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Overview

Monday, November 6, 1995, Art Modell made an announcement that shocked many. Art Modell, the owner of the Cleveland Browns announced that at the end of their season, the team would be moving their franchise out of Cleveland, Ohio to Baltimore. The city of Cleveland was in an outrage, and the rest of the football league was in a complete shock. The city of Baltimore had lost their professional football team to Indianapolis, now known as the Indianapolis Colts. The Browns had a great history in Cleveland, with a solid fan base and tradition. Not only did this upset the fans and the city of Cleveland, but it scared others seeing how easy it is for a franchise to up and relocate. "Between 1982 and 1997, there were seven NFL teams that had relocated" (Sandomir). The difference between the Browns and the other relocating teams is that the spirit of the Browns did not follow the team to Baltimore. The fan base remained in Cleveland and there was fallout between the team and its fans. "Because of the history of the Browns, the city obtained the rights history, tradition, name, colors and name" (Sutton). This move was unique to franchise relocation and it created a new model. The city of Cleveland gained national attention for the way it handled the relocation of their football team.

Organizational Analysis

There are a couple strengths of Art Modell moving the Browns to Baltimore. Because Modell himself was facing possible bankruptcy, the move allows him to keep ownership of the Browns, while avoiding bankruptcy. The relocation also gets the team out of the possible bankruptcy they would be facing with the lack of financial stability they were working with. Additionally, there are some weaknesses of the move. When Modell made the announcement he did not have much support. The whole city of Cleveland was in an outrage that their beloved team, was moving out of their city. Also many teams of the league did not support the move. "Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Oakland, St. Louis, or Arizona did not vote in favor of the move" (Snider). With these teams not supporting the move, the franchise may suffer getting started in this new city.

The opportunities of the franchise moving to Baltimore would be the success of the team. The team has much more opportunity to become a winning team because they will have a facilities they feel they need, and they will also don't be facing the financial issues they were facing in Cleveland. There are also threats to the move. Since they moved, Cleveland has the rights to all of the history the team once had. They do not have any history, to where they are going. They will also be competing against the city that they left out to dry.

Situational Analysis

There were three reasons thought to be the pushing force for Art Modell to move the Browns to Baltimore. First, the team was quickly facing what looked to be bankruptcy. Many loans were taken out to improve the stadium, with not enough income to pay it off. Modell himself was also facing either selling his team, or filing for bankruptcy himself. The second reason for the move is the city of Cleveland itself being broke and could not put any money into the team or the stadium. And thirdly, the money the politicians of Cleveland did have, was put into the city's major league baseball team, the Indians, and the national basketball league team, the Cavaliers. Modell did not believe he could compete for a super bowl without the city supporting money going into the stadium.

Solution Alternatives

Art Modell could have kept his team in Cleveland. Cleveland has a great support system for his team. The fans were always behind the team 100%. There is great tradition and history for the Browns there and those who grew up loving the team are there to support. No one would raise any eyebrows because this is the way that it has always been and it was always supposed to be. The cons of keeping his team in Cleveland are that he may lose a lot of money, the team may lose a lot of money, and the team will not get the facilities that they feel that they need. Modell is aware that there is not a good financial future for this franchise. The city of Cleveland is not supporting it financially and the money needed to put in for a new stadium are unrealistic. Modell may either have to file for bankruptcy.

Another option for Modell to do in this situation is to sell the franchise. If Modell sells the franchise, he will go out without hitting rock bottom. He will still have been liked because he did not rob a city of their team. This would allow him to still be a fan and potentially buy another team somewhere else. The con of Modell selling the team is that he would have to give up his love. This was a franchise he put a lot of time and money into and he was not ready to give that up. He also may not have the opportunity to purchase another team, therefore giving up his love of the business.

Finally Modell could move his team to another city, such as Baltimore. This would allow him to leave all financial issues in his past. The team would have a facility that they feel they need, and they will have a city that can help support them financially. The issues that he may run into are the teams that do not support this move. He may also chance the city not adapting to the team. The Colts already could not keep their team in Baltimore, so he may run the same risk of having to move again. He also will lose the respect of the Cleveland fans, along with the tradition of the team, the name, history, records and team colors.

Recommendations

It is highly recommended that the Art Modell moves his team to Baltimore. He may run the risk of not adapting to Baltimore, or he may lose the support of Cleveland fans, but the tradeoff is worth it. He will escape all monetary issues that he had in Cleveland. He does not have to sell his beloved team, and he can keep his job. It may be good for him to leave the history of the Browns in Cleveland and he has a new slate to work off of. There is much more chance of success in Baltimore, he will have a stadium he can afford and Cleveland will have a team that they can cheer for in their own city.

Implementation Plan

In order to make this move the biggest issue will be convincing others that this is the right thing to do. It will be hard because Cleveland has loyal fans. The loyal fans do not want to see their team move to a different city in which they cannot attend games or take pride in their city. He also must convince the NFL that this is the best thing to do. It may worry some teams, but adds another team to the league. After getting the NFL, popular vote he must make a speech. This speech is to be thankful for all that the city has done for the franchise, and the positives of the move. Finally it is important that he leaves Cleveland as happy as possible. Though it is hard to do, the best thing is to leave the history of the Browns in Cleveland. The city deserves to have

something to be proud of and either way, he would lose the fan support. At least if he leaves the city he can start new, and create a new fan base.

Benefits

There are many benefits to the move from Cleveland to Baltimore. The main reason, previously mentioned, is the escape from bankruptcy. Seeing the bankruptcy coming, Art Modell knew it was time to get out of the financial scrutiny he got himself in. The move also gives Baltimore a team back. Every city benefits from having a team in their city because it brings money. The city of Cleveland also benefits in the long run because they still have a team to be proud of, to bring money into their city, and the team still has the same history it had before Art Modell made the relocation.

Reference

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