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THE STADIUM PLAN

PR executives offer the Dolphins a blueprint

• DOLPHINS, FROM 1L

sengers, offered these thoughts on swaying the hearts and minds of skeptical South Floridians.

Repeat, over and over, this mantra — The Dolphins are not the Marlins: You simply can't compare the Marlins' short tenure and serial ownership changes with the Dolphins, DeMaria points out. Long before the baseball franchise came into existence, the Dolphins were winning Super Bowls (two) and hosting many more at their stadium. That stadium was built by founding owner Joe Robbie using Joe Robbie dollars (hence the original name — Joe Robbie Stadium — obliterated after the new owners sold the naming rights). "The Dolphins are loved," said DeMaria, while the Marlins have cultivated a hate/hate relationship with the community.

What's more, said Schwartz, current owner Steve Ross, "is putting a lot of skin in the game" — and not just future spending, but money that's already been poured into major improve-



THE MIAMI DOLPHINS/

THE VISION: Rendering of proposed changes to Sun Life Stadium, showing partial roof covering.

ments at Sun Life Stadium. On the negative side, unlike Marlins Park, Sun Life is privately owned.

Accentuate the economic impact: A lot of whoppers have been told about the supposed economic impact of the Super Bowl coming to a city, but there is clearly an economic impact. Fans with fat expense accounts fill hotels and they have money to burn on restaurants, taxis, entertainment and so on. The NFL may or may not be lying when it says the game will go elsewhere unless improvements are made, but it is clear that newer stadiums in cities like Phoenix and

Dallas are vastly cushier.

Underscore "return on investment": The Adrienne Arsht Center received a huge influx of public money. By way of payback, the center brings in tens of thousands of students each year, free of charge. That's "return on investment" to the taxpaying public. The Dolphins might want to announce a similar initiative — an educational program, something to benefit families, whatever — in an effort to underscore that they care about this place.

Tug at the heartstrings: "The Dolphins are part of Miami more than any other organization," said

Schwartz. "This is a football town. When you think of Miami, you think of the beach, of bikinis and the Dolphins — maybe the Heat nowadays. It's because of Marino and Griese and Csonka."

Take on Braman directly: "They need to anticipate and defeat the opposition," said Schwartz. "The Braman factor is really key to this because no one knows how to whip the target audiences into a frenzy over the use of public money more than Norman. Their campaign needs to drive the dialogue, or Braman will win going away."

If you think of the campaign as a shiny new car, that car needs a really impressive hood ornament: Paging Don Shula. The Hall of Fame coach "is one of the most loved men ever in Miami" said DeMaria. "He would be a great face of the campaign."

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