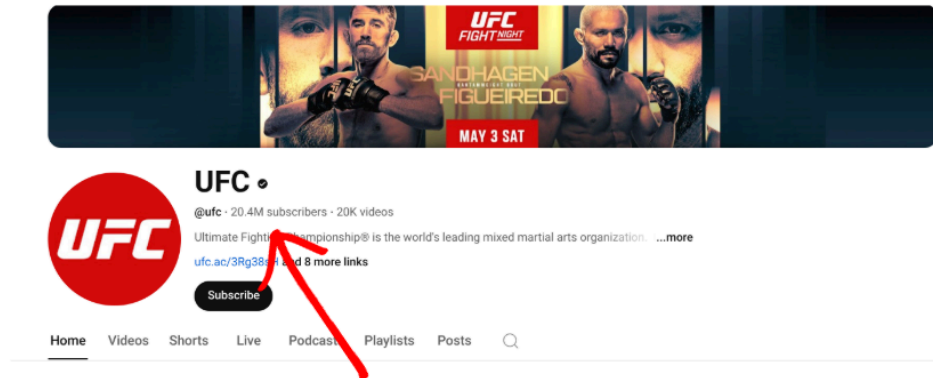
- Gibbs reflective framework (1988) This model encourages detailed exploration of personal experiences and emotions. This is why it's important for the qualitative data mostly displayed within the UFC as fighters tend to play a personality to gain more success
- Audience engagement/Marketing insights in order to check how effectively the marketing strategy is working. Gibbs framework states the importance of using qualitative data in the form of interviews and other media content.

Event Promotion



- Frequent social media updates e.g. clips to market and also create a fight poster.
- Fighter interviews before and during fight week

UFC Youtube



The official UFC youtube page is where fight week will be documented through videos called 'UFC Embedded'. This is a series of videos posted for the week leading up to the fight showing the fighters who are competing experience in Cardiff

A screenshot of a Google Slides presentation titled 'IP Presentation'. The slide is titled 'Promotion of Welsh Stars' and features a photo of Oban Elliott celebrating. The slide lists benefits of promoting Welsh stars. A green arrow points to the photo of Oban Elliott.

Promotion of Welsh Stars

Oban Elliott-

- Undeafated in the UFC
- Up and coming prospect within the organisation
- Loyal social media following, primarily Welsh.

Benefits -

- Increased local engagement
- Market expansion and revenue growth
- National pride and identity. Inspire the up and coming generation to pursue the same path.

Target Audience



- More interest from European fans as its one of few events in the evening instead of the early hours of Sunday morning.
- More ticket sales from european fan base
- Welsh sports fans. Regional loyalty will greatly increase the support for this event.

EVENTS RANKINGS ATHLETES **NEWS**

UFC

CONNECT SHOP Q

**UFC DELIVERS €33.4 MILLION IN
ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR THE CITY OF
PARIS FOR UFC'S FIRST EVENT IN
FRANCE**

The September 2022 Event Had A Huge Impact On Tourism.

Potential Impacts



- Largest gate in UFC history
- Increased revenue for the UFC through more PPV buys
- Sustaining business growth and Global expansion
- Increased tourist influx

What would the event Achieve?

- Significant economic impact for Wales
- Highest UFC gate of all time (sold out principality 74,500)
- Popularity of Oban Elliott increases significantly due to the strategic marketing prior to and during the event
- Growth of fan base within europe , significantly Wales
- Improved relationship between the Principality stadium and the UFC



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