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ABSTRACTS

Drivers to divas: advertising images of women in motorsport 204
Sally R. Ross     Lynn L. Ridinger     Jacquelyn Cuneen
An analysis of the evolution of advertising’s portrayal of women in motorsport. The construct of source credibility is examined and used as a framework to better understand the limitations and opportunities of female athlete endorsers in general and female racing car drivers in particular. The advertising images of pioneer drivers Janet Guthrie, Lyn St. James and Sarah Fisher are discussed and compared to that of Danica Patrick, a media star in the Indy Racing League (IRL). Patrick has been successful in capitalising on her expertise and attractiveness to enhance her image and endorse products. Attitudes towards using sex appeal to sell products are presented and discussed.

Can sponsorships be harmful for events? Investigating the transfer of associations from sponsors to events 244
Jörg Henseler     Bradley Wilson     Dorien de Vreede
This paper outlines how sponsorships can be beneficial or harmful to events. Using an experimental design and focusing on association transfers surrounding a snowboarding event, we illustrate that the sponsoring brand associations have a significant effect on the associations of the event. Our results indicate that in this instance some associations are transferred; others are not significant. Event managers must track which of these association transfers are occurring in order to understand and maintain their desired positioning.

The relationships between team attributes, team identification and sponsor image 215
Yong-man Kim     Susan Kim
This study tested the paths of a structural model that was conceptualised by hypothesising that team attributes affect team identification, which in turn plays a mediating role in sponsor identification and image transfer from event to sponsor. A questionnaire adapted items from relevant constructs in past research and responses were collected from 991 conveniently sampled fans of professional soccer teams in Korea. Data analysis using the SPSSWIN statistical program (v. 12.0) and the AMOS structural modelling program (v. 4.0) found that the data fitted the conceptualised structural model.

European football under close scrutiny 230
Chantal Rouvrais-Charron     Christophe Durand
Consumers are increasingly looking beyond products, and are expressing concern for the respect of societal values. This paper analyses how football organisations and governing bodies in Europe are adapting their marketing strategies to reflect these concerns. ‘Ethical charters’ or ‘ethical codes of behaviour’ need to be redefined under close scrutiny from shareholders and stakeholders. Whether it is a deliberate decision or a forced change, football organisations must respond to simultaneous commercial and political pressures.

‘Give me a stadium and I will fill it’ An analysis of the marketing management of Stade Français Paris rugby club 252
Guillaume Bodet
This paper analyses the marketing strategy, marketing mix and brand development of SF Paris rugby union club, which succeeded in attracting huge crowds (around 75,000 spectators) for several regular season games and in building strong brand equity. Parallels with American professional sports are drawn and differences from other European clubs highlighted. Finally, planning, consistency and in particular innovation are identified as key factors for success in implementation of the club’s marketing strategy.
Editorial

Global reach to reflect developments in sport

These are interesting times for the sports industry and its partners, as the economic downturn and the reducing availability of credit usher in a sea change in the commercial confidence in sport. The importance of sports marketing and sponsorship to the production and consumption of sport cannot be overstated. Not since the start of the new millennium have these practices come under such scrutiny for their value and dependability. However, this is where marketing and sponsorship can reinforce their value to sport’s myriad stakeholders. This should happen not just at the international and elite levels of sport but also in local communities, to prove that the transactional approach to sponsorship no longer has relevance and that authenticity and substance have become the hallmarks of the relationship approach that will hopefully dominate future practices.

I am pleased to be taking over the stewardship of the Journal from Professor Simon Chadwick, who over the past four years has continued the successful development of this publication. Central to this has been the establishment of a double blind peer-review system, which has increased the Journal’s quality and reputation with each passing volume and seen it become one of the premier sports marketing publications in an industry that is dynamic and innovative.

There are still challenges facing the Journal for its continued growth, and I am very happy to have Paul Kitchin alongside as a deputy editor to help me in this work. His contribution has already been significant for this issue and I am sure we will make a great team.

Our first challenge is that despite being an ‘international’ journal, our global evidence is still dominated by work from Western Europe, Australasia, North America and the Far East. While this may well correspond to the majority of sports management and marketing programmes internationally, there is a pressing need to increase submissions from Africa, South and South-East Asia and South America. The staging of the 2010 World Cup, the increasing popularity of European football in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand and, until recent developments, the promising beginnings of the Indian Premier League highlight the development of sport in these regions. Our publication should begin to address the issues they face. One of our aims, therefore, is to appoint regional editors to work with our European base to increase the quality and relevance of submissions.

The second challenge is to enhance our contribution to sports marketing and sponsorship practice while also increasing the Journal’s use as a resource for teaching.

Becoming all things to all audiences is not our intention, but by maintaining the quality of research published we can provide the platform for these complementary goals. We also aim to develop more case studies to demonstrate good marketing and sponsorship practice to industry and to benefit academics and students in the classroom. In 2009 we plan to host a conference in London to emphasise the value of such a platform for both practitioners and academics, to build new bridges and encourage new research programmes.

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Interview with Orlando Salvestrini
President of Marketing, Club Atletico Boca Juniors in Argentina

Nick Wilde
Senior Lecturer in Marketing at the University of Greenwich
and visiting lecturer in Sports Marketing at Birkbeck University,
University of Liverpool and ESEADE University in Argentina

NW: Orlando, when I have visited Argentinian matches it is clear how different the occasion is compared to football in other countries. For you, what makes Argentinian football so different from say European football?

OS: There are several key reasons. One of them is linked to the economic history of Latin America. It is one of underdevelopment and economic crisis and this has had a significant impact on Argentinian football and its supporters. High unemployment and inflation are not the best climate for running this type of business.

The fans also appear to be very different from those that I have seen at European games. When we talk about ‘futbol’ it is giving people a channel into which they place their hopes and their passion. Football therefore becomes even more important not only for Argentinian fans but also for the government. I think that a typical football fan at the stadium on a Sunday afternoon, psychologically feels safer.

Football also appears to be more of an event for an Argentinian fan, an event which has two components. These are passion and show. In some cases the show is important in order to balance or even offset the intense passion of the spectator. The passion of our supporters is such that there is always the danger that it can boil over and become dangerous and there doesn’t seem to be a logical explanation for this type of behaviour. As a result of the economic crisis and the value of our currency, clubs are almost obliged to sell their best players overseas in order to balance their books. In selling their best players, there is an impact on the show element of the game in Argentina. Invariably, most of the best players are sold to European clubs, and during the World Cup nearly all of the Argentinian squad played for European teams.

When you walk into an Argentinian game you are instantly aware of the passion, the colourful environment, which is very positive, and the negative aspect of the game which is the dangerous, illogical behaviour of fans. Take my own team, Boca. On the one hand there is this intense passion which is beautiful to see, but sometimes it is threatening. I think that if people haven’t experienced this then it can be difficult to understand. You can confirm this can’t you?
NW: Yes. I went to one of the Copa Libertadores games and the atmosphere was intense. It made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck and it seemed that everybody in the ground wanted to contribute to the spectacle, and I was in a seated area! Talking specifically about Boca Juniors, what do you think are its key brand attributes?

OS: Let’s start with the role of the supporters, which for us is very important. We carried out some research to compare the socio-economic background of our fans with those of other clubs in Argentina. We found a high percentage of upper-middle class fans, a low percentage of middle class fans and then a high percentage of working class fans. Other clubs had a much higher percentage of middle class fans. It would appear that our working class and upper-middle class fans have no problem in showing their love of the Boca brand by wearing Boca colours. A Boca fan will almost wear club colours in an exaggerated way in order to show their passion. They paint their faces, wear wigs, wear yellow and blue clothing and carry scarves and Boca banners. The Boca brand therefore stands for loyalty, identification with the club and identification with other fans who make up the Boca tribe. It also represents an escape from some of the economic and social problems that people face on a daily basis.

NW: What would you say is Boca’s global appeal?

OS: Boca is a global brand in its own right, and as a result of winning the World Club Championship on three occasions, it is one of the most important clubs in the history of football. Boca attracts fans from all over Latin America and many of its fans have emigrated overseas in search of a new life. Boca’s games are shown to audiences of 40 million people in China and regularly shown on Japanese television. Perhaps our biggest overseas following is in Mexico and the USA, principally in Los Angeles, Miami and New York, where Boca has a presence through televised games. The main problem for us is that we do not have a global commercial presence, compared to clubs like Real Madrid, Juventus, Barcelona, Manchester United, Milan and Chelsea. Football people globally are aware of Boca’s heritage and the importance of the classic derby which we play against our great rivals River Plate. Gavin Hamilton wrote about this game in the Observer in April 2004 and said that it was possibly the most passionate derby in the world. We are also recognised by the fact that we are an Argentinian club and through the respect that people have for our national side. We have a global icon in the form of Diego Maradona, who not only is a global ambassador for us but also typifies the passion that I talked about earlier. Diego Maradona and Boca Juniors are inextricably linked. We know also through the hits on our website that we have a significant global presence. It is this global appeal that we are looking to further develop with an increased media presence.

NW: How do the TV contracts negotiated in Europe compare to those signed in Argentina?

OS: It is clear that we need to renegotiate the TV deal signed by the Argentinian Football Association (AFA) in order to bring more money into the game. Boca Juniors are on television nearly every weekend, and during the week in cup competitions, but this isn’t reflected in the money we receive as part of the deal. With more money we can keep some players, put on more of a show and then look to compete in world markets. The new TV deal signed in the Premier League is likely to mean that more Latin American players will be sold to British clubs, which will further weaken our squad. If you compare our TV revenues with an equivalent club in the UK, like Arsenal or Manchester United, who also play in the Champions League, they are insignificant.

NW: Faced with the need to generate more revenue, where will your future income come from?
“We have enjoyed ten consecutive years of positive cashflow and increased our net equity by 859% from around $4 million to $40 million.”

OS: We expect to gain income from the sale of international TV rights, some tours to overseas markets to promote the club and through sales of club merchandise overseas. Every July and August we will embark on overseas trips in order to develop our relationship with overseas fans. Ticket sales in Argentina average only about $8 or £4, compared to the £30–£40 for the Premier League. While we attract big crowds, our total revenue from tickets is minuscule compared to all clubs in the Premier League and even the Championship. We are also continuing our international expansion and have set up an international division to help increase our presence and maximise revenue in overseas markets. While we don’t want to have to sell players, we are confident that we will continue to develop excellent players through our development centres. We are proud of our ability to spot and nurture young talent.

NW: You spent some time living and working in the United States and I know that you admire the way that professional sports leagues are run, but what can we learn from their sports business?

OS: I think it is important to bear in mind that professional sport in the USA also benefits from lucrative TV deals. Nevertheless, there are other things to admire about sports marketing there. Their philosophy is clearly based on managing consumer relationships as a way of generating loyalty. They seem able to attract new fans to their sports. American people appear to be more mobile in the pursuit of their careers and are attracted by the sports brands that have been created and seem to be less loyal to their hometown clubs. In order to compensate for the lack of passion from their fans, they are very good at putting on a show. They are as much event managers as they are managers of sports clubs. The facilities are probably the best in the world and we can learn a great deal from their sports clubs and their innovations in loyalty management schemes.

NW: Can you tell us more about the changes at Boca Juniors over the past ten years? I understand that you have enjoyed considerable success.

OS: Yes, we are very proud of our achievements over the last ten years. We have enjoyed ten consecutive years of positive cashflow and increased our net equity by 859% from around $4 million to $40 million. Our marketing revenues have increased by 286% from $2 million to $8 million, with a 47% increase in new members from 40,000 to 58,000 and an increase in season ticket holders of 111%, from 7,000 to 15,000. We set out a clear plan to turn round the club and we are pleased with the results so far, but there is still a long way to go. You also have to bear in mind that our clubs are owned by members, so it isn’t currently possible for private investors to buy our clubs and inject capital.

NW: I know that you have invested a considerable amount of time in developing merchandising at the club, but are you able to share the results with us?

OS: Certainly. As I said earlier the Boca brand has a huge following and we have set in place merchandising strategies to enable more people to buy Boca merchandise. Our research tells us that of all the football merchandise sold by Argentinian clubs, we sell an incredible 75% or around $70 million. We have around 115 licensees, an increase of 56% in three years and a range of 935 products. We have a dedicated merchandise truck that travels around Argentina selling merchandise to Boca fans, a fleet of licensed taxis, a themed club bar, retail outlets and even our own cemetery! Our museum has also
received 800,000 visitors in about 5 years. We also have a co-branding agreement with Warner Bros so even Bugs Bunny is a Boca supporter and wears a Boca Juniors shirt. As I said earlier, we are planning to further develop our merchandising.

NW: There has clearly been a significant increase in your revenue, but how are you faring in your battle against piracy?

OS: It is sometimes difficult for people to understand the scale of the problem that we face in Argentina. It is possible that for every official product sold there is a counterfeit good sold. We saw this as a problem which we had to tackle. We launched an advertising campaign in which we pointed out to fans that counterfeit goods cost the club lost revenue, and asked them to make us aware of any counterfeiting operations. We appealed to their love of the club and gave them a dedicated number for them to report pirated goods. We knew that it was better to educate our fans about counterfeiting rather than simply tell them not to buy it. We also pointed out that profits made from merchandise are used to buy new players. Our fans have become our ‘brand guardians’, or put another way, we have 17 million spotters in Argentina. We have had some success but the battle continues. It appears to be a much bigger problem than clubs encounter in Europe and the rest of the world.

NW: How important is sponsorship to Boca Juniors?

OS: It is very important, just as it is for all sporting organisations. Sponsors want to work with attractive football brands and are interested in the media exposure they receive. We are entering a new phase in sponsorship. It is noticeable how many clubs in the UK now call their sponsorship managers ‘relationship managers’, which reflects these changing relationships. We have had success with sponsors but without a greater media presence it is harder to leverage the size of our sponsorship deals. As we increase our global presence, we are sure that we will be able to increase sponsorship revenues. Our biggest partner is Nike, and while we attract big shirt sponsors our income from these deals is much lower than those secured in more developed economies. We are aware of what we could achieve. So watch this space.

NW: What do you think the future holds for football clubs around the world?

OS: I think that the biggest challenge is to maximise TV revenue, while at the same time selling every ticket in the stadium. There are very few clubs who seem able to do that at present, and certainly Manchester United is one of those teams. I think that increased TV exposure will lead to a fall in attendances at games as we have witnessed in Spain, Italy and Germany and to a certain extent in the United Kingdom.

The new stadia of the future will probably hold around 40 to 50,000 people. There might come a time when people are admitted for very low entrance fees to make the game more of a spectacle for the global TV viewer. I know that some Premier league sides already offer heavily discounted tickets for some of their less attractive league games and I expect this trend to continue. We can’t rule out the possibility of an international club competition similar to the European Champions League and the Copa Libertadores in South America, but again this is likely to be driven by TV companies. I am amazed at the number of live games that are shown on TV every weekend just in the UK. I wonder if this will have an impact on live attendances.

“We have had success with sponsors but without a greater media presence it is harder to leverage the size of our sponsorship deals.”
NW: Given that TV revenues are the biggest sources of income for many European football clubs, do you think that so many televised games will have an impact on stadium attendances? After all we have seen attendances fall in Italy, Germany and Spain.

OS: I think that the future of football is in television. Somebody once told me that in the future, sports will be played in television studios, and the stadia will only hold a few thousand people. I personally don’t believe that this scenario will help the game, but it will be similar to the NBA, where most people watch on TV. I think that attendances will eventually start to fall.

NW: From your visits to the UK, what are your impressions of the English Premier League?

OS: I have enjoyed the games that I have watched in England at Manchester United and at Tottenham. It was interesting to see a brand new stadium at Arsenal and compare it to an older stadium like the one at Tottenham. I have also visited a number of grounds and everything seems to be very well organised. I think also that the TV contracts are very well negotiated and give your clubs a big advantage in the global football market.

NW: You talked about the ownership of Argentinian clubs. Do you think that there will come a time when the structure of the clubs changes to allow private ownership and private investment?

OS: Our clubs are set up as not-for-profit and many people work on a volunteer basis, only contributing a few hours a week. This means that it is very difficult to take decisions, other than through a vote. It would be good to be able to restructure the organisation of the club, but this is unlikely to happen.

NW: Well Orlando, thanks for taking the time to talk to me and enjoy the rest of your stay in England, and good luck with your future projects at Boca Juniors.

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Drivers to divas: advertising images of women in motorsport

Keywords
motorsport
women
source credibility
advertising images

Abstract
This study presents an analysis of the evolution of advertising’s portrayal of women in motorsport. The construct of source credibility is examined and used as a framework to better understand the limitations and opportunities of female athlete endorsers in general and female racing car drivers in particular. The advertising images of pioneer drivers Janet Guthrie, Lyn St. James and Sarah Fisher are discussed and compared to that of Danica Patrick, a media star in the Indy Racing League (IRL). Patrick has been successful in capitalising on her expertise and attractiveness to enhance her image and endorse products. Attitudes towards using sex appeal to sell products are presented and discussed.

Executive summary
This study extends the work of Cuneen et al (2007) by applying the framework of source credibility (Ohanian, 1990) to investigate advertising images of women in motorsport. The researchers examined issues of the official Indianapolis 500 programme that featured advertisements with female drivers. The total number of advertisements in the Indy programmes that depicted women in motorsports was 18.

Content analysis was used to evaluate each advertisement for its emphasis on two components of source credibility: expertise and attractiveness. Findings revealed that the endorsement portrayals of pioneer women auto racers Janet Guthrie and Lyn St. James focused on their expertise. A shift in the
image portrayal of female drivers was first seen with Sarah Fisher in 2003 and became quite evident in 2006 with Danica Patrick. While most of the advertisements in the official Indy programme that featured contemporary female drivers still contained aspects of expertise, there was the added dimension of attractiveness used to promote products. A discussion of views about using sex appeal to sell products is presented, and it is argued that source credibility is most effective when expertise is combined with attractiveness. Female athletes who are able to capitalise on both of these factors may experience the most success in garnering endorsement opportunities. Further research is recommended to empirically test the influence and interaction of these two components of source credibility.

Introduction

Advertising is an important art form with significant financial implications for many businesses. Millions of dollars, thousands of hours and a profusion of creativity are used in developing each print and electronic advertisement we see and hear because designers want to make their work meaningful to viewers on a personal level. Those in the advertising industry know that consumers respond best when they can identify with themes and/or characters in ads, and they realise that using celebrities to promote products is an effective means by which to influence consumers to identify with certain brands (Irwin et al, 2002; Petty et al, 1983; Ohanian, 1990).

The fame and popularity of athletes makes them appealing choices as celebrity endorsers (Boyd & Shank, 2004). The use of athletes as product endorsers has principally been a strategy to reach the male market. Sutton and Watlington (1994) explain that men, more than women, respond to the “hero worship” associated with celebrity endorsements.

Women in sport have traditionally endorsed products targeted at females, and the athletes themselves have primarily been those who participate in activities ‘appropriate’ for females such as figure skating, tennis and golf (Cuneen, 2001; Cuneen & Claussen, 1999; Cuneen & Sidwell, 1998; Cuneen & Spencer, 2003). Not only were these traditionally feminine, gender-appropriate women athletes matched with products associated with female consumer markets, but female athletes were usually portrayed in posed, rehearsed positions wearing feminine ‘street’ clothes and not in their game gear or in an athletic pose (Lumpkin, 2007; Media Education Foundation, 2002; Spencer, 2003).

Social ideals of masculinity and femininity have limited female athletes’ endorsement opportunities and earning potential (Cuneen, 2001; Cuneen & Claussen, 1999). Thus one would assume that women whose sporting interests challenge society’s definition of gender appropriateness, such as those in the male-dominated sport of auto racing, would lack sponsorship.

Interestingly, an examination of advertising images of pioneer women racers indicates that a variety of corporate sponsors have enlisted women drivers to promote their products. Furthermore, in contrast to other female athletes, these women were recognised as drivers first, and the product advertisements focused on their talent or expertise rather than on their femininity. The treatment of early women racers in sponsorships and endorsements appeared to be more equitable in the male-dominated stronghold of Indy car racing than in other sporting realms. Some of the advertising portrayals of more contemporary female drivers, however, have increasingly included more emphasis on their femininity and attractiveness.

Cuneen et al (2007) conducted a content analysis of advertisements depicting female drivers that appeared in the official Indianapolis 500 programmes from 1977 to 2006. The advertisements were analysed for pose, connotation, role portrayal and camera angle. Results from the study were reported as descriptive statistics, with no attempt to explain their meaning based on a theoretical framework.

The purpose of this study is to broaden and extend the work of Cuneen et al (2007) by examining the
same advertisements of women in motorsport and applying the concept of source credibility (Ohanian, 1990) to gain a better understanding of the portrayal of female athletes as celebrity endorsers. In this paper, we will show how the advertising image of female drivers has changed over time. Furthermore, we will argue that in today’s media culture, attractiveness coupled with expertise can result in successful endorsement relationships.

The endorsement game: how does one become a credible spokesperson?

Advertisements are designed to touch consumers’ emotions and tune into their identities by depicting characters in stereotypical settings that induce consumers to buy a product (Kilbourne, 1999; Shields, 2001; Smithsonian World, 1991). Sports celebrities are popular as ad characters (i.e. product endorsers) because fans identify with their favourite athletes and will readily identify with products praised by their favourite players (Irwin et al, 2002). Research has linked celebrity endorsers with positive consumer brand attitudes towards products (Pettty et al, 1983), intention to purchase (Ohanian, 1991), and positive expected future profits for a company (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995).

Millions of corporate dollars are paid to athlete endorsers and billions more are spent on promoting the association between the athlete and the company (Boyd & Shank, 2004). Yet most of these endorsement opportunities are for male athletes. In their analysis of sports and non-sports broadcasts, Turner et al (1995) found that only 3% of athletic figures employed in television commercials were female. Nevertheless, endorsement opportunities for female athletes may grow as sports consumers and sponsors look for more positive athletic role models. It is widely believed in the marketing and advertising industries that there is a significant link between the persuasiveness of a message and the character of the spokesperson (Ohanian, 1990).

The concept of source credibility provides a useful framework for examining the use and portrayal of female athletes as product endorsers. Source credibility is a term used to imply a communicator’s positive characteristics that affect the receiver’s acceptance of a message (Ohanian, 1990). After finding inconsistencies in the literature and a lack of psychometric assessment of scales regarding the impact of communicator credibility, Ohanian (1990) developed a valid and reliable scale to measure source credibility.

This 15-item semantic differential scale comprises three distinct dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. Expertise is based on characteristics such as experience, knowledge, qualifications, skill and expertise. Trustworthiness is operationalised as a composite of being perceived as dependable, honest, reliable, sincere and trustworthy. The attractiveness dimension consists of items to assess whether the source is considered classy, handsome/beautiful, elegant, sexy and attractive. These three dimensions of credibility can make independent contributions to the effectiveness of the source as well as combine to influence the overall impact of the message (Ohanian, 1991).

Boyd and Shank (2004) explored how the gender of the athlete endorser and the type of product they are endorsing relates to perceptions of credibility. They used Ohanian’s (1990) Source Credibility Scale to analyse respondents’ perceptions of magazine advertisements with female and male athlete endorsers, and found that athlete endorsers are most effective when the target market is male, the athlete is male and the product is sports-related. Their results also suggest that when the gender of the target market is the same as that of the endorser, credibility is enhanced due to greater trustworthiness.
Attractiveness and expertise: the new winning combination?

Till and Busler (1998) examined how physical attractiveness of a male athlete affected attitudes towards an endorsed brand. When a profile created for a fictitious male athlete endorser was matched with an attractive image, undergraduate business students at a number of universities had more positive brand attitudes and stronger purchase intentions than when this profile was matched with an unattractive image. However, Till and Busler (1998) also found that the perception of expertise regarding a male athlete was more important than good looks alone. If a competent male athlete was endorsing a product related in some way to athletic performance, consumers envisioned an enhanced endorsement fit.

Research has found that attractive and traditionally feminine women athletes gain more media coverage and endorsement opportunities than those who are seen as less attractive and less feminine, regardless of their level of skill (Spencer & McClung, 2001). However, for women athletes, attractiveness alone has not been found to be especially influential in producing endorser-endorsement fit.

Fink et al (2004) examined how characteristics of a spokesperson influence attitudes towards an athletic event and intentions to purchase a ticket to that event. These researchers tested the hypothesis that athlete attractiveness would be positively related to perceived fit as an endorser of an athletic event. They sought to determine if athlete attractiveness or expertise was more important in determining fit. In creating a fictional softball player, the researchers controlled for attractiveness and expertise to investigate how likely respondents were to attend an NCAA softball event. Similar to the findings of Till and Busler (1998), they determined that highlighting expertise was more convincing in influencing purchase intent than focusing on attractiveness.

Garu et al (2007) addressed the frequency that female athletes appeared as product endorsers in magazine ads, and whether the portrayals emphasised athletic ability (i.e. expertise) or beauty and sex appeal (i.e. attractiveness). In content analyses of six types of magazines, Garu et al (2007) assigned advertisements into categories of suggestive, partially nude or demure. The researchers analysed advertisements in magazines which included sports publications, general magazines, men's magazines, women's magazines, women's fitness magazines and women's teen magazines. Out of 169 advertisements that featured athletes, 91.7% of these ads contained male athletes while only 21 ads (12.4%) contained female athletes. Out of the 21 ads featuring female athletes, 15 were classified as suggestive and 2 were classified as partially nude. Overall, 81% of the advertisements with women athletes focused on their attractiveness. Only four (19%) were classified as demure. Incidentally, male athletes were demure in 61% of the advertisements in which they were portrayed. Clearly, male athletes had more opportunity to serve as product endorsers, and their portrayals in advertisements were based on athletic competency far more often that were the portrayals of women athletes.

Method

For the present study, the construct of source credibility is applied to the findings of Cuneen et al (2007) to better understand the focus of advertisers in their portrayal of female racing car drivers. Specifically, two factors of source credibility – expertise and attractiveness – were assessed. The third component of Ohanian’s (1990) Source Credibility Scale, trustworthiness, was not examined in this particular study because the chosen methodology of content analysis is not a means to measure consumer confidence in the source.

Content analysis is a qualitative research design that is used to describe observations and search for core meanings (patterns and themes) that emerge from a document (Patton, 2002). Content analysis has been used in several studies on sports-related advertising (Cuneen, 2001; Cuneen & Claussen, 1999; Cuneen &
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Sidwell, 1998; Cuneen & Spencer, 2003) and was the method chosen by Cuneen et al (2007) to assess advertisements that depicted female drivers in the official Indianapolis (Indy) 500 programme. The researchers examined souvenir programmes from 1977 to 2006 and found that female drivers appeared in only six issues of the official programme over that 29-year period. There were three advertisements with Janet Guthrie, three with Lyn St. James, two with Sarah Fisher and 10 with Danica Patrick. The units of analysis included pose, connotation, role portrayal and camera angle.

For this study, the same advertisements examined in Cuneen et al (2007) were assessed for source credibility in terms of expertise and attractiveness. Expertise was determined by a combination of factors: an active pose, a strong connotation or undertone of the ad photo (suggesting competence), a role portrayal with an athletic component, and whether the product being endorsed was racing-related. Attractiveness based on traditional femininity was also determined by several factors including a passive pose, a weak connotation and a role portrayal consisting of a non-sports traditional gender role and/or sexual suggestiveness.

**Resulting application of source credibility**

The three advertisements in the official Indy programme that featured Janet Guthrie, two in 1979 and one in 1980, all indicated expertise by containing an athletic component in the role portrayal and promoting racing-related products (Indy Hall of Fame and Texaco Oil). One of the advertisements also included an active pose and strong connotation suggesting a strong emphasis on expertise. The other two Guthrie advertisements were passive poses and neutral connotations which suggest some interest in attractiveness, but overall, the Guthrie advertisements were more focused on expertise as the source of credibility.

Lyn St. James, who was an endorser in two Indy programme advertisements in 1993 and one in 1996, was portrayed as athletic in all three advertisements. Two of the advertisements had non-sports companies sponsoring racing-related products (Bank One Rookie-of-the-Year Award and the JC Penney & Nike Racing Team) while the other advertisement was for Lifetime TV. Two of the advertisements included active poses and strong connotations of competence. The advertisers who featured St. James were primarily focused on gaining credibility via expertise.

In 2003 Sarah Fisher was a spokesperson in two advertisements in the official Indy programme, one for Tag Heuer Watches and the other for Raybestos Brakes. Both advertisements depicted Fisher in a passive pose with a neutral connotation wearing her racing gear, but in one of the advertisements, there was some sexual suggestiveness through an alluring facial expression and body position. Thus there was less emphasis on expertise and more on attractiveness in comparison to advertisements featuring earlier racers, Guthrie and St. James.

The 10 advertisements featuring Danica Patrick in the 2006 Indy programme included a mix of advertisers, half of them endorsing racing-related products. She was in an active pose in only one advertisement, but displayed a strong connotation of competence in four of the advertisements and a neutral connotation in all of the others. She was wearing her racing gear in eight of the advertisements. She was wearing a formal length dress and stiletto heels in an advertisement for Secret deodorant and jeans and a tank top in a promotion for Peak antifreeze. An advertisement for Tissot Watches included three head-and-shoulder shots of Patrick, one in her racing suit and the other two in a tank top. Sexual suggestiveness was evident in four of the advertisements featuring Patrick. Some advertisers emphasised Patrick’s expertise while others zeroed in on her attractiveness or highlighted both expertise and attractiveness as sources of credibility.
Discussion

Pioneer female drivers at Indy

Danica Patrick has been credited with boosting the marketing and sponsorship of women drivers (Sabo, 2005). However, other women blazed a trail for her in motorsport, including Janet Guthrie, Lyn St. James and Sarah Fisher. While Guthrie, St. James and Fisher lagged behind male drivers in levels of endorsements and sponsorships, the women's portrayals in their sponsors’ advertisements, like the men's, most often focused on their trade and competency rather than their gender.

Texaco Oil sponsored the first female Indy Racing League (IRL) driver, aerospace engineer Janet Guthrie. Texaco's advertisements portrayed Guthrie as an athlete, dressed in racing gear, often in or near her car (Cuneen et al, 2007). Guthrie's portrayals were analogous to those of her male counterparts, who were featured in correspondingly designed ads. Guthrie's late 1970s racing career ended due to a lack of multi-sponsorship prospects (Guthrie, 2005).

In the 1980s, when Lyn St. James entered the Indy car circuit, she received sponsorship from JC Penney, Nike, Ford Motor Company, Secret antiperspirant, Yellow Freight, New Essentials, Jantzen and Lifetime Television (Cuneen et al, 2007). St. James, like Guthrie, was portrayed as a driver in her ads, in ways similar to the portrayals of male drivers for this era. She was athletic, in control and wearing racing gear in or near her car. Even an artistic rendering of St. James that was featured in the 1992 Bank One Rookie-of-the-Year ad was designed in the identical fashion and scheme as previous and subsequent ads featuring male drivers such as Robby McGehee, Helio Castroneves and Kosuke Matsuura. Clearly, St. James was portrayed in ways that emphasised her expertise as a driver. St. James was very aware of her brand image and made a conscious effort to guide her sponsors so that they did not step over the line in their portrayal of her. According to St. James (personal communication, 11 September 2007), her sponsors, aware of her sensitivities, never asked her to pose in a provocative manner in ads. She said, “I always believed that it was better for a tasteful image to speak for the fact that I was a woman, rather than having to say ‘woman/female race car driver’.” When asked to comment on her opinion of the ways in which advertisements portray current women racing car drivers, St. James provided an insightful answer: “I'm very 'brand' and 'image' conscious and my recommendation to anyone is to know who you are – that you are a brand – and to be authentic with how you allow anyone to promote you. Also, know that whatever choices you make come with consequences. “Women race car drivers are at a severe disadvantage in being taken seriously, so everything they do impacts their ability to garner support. It's a very delicate balance when there is more interest and exposure from being a female in the sport, so everything you do is under scrutiny by the media, the fans, the sponsors, the competitors, everyone.” (Personal communication, 11 September 2007).

Sarah Fisher, who first raced at Indy in 1999, also had racing- and non-racing related endorsements. Fisher appeared in ads for Honda, Firestone, the American Automobile Association, AAMCO transmissions, Raybestos, pitstopshop.com and other products. However, equitable portrayal of the genders began to take a turn in 2005 with Fisher’s sexually suggestive Tag Heuer advertisement. While many of her previous advertising portrayals had been strong and athletic, similar to those of Guthrie and St. James, her Tag Heuer watch advertisement appeared to be the change agent ushering in a new era for portrayal of women drivers (Cuneen et al, 2007). Tag Heuer featured Fisher sitting in front of her car, dressed in her racing gear, legs bent, helmet in her lap, with an alluring facial expression. Her internet site (sarahfisher.com, 2006) featured Fisher in a similar pose, with her feet spread wide apart, helmet positioned between them. Fisher’s Tag Heuer advertisement, nevertheless, was docile considering what was to come.
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Danica and the changing image of female drivers

Guthrie, St. James and the majority of Fisher’s programme advertising depictions prior to 2003 featured the drivers as strong and athletic, controlling their own movements, with their photographs shot from straight, even planes (Cuneen et al, 2007) with only Fisher’s Tag Heuer advertisement venturing close to being sexually suggestive. However, a new era in female drivers’ advertising portrayals arrived with Danica Patrick in the early 2000s. In 25 years of official Indy programmes, between 1979 (Guthrie’s rookie race) and 2003, only eight advertisements featured women drivers: Guthrie (N = 3), St. James, (N = 3) and Fisher (N = 2). After Patrick’s 2005 rookie performance, where she took the speedway, racing world and media by storm, the 2006 Indy programme contained 10 ads featuring a female driver – all were of Patrick. She endorsed products that would be expected of a racer, such as Firestone tyres, Run-Rite car care maintenance products and Peak antifreeze, as well as non-racing products such as Tissot watches and Secret antiperspirant. However, while Guthrie, St. James and most of Fisher’s race-and non-race related ad portrayals featured them as ‘drivers first’ without objectifying them as females, Patrick’s portrayals in 40% of the 2006 Indy programme ads featured her in sexually suggestive portrayals (Cuneen et al, 2007).

Currently, Danica Patrick and her marketing team continue to present her in campaigns that focus on a traditionally feminine appearance, but with a twist. Not only is Patrick’s attractiveness highlighted, her competence in the masculine environment of the Indy Racing League is also emphasised. In a recent advertisement for Motorola, with whom she has a three-year, $21 million sponsorship agreement (Miller, 2006), Patrick is standing, facing the camera, a vertical line splitting her into two distinct images. Her right side is clad in a shiny blue and black racing suit, a helmet covering half her face, with the ‘MOTO’ of the Motorola logo visible. The left side of Patrick’s head shows her with her hair styled away from her face, wearing makeup, with a seductive gaze on her face. In this half of the image, Patrick is clad in an evening gown. The material is silver satin, and the cut, while not revealing, is significantly lower than the cut on the racing suit. Patrick’s arms are hanging at her sides in both halves of the image. The racing suit arm and hand is gloved, while her other hand has an extremely large diamond ring. On the half of the ad focusing on Patrick’s feminine appearance, rather than wearing a large earring with her elegant gown, as might be expected, her earring is small and she is sporting a Bluetooth on her ear, one of Motorola’s signature products. Patrick is clearly portraying two distinct images; one, a competent athlete in her sport, and the other, a traditional feminine image (with a Bluetooth device on her ear).

At present, Patrick seems comfortable with portrayings images that emphasise her femininity and good looks as well as relishing in the opportunity to emphasise her skill as an Indy driver. It was in a 19 March 2003 article in USA Today that Patrick spoke of the images she felt were necessary for her to construct to promote herself and her sport. She defended provocative publicity photos and a spread in FHM (For Him Magazine). Addressing her image based on sex appeal, Patrick shared: “Eventually I hope to lose it, but I’m going to use it to my full advantage, just like anybody else would who has a niche… At the end of the day, when I take the helmet off, I’m still a girl” (Fogarty, 2003, p.13c).

In an attempt to move Patrick away from these early images she developed, Players Group, one of her marketing consultants, designed its promotional strategy to focus on her as a driver and successful performer. Their plan was to avoid deals emphasising Patrick’s femininity in favour of deals highlighting her athleticism. Ratto (2005) contended that Patrick needed wins on the track in order for the strategy to pay off and keep her from falling into the trap associated with Anna Kournikova, the now-retired
Russian tennis player, known more for her sex appeal than her on-court success. Kournikova's name is synonymous with unfulfilled potential, yet Patrick is not insulted to be placed in her company. She wasn't all that bad, Patrick says good-naturedly. “She was pretty darned good at tennis and obviously a pretty girl. That’s where people seem to think if you’re really popular and famous, you’re supposed to be doing certain things. Other people set the rules on how successful you’re supposed to be and it’s not that easy. As a result, some people are under-publicised for how good they are and some people are over-publicised, but we can’t control that as athletes. I do feel badly for [Kournikova]. It’s sad that her [sex appeal] overshadowed her career. But she still was very successful financially. And why shouldn’t she have [capitalised on that]?” (Isaacson, 2007, p.1)

Interstate Bakeries Corporation realised the commercial potential of an association with Danica Patrick and their Hostess brand of packaged snacks, and Patrick welcomed Hostess as a sponsor (Reyes, 2005). Hostess was eager to make the most of the phenomenon of females in motorsport by launching a comprehensive campaign introducing the ‘Hostess Divas’. The Divas comprised IRL driver Patrick, National Hot Rod Association driver Melanie Troxel, and Leilani Munter, who raced NASCAR until her August 2007 IRL debut.

The Divas were featured on Hostess brand snack boxes, point-of-purchase displays and in a number of other formats. Hostess believed the Divas were each excellent ambassadors for their sports by launching a comprehensive campaign introducing the ‘Hostess Divas’. The Divas comprised IRL driver Patrick, National Hot Rod Association driver Melanie Troxel, and Leilani Munter, who raced NASCAR until her August 2007 IRL debut.

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Conclusion: driving in reverse?

An examination of women in motorsport over time (1979-2006) shows that pioneer racers such as Janet Guthrie and Lyn St. James were portrayed as expert drivers with little or no emphasis on traditional femininity. In the current age of celebrity, the attractiveness of drivers such as Sarah Fisher and Danica Patrick has become more of a focal point of their endorsements. By moving from endorsement portrayals that focus on the expertise of women drivers to those that place a much greater emphasis on physical attractiveness, are women in motorsport driving in reverse in terms of advertising images for female athletes? Is Patrick harming the reputation of female athletes or has she found a combination of credibility factors that can work together to enhance her image as well as positively promote the corporate brands she is endorsing?

Many of the advertising images of contemporary women racing car drivers contain a dual-role portrayal that connects attractiveness with some element of athleticism and a strong connotation of competence. Strong and competent women athletes are becoming increasingly accepted by society (Castelnuovo & Guthrie, 1998; Dworkin, 2001; Kane, 1995), but perhaps more so than strong and competent male athletes, they are also judged by their attractiveness.

Researchers examining the portrayal of female athletes by the media have expressed concerns that women are often objectified when they are depicted in passive, non-sporting and gender-stereotypical ways (Blinde et al, 1991; Jones et al, 1999; Lynn et al, 2002; Lumpkin, 2007; Lumpkin & Williams, 1991). The current stance of the Women’s Sports Foundation regarding the ‘sex sells’ attitude towards women’s sports acknowledges “a remarkable insensitivity to the harmful effects of sexist stereotyping. The advertising or sports media should not perpetuate harmful, limiting images towards any group of individuals. Saying ‘This is what the audience wants’ and ‘This is what sells’ would not be tolerated if the images perpetuated racist or anti-Semitic stereotypes. The
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position should not be tolerated if the images perpetuate the stereotype of women as sex objects” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2007).

Roth and Basow (2004) adamantly opposed the presentation of athletic women’s bodies as sexy, judging that one way to limit and de-emphasise women’s physical power and capabilities is to associate female athleticism with female sex appeal. The Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport has piloted a research project examining the ‘sex sells’ approach to marketing. This research, partially funded by the Women’s Sports Foundation, recognises a gap in the understanding of how representations of women athletes in the media are interpreted by consumers. In examining intent to view or attend a women’s sporting event, Kane and Maxwell (cited in Blount, 2007) stated that their initial findings from surveys of men aged 18-34 did not support that promoting sexy images of women athletes attracts men to games. In fact, Kane and Maxwell believe this approach may be counterproductive and may also alienate women as consumers. Their research suggests that selling out women to sexist stereotypes does nothing to advance the cause of women’s sport.

Nevertheless, attractiveness is an important dimension of source credibility, and research has shown that physically attractive communicators are more successful in altering beliefs than those who are unattractive (Chaiken, 1979; Ohanian, 1991), and attractive endorsers have positive effects on brand attitude and purchase intent (Till & Busler, 2000). The construct of physical attractiveness is not uni-dimensional and can be operationalised in a variety of ways. Attractiveness is often described in terms of physical appearance, but it can also be interpreted as similarity of the source to the receiver of the message, familiarity or whether the source is liked or admired (Boyd & Shank, 2004). Attractiveness alone, however, may not be enough to convince consumers. Expertise has been found to be a significant component of credibility (Boyd & Shank, 2004; Ohanian, 1991). Attractiveness and expertise, as two sources of source credibility, can work independently or together to enhance the effectiveness of the source. Thus an attractive spokesperson with knowledge about a product is likely to be a successful endorser.

Highlighting attractiveness without diminishing a woman athlete’s expertise may not constitute exploitation. In fact, an expert woman athlete who takes advantage of her attractiveness may be thought of as a savvy businesswoman capitalising on her own endorsement potential while increasing efficacy for her sponsors. Danica Patrick aptly summed up the prevailing attitude that a woman athlete’s attractiveness and expertise are both important aspects that influence endorsement success: “You use what you have… I’m a girl, I can promote products, and I’ll use that to my advantage. But in the end it boils down to speed” (Inkrott et al, 2002, p. 38).

Directions for future research

This paper has focused on two factors of source credibility – expertise and attractiveness – to examine advertising images of female athletes. It explored the evolution of how women in motorsport have been portrayed in product advertisements. Surprisingly, the endorsement portrayal of the pioneer women auto racers who broke into the male bastion of motorsport was more equitable than for female athletes in other sports realms. Early endorsement opportunities for most female athletes highlighted femininity rather than athletic competence. Women racing car drivers, on the other hand, were treated as athletes, and advertising images most often focused on their trade and competency rather than their gender.

A new era in female drivers’ advertising portrayals arrived with Danica Patrick. She has unapologetically used sex appeal to promote herself and the product brands that she endorses. Nevertheless, she and her marketing team realise that attractiveness alone is not enough to maximise her effectiveness as a product spokesperson; expertise is the most persuasive.
component of source credibility (Boyd & Shank, 2004; Fink et al., 2004; Ohanian, 1991; Till & Busler, 1998) and is needed to garner respect as an athlete and convince consumers to buy endorsed products.

Is Danica Patrick on the right track? Do the factors of attractiveness and expertise work synergistically to enhance the image of the spokesperson and the products being endorsed? Or does the use of sex appeal in advertising reduce the impact of the message by objectifying the endorser? How does gender affect this equation? Do consumers respond differently to advertisements featuring female athletes versus male athletes? Does the type of sport make a difference? Future empirical research is needed to investigate these and other questions related to advertising images of athlete product endorsers. A better understanding of the interaction and influence of source credibility factors will enable sports marketers, corporate sponsors and athletes to develop more successful endorsement relationships.

References


Biographies

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Drivers to divas


The relationships between team attributes, team identification and sponsor image

Keywords
team identification
team attributes
sponsor awareness
sponsor image
image transfer

Abstract
This study tested the paths of a structural model that was conceptualised by hypothesising that team attributes affect team identification, which in turn plays a mediating role in sponsor identification and image transfer from event to sponsor. A questionnaire adapted items from relevant constructs in past research and responses were collected from 991 conveniently sampled fans of professional soccer teams in Korea. Data analysis using the SPSSWIN statistical program (v. 12.0) and the AMOS structural modelling program (v. 4.0) found that the data fitted the conceptualised structural model.

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Executive summary
Organisational identification is a manifestation of a social identity, and by recognising that a professional sports team is a type of organisation and that fans are its members, team identification can be seen as a form of organisational identification.

Drawing partly on past research, many factors are either proposed or empirically shown to affect team identification. Among these are attributes such as team attractiveness, team similarity and team familiarity. However, regardless of the factors that affect it, team identification is recognised as a form of event involvement, and a high level of involvement with a sponsored activity heightens sponsor awareness. This is so because highly involved fans continue to watch sports events, and sponsor awareness improves over time. Also, highly involved fans are best able to comprehend meanings associated with sports events, and are therefore most capable of transferring these values to the sponsor through association. Gwinner (1997) proposed a model in...
which meanings are derived from event type, event characteristics and individual factors. By recognising the presence of a highly identified team or the level of team identification as a possible event characteristic or individual factor, respectively, this paper brings together the notions discussed above and conceptualises a structural model in which team attributes affect team identification, which in turn plays a mediating role in sponsor identification and the image transfer from an event to its sponsor.

This study is significant because it attempts to analyse the relationships of all the constructs as a whole, as opposed to previous studies, which analysed only parts of the relationship. Specifically, the following hypotheses were made: (1) team attractiveness, team similarity and team familiarity positively affect team identification; (2) team identification positively affects sponsor identification; and (3) sponsor identification positively affects sponsor image. For assessment, a questionnaire adapting items from relevant constructs in past research was devised, and responses were collected from a total of 991 conveniently sampled fans at 10 professional soccer games in Korea. The hypotheses were then simultaneously tested using the data and employing the AMOS structural modelling program (version 4.0). It was found that the data fitted the conceptualised structural model, and consistency was found in the results when the hypotheses were tested again individually.

Introduction

One of the most important effects of sports sponsorship is the building of a positive image for the sponsor’s brand, product and/or company (Meenaghan, 1991), and this image building takes on the form of establishing, strengthening or changing the sponsor’s image (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Today, competition for sponsorship has become very strong, such that an assessment of the strength of image transfer from an event to the sponsor has become increasingly important in evaluating the effectiveness of a sponsorship (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005). While a common method is to quantify the link between event image and sponsor image, very few studies have been conducted in this area (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005).

Instead, more studies have focused on explaining the process by which sports sponsorship leads to the enhancement of the sponsor’s image. In one study, Gwinner (1997) asserted that meanings are derived from the event type, event characteristics and individual factors to build an event image, which is transferred to the sponsor’s brand image. Consequently, specific factors affecting the event image or the image transfer have been examined, and event-sponsor fit and event involvement were empirically found to be two important factors (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005).

Grohs & Reisinger (2005) explained event involvement’s positive effect on the strength of image transfer through the notion of the learning theory. The theory implied that increased event involvement leads to greater processing of information, and greater knowledge about the connection between the event and its sponsor in turn boosts the image transfer. This is consistent with Pitts & Slattery’s (2004) finding that recognition (i.e. awareness and identification) of sponsors improved over an extended period of time. It is also consistent with Meenaghan’s (2001) assertion that since highly involved fans are best able to comprehend the meanings associated with sports events, they are most capable of transferring the meanings to the sponsor through the association.

When one recognises the importance of event involvement as a mediating factor in sponsorship identification, as well as the transfer of meanings to the sponsor, the importance of identifying factors that enhance event involvement becomes apparent. Team identification, defined as the level of psychological attachment felt by a sports fan towards his or her favourite team (Branscombe & Wann, 1992), was recognised as one form of event involvement, and
Gladden & Funk (2002) suggested that team attributes are the criteria for judging a sports team’s value, which affects team identification. From past empirical organisational studies, two of these attributes were shown to be organisation attractiveness (Fisher, 1998; Kelman, 1961) and organisation similarity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al, 1994; Fisher, 1998; Kelman, 1961). While no empirical evidence was provided for the effect of organisation familiarity, Trail et al (2000) and Heere (2005) respectively identified acquisition of knowledge and awareness and knowledge as factors leading to team identification.

Purpose of study and hypotheses

By recognising the presence of a highly identified team or the level of team identification, respectively, as a possible event characteristic or individual factor in Gwinner’s (1997) AMICIT model, this study conceptualised a structural model in which team attributes affect team identification, which in turn plays a mediating role in sponsor identification and the image transfer from an event to its sponsor. Unlike previous studies, which analysed only parts of the relationship, this study aimed to analyse the relationships of all the constructs as a whole. Specifically, the following hypotheses were established and simultaneously tested: (H1) team attractiveness positively affects team identification; (H2) team similarity positively affects team identification; (H3) team awareness (i.e. familiarity) positively affects team identification; (H4) team identification positively affects sponsor identification (i.e. awareness); (H5) sponsor identification positively affects sponsor image.

Theoretical background

Team identification

Team identification has been defined as the level of psychological attachment felt by a sports fan towards his or her favourite team (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). Fundamental to this concept of team identification is the concept of social identity, because team identification is a manifestation of social identity (Underwood et al, 2001), which is “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his or her knowledge of their membership in a social group or groups together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p.255). This means that as sports spectators become affiliated with a team, they derive a sense of identity from the affiliation (Hirt et al, 1992; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In turn, they perceive other fans of the same team as in-group members and fans of other teams as out-group members (Melnick, 1993). This perception enhances their sense of belonging to a team, which results in higher team identification (Underwood et al, 2001).

This relationship between social identity and team identification is supported by earlier organisational identification studies. Katz & Kahn (1966) asserted that the perception of belonging to an organisation influences an individual’s organisational identification, which Bhattacharya et al (1995) defined as “the perceived oneness with or belongingness to an organisation of which the person is a member” (p.46). Thus, recognising that a professional sports team is a form of organisation and that fans are its members enables team identification to be recognised as a form of organisational identification. With regard to membership, Chen (2007) argued that fans are members of a team because they believe a team’s success or failure to be their own personal success or failure. Heere (2005), however, gave three different reasons. First, fans can affect the quality of a product, as in the case of local fans’ support affecting the
outcome of home games (Agnew & Carron, 1994). Second, fans can affect teams’ revenue income from various sources, and third, fans can be shareholders of franchised teams.

Meanwhile, many terms purport to measure the psychological attachment of sports consumers towards their favourite sports teams (Kwon & Armstrong, 2004). Among them, fan identification (Sutton et al, 1997; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) and team identification (Fisher, 1998) are commonly used in the sports setting. It can be argued that the difference between the two lies in ‘who’ is identifying with ‘what’. Fan identification emphasises the ‘who’, and team identification emphasises the ‘what’, but since a fan can identify not only with a team but also with a player, this study exclusively uses the term ‘team identification’, because the focus is on a team as a sports organisation.

Team attributes and team identification
Early measures of team identification were unidimensional (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), but many researchers (e.g. Ashmore et al, 2001; Ellemers et al, 1999; Jackson & Smith, 1999; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Sellers et al, 1998) provided support for the need of a multidimensional construct. Since perceptions regarding team attributes are attitudinal and attitude is a multidimensional concept, the view of team attributes as factors influencing team identification recognises team identification as a multidimensional construct.

One team attribute shown to affect team identification is team attractiveness, and one important team attractiveness factor is team performance or team record. The relationship between team record and team identification is described in several studies as follows. Highly identifying sports fans are affected by team performance because they tend to take a team’s success and failure to mean personal success and failure (Hirt et al, 1992; Sutton et al, 1997). However, while the relationship between the highly identifying fan and a team becomes closer through the team’s success, it does not deteriorate with the team’s failure (Wann & Branscombe, 1990; Bizman & Yinon, 2002). It is argued that this is so because spectators have a tendency to attribute the victory of their favourite team to internal causes, while attributing losses to external causes (Wann & Schrader, 2000). Nevertheless, recognition of a high level of team identification regardless of team performance suggested a need to discuss attributes other than team performance.

Wann et al (1996) found that players are another significant team attractiveness factor that affects team identification. Trail et al (2000) agreed by proposing appreciation of the physical skill of athletes and physical attraction to the athletes as possible factors leading to team identification, and Matsuoka et al (2003) agreed by proposing that overall effort, skillful play and teamwork may be the other possible factors. Gladden & Funk (2002) also showed a relationship between players and team identification, because they found that there was a tendency in sports consumers who remember the statistics of players in their favourite team to show a strong and positive attitude towards their team, which they explained in terms of identification. However, it is uncertain as to whether the memorisation brought about team identification, or team identification brought about the memorisation.

Other than attractiveness, Stotland et al (1961) proposed the notion of similarity to explain the relationship between individuals and group identification. According to this notion, fans of the same team not only share many similar characteristics but also perceive the similarity between them. Kelman (1961) and Fisher (1998) also provided support to the notion of similarity by reporting that both team attractiveness and team similarity affect team identification. However, they disagreed on which was the more important variable. Later, Ashforth & Mael (1989) and Dutton et al (1994) gave further support to the perception of similarity as a factor affecting identification with an organisation.

Meanwhile, Funk & James (2001) asserted that one must be aware of a product to know about its attractiveness. Although there is no denying the
assertion, several researchers recognise familiarity not as a variable antecedent to but independent of attractiveness. For example, Trail et al (2000) and Heere (2005) respectively identified acquisition of knowledge and awareness and knowledge as factors leading to team identification. Also, according to Keller (1993), customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong and unique brand associations in the memory, implying that familiarity and attractiveness are two separate concepts.

Thus, the following hypotheses were made:

H1: Team attractiveness positively affects team identification

H2: Team similarity positively affects team identification

H3: Team familiarity positively affects team identification

Team identification and sponsor identification

Dean (2002) reported that it is not necessarily the liking of a property that influences the property-sponsor association, but rather the intensity of the liking that heightens awareness of the property-sponsor association. In agreement with this, Meenaghan (2001) showed that awareness of the sponsor was highest among those most involved with the sponsored activity, and mentioned that the result was “in line with evidence presented by Bennett (1999), Clark (1991), Diakopoulou (1990), Eilander & Koenders (1991) and Parker (1990, 1991)” (p.110). This relationship between team identification and sponsor identification can also be approached from the perspective that highly involved fans continue to watch sports events (Colleen & Kahle, 2006) and that repeat attendance allows fans to become more aware of long-term sponsors. This is supported by Pitts & Slattery (2004), who showed that recognition (i.e. awareness and identification) of sponsors improved over an extended period of time. Thus, the following hypothesis was made:

H4: Team identification positively affects sponsor identification (i.e. awareness)

Team identification, sponsorship identification and sponsor image

Meanwhile, Pope & Voges (2000) asserted that corporate image is positively influenced by sponsorship awareness, and Meenaghan (2001) asserted that “highly involved fans/consumers, being most aware of the sponsor’s investment and the benefits arising, were most favourably disposed towards that sponsor” (p.110). These two studies suggest that there is a possible relationship between team identification and sponsor image.

As for the relationship between sponsorship and image building, Gwinner (1997) attempted to explain it through his Model of Image Creation and Image Transfer (AMICIT). Here, Gwinner (1997) defined event image as a representation of the overall subjective meanings assigned by a particular market. He then proposed that event type, event characteristics and individual factors affect event image, and that sponsorship activities bring about a transfer of the event image to the sponsors’ brand image. This transfer of event image to the sponsor became evident in empirical studies (Ferrand & Pages, 1996; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999), and more explanations were given about the process. Chien et al (2005), for example, asserted that sponsorship’s association of a brand with a specific event allowed the brand to gain additional meaning and value, while Meenaghan (2001) asserted that highly involved fans are best able to comprehend these meanings, and are therefore also most capable of transferring these values to the sponsor through association. Therefore, when one recognises the presence of a highly identified team or the level of team identification as a possible event characteristic or individual factor, respectively, the role of team identification in building an event image that is transferred to the sponsor...
image becomes apparent. Further support is offered by Grohs & Reisinger (2005), who showed that event involvement has a positive effect on the strength of image transfer. They explained the finding through the learning theory, which suggested that increased event involvement leads to greater processing of information, and that greater knowledge about the connection between the event and its sponsor boosts the image transfer. Thus, the following hypothesis was made:

**H5: Sponsor identification positively affects sponsor image**

**Method**

**Respondents**

A total of 100 home fans were drawn from a home game for each of 10 teams belonging to Korea’s professional soccer league, known as the K-League. Although there are actually 12 teams in the K-League, two teams were excluded from the study because as newly established teams, they lacked sufficient time to develop loyal fans. Specifically, the seating area for the home team fans at each team’s home game was divided into four or five sectors depending on the number of assistants available, and an assistant was assigned to each sector. Each assistant in turn approached at their convenience any spectator who entered their assigned sector before the game. To guard against the possibility of non-home fans entering the home fan sector, each approached spectator was asked whether or not he or she was a fan of the home team, and only those who answered the question affirmatively were asked to complete the survey by the self-administration method.

Each assistant was responsible for collecting 20 or 25 acceptable surveys depending on whether the home fan seating area was divided into five or four sectors, respectively. The surveys were judged to be acceptable at this point only when there were fewer than three questions unanswered, and the number of surveys was limited so that 100 home fans could be equally drawn for all 10 teams. However, despite these efforts, nine of the accepted surveys had to be excluded from data analyses because either there were actually more than three unanswered questions, or the response categories to at least 10 consecutive questions were indicated by the same scale number. Therefore, for the generalisation purpose of this study, the data for the 10 teams were pooled to yield a total of 991 surveys that were accepted for final analyses. The demographics of the respondents are as follows: 666 (67.2%) males and 325 (32.8%) females; 85 (8.6%) high school students, 273 (27.5%) college students, 379 (38.2%) employees, 87 (8.8%) private business owners, 14 (1.4%) unemployed, 60 (6.1%) housekeepers and 93 (9.4%) others. Also, the respondents’ average age was 28.4 ± 8.9.

**Survey instrument**

The questionnaire included items on demographics, team attributes, team identification, sponsor identification and corporate image. These items were measured on five-point Likert scales with response categories anchored by strongly disagree = 1 and strongly agree = 5. Except for demographics, all items (see Table 2) were adapted from scales used in past studies that were judged to be relevant, valid and reliable; therefore, the scales were not pre-tested. The following are the operational definition and source of items for each variable.

**Team attributes**

Among the variables suggested by Gladden & Funk’s (2002) Team Association Model, professional sports team attributes in this study were limited to team attractiveness, team similarity and team awareness. First, team attractiveness refers to how much a team appeals to its fans, and six items were adapted from Fisher (1998) for the scale. Second, team similarity refers to how much sports fans perceive their favourite team as being similar to themselves, and four items were adapted from Fisher (1998) for the scale. Finally, team awareness refers to how well one’s favourite team can be differentiated from other teams, and
Team attributes, identification and sponsor image

based on studies by Yoo et al (2000), Park & Srinivasan (1994), Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991), four items measuring team awareness were adapted to fit the setting of a professional sports team.

Team and sponsor identification. Team identification refers to the level of psychological attachment felt by a sports fan towards his or her favourite team, and eight items were adapted from Fisher (1998). Meanwhile, sponsor identification refers to how much sports fans perceive themselves as having a common fate with a company, which in this study was the title sponsor of the K-League, and six items were adapted from Mael & Ashforth (1992).

Sponsor image. Keller (1993) defined brand image as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory” (p.3). Here, sponsor image refers to the spectators’ perceptions about the K-League’s title sponsor as reflected by associations held in the memory, and six items were adapted from the questionnaire first used by Javalgi et al (1994) and later used by Pope & Voges (2000).

Data analyses and results

Test of measurement model for fit
First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted for all variables to determine how well the hypothesised model fitted to the data, and AMOS 4.0 was used to perform this analysis. As a result, 11 items (i.e. two team attractiveness, one team similarity, four team identification, two corporate identification and two corporate image) were found to cross-load with other constructs and were therefore eliminated (see Table 2 for the deleted items). In turn, a second CFA was conducted to reveal an acceptable model fit. The measures used in the study to assess the match of each factor’s structure to the sample data were the goodness of fit index (GFI), the normed fit index (NFI) and the root mean square residual (RMR). Generally, GFI and NFI values greater than .90 and an RMR value less than .10 represent a good fit of the data to the model, and since all the factors met the above-mentioned conditions as shown in Table 1, they were retained in this study.

Next, the reliability of the scale factors was assessed by observing the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, the

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>STAGE 1</th>
<th>STAGE 2</th>
<th>x²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>RMR</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEAM ATTRACTIVENESS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.467</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.291</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM SIMILARITY</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM AWARENESS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.761</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.972</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td>.981</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.234</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.540</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.280</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>.992</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE IMAGE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>108.313</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>586.036</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.951</td>
<td>.938</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>.978</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* saturated model

---

Table 1: Fit indices for 6 factors
### TABLE 2

**Standardised regression weight and reliability for six factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATENT AND MEASURED VARIABLES</th>
<th>STD.</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>ALPHA</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEAM ATTRACTIVENESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of this team have high status</td>
<td>.810</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of this team are admired</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of this team have characteristics that others admire</td>
<td>.875</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of this team are liked by others</td>
<td>.779</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of this team are popular*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of this team have a life others would like to lead*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEAM SIMILARITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a lot in common with members of this team</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have attitudes that are similar to those held by members of the team</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The members of the team and I are alike in a lot of ways</td>
<td>.864</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am similar to members of the team*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEAM AWARENESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have an image of my team in my mind</td>
<td>.867</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of my team</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td>.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can easily interface to internet site of my team</td>
<td>.808</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can recognise my team among other competing teams</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEAM IDENTIFICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There aren’t too many days during the season that I don’t think of the team</td>
<td>.795</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the team is important to me</td>
<td>.856</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love being a fan of this team</td>
<td>.827</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If asked who I am, one thing I’ll tell is that I am a fan of this team</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td>.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a team fan*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The team is an important part of my life*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a team supporter is part of who I am*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think of myself as part of the team*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CORPORATE IDENTIFICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of the corporate sponsor feels like a personal insult</td>
<td>.831</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very interested in what others think about the corporate sponsor</td>
<td>.886</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliment of a corporate sponsor feels like a personal compliment</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the media criticised the corporate sponsor, I would feel embarrassed</td>
<td>.846</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This corporate’s successes are my successes*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone praises this corporate, it feels like a personal compliment*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 2 cont

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATENT AND MEASURED VARIABLES</th>
<th>STD.</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>ALPHA</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE (TITLE SPONSOR OF K-LEAGUE) IMAGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE SPONSOR HAS GOOD PRODUCTS/SERVICES</td>
<td>.850</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.870</td>
<td>.612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE SPONSOR IS WELL MANAGED</td>
<td>.906</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE SPONSOR Responds to Consumer Needs</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE SPONSOR Is a Good Company to Work For</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE SPONSOR ONLY WANTS TO MAKE MONEY*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE SPONSOR IS INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * = items excluded after first confirmatory factor analysis

Std = standardised regression weight; SE = standard error of the variance; AVE = average variance extracted

$x^2 = 586.036, \ p = .001, \ RMR = .036, \ GFI = .951, \ AGFI = .938, \ NFI = .966, \ CFI = .978, \ RMSEA = .042$

### TABLE 3 Means, standard deviations and correlations for the observed variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSTRUCT</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>F4</th>
<th>F5</th>
<th>F6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Attractiveness</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>.855</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Similarity</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Awareness</td>
<td>.456**</td>
<td>.346**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Identification</td>
<td>.511**</td>
<td>.329**</td>
<td>.863**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Identification</td>
<td>.462**</td>
<td>.274**</td>
<td>.186**</td>
<td>.182**</td>
<td>.371**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Image</td>
<td>.350**</td>
<td>.239**</td>
<td>.242**</td>
<td>.249**</td>
<td>.405**</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.655</td>
<td>2.851</td>
<td>3.954</td>
<td>3.764</td>
<td>2.149</td>
<td>3.346</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>1.018</td>
<td>1.010</td>
<td>1.022</td>
<td>1.040</td>
<td>.884</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01
Team attributes, identification and sponsor image

FIGURE 1 Identification: antecedents and sponsorship outcomes

TABLE 4 Summary of research hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSTRUCTS</th>
<th>HYPOTHESIS</th>
<th>PATH COEFFICIENT</th>
<th>T-VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEAM ATTRACTIVENESS → TEAM IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>H1</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>4.509***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM SIMILARITY → TEAM IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>H2</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>5.058***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM AWARENESS → TEAM IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>H3</td>
<td>0.758</td>
<td>22.414***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEAM IDENTIFICATION → CORPORATE IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>H4</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>3.297***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPORATE IDENTIFICATION → CORPORATE IMAGE</td>
<td>H5</td>
<td>0.370</td>
<td>11.694***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2=708.863$, $p<.001$, $RMR=.088$, $GFI=.941$, $AGFI=.926$, $NFI=.959$, $CFI=.971$, $RMSEA=.047$

All t-values are significant at *** $p<0.001$.

internal consistency estimates (Cronbach, 1951), and all six scales were found to meet acceptable reliability standards with alpha values ranging from .870 to .929 (Nunnally, 1978).

Meanwhile, the discriminant validity of the factors was assessed both by observing whether the average variance extracted (AVE) estimates associated with each construct pair is greater than .50 standard criteria (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and by determining whether the AVE estimates are greater than the square of the correlation between the appropriate two constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). First, the AVE estimates were found to range from .568 to .714 (Table 2). Second, the correlation estimates were found to range from .021 to .761 (Table 3), and the AVE estimates were found to exceed the appropriate squared factor correlation. Therefore, the measurement model was accepted as demonstrating discriminant validity.
Simultaneous test of paths in the structural model
In order to simultaneously test all the hypotheses, a full structural model was developed with a path from each of three team attributes (i.e. attractiveness, similarity and awareness) to team identification, a path from team identification to sponsor identification, and a path from sponsor identification to corporate image (Figure 1). The model was tested using the maximum likelihood method of parameter estimation, and the fit indices for the model were found to be acceptable with $x^2 = 708.863$ ($p < .001$), GFI = .941, AGFI = .926, NFI = .959, CFI = .971, RMSEA = .047 (Table 4). Therefore, the full structural model was concluded as fitting the data.

Test of individual paths in the structural model
Having found that the structural model fits the data, the individual paths in the model were tested for consistency of support as was done by Boyle & Magnusson (2007), as well as Gwinner & Swanson (2003). Tests of hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively yielded a standardised path coefficient of .144 ($t = 4.509$), .133 ($t = 5.058$), .758 ($t = 22.414$), .115 ($t = 3.297$) and .370 ($t = 11.694$), and since all of these results indicated a statistically significant relationship, all hypotheses were accepted.

Conclusions and discussion
This study aimed to simultaneously test the paths of a structural model that was conceptualised by hypothesising that team attributes affect team identification, which in turn plays a mediating role in sponsor identification and the image transfer from an event to its sponsor. By applying the AMOS structural modelling program (version 4.0) to data obtained from a sample of professional soccer fans in Korea, team attributes such as team attractiveness, team similarity and team awareness were found to positively affect team identification, and this team identification was found to positively affect sponsor identification, which in turn was found to positively affect sponsor image.

This study is significant because it comprehensively combines the various constructs into one model, which the authors henceforth call the ‘Triple A-I Model’.

While empirical evidence showing that both team attractiveness and team similarity positively affect team identification has been found (Fisher, 1998; Kelman, 1961), team awareness and knowledge was only proposed by Trail et al (2000) and Heere (2005) to be a potential factor. This study is also significant because it provides empirical evidence for team awareness (i.e. knowledge and familiarity) being a factor that positively influences team identification. The finding is consistent with Funk & James’s (2001) assertion that awareness leads to attachment, but awareness in the earlier study was recognised as an antecedent to attractiveness, as opposed to an independent variable in this study. Thus, although it can be argued that one must be aware of a team to recognise its attractiveness, it can also be argued from the result of this study that it is possible for someone to be attracted to someone or something without knowing much about the person or object.

Meanwhile, highly involved fans were described as being most aware of a sports event’s sponsor (Meenaghan, 2001) and playing a mediating role in the strength of image transfer from an event to the sponsor (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005). Little explanation, however, is given of who the highly involved fans are and what affects the fans’ level of event involvement. Considering team identification’s relationship to sponsor identification as indicated by the results of this study, this study is significant because it narrows event involvement to identification with a sports team and shows that team attributes affect this team identification.

Finally, Gwinner (1997) proposed that event type, event characteristics and individual factors affect event image, and that sponsorship activities bring about a transfer of the event image to the sponsors’ brand image. Since team identification was shown to affect sponsor identification, and the resulting sponsor identification was shown to affect sponsor image, this
study has greater significance because it allows one to recognise the presence of a highly identified team or the level of team identification as a possible event characteristic or individual factor, respectively.

Limitations and recommendations for future research
Two limitations of this study derive from the sampling. First, convenience sampling, as opposed to random sampling, was used. Second, because the study drew its sample from professional soccer fans in Korea, application of the results to soccer fans in other countries, to amateur sports and to other professional sports requires caution. In addition, since the data were collected at the game sites, application of the results to internet and TV game viewers also requires caution. Similar research should therefore be conducted with sports fans in various settings to check the reliability of this study’s results, and this should include the extension of fans to include all types of game viewers for generalisation purposes, or to examine potential differences between the viewer segments.

The role of gender may also be considered. While males identify with being a sports fan significantly more than females (Dietz-Uhler et al, 2000), an empirical study by Ross et al (2007) showed that females recognised sponsors more than their male counterparts. Ross et al (2007) explained their finding by arguing that males “might be paying closer attention to the game and may be missing the signage or contests associated with the sponsors more than females” (p.304). The explanation was partly based on Gantz & Wenner’s (1991) research, which indicated that men and women tend to watch sporting events for the excitement and social aspects of the game, respectively, as well as on Myers-Levy & Mahewaran’s (1991) research, which indicated that information processing by females usually involves substantial detailed examination of the message content. Since research even indicates that males and females use to evaluate a team’s attractiveness, similarity and awareness be identified, and that the structural model conceptualised in this study be tested for each gender for comparison.

Meanwhile, the magnitude of the image transfer from event to sponsor is greater when the number of sponsors is smaller and the level of sponsorship is higher (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Since this study was limited to the identification and image of the title sponsor, it is recommended that this study be extended to other levels of sponsorship. Also, since consumers’ decision-making for high-involvement products like automobiles and low-involvement products like soft drinks may be different, effort to consider the product involvement level is recommended, while extending the study to companies from more diverse service and/or product areas. Moreover, Pitts & Slattery (2004) showed that sponsor identification improved over an extended period of time. Taking this into consideration, the number of games watched may also be added in between the path from team identification to sponsor identification (team identification may affect the number of games watched, which in turn may affect sponsor identification) so that the model can be simultaneously tested with six rather than five paths.

In the case of team identification, this study adapted items from Fisher’s (1998) research rather than using the existing sports spectator identification scale (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) or psychological commitment to team scale (Mahony et al, 2000). While Wann & Pierce (2003) showed that the SSIS and PCT scales were highly correlated, it is not certain whether Fisher’s scale highly correlates with the others. Therefore, this study is limited by any lack of reliability and validity that Fisher’s (1998) scale might have compared to the other scales, and examination of the correlation between Fisher’s scale and the others is desirable. Finally, it is recommended that other team attributes that potentially may affect team identification be explored.
Team attributes, identification and sponsor image

Biographies

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Team attributes, identification and sponsor image


European football under close scrutiny

Keywords
marketing
ethics
deontology
football
governing bodies
stakeholders

Abstract
Consumers are increasingly looking beyond products, and are expressing concern for the respect of societal values. This paper analyses how football organisations and governing bodies in Europe are adapting their marketing strategies to reflect these concerns. ‘Ethical charters’ or ‘ethical codes of behaviour’ need to be redefined under close scrutiny from shareholders and stakeholders. Whether it is a deliberate decision or a forced change, football organisations must respond to simultaneous commercial and political pressures.

Executive summary
The commercial aspect of football is growing inexorably, and this requires the adaptation of its various structures to the changing socio-economic context. Even though sporting authorities have always promoted ethical attitudes, some of their rules have demonstrated some weaknesses in terms of how they respect societal values. However, consumers are increasingly looking beyond products, and are expressing concern for the respect of societal values. This change in mentality seems praiseworthy when the organisation acts positively with regard to both its own objectives and the values of society. As a new social standard, ethics does not claim to serve an ideal, but is a means by which the interests of the majority can be satisfied. In terms of social responsibility, sport embodies an ideal. As the flagship of an egalitarian society, it should be the emblematic example for ethical conduct. The aim of this paper is two-fold. First, it will analyse the framework within which the system of ethics used by football authorities...
has been designed, and identify the pressures exerted by stakeholders. These pressures can take a commercial form (sponsors, broadcasters, spectators, fans, etc.) as well as economic and political forms, and are imposed by federal governments, communities and citizens. Second, it will examine how ethical concerns, which are vital to the future of sport, can coexist with the increasing impact of commercial concerns. The main question is whether ethical concerns and commercial imperatives are compatible, and whether they can successfully coexist while at the same time respecting ethical values.

Our approach, based on a documentary study and concrete cases, falls within the framework of the stakeholder theory. It focuses on the normative dimension of this theory, as it examines the introduction of an ethical dimension into the analysis of strategic management.

The first section of this paper aims to examine the interdependence of the concepts of ethics and deontology. In response to various scandals, ethics has become a rallying point in the communications made by leaders in the worlds of business and sport. We examine the fragile equilibrium for the football industry between a market dimension and an ethical dimension. From a matrix that takes into account the ethical importance in the marketing strategy of football organisations and their identity-oriented or collective actions, four different approaches have been identified: an ethics of comparative responsibility; an ethics of conviction; forced ethics; and egocentricity or self-centeredness. The second section of the paper deals with ethics as a new management tool. Pressured by their partners and stakeholders, football organisations are forced to put ethical considerations at the centre of their communication activities. Ethics thus catalyses strategy; the strategy of international sporting organisations tends to oscillate between commitment and opportunism. It is necessary for sporting organisations to protect their relationships with consumers, fans and sponsors if they want to ensure their commercial survival. The marketing consequences cannot be ignored; actions must be in congruence with an ethical dialogue. Under pressure from stakeholders, football organisations have had to adapt their global strategies to the changing world scene, and are under close scrutiny.

Introduction

Sporting event organisers, professional clubs and federal sporting authorities, particularly in football, are being faced with both socio-economic changes in their environment and mounting criticism. They have reacted to this by implementing marketing strategies in which ethics – in the broad sense of the term – plays a major part. This has led to a revision of ethical charters and the creation of new ‘professional codes of behaviour’. Under pressure from stakeholders (non-governmental organisations, governments, suppliers, the media, sponsors and fans), football organisations have had to adapt their global strategies to the changing world scene. Indeed, clubs and federal sporting authorities act in an increasingly commercialised environment, incorporating television and digital broadcasting rights, partnership/sponsorship contracts, corporate use of sporting events for public relations purposes, and ticket sales through establishments that are mainly funded by national or local taxpayers.

The commercial aspect of football is growing inexorably, and this requires the adaptation of its various structures to the changing socio-economic context. This issue is all the more important as high-level sport is a combination of intense physical commitment, competition against an opponent, major media exposure and high financial stakes. Moreover, the world of sport has long sought to be identified with mainstream ethical values such as equal opportunities for all, respect for the rules, the desire to exceed one’s limits, and the rewarding of talent, sustained effort and hard work. Football organisations thus need to openly show their willingness to guarantee that these values will be respected, and to implement and stick to a clearly stated deontology that is widely accepted.
by all concerned. The feeling of disenchantment that has taken over the world has shaken the world of sport. These days, clubs and federal sporting authorities need to redefine their codes of behaviour and devise methods to enforce them. They must choose whether to take deliberate steps for moral and commercial reasons, or to respond to political and social situations.

Using a descriptive approach related to the case of European football, the aim of this paper is two-fold. First, it will analyse the framework within which the system of ethics used by football authorities has been designed, and identify the pressures exerted by stakeholders. These pressures can take a commercial form (sponsors, broadcasters and spectators) as well as economic and political forms, and are imposed by federal governments, communities and citizens. The ethical aspect of football marketing will thus be considered. Second, it will examine how ethical concerns, which are vital to the future of sport (as well as in other sectors), can coexist with the increasing impact of commercial concerns. The main question is whether ethical concerns and commercial imperatives are compatible, and whether they can successfully coexist while respecting the aforementioned ethical values.

The paper is divided into two sections. The first section examines the general aspects of ethics. Ethics is defined, and its growing demand from the corporate world is reviewed. We look into the conditions required for companies to develop ethical concerns, relying on the example of sporting equipment suppliers. In the second section, the part played by ethics in European football is examined. First, there is a description of the marked shift to more commercial concerns over the last 20 years, as well as an assessment of the consequences this has had on strategies, especially marketing strategies. We look into the role of ethics in this new context and ask the question of whether ethical preoccupations are a key factor of success. Finally, we examine the implications of sports ethical marketing managed by football organisations for consumers and sponsors.

Where do ethical concerns fit in?
Generally speaking, today’s sporting world is bathed in moral principles in an attempt to counter the numerous accusations of corrupt management, embezzlement, geographical inequalities and exploitation, among others. Ethics and its corollary, deontology, are often supposed to be clearly defined. An important point to bear in mind is that the sporting organisations that support these ethical standards or professional codes either do so willingly, by deliberate choice, or are forced to adhere to them due to pressure from their stakeholders.

From ethics to deontology
Etymologically, the word ‘ethics’ has two origins: the Greek word ‘ithos’, which refers to the attitude of the spirit, and ‘ethos’, which indicates the rules that result from it. Louart (1999) identified two ways of thinking: Deontological approaches “judge that humans have the duty to conform to the rules of nature and the customs or social contracts that are essential to them”. These have “determinist and normative contents”. Teleological approaches consider that “each act must be assessed in terms of its results either by the actor (ethical selfishness) or by others (utilitarianism)”.

However, current ethical thinking is not focused on the causes and effects of social phenomena, but instead aims to describe the normative foundations of social actions (Rojot, 1992). As a new social standard, ethics does not claim to serve an ideal, but is a means by which the interests of the majority can be satisfied (Mercier, 1999). From this perspective, the antagonism between ethics and the finality of an undertaking can be superseded when an organisation functions better by acting in accordance with both its own objectives and an equitable development of the world (Le Tourneau, 2000; Courrent & Mercier, 2000).

Within this framework, teleology and deontology remain inseparable as long as deontology has prescriptive power, which can occur only if it is part of a global ethical movement with clearly stated values (Vitell, 2003; Vitell & Paolillo, 2003). This observation
is particularly clear in the sporting world, which has a long ethical tradition. Moreover, deontology has a markedly professional character: it represents all the rules that govern the relationships between members of a given profession, both among the members themselves and between them and their economic or social partners. Establishing a code of behaviour amounts to identifying the good principles of action and the bad ones, which plays a federalising role in the organisation’s culture and more generally on the sector in which it operates. This pragmatic dimension of deontology indicates the actions to be taken. In this sense, deontology defines who has authority; it even defines the official body of a given sector of activity – a body which may have the power to impose sanctions.

The transition from deontology to modes of defining rules and checking if they comply with them requires a process that literature has termed ‘ethicology’. This word, borrowed from Louart (1999), refers to the set of rules related to a certain ethical domain. Indeed, the construction of a professional code of behaviour includes a step that clarifies the way in which individuals justify their actions within the collective occupational framework. The interdependence of the concepts of ethics and deontology in both nature and content should be emphasised. Ethics provides the basis for the general doctrine observed in the corporate world, particularly in the sporting sector, as opposed to the moral philosophy, which is specific to each individual.

Deontology is the professional translation of a code of behaviour ensuing from general ethics – which is itself a general standard aiming to satisfy the majority – adopted by an organisation. Consequently, the internal rules and procedures express the contents of a sector’s deontology.

A call for more ethics: a world movement that football must take into account

The liberalisation of the economy that is driving globalisation has widened the gap between the market and society. However, the market, in the broad sense of the term, needs society since it needs an institutionalised environment in which the various actors are important (Barrientos, 2000). Moreover, without sufficient international government pressure in favour of regulatory mechanisms, the private sector is always ready to take up the challenge and become the architect of world markets. In the sporting market, criticisms of sporting events, and particularly of football, have been strengthened by new information and communication technologies that are now used as powerful media weapons. This has increased the risks for sporting event organisers. Whether this criticism is justified or not, organisers are now developing policies of greater social responsibility. However, as seen through the prism of ethics, these organisations have become increasingly vulnerable.

In response to various scandals, the harmful effects of economic development and the consequences of globalisation, “ethics” has become a rallying point in the communications made by leaders in the worlds of business and sport. There is, in fact, nothing new about this, as ethics has a long philosophical and sociological history. Le Goff (1995) pointed out that when a society lacks common references, modern companies, and in particular public or private organisations, become ethical communities, promoting and implementing the forgotten humanist values. Today’s omnipresent concern with ethics reveals the deep anxiety of a society whose codes of behaviour are no longer defined by ideological or religious reference points, or by strong authority figures (Canto-Sperber, 2001). Therefore, the organisation comes to perceive itself as a citizen, and insists on its share of responsibility in local and national affairs. It can no longer turn away from the responsibility it has for society, and indeed is accountable to all of its interlocutors. This change in mentality seems praiseworthy when the organisation acts positively with regard to both its own objectives and the values of society. Studies carried out in the United States (Cui & Choudhury, 2003) highlight the fact that the ethical consequences of organisational actions are increasingly important to the fundamental beliefs of individuals. These beliefs are expressed in the search
for social and moral equity, and in the desire for honesty and justice. A beneficial combination of philosophy and morals could then give rise to a business ethics dominated by integrity, and sports in general would not be exempt. Football in particular, because of the huge amounts of money involved and its intense media exposure, often experiences these pressures.

Since its creation, football has always portrayed certain fundamental values such as courage, determination, performance, respect for rules and for others, exceeding one’s limits, and the “beauty” of track and field. Moreover, sport has a symbolic function in that it is a reminder that sport is, above all, the activity of individuals who are members of a society. In terms of social responsibility, sport embodies an ideal. As the flagship of an egalitarian society, it should be the emblematic example for ethical conduct. The sporting market is huge, and international brands convey images that combine youth with the idea of a cosmopolitan and multicultural society. The importance of such a thought is demonstrated and exemplified by Nahapetian (2004).

Ethics used as a strategy: a deliberate choice or a forced decision?

As a rule, the responsibility of today’s organisations is three-fold: a social responsibility to their employees and consumers; a societal responsibility to the community in which they operate; and an environmental responsibility in the broad sense of the term (Caroll, 1979; Beji-Becheur & Bensebaa, 2004). Given this triple responsibility, our study concerns the incorporation and the application of ethics in the strategies of these organisations. Furthermore, organisations that coordinate sporting events are highly specialised and require a particularly focused study, since this market is characterised by a specific ethical claim, emphasised to the point of asserting that these activities are the “sporting exception”.

How can profit be reconciled with a respect for “what is right and good” from economic, social, societal and environmental points of view? Ethical problems also emerge when two duties conflict; for example, the duty to ensure the continuing financial health of a capitalist enterprise and the duty to protect the interests of society (Morin, 2004). This is undoubtedly the most acute issue. In combining ethics with sport, football organisations find themselves ahead in the implementation of higher levels of functioning, and could be seen as ideal examples for non-sporting organisations. We can better illustrate this with the following examples. In 2006, the Sepp Blatter Foundation Prize was awarded to the Handicap Sport Association. This foundation aims to support sporting projects, particularly in football. In the same way, the Football Foundation, funded by the Football Association and the British government, is one of the largest sporting and social associations in the UK. These foundations are playing a key role in revitalising grass roots sport. Their main mission concerns social development through the establishment and communication of the values traditionally associated with English football.

Although once committed to satisfying their shareholders, these organisations are today required to meet the demands of their stakeholders, whether they belong to these organisations (owners, managers, employees, volunteers) or not (competitors, fans, governments, lobbies, the media, community and natural environment) (Mercier, 2001; Madsen & Ulhøi, 2001; Gabriel, 2003). The report ‘Football and its communities’, carried out by Manchester Metropolitan University over three years, outlines a new vision and understanding of how the football world can engage with communities. It recognises the extensive efforts that football, more than any other sport, has put into community development. This stakeholder theory is the framework of much of today’s research on organisational ethics (Caroll, 1979, 1999; Mercier, 2001). This paper focuses on the normative dimension

1 Maignan & Swaen (2004, p.55): “Stakeholders refer to individuals or groups who – directly or indirectly – influence the operations of the company or can be influenced by them (suppliers, customers, employees, investors, local communities, governments, lobbies, trade associations, etc.).”
of this theory, as it concentrates on the introduction of an ethical dimension into the analysis of strategic management – addressing the need to reconcile the conflicting interests of stakeholders to ensure the organisation’s survival\(^2\). The commitment to the wellbeing of the community as a whole is implicit, and underlies the idea of a joint project to which all stakeholders adhere.

Another approach considers the ethical dimension from the point of view of an organisation – a professional club, a sporting authority or an equipment supplier\(^3\) – dealing with the importance it attaches to ethics in its marketing strategy and its recourse to identity-oriented or collective strategic actions (Figure 1).

In Figure 1 we can see that sporting organisations, professional clubs or equipment suppliers can take four different approaches:

- **An ethics of comparative responsibility** (Weber, 1964, 1971), in which only results matter. Organisations such as Adidas\(^4\) can be led to compromises that have the sole aim of demonstrating their societal responsibility to their stakeholders. Ethics becomes a tool for marketing differentiation, like the brand name itself. It also gives the company a competitive advantage as it contributes to the positive image of the organisation (Tixier, 2004).

- **An ethics of conviction** (Weber, 1964, 1971), according to which action is taken out of a belief in a moral principle, regardless of the consequences (e.g. Patagonia, Timberland\(^5\)). This is a more philosophical attitude that is marked by a harmonisation between what is thought, said, and done, through a double-loop societal training process – a process that works retroactively and integrates questions about the underlying principles of an action (Gond, 2003).

- **Forced ethics**, which typifies organisations like Nike, the equipment supplier that always acts in response to pressures from stakeholders\(^6\). Nike’s adaptation to its environment could be considered as a ‘paradoxical balance’ insofar as it tries to reconcile its

2 The descriptive dimension highlights the relationship between the organisation and its environment; the instrumental dimension describes the stakeholders, not the shareholders, as factors making it possible for the company to achieve its goals (Donaldson & Preston, 1995, mentioned by Mercier, 2001, p.6).

3 By supplier, we mean companies which have the role of providing clothing and equipment for players or teams needing to practise for a sporting competition (Desbordes, 2001, p.21).

4 Adidas, through its slogan ‘Forever sport’, clearly shows its implication in traditional sporting values.

5 Beyond the information registered on the labels of its products, Patagonia invests in environmental protection and advertises it widely (1% of its turnover is devoted to the protection of the environment through the funding of associations that carry out concrete actions). Timberland, a forerunner in respect for the environment, is the initiator of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).
organisational goal (profit) with the general interests of society as a whole. Its appropriation of ethics is comparable to a single-loop societal adjustment process (Gond, 2003). A strategy of cooperation prevails over confrontations.

**Egocentrality or self-centeredness**, which is the attitude of organisations that do not care much for ethics (e.g. Puma). Their development is ensured by their inimitable competence, due to which they keep a definite advantage over their competitors.

Indeed, ethical positioning, with regard to marketing strategy, can be analysed in two ways. These combine aspects that have to do with deliberate strategies and fall under a contingent logic. The pressure of the environment plays a major part in this. The following section attempts to measure the relative roles of these two concepts in professional football.

**European football and ethics: ethics as a major element in marketing**

The integration of ethical considerations into sporting management depends first on the commitment of managers, who set the tone of the organisation's general policy (Mercier, 1999). Making their ethical commitment credible is a challenge for organisations, and the stakes are very high. This has become a new battleground for competition, much like 'quality' was a few years ago. Although “ethics” may appear to be a new management tool, its successful use relies on intense work on the group's values (Mercier, 1999), because any disagreement will lead to sanctions from higher powers. Passing on information will be a key factor in the area of communication, and will depend on the stakeholders. Such a marketing choice gives the organisation a better rating over its competitors (Pautard, 2004). After briefly examining the radical commercial shift that football has undergone, we will show the respect this sporting sector has for ethics, through a study of a selection of actions. In line with this, commercial repercussions on consumers and sponsors are emphasised.

**The shift of the 1980s: towards a form of capitalist business?**

In many countries, football carries so much social and political weight that it has become a political force in national or local governing bodies. The changes football has gone through over the last 10 years have led to many observers considering it as an emerging industry. The major evolution to less state economic control and a general trend towards more privatised structures and globalised trade has significantly affected the sector of sporting event production, and football has been the first sport affected in terms of audience. The European clubs can thus be compared to sporting event producers working in the field of entertainment.

The rise in the economic stakes involved in sporting events since the 1980s, linked with the opportunity to sell broadcasting rights, has attracted many private operators interested in investing in the sector. Some have developed in the direction of industrial strategy, like the media, sport-oriented public relations agencies and equipment suppliers. Some, only a few in fact, are solely motivated by financial gain. Others seem to be driven by a need to maximise their own social efficiency: they subsidise clubs to satisfy their personal passion and to secure a strong reputation through the strong media presence in football.

The political economy of professional football has changed radically over recent years. Andreff (2000) summarises this transformation as the passage from an ‘SSSL’ (Spectators-Subsidies-Sponsors-Local) model of subsidising, which was the rule in the 1970s, to an ‘MMMMG’ (Media-Magnates-Merchandising-Markets-Global) model in the 1980s.

One of the major goals of the operators in football today is a commercial one. They seek to diversify and

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6 Nike sells a rebellious state of mind – a festive lifestyle – more than sporting products. When in 2001, non-governmental organisations blamed the equipment supplier for making children work in sweatshops, it was its speech about “blossoming”, “going beyond”, the “Just do it” slogan, and the social ideas associated with them, that were targeted (Levy, 2003). Nike’s response was to keep a tighter control on its subcontractors and to give subsidies to a non-governmental organisation, Global Alliance for Workers and Communities, in partnership with the World Bank and the Gap clothing brand. Even if the reports on the audits carried out among the subcontractors were not positive, the group is taking on its responsibility and is rebuilding its image step by step.
expand their sources of income, particularly outside of sport. This strategy can be seen through the development of brands (Kapferer, 1996; Aaker, 1994), illustrated by the plethora of products carrying team logos, names and mascots being sold through major distribution channels or specialised shops across the world. This overall commercialisation associated with football is made quite obvious both to the general public and to stakeholders, who witness costly transfers and contracts. Players, while benefiting from this commodification, have become goods to be traded and are sold to the highest bidder. Federal sporting authorities have also extensively developed their commercial activities. FIFA announced that the last 2006 World Cup in Germany has generated a revenue of €1.86 billion and for 2008 a turnover of USD 957 million (€719.5 million) and a profit of USD 184 million (€138 million). UEFA has announced an estimated revenue of €1.3 billion for the 2008 European Championship, mostly from the sale of television broadcasting rights (€900 million).

We can therefore see that this mass marketing of football is affecting sporting organisations that used to be non-profit organisations. With this in mind, what is the part played by ethics in the marketing strategies of these organisations?

For sporting organisations, ethics is a key value under close scrutiny

Beyond the general consideration of ethics in the business world, some sporting organisations have made it a central element in their strategy (Durand & Rouvrails-Charron, 2006). This choice involves a constraint that is two-fold. With these organisations having social goals, it is imperative that they protect sporting values; ethics is a key element in their identity. In addition, pressure from their partners and stakeholders forces organisations to put ethical considerations at the centre of their communication activities. Ethics thus catalyses strategy. In ethical terms, we may suppose that international sporting organisations tend to oscillate between commitment and opportunism. We are then led to ask which of the decisions taken are a result of giving in to pressure, and which ones come from a real desire to act. We can begin to answer this question if the international sporting movement is considered as an integral part of societal evolution. Along these lines, we must first clarify the dilemma sporting that organisations face, especially in football: adapt or die.

While sporting myths may always have been a key element in this sector, a critical movement gained momentum in sport as a whole in the 1990s, and was sometimes expressed in extreme words (Brohm et al, 2004): “By a quasi-mystical invocation of the ‘eternal values of sport’, this ideology seeks self-prophesying status by reducing the gap between the reality of capitalist practices in the production of sporting events and the celestial sphere of the ‘grand idea of sport’.”

As Bayle & Durand (2004) noted, there is “a growing gap between ethics and behaviour” among historical sporting authorities. As a result, the legitimacy of international sport’s governing bodies can no longer be based on a rhetoric that has more to do with ideology than with reality (Figure 2).

Figure 2 represents a self-regulating system. The community sends two types of signal. The first targets private actors. It defines some demands mainly guided by commercial motivations. The second type of signals concerns social matters and is directed towards public stakeholders. There is an attempt at a greater code of ethics from the sporting movement, and in particular from the world of football, for political reasons. These pressures oblige sporting figures, whose principles are rather similar, to apply suitable marketing tools to respond to these various demands. Moreover, these marketing tools relate to the actions on the moral level, for example the fights against doping, corruption, xenophobia or violence in stadia. They also consist of talks and communication operations with social figures. Therefore, for example, the official reports of sporting authorities propose the role of sport as a tool for social integration and the protection of basic values before any other elements. It can therefore be seen that sporting figures are compelled
to act and communicate against doping, corruption or a disregard for human rights. The original dimensions of football, such as respect, equal opportunities for all and courage, must be obvious to all.

Moreover, ethics, as defined in the first part of the paper, is to be found at the heart of the system. Authorities like UEFA, guardians of sport’s original values, have adopted a more strict approach to the application of deontology in football; they impose their directives on professional clubs as with players. Sporting authorities and professional clubs must no longer limit their philosophy of action to a commercial framework, but must find their roots again. Dependent on sponsors (suppliers and various private organisations), who themselves experience the pressure of the community, sporting authorities and professional clubs can no longer shy away from this moral constraint.

The system presented in Figure 2 is regulated by linking the pressures exerted. Private stakeholders trade their financial contribution with the sporting system. Public stakeholders offer to take away their legitimacy and their prerogatives concerning football from the sporting authorities. Hence, if matches are the opportunity for small groups to express their racism and violence, the stakeholders’ reactions will
be double: commercial partners will take away their contributions, while political actors will take away the legitimacy of football sporting authorities. Broadcasters have also stated their aim to be associated only with events whose ‘moral standards’ are unambiguous. The financial stakes are such that these ‘customers’ have a considerable weight, influencing not only the logistical organisation of events but also the image of organising authorities. Football sporting authorities will be sanctioned if they are unable to preserve commercial and symbolic qualities of sporting products. Players and clubs undergo the same dual constraints. The example of Paris Saint Germain is revealing. In 2000, the Parisian football club created a foundation to engage with the community, and the integration of underprivileged youths in particular. However, some fans displayed violent behaviour, which received much media coverage. With this in mind, the city of Paris – the owner of the Parc des Princes stadium and the most important and oldest supporter of the club – plans to reduce its support as the team and its image do not meet with what is expected from them. In the same way, the obvious exploitation of players coming from Third World countries to play with European clubs produced a strong reaction from the European Commission in 2003.

As illustrated above, the ethical positioning is thus largely dictated by pressure from stakeholders, whether they are political and public or commercial and private. Consequently, the fact that football event producers take ethical aspects into account no longer arises from a strategic choice to make a specific organisation different, but from a vital need initiated by stakeholders – the need to respond to the emergence of a new world, a world that is seeking transparency and truth.

Implications of sports ethical marketing
The stakeholder theory is most appropriate to integrate the concept of organisational ethics into management issues (Caroll, 1989, 1999; Mercier, 2001; Madsen & Ulhøi, 2001). Its strategic quintessence is based on the necessity of reconciling the conflicting interests of the stakeholders in order to ensure the survival of the sporting figures. Ethics is meaningful because it concerns everybody; as for marketing, its purpose is to convey the values shared with the stakeholders. Thus this theory throws light upon the intricate interactions between the actors aiming at implementing an ethical process (Figure 2). Fulfilling the expectations of the stakeholders implies erasing the limits between the private and the public spheres in terms of ethical objectives. So, in order to be totally relevant, the means used by the sporting authorities must necessarily be adapted to the social context. Taking ethics into account in the marketing approach of football figures is quite a strong signal towards two interlinked major targets in terms of consequences. The cases of the media and the investors will not be analysed in this section, because the implications of ethical marketing are less important for these stakeholders.

The first target concerned is the consumers who are also citizens, fans and spectators of sporting events, and eventually paid workers. Beyond his personal consumption, the individual wants to share common values and emotions with the brand of goods he has purchased – a brand owned by the sponsor. In the experiential framework of consumption, marketing corresponds to a new paradigm that says that the development of a brand is based on the co-production of meaning and on the sharing of experiences with consumers (Cova, 1995; Cova & Cova, 2001; Cova & Louyot-Gallicher, 2006; Hetzel, 2002; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Langlois, 2002; Ritzer, 2005; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). It becomes part of the postmodern view in which consumption holds a crucial role and has multiple functions such as re-establishing social links, building the individual’s identity according to the concept of learning, and meeting a need for emotions and experiences (Addis & Podesta, 2005; François-Lecompte & Valette-Florece, 2006). Thus, Nike, Adidas and Puma are brands exemplifying different lifestyles rather than simple products. In their roles as sponsors, ethical breaches during a sporting event or by a player will have repercussions both on
European football under close scrutiny

the sales of sporting goods and on the social representation of brands (Kapferer, 1996). These brands stand for values, laws and history; if their ‘soul’ is smeared by scandal, the sales of goods will fall. Following the 2006 FIFA World Cup, Nike was hoping to sell 2.4 million replicas of the football shirts, 23 million pairs of shoes and 10 million balls. In 2002, the victory of the Brazilian team, sponsored by Nike, did nothing but strengthen its leadership among the world of sporting suppliers. A partner of FIFA since 1970, Adidas used the 2005 Cup with its logo, as the supplier of the official ball ‘Teamgeist’ ('team spirit'); sales were forecast to soar by 50% compared with the previous World Cup. Moreover, Adidas signed a partnership contract with UEFA for Euro 2008 and the Champions League.

The second repercussion of the ethical marketing of footballing figures, linked to the one above, has to do with the sponsors. Whether they are suppliers or not (e.g. Coca Cola), sponsors use football matches watched by millions of viewers as a showcase. In terms of image sponsoring, they show off their brands in order to be known and to generate a closeness and emotions with the viewers. Sporting events are also opportunities to test their latest products. Finally, there is also network sponsoring, since the brands take advantage of the events to stimulate their sales network. This is why any ethical breaches will reflect badly on the sponsors’ images, and will have repercussions on the mental representation they have in their partners’ minds.

Within the context of ethical marketing, we can observe a beneficial hybridisation of wills of the shareholders and the stakeholders in order to fulfil a collective interest; it is a search for global meaning fed by the original sports values. The implications of ethical approach taken by the sporting authorities lead to repercussions in terms of image as well as in terms of sales for their stakeholders searching for more authenticity. Zinedine Zidane’s head-butt during the World Cup final is a case in point in terms of non-respect for sports ethics. In spite of the bad image the player gave of himself, the repercussions on the sponsors were limited for part of the public. If football attempts to free itself from the ethical needs of its stakeholders, the large financial means it currently enjoys will be going to other sports. And therefore the use of ethical marketing managed by football organisations can be deemed a virtuous circle.

Conclusion

There remains one question, however: is the ethical approach of sporting organisations sincere or is it a solution – or a fad, even – related to the current environmental context (Gaski, 1999)? Even the marketing dimension of this approach is open to criticism because no theoretical reconstruction has taken place; only a mere extension of the original marketing model has occurred (Crane & Desmond, 2002).

In the last 20 years, sport has entered into a rising commercial spiral due to the evolution in consumer behaviour and new communication technologies. However, two major elements come to disturb the autonomy asserted by professional sport.

Communities are expecting the application of ethics by these organisations. This social demand also concerns figures from the sporting world, public authorities and sponsors. The marketing consequences cannot be ignored; actions must be in congruence with an ethical dialogue. However, the public of mainland Europe are still attached to a sport bearing human and social values, and look beyond the packaged spectacle. In order to preserve their legitimacy, football’s governing bodies must play their primary role of guardians of the sport’s central values, by imposing the respect of a true deontology on all stakeholders and shareholders (clubs, players, sponsors, fans, etc.).

Indeed, in 2006, an independent report written by Arnaut for the European Union considers ethical recommendations in terms of “corporate governance

resulting from sport governing bodies” (p.76), of active prevention against “criminal activities around football, money laundering and trafficking of young players” (p.81), that of “the fight against racism and xenophobia” (p.83) and doping. As Arnaut highlights: “two important features need to be taken into account: the rapid and irreversible trend towards commercialisation of sport and at the same time the development of the European Union into a wider political, economic and legal structure…” (p.9). Therefore we can say that the pressure of the political sphere on ethical questions will be major: “political bodies have both the duty and the legal means to play their part in finding the appropriate solutions (p.10)”. The setting up of ethical codes is strongly advised: a European code of corporate governance for clubs, procedures to help establish best practice, and a transparent system for transactions related to player transfers.

Facing political pressures and public demands, sporting authorities, particularly in football, must integrate the ethical dimension into their marketing function. However, talk is not enough. Authorities are criticised for favouring talk over action. To act means to set up real actions, like restoring sport’s educational and social role through the creation of foundations in charge of integrating underprivileged youths or disabled people. Moreover, clubs and players should be obliged to develop partnerships with private organisations that respect certain moral standards, such as being against child labour and respecting human rights.

In this return to the ‘grass roots’ of the game, sporting authorities, federations, clubs and players will no longer be able to form a deliberate strategy but will be forced to adhere to a given logic. An ethical dimension is required by powerful stakeholders in agreement with the European model of the sport. In the event of a contravention, the market of consumers – citizens and the sporting public – will be obliged to sanction any ethical infringement.

Stakeholder theory would contribute to the development and true improvement of European football’s governance: its governing bodies, multinational groups, the business world, consumers, fans, and more (Rossouw, 1994; Mercier, 2001). In spite of its limits and unfinished state, this paradigm provides an interesting basis for a study of corporate management environment, in particular those corporations that are spread out over several geographical locations (Beji-Becheur & Bensebaa, 2004)

In 2007, new UEFA president Michel Platini said: “Many sporting people want to defend certain sporting values and protect the values that we knew. I’m not against business at all, but if business takes football hostage then we risk losing everything.” This could be considered as a symbol of necessary return to football’s fundamental ethics.

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Biographies

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European football under close scrutiny

References


Can sponsorships be harmful for events? Investigating the transfer of associations from sponsors to events

Keywords
sponsorship
association transfer
sponsorship
harm to events

Abstract
This paper outlines how sponsorships can be beneficial or harmful to events. Using an experimental design and focusing on association transfers surrounding a snowboarding event, we illustrate that the sponsoring brand associations have a significant effect on the associations of the event. Our results indicate that in this instance some associations are transferred; others are not significant. Event managers must track which of these association transfers are occurring in order to understand and maintain their desired positioning.

Executive summary
This paper outlines how sponsorships can be beneficial or harmful to events.

Companies try to absorb part of the image of sporting events by becoming the official sponsor of the event. In this way they hope that the consumer will link associations of the event with associations of the sponsoring company, thereby transferring the image of the event to the image of the sponsor.

This paper adds to the extant literature by investigating whether a sponsorship can influence the image of a sponsee. More specifically, it examines the transfer of associations from a sponsor to a sponsee. By doing so, it will illustrate how sponsorships can create but also destroy value for the sponsee – beyond the sponsorship fee.

Using an experimental design and focusing on association transfers surrounding an event, we illustrate that the sponsoring brand associations have a significant effect on the associations of the event.

A fictitious snowboarding competition was chosen as a context in which the research subjects, students, had significant relevance, interest and participation. A
post-test-only experimental design was utilised where we altered the sponsoring brand keeping everything else constant.

We prepared two almost identical newspaper articles about the event, which differed only in the brand that was mentioned as the key sponsor. Two brands were selected based on a strong profile and their expected divergent contrasts in terms of elicited associations. The first brand, Quiksilver, is a winter sporting goods manufacturer and was likely to have many complementary associations in reference to the event. The second brand, KPN, a telecommunications provider, was chosen in the belief that it did not have as strong a complementary association fit with the event.

The respondents were randomly assigned to either one of two experimental groups. We measured the respondents' association with the event as well as with the sponsor by means of the attributes ‘tough’, ‘boring’, ‘sporty’, ‘young’, ‘cosy’, ‘alternative’, ‘formal’, ‘old fashioned’, ‘reliable’ and ‘slow’, because the pre-test revealed these were the relevant associations worth exploring.

The results indicate that the image of a sponsor has an impact on the image of the sponsee and can either enhance or damage an event.

The findings are of importance to both sponsees and sponsors. The sponsees must be very careful in the recruitment and selection of their sponsors. It is important for event organisers to understand and use this knowledge of association transfer as an image building tool in the same way sponsors do now.

Sponsees must also be aware of possible implications for damage to their event image that can be readily caused by sponsors with bad or dull images or are likely to experience a transgressional event. Sponsees should now realise that they need to attract appropriate sponsors that supplement their event image strengths and reinforce their existing event weaknesses. If events can attract brands with a suitable image as their sponsor, they may also benefit from the positive image flow on effects. In such a case, the value of a sponsorship for the sponsee goes clearly beyond the sponsorship royalty.

Introduction

Sponsorship’s importance as a marketing communications tool has increased significantly in comparison to traditional advertising (Erodogan & Kitchen, 1998; Harvey, 2001) Amis et al (1999) argue that “a sponsorship agreement should be considered as a resource which, if carefully managed, can be developed into a distinctive competence capable of producing a sustainable competitive advantage for a firm”. Sponsorship objectives vary and may relate to a range of brand and strategic objectives (Farrelly & Quester, 2005a). As Cliffe and Motion (2005) point out, sponsoring can be useful to create brand awareness and brand loyalty, and it is useful for the creation of brand experience. According to Gwinner & Eaton (1999), companies try to absorb part of the image of a (sporting) event onto themselves by becoming the official sponsor of the event. They hope that the consumer will link associations of the event with associations of the sponsoring company, thereby transferring the image of the event to the image of the sponsor (Cornwell et al, 2001; Javalgi et al, 1994; McDonald, 1991; Roy & Cornwell, 2003). Gwinner (1997) illustrated that this belief is justified because sponsorship does transfer associations from the sponsored entity (the sponsee) to the sponsor. Recently, a new stream has emerged within sponsorship research, extending Cornwell and Maignon’s (1998) cartography of sponsorship research. The relationship between sponsee and sponsor has been identified as a relationship typical of a business-to-business relationship (Farrelly & Quester, 2005a,b). This introduces other business-to-business constructs into the equation, such as the notion of value creation and dissemination within that relationship from both parties’ perspectives.

This paper adds to the literature by investigating whether a sponsorship can influence the image of a sponsee. We will examine the transfer of associations from a sponsor to a sponsee. By doing so, we will illustrate how sponsorships can create but also destroy value for the sponsee – beyond the sponsorship fee.
There are many examples of sponsors influencing the image of an event. One of the most prominent is that of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, which was labelled the ‘Coca-Cola Games’ (c.f. Pope et al, 1997). In many countries, this negatively affected the credibility of the Games.

Despite anecdotal evidence that a sponsorship can effect an event’s image and have severe consequences for the overall event image, there are no scientific investigations relating to this. Moreover, Gwinner (1997) even doubts that such effects actually exist. However, following the clear outline of Ferrand and Pages (1999), that a sponsee can also be considered as a unique brand, it remains unclear why an association transfer between two brands should be believed to only occur from the brand of the sponsee to the brand of the sponsor and not vice versa. We aim to test the previous contention of Gwinner and Eaton (1999), to explore further the direction of association transfer.

Literature review and hypothesis development

According to Cornwell and Maignan (1998), “sponsorship involves two main activities: (1) an exchange between a sponsor and a sponsee whereby the latter receives a fee and the former obtains the right to associate itself with the activity sponsored; and (2) the marketing of the association by the sponsor. Both activities are necessary if the sponsorship is to be a meaningful investment”. In line with Cornwell (1995), we take sponsorship to be “the orchestration and implementation of marketing activities for the purpose of building and communicating an association to a sponsorship”. Both definitions emphasise the association between the sponsor and the sponsee.

Obviously, this association is not restricted to a legal association, but actually represents the accumulated mental associations within consumers’ minds. According to Gwinner & Eaton (1999), sponsors hope that the consumer will subconsciously link associations of the event to associations of the sponsoring company, thereby transferring the image of the event to the image of the sponsor. Madrigal (2000) found that through sports sponsorship, a company can link itself or its product to the strong feelings a consumer has towards the sponsored team. A company that is able to successfully tap into a consumer’s psychological connectedness with a sports team can encourage greater consumer attachment and commitment to the sponsor’s brand. Available empirical evidence on the direction of image transfer demonstrates transfer from the sponsee to the sponsor.

This identifies a clear need for further research into image transfer through the sponsorship relationship and the directionality of image transfer. It is apparent that association of transfer from sponsor to sponsee has yet to receive the attention it deserves. To further explain association transfer, we next discuss two theories pertinent to this domain: first, the structure of memory as represented by the associative network memory model; and second, learning theories as represented by classical conditioning theory.

Humans deal with a vast array of information every day. An individual is able to function in this complex environment through use of cognitive systems (mental thinking processes) and affective mental systems (feelings and emotions) to evaluate information and situations as they arise. By these processes, only the most relevant information reaches the mind. The two systems are interconnected and influence each other (Peter et al, 1999). In order for information to reach a person, the person has to be exposed to the information and has to pay attention. Furthermore, the stimulus needs to be interpreted (comprehension) and meaning has to be attached. This interpretation process can occur by a central route – the use of cognition – or by the peripheral route to persuasion – the use of cues (Petty et al, 1983). When relevant information successfully navigates an individual’s screening mechanisms and reaches the mind, it has to be stored. There are many theories concerned with the organisation of the mind. The associative network memory model is commonly accepted (Blackwell et al,
can sponsorships be harmful for events?

2001), and we acknowledge that this categorisation model also has critics (Gregan-Paxton & Roedder 1997; Restak, 1995), but a full review of the numerous theories detailing the functioning of memory is not our purpose here.

The associative network memory model views the memory as a spider web of nodes and links. Nodes are stored information connected by links that vary in strength (Keller, 1993, p.2). A node can be activated by external information or by internal information that is retrieved from long-term memory (Anderson & Bower, 1974; Anderson, 1983). This activation can spread to other linked nodes. For example, in the case where a spectator is watching a sponsored football game, this person will have nodes in their mind with information about the football game, nodes with information about the sponsoring brand and possibly, if the marketing has been effective, links between the two. Information can be spread from one node to the other. The scope of the activation and the amount of retrieved information from memory is determined by the strength of the association between the activated node and the linked nodes (Rossiter & Bellman, 2005; Woelfel, 1995). The appropriateness of the association and the presence of cues can also have an influence (Aaker & Keller, 1990). Consistent with this theory, a brand can be viewed as a node in memory that includes some linked associations.

Brand associations are developed from different sources, such as product use, informational sources and secondary associations with other entities, for example attribute associations related to a celebrity endorser or a sporting event (Gwinner, 1997; Keller, 2003). These secondary associations can lead to a transfer of associations. Finally, brand associations can vary in their degree of favourability, strength and uniqueness (Keller, 1993).

In the ‘transfer of associations’, some associations that are linked to one object in the mind are transferred to another object within the mind (Keller, 1993, p.3). Therefore, the second object gets image association transferred to it that is consistent with the first object. Recently this has been demonstrated with brand personality transfer effects in the Ryder Cup (Deane et al, 2003). IBM supplemented its brand personality by being associated with an exciting and sophisticated event. If the dynamics were to work in reverse, it would be entirely possible that a sporting event might become associated with an attribute such as ‘dull and boring’ for being sponsored by an insurance company.

This ‘associative learning’ can be further supplemented by outlining the simple principles of classical conditioning learning theory. This theory explains how a stimulus acquires new meaning by its association with another stimulus (Blackwell et al, 2001, p.461). The theory became famous through Pavlov’s (1927) dog experiments. Associations can, therefore, also be transferred via classical conditioning. Image transfer will be stronger when brands are more familiar (Simonin & Ruth, 1998). So, when familiar companies with strong brands and associations sponsor events, stimuli will be elicited and this will make learning (via classical conditioning) more likely.

Many organisations use conditioning to facilitate conditioned responses, as researched by Robertson and Kassarjian (1991, pp.162-187) and McSweeney and Bierley (1985, pp.301-315). Event managers might use similar strategies with sponsor solicitation to create positive affective responses. By this process, positive, or indeed negative, feelings may be evoked (Peter et al, 1999).

Interestingly, neither of the two theories outlined above specifies the directionality with which image transfer occurs. As the associative network model views a brand as a node in memory including some linked associations, and as this theory assumes it is possible to transfer these associations from one object in mind to another, a transfer of associations from the sponsor to the sponsee is likely to occur. Furthermore, the classical conditioning theory explains how a stimulus acquires new meaning by association with another stimulus. If, for example, a sporting event is repeatedly paired through sponsoring with a brand having strong and favourable associations, the event is likely to evoke the same favourable associations. The
literature discussed shows that a transfer of associations from the sponsor to the event should be possible. This results in the following hypothesis:

H1: If a sponsoring brand is linked to an event through sponsorship, some of the associations with the sponsoring brand will be transferred to the image of the event in people’s minds.

In keeping with the recommendation of Rossiter (2002), we would like to clarify the terminology of ‘image transfer’ and ‘transfer of associations’. It appears that these terms are often used interchangeably (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Meenaghan, 2001; Gwinner, 1997) or without a clear enough distinction between the two. In line with the associative network memory model, one can argue that these two concepts are not the same. Keller (1993, p.3) defines brand image as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory”. So the image of an object contains all of the collected brand associations a person has with that object. If the term ‘image transfer’ is being used, this implies that in the case of a transfer, the image as a whole will be transferred instead of single brand association. A complete or full image transfer is not very likely to occur for two main reasons. First, an image contains many kinds of associations, namely:

1. product-related or non-product-related attributes,
2. functional, experiential or symbolic benefits, and
3. overall brand attitudes (Keller, 1993).

It seems impossible, although not yet proven by research, that sponsorship can cause a transfer of all three kinds of associations at once. Although we acknowledge that extremely effective sponsorship programmes probably do transfer many associations, we doubt that there are many instances of full image transfer. Secondly, the associations can differ in their degree of favourability, strength and uniqueness (Keller, 1993).

Methodology

According to Cornwell et al (2005), there is a need for more experimental research to improve the understanding of processing mechanisms of sponsorship communication. As our research question is not only related to a relationship between two variables but also questions the direction of the influence, a causal research design was selected.

In principle, any respondent group can be used to test a universal theory; however, characteristics of the group chosen are interrelated with the operationalisations of theory variables (Calder et al, 1981). We strived for a homogeneous yet relevant subgroup, and decided upon a student sample. In order to avoid the possibility of Type II errors, we followed Ferber’s (1977) recommendation to employ operationalisations that are relevant for the subject population. We identified snowboarding as a context which for students had significant relevance, interest and participation.

A post-test-only experimental design was utilised, in which we altered the sponsoring brand but kept everything else constant. We prepared two newspaper articles about a fictitious snowboarding event, which were almost identical, differing only in the brand that was mentioned as the key sponsor. Our experiment resembles the approach taken by Gwinner and Eaton (1999). A pre-test among 33 students was conducted in order to identify the most important associations pertaining to a snowboarding event as well as to select the sponsoring brands to be used for creating the contrasting stimuli.

Two brands were selected based on their strong profile and their expected divergent contrasts in terms of elicited associations. The first brand, Quiksilver, is a winter sporting goods manufacturer and likely to have many complementary associations in reference to the event. The second brand, telecommunications provider KPN, was chosen in the belief that it did not have as strong a complementary association fit with the event.

In all, 112 undergraduate business administration students participated in the experiment. The
respondents were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups. We measured the respondents’ associations with the event and with the sponsor by means of the attributes ‘tough’, ‘boring’, ‘sporty’, ‘young’, ‘cosy’, ‘alternative’, ‘formal’, ‘old fashioned’, ‘reliable’ and ‘slow’, because the pre-test revealed these were the relevant associations worth exploring.

**Results**

The statistical analysis utilised multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). There are two reasons for this choice of method. First, MANCOVA’s capability for testing the influence of factors on several metric dependent variables supports a simultaneous assessment of the change in all associations with the event. The experiment-wide error rate is thereby taken into account. Second, MANCOVA allowed us to control for several continuous variables. These included the individual’s involvement with each brand and the perceived fit between the brand and the event.

The MANCOVA showed that the sponsoring brand has a significant effect on associations with the event, $F(10,99)=2.357$, $p=0.015$. Tests of between-subject effects indicated that not all associations with the event are affected. The outcomes are per attribute (in parenthesis, the level of significance, if significant): tough (0.002), boring (0.053), sporty (0.040), young (0.012), cosy (n.s.), alternative (0.067), formal (n.s.), old fashioned (0.011), reliable (n.s.) and slow (0.063).

**Conclusion**

From the empirical study, our central hypothesis could be confirmed: The image of a sponsor has an impact on the image of the sponsee. Thus we established through association transfer that not only can the sponsor’s brands be enhanced or damaged (c.f. Wilson et al, 2004; Wilson et al, 2005; McCracken, 1988) by association, but that the same mechanism works the other way around: The image of a sponsee can be influenced by a sponsorship from a particular sponsor. This finding has important implications both for marketing practice and theory.

Our findings are relevant to sponsees and sponsors. Sponsees must take great care in the recruitment and selection of sponsors. (We acknowledge that this is a luxury most sponsees cannot afford.) It is important for event organisers to understand and use this knowledge of association transfer as an image-building tool in the same way as sponsors do now. Sponsees must also be aware of possible damage to their event image that might be caused by sponsors with bad or dull images. Sponsees need to attract sponsors that supplement their event image strengths and help overcome their event weaknesses. The value of a sponsorship for the sponsee then goes clearly beyond the sponsorship royalty. For all parties, sponsorships can be regarded as a fountain of meaning. Sponsees create meaning through their activities, and sponsors contribute to the strong, favourable and unique associations being built into an event.

Our research has clearly demonstrated that the fountain of meaning is not perpetual but can be harmed by heavy consumption. The latter is the case when a brand with strong but unfavourable associations sponsors an event. Due to the deterioration of the event’s image, the value that the sponsor gets out of the sponsorship diminishes. This can lead to a vicious cycle leading, at worst, to event image degradation and dissolution. Furthermore, sponsorship managers should consider the association transfers from all sponsors to sponsee when deciding upon their own sponsorships. Not only will the sponsee’s image be influenced by the sponsor’s image, but also by the images of possible co-sponsors.

Our contribution resolves doubts about the existence of sponsor to sponsee transfer effects (see, for example, Gwinner, 1997). Although the artificial character of the experiment limits the external validity of the findings, the generalisability is high due to the sound theoretical grounding. Replication would obviously increase the external validity. It would also be most valuable to consider other potential
moderating effects of the association transfer process. For example, the degree of similarity between the sponsor and the event (McDaniel, 1999; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Rifon et al, 2004) and the degree of involvement the consumer has with the sponsor or the event (Meenaghan, 2001). Aaker and Keller (1990) argue that it is likely that the extent to which associations will transfer also depends on the appropriateness of the association and the presence of cues to activate the association. It would be of interest to investigate different cues and creative strategies to identify which format offers the strongest conduit for successful association transfer. Extensive research is needed to investigate these moderating effects conceptually and empirically, in order to identify conditions which facilitate or hamper the transfer of associations. Finally, the role of co-sponsors on consumers' brand experiences is an important issue that also needs to be explored.

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References


Can sponsorships be harmful for events?


‘Give me a stadium and I will fill it’
An analysis of the marketing management of Stade Français Paris rugby club

Keywords
rugby
brand image
increased attendance
growing revenue

Abstract
This paper analyses the marketing strategy, marketing mix and brand development of SF Paris rugby union club, which succeeded in attracting huge crowds (around 75,000 spectators) for several regular season games and in building strong brand equity. Parallels with American professional sports are drawn and differences from other European clubs highlighted. Finally, planning, consistency and in particular innovation are identified as key factors for success in implementation of the club’s marketing strategy.

Executive summary
On 27 February 2007, Stade Français Paris (SF Paris) rugby union club set a new world record of attendance with 79,741 spectators for a regular domestic rugby union game. This record is particularly interesting because the regular home ground of SF Paris has a capacity of 12,000. The reason for the club’s success in filling huge stadiums several times a year is the chairman’s ability to market events and build strong brand equity. Indeed, it is thanks to the chairman, Max Guazzini, that the club has developed an innovative marketing strategy based on the targeting of new ‘temporary’ fans rather than just the traditional ‘devoted’ and ‘fanatical’ fans (Hunt et al, 1999). Essentially, SF Paris has targeted aesthetic and interactive fans who respectively look for the theatrical and emotional dimensions of the sports spectacle.
(Bourgeon & Bouchet, 2001). It has also identified young fans and females – women and girls.

The brand was positioned in opposition to its main rugby union competitors located in the south-west of France and the club has developed a modern, fashionable brand image. Marketing was conducted in accordance within the overall strategy and the segments SF Paris targeted. The club focused on offering highly entertaining games with numerous peripheral elements at very cheap prices (starting from 5 euros), developing the merchandising through innovative replica shirts and extending the brand with innovative merchandise such as cosmetic products.

This strategy has important similarities with American professional sport and is considered innovative when compared to European practices. Indeed, European rugby union clubs, and professional sport clubs in general, concentrate mainly on attracting the best players in order to secure as many victories and trophies as possible. These, in turn, enhance customer loyalty, which then guarantees steady financial income (Morgan, 2002).

Moreover, Harris and Jenkins (2001) highlighted the lack of strategic marketing in English and Welsh rugby union clubs, which favours the reproduction of traditional practices.

The aim of this analysis is not to encourage replication of the SF Paris strategy because it is strongly related to the sports club’s identity. Instead, it is to emphasise the essential role of marketing strategy for professional sports clubs and to encourage innovation in the increasingly competitive professional sport and entertainment sectors, which are, more than ever, being driven by globalisation.

**Background**

On 27 February 2007, Stade Français Paris beat Stade Toulousain 22 to 20 in a game that set a new world record, not for its score but for attendance at the stadium (Jackson, 2007) – 79,741 spectators for a French premier league regular season match constitutes a world record for rugby union and also a French national record for any sport. The reasons why this event is so interesting are based on the context in which it was achieved. This was not the result of a regular on-field success, but a result of the role of marketing in attracting such a crowd. Incidentally, the attendance figure was not a one-off. Since the 2004-05 season, SF Paris has on several occasions succeeded in gaining significantly large crowds through marketing initiatives. Crowds in excess of around 70,000 or 40,000 (depending on the capacity of the stadium) have been achieved regularly. These are exceptional performances considering both the general interest in rugby union in France and that the club’s regular home stadium has only 10,500 seats (Ligue Nationale de Rugby; LNR).

**Objective**

The objective of this paper is to highlight the successful marketing management of SF Paris in attracting big crowds and developing strong brand equity. Obviously, investigating a posteriori the success of a company or a brand is always a difficult exercise because analysts can never be entirely sure about the authenticity of the managerial rationale that leads to success. However, in our case, we think that the marketing strategy that we present was well considered and intentional, mainly because of the personality and the professional background of the chairman of the club, Max Guazzini. This former chairman of a successful private French radio station took over the presidency of Stade Français in 1992 and was the catalyst for the development of the club, indeed some might even say for the overall rejuvenation of French professional rugby.

Therefore, we will present the strategic plans and marketing initiatives SF Paris implemented to build its world record attendance and strong brand equity. Finally, a comparison with other European clubs will be made to show why this case is unique and how it could be replicated.
CASE STUDY

Implementation

Strategic marketing
As stated by Kotler et al (2004), strategic marketing relies on three elements: segmentation, targeting and positioning. Segmentation consists of clustering a market in several homogeneous groups, which are both significant and accessible to marketing activity (Kotler et al, 2004). In the case of SF Paris, the first question concerns which market the club is competing in (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005). Indeed, as with professional sports clubs in general, SF Paris competes in several markets, namely the rugby union market, the professional sports market and finally the broad leisure and entertainment market (Euchner, 1993; Mason, 1999).

As far as the rugby union market is concerned, the intensity of competition can be determined through analysis of different levels of the sport. At the national level, the main competitors for SF Paris are based in the south of France, i.e. the area south of the Loire river, and in south-west France in particular (Boure, 2004; Charlot, 2006). The main rivals, in terms of both field performance and image, are Stade Toulousain, Biarritz Olympique, Clermont-Auvergne and USA Perpignan. SF Paris is the only club geographically situated in the ‘north’, and this partially contributes to the cultural rivalry between the capital and the provinces. The south is considered to be the home of rugby union, and the spirit of rugby is often characterised as a sport of villages or ‘clock towers’, meaning that it is territorially (Boure, 2004; Charlot, 2006) and culturally attached to ‘peasant’ values (Pociello, 1983). At a local level, there is only one other professional club situated in the Paris region, l’Ile de France. Racing-Metro, which along with SF Paris is one of the oldest French sports clubs, plays in the second division with a home ground capacity of 6,500 seats and an average attendance of 1,141 for the regular season 2006-07 (LNR).

In the general professional sports market, SF Paris’s main regional competitor is Paris Saint Germain (PSG) football club, although other team sports such as basketball, handball, volleyball and ice-hockey have at least one first division professional club. However, it is debatable whether they truly compete, given that football and rugby have very different fan profiles.

Finally, as an entertainment activity, we can consider that SF Paris competes in the leisure market and, more specifically, is an alternative choice for Saturday night activities such as theatre, cinema or going out (Euchner, 1993; Mason, 1999).

The principle of segmentation highlights the difference between groups of customers. It does so in order to select which segments fit the company’s product and which are profitable (Kotler et al, 2004). In order to investigate the marketing strategy of SF Paris, it is legitimate to focus on several frameworks that might help us to understand the demand for the sport spectacle, and then which segments were targeted by SF Paris.

Thus, in relation to the sports spectacle, Holt (1995) identified four types of practices which are defined as consumption metaphors. The first one defines consuming-as-experience and highlights the consumer’s subjective and emotional reactions and particularly the experiential, aesthetic, autotelic and hedonic dimensions of consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The second metaphor, consuming-as-integration, describes “how consumers acquire and manipulate object meanings” thanks to their symbolic dimension (Holt, 1995). The third highlights the classification role of consumption in general and the sports spectacle in particular. Finally, consuming-as-play refers to the way consumers use consumption objects to interact, socialise and share common experiences. Although this framework constitutes the first step to understanding what consumers of sports spectacles look for, it did not allow us to create marketing segments, because most spectators use consumption for several meanings. However, Bourgeon & Bouchet (2001) extended the work of Holt (1995), and produced a semiotic square providing four consumer profiles of sports spectacles. The ‘aesthete’ profile characterised customers who look for the quality of the game, the beauty of the
display and the feat of the athletes in relation to the dramatic and theatrical intensity of the spectacle. The ‘interactive’ profile is essentially reactive and refers to the emotional dimensions of the games in relation to what happens both on and off the field. The ‘supporter’ profile describes active and engaged supporting behaviour towards a team. These consumers consider themselves as actors in the spectacle. Last, the ‘opportunist’ profile corresponds to individuals who use the spectacle for utilitarian values such as economic or political interests without involving themselves in the event. Even if these profiles are not mutually exclusive they identify relevant behaviours and attitudes that allow marketers to create segments.

Furthermore, Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001) defined the relationships and the compatibility between the different profiles which are particularly important from a marketing perspective. Indeed, they considered that the aesthete and interactive profiles are complementary, as are the opportunist and supporter profiles. There is a discord between the opportunist and aesthete profile and between the supporter and the interactive profile. Finally, there is a contradiction between the opportunist and the interactive profiles and between the supporter and the aesthete ones.

The authors not only segment the population, they evaluate the degree of compatibility between the different segments with the aim of producing a multiple strategy. However, they failed to provide crossing characteristics such as socio-demographics in order to determine who presents such profiles.

Of a similar theme, but less theoretically grounded, Hunt et al (1999) proposed a classification of sports fans according to their level of attachment to the team, from the ‘temporary’, ‘local’, ‘devoted’ and ‘fanatical’ to the ‘dysfunctional’ fans. This framework suffers from the same shortcomings as Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001), because it cannot put a face to these people. An exception to this is probably dysfunctional fans whose actions, as highlighted in the media, are easily recognised.

In a more pragmatic way, Tapp & Clowes (2002) segmented football fans according to their level of loyalty measured by attendance frequency and by what they termed ‘the product need’, measured by consumption behaviour on the day of the match.

We think that consideration of these different frameworks helps us to better understand the next steps of strategic marketing: targeting and positioning, which respectively rely on the choice of segments and the methods used to compete with others within the selected segments.

The basic segment for professional teams is composed of what Hunt et al (1999) identified as the devoted and the fanatical fans. By definition they are strongly attached to a specific club or sport. In the case of SF Paris, this segment is relatively small. Indeed, we can estimate it to be no more than 10,000 people in the Parisian region considering that the average attendance for SF Paris was 8,385 and 1,141 for Racing-Metro for the 2006-07 season (LNR). Max Guazzini realised that SF Paris had to target other, newer segments.

The first segment, chosen mainly because of its size, relies on what Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001) termed the interactive profile. The club targeted people who want to share, to enjoy and to participate. Essentially they were identified as young, without a good knowledge of the rules or the world of rugby, and as local and temporary fans. This segment was also increasingly made up of women and girls because, as Gantz & Wenner (1991) stated, women are more likely to watch televised sports for companionship and sharing with family and friends. In such cases, the target is represented by the whole family and particularly by the parents, because they are the decision-makers.

Bourgeon and Bouchet’s (2001) work suggests that SF Paris is also segmented on aesthetic lines. Indeed, people with an aesthete profile are attracted by the dramatic and theatrical dimension of the spectacle and present a complementary relationship with the interactive profile. We can also predict that the socio-demographic profile of the two groups is very similar.
However, the aesthete profile also refers to the quality of the game and the beauty of the display, which requires a certain knowledge of the sport. This group, identified as connoisseurs, presents a different profile and is considered to be mainly male. This is based on the fact that only a small proportion of women are involved in French rugby union.

It is for this reason that we think that this segment was not targeted, although the relatively small size of the group might also have a bearing. Moreover, even though the club had highly talented players, SF Paris did not produce the flamboyant style of play seen in competitors such as Toulouse.

Finally, we consider that the last segment, the opportunist profile, was also targeted. Even though this segment is very small and would neither fill a stadium, nor provide significant income, high-profile figures such as politicians or celebrities in this group could arguably increase the level of awareness of the club and affect its image.

Therefore, it is considered that SF Paris employs a multiple targeting strategy, defined as selective specialisation, with a main focus on the interactive segment. The choice of this segmentation strategy might be reinforced by the fact that very few, if any, professional clubs, are targeting these segments.

The first differentiation strategy is linked to both the image of rugby in general and that of the main competitors to SF Paris. As mentioned, the south-west of France represents the bastion of rugby. It is therefore difficult for SF Paris to challenge those competitors on historical/traditional values. The traditional image of rugby is of a grounded sport, with strong, deep provincial, rural and inherited values (Augustin, 1999; Boure, 2004; Charlot, 2006).

The club therefore decided to take the opposite route and to play on the French capital versus province issue, implementing a modern, trendy, young, glamorous and fashionable image (Fraioli, 2005; Maignan, 2006; Perrin, 2007). As far as local competition with other Parisian sports and leisure activities is concerned, the brand is positioned as ‘entertainment’, ‘show’ and of ‘stars and sequins’, which corresponds with the overall image of Paris. In addition, because the club does not target the devoted or fanatical fan segment, it has underlined the ‘young’ and ‘fun’ dimensions of the brand, and is positioned as ‘always family-friendly’.

Marketing mix
The first element to be considered is the initiative run by SF Paris four or five times a year when the club ‘invades’ the Stade de France (the French national stadium) and puts on an unusual and theatrical show. Obviously, this does not happen at every home game at the Jean Bouin stadium, which might be one reason for the success. At normal home games, SF Paris focuses mainly on the core product (rugby) and winning. Very few peripheral elements are included, just cheerleaders and the remote-controlled car that brings the tee on to the pitch for penalty kicks. The overall home attendance for the 2006-07 season was 8,385, and sold-out games were rare.

The second initiative is very interesting because it constitutes the basis upon which SF Paris developed its awareness brand image at a national level. Contrary to normal home games, the core product, i.e. what happens on the pitch, is not the most important element. Obviously it is not unimportant, because
victory is part of the satisfaction package, but it is secondary in the sense that even when the team is defeated, most spectators are satisfied. In line with Bodet & Bernache-Assollant (in press), and because of the characteristics of the spectators, we can consider that the issue of the game, or the performance of SF Paris players, can be either ‘secondary’ or ‘additional’ elements. This means that they might only significantly affect customer satisfaction if the score or the performance is favourable, although they do not produce any dissatisfaction if they are negative. Indeed the marketing strategy, which focuses mainly on interactive spectators comprising families and young people, puts the accent on peripheral elements, which move the simple game of rugby to a great Saturday night show. There is a broad focus on pre-game entertainment with a variety of elements such as BMX freestyle, acrobatic trampolining, basketball slam dunks, canons throwing SF Paris t-shirts on floats, acrobatic dancing, wrestling fights, cheerleaders, acrobatic horse displays, balloon throwing, majorettes, parades of schools of rugby from the Parisian region, biker parades, and Cowboys and Indian parades.

It is noticeable that many elements come from American culture, which is seen as the leading force in such entertainment, and is known as ‘show à l’américain’ in French. It is, therefore, a replication of what happens in North-American sports, illustrated by the Toronto Maple Leafs example described by Richelieu and Pons (2006).

Mini concerts also take place before the kick-off, featuring various artists that are popular with younger audiences, and are also particularly popular with women in their seventies. Such singers fit perfectly with the festive, young, feminine and parental target.

The way in which the ball is brought onto the pitch is also theatrical and has included French cabaret dancers, Miss France hidden in a golden rugby ball and by an angel descending from the sky (the roof of the stadium).

During the game, flags of SF Paris are displayed, traditional or exotic music bands play along to the action on the fields, and Mexican waves are encouraged. After the final whistle there are firework displays. Again, several similarities can be identified with American sports, in particular with the continent’s biggest sporting event, the Super Bowl.

Professional sports clubs also offer products which can be considered as peripheral to the core product of the match. The most important is the match shirt/jersey, for which SF Paris has received praise. Indeed, the first shirt the club developed used its usual colours but the shirts were striped with three forks of lightning. This represented an innovative development in the world of rugby that generally opts for conservative and traditional designs. Red lightning could be interpreted as conveying power and energy (which, incidentally, is the name of the youth radio station, NRJ, that Max Guazzini was chairman of). The image was developed in order to attract a young demographic who were not already fans. Again, parallels can be made with American sport (Lightning is the name of the NHL club of Tampa Bay). However, what made SF Paris famous was the launch of a pink shirt. Indeed, they designed a bright pink shirt with three blue forks of lightning. This colour had never been used for a shirt in French rugby. Moreover it is strongly related to femininity. In the traditional macho world of French rugby, this has had a huge impact, arousing numerous comments and gibe (Charlot, 2006). However, this was done deliberately. Consistent with its positioning, SF Paris had to differentiate itself at a national level from the main French clubs mostly situated in the south west of France, which is characterised by more conservative values. Associating rugby players with feminine symbols was certainly one strategy that highlighted the difference. Obviously, it was also an explicit appeal to women and girls who are usually not interested in rugby. Some said that it was also an appeal to the Parisian gay community, which is supposed to be an opinion-former in consumption trends. This was certainly reinforced by another product, the calendar of ‘Les Dieux du Stade’ (The gods of Stade) which pictured half-naked players in suggestive positions in Greco-Roman style. This calendar was a great success.
Stade Français Paris rugby club

every year (selling around 200,000 copies) and it significantly increased awareness of SF Paris and its players among women. Although the calendar was not well received by many traditional or old-fashioned rugby fans because of the implied reference to homosexuality, it has had great success with an increasingly feminine and young audience (Charlot, 2006). Finally, SF Paris introduced a dark blue shirt covered with pink lilies, which was created in partnership with a fashion designer. It was not only an extravagant and differentiating innovation, but it perfectly matched the image that SF Paris wanted to enhance, and echoed the cultural and stylish reputation of Paris itself.

In 2005, when the club’s contract with Adidas began, the volume of shirts sold rose from 10,000 to 80,000. During the 2006-07 season 180,000 shirts were sold according to the communication manager of Adidas (Perrin, 2007).

Thanks to this brand strength, SF Paris has been able to implement both range and brand extensions. Indeed, the success of the shirts prompted SF Paris to extend the line and to create a range of clothes and accessories showing different elements of the brand, which were more ‘street-wear’ and trendy than traditional sportswear. Finally, the club extended the brand by creating a line of cosmetic products aimed at men carrying the same name as the calendar, and potentially described as ‘metro-sexual’.

Merchandising figures doubled every year from 2004 and represented 17% of overall club turnover in 2007 (Perrin, 2007). Since then the club has made significant investments in merchandising, realising that it was not simply a revenue stream but also helped to develop the brand image. According to Max Guazzini, the secret is that merchandising is innovative and that in doing it, the club has fun (Perrin, 2007).

SF Paris also developed co-branding initiatives with several official sponsors, such as special mobile phones using the colours and elements of the brand such as the pink lily.

The second operational marketing element is price. The overall marketing strategy states that a required condition for a successful game is the quality and size of the crowd. Indeed, it is necessary that for such unusual games, there are a lot of spectators, which guarantees a great atmosphere and a sense of festivity, particularly for interactive spectators. Thus, the price strategy was based on a quick market penetration, with very low prices. For instance, the cheapest tickets for the record-breaking game against Stade Toulousain started at five euros and allowed SF Paris to attract around 70,000 people. The price strategy is also consistent with the type of spectators the club wanted to attract. The main target comprises families, for whom the price is critical. The low prices allow SF Paris to compete directly with other Saturday night leisure activities and position the club as the cheapest option. For spectators who are not usually interested in rugby and do not even know the rules, the low price would induce trial, because the value of the product, as defined in the cost-benefit ratio (Zeithaml, 1988), represents a strong incentive.

The third element of the operational marketing strategy is the venue, where the customers experience the service. With a limited capacity of 12,000, including 10,500 seats (LNR), SF Paris was not able to apply its strategy to its home ground. The club therefore had to find other arenas with a larger capacity in Paris. SF Paris first used the Parc des Princes, the home ground of PSG football club, which is geographically close to its Stade Jean Bouin base. This first game ‘away’ was staged in April 2005 and was a sell-out success (47,428 seats). SF Paris wanted to repeat the exercise but was refused permission by PSG, who were worried about the damage that rugby matches cause to the pitch. SF Paris then considered the Stade de France, which has twice as many seats and no regular resident. The Stade de France, the biggest stadium in France, has very good transport links, especially via the underground. This is very important when targeting spectators with a low level of involvement with the consumption object (i.e. the club). Moreover, the Stade de France also benefits from a strong positive image because it is associated with the 1998 FIFA World Cup.
World Cup victory and the ensuing celebrations. As a multi-purpose facility, it has also hosted numerous major shows such as operas and rock concerts, which tend to reinforce the psychological association with entertainment and festivity.

Apart from the aggressive price strategy, another key success factor is the broad network of sales points. This includes retail outlets, such as multimedia stores that appeal to younger demographic groups, and supermarkets, which are strategic points to meet familial target groups. Moreover, tickets were offered through websites that usually concentrated on non-sports-related events.

The fourth and final element, which SF Paris put a great deal of effort into was promotion. The evidence suggests that SF Paris, and particularly chairman Max Guazzini, was determined to move the club from the restrictive world of rugby and give it a much broader appeal as part of the overall entertainment sector. For example, club players were frequently invited to appear on non-sports-related TV shows and the club launched several different musical ‘anthems’, which were broadcasted on radio stations.

Another aspect of brand promotion concerns what Bourgeon and Bouchet (2001) define as the ‘opportunist profile’. SF Paris certainly mirrored such activity through picking such celebrities as former model Naomi Campbell and Madonna as the club’s ambassadors. The initiative increased brand awareness and enhanced the trendy, popular and ‘show-biz’ aspects of the club. The club also worked to develop other key public relationships, evidence of which is the link the club implemented with the mayor of Paris.

Finally, the advertising treatment was also very creative, with adverts for special games having more in common with American blockbuster posters than a professional rugby game.

All of the promotional communication channels therefore focused on the spectacle and entertainment aspects of the event and were designed to appeal to the targeted segments.

Comparative analysis
A major difference between other French or, indeed, British rugby clubs is that SF Paris considered that the demand, rugby was elastic and would grow significantly as a result of a relevant marketing management strategy. Until recently, clubs only considered the devoted or fanatical segments as suitable targets. Their strategy, in those cases where plans have been made (Harris & Jenkins, 2001), is focused on sporting success with the core being rugby. Such a strategy can increase customer loyalty and revenues, which in turn helps to maintain the sports-based strategy by further investing in high-quality players.

Morgan (2002) illustrated this model using the example of Bath. Rugby union clubs try to recruit the best players from around in the world, to offer a structured season with regular home games and to have their international stars available in order to satisfy investors. As far as the expectations of spectators and television viewers are concerned, the primary focus is on the uncertainly of the outcome, the significance of the game and the identification with the success (Morgan, 2002). We could argue that the first and third such expectations are contradictory, unless uncertainty concerns only the extent of the victory. This strategy is not wrong and has been applied with success to numerous clubs such as Leicester Tigers or Stade Toulousain (Fraioli, 2005). It is certainly justified when clubs have sporting success and attract high attendances. However, there is a question as to whether the strategy works for clubs that are not performing well, or if, when they do, they still fail to attract bigger crowds. We would argue that the strategy is not suitable for such clubs.

With regards to the commercial, marketing and business strategic plan of rugby union, it appears that the Rugby Football Union (RFU), and English rugby clubs by extension, tend to be positioned “towards up-scale men” (p.95), where “new participants are more likely to be interested if they are introduced to the game through a sympathetic third party and as a
result, have had the complex rules and strategies of the game simplified in order to make the game enjoyable” (p.100). This view seems to be confirmed by the Rugby Conduct survey (2002), which found that rugby union spectators are essentially male (82%), middle-aged (more than 50% are over 45), familiar to the sport (almost all participants) and have a good understanding of the rules.

The relevance of such targeting is directly linked to match attendance figures and the level of financial income. If clubs still struggle to fill their stadia or increase revenues, why not implement a new marketing strategy? Why not target different segments such as women, children, the middle classes and ethnic minorities?

There are not many examples of such an approach in rugby, or indeed even in football, and we can highlight just a few ad hoc initiatives that do not correspond to a pre-determined strategy. One example is that of Athletic Bilbao football club, which explicitly targets regional Basque spectators by fielding only Basque players in the team (Castillo, 2007). The club has not been very successful on the field, finishing 17th (out of 20) in the Spanish first division in the 2006-07 season. It does, however, have a high attendance level, which was approximately 85% of capacity for home games during that season (Liga de Fútbol Profesional).

However, even though SF Paris appears to be a unique case, it has pioneered a method which others have begun to follow. For example, following the success of SF Paris games at the Stade de France, several French rugby union clubs organised important games, such as the quarter-finals of the Heineken Cup, in other stadiums with large capacities. Biarritz Olympique crossed the border to play in Real Sociedad football club’s Stade Anoeta in San Sebastian, Spain. Bourgoin-Jallieu has played in St Etienne and even Geneva (Switzerland), and USA Perpignan is attempting to play in a stadium in Barcelona (Spain).

We note that neither Spain nor Switzerland are rugby-playing countries but this does not seem to be an obstacle to filling stadiums. The clubs have realised that if they can get a very big stadium, they can occasionally fill it; the title of this paper is, therefore, apposite.

Finally, we can consider that European rugby and football clubs are beginning to embark on marketing strategies that can be associated with an Americanisation of the approach to sports spectators. This is illustrated in the paper’s title, and can be summarised in the following words: sport marketers have to consider their customer demand as elastic. Obviously some professional clubs, particularly those in football, are still a long way from such a position partly because of their sporting success and the size of the demand, as illustrated by Barcelona FC (Richelieu & Pons, 2006). But the SF Paris case study demonstrates that there is a significant incentive for sports clubs that are not particularly successful or popular to be innovative. The recent arrival of American sports such as NFL in Europe might also affect the way sports marketing is viewed by European professional sports, as US sports are now targeting European fans (Blitz, 2007).

**Conclusion**

The rationale for this case study was justified by three elements, which appear to be the main success factors for SF Paris. The first is the fact that strategic marketing often seems to be neglected, especially when compared to operational initiatives. This case study clearly demonstrates that SF Paris’s marketing operations appear to be driven by a pre-determined and intentional strategy. The second factor relies on the consistency of the marketing management, and the third concerns the level of innovation and the willingness to change common habits and approaches to business.

Indeed, the success that SF Paris has had in filling large stadiums and building strong brand equity might be because the chairman and club managers did not see the idiosyncrasies and traditions of rugby as insurmountable barriers. Obviously, as Richelieu and
Pons (2005) noted, some might not agree with such a marketing strategy, and our goal is not to say that every professional club should replicate it. It depends on the identity of the sports organisation and the potential demand. Through this case study, we wanted to highlight the fact that the marketing strategy was successful because it was well thought-out, consistent, innovative and in accordance with, or determined by, the identity of the club.

For SF Paris, the major issue now is developing spectator loyalty and transforming casual spectators into fans with an increased club identification level. This is because such developments have been found to generate numerous favourable outcomes for the club (Wann, 2006). So far, there is no evidence to make us conclude that such a transformation is happening. However, we do not consider it as a major shortcoming. Indeed, the aim of SF Paris is not to provide a major show at every home game. This would over-supply the product and spoil the uniqueness and its extraordinary quality. Through limiting supply, there is no reason to think that future extravaganzas would not be successful. The strategy should, therefore, guarantee strong and steady financial income through these major events and the overall brand management, which will in turn enable the club to invest in the core product, talented players or staff.

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Biographies

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The Journal welcomes the submission of academic and practitioner research papers, articles, case studies, interviews and book reviews. Submissions should aim to educate and inform and should ideally focus on a specific area that is pertinent to the subject matter of the Journal, as detailed below. In all instances, the editorial team seeks to publish submissions that clearly add value to theory and/or practice in sports marketing and sponsorship.

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The mission of the Journal is to bring together academics and practitioners in one forum, with the intent of furthering knowledge and understanding of sports marketing and sponsorship. The Journal interprets sports marketing and sponsorship broadly, to include:

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- leagues and competitions
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- sponsors and properties
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We encourage submissions from a wide variety of perspectives, including marketing, all areas of management, economics, politics, history, sociology, psychology, cultural studies and anthropology.

All articles should be written primarily to inform academics and practitioners directly or indirectly involved in the sports marketing and/or sponsorship industries. Articles that detail results of original work are accorded high priority. The Journal also invites reports on new or revised business techniques, perspectives on contemporary issues and results of surveys.

Case studies and reviews of books and/or reports are welcomed. For these, we request that copies of the book/report be sent to the Editor and to the Publisher.

Research articles should be well grounded conceptually and theoretically, and methodologically sound. Qualitative and quantitative pieces of research are equally appropriate.

The Editor is willing to discuss and advise on proposed projects. This is no guarantee of publication.

Submissions are double-blind peer reviewed according to the following general criteria:

- clarity and content of the abstract
- problem or issue definition and justification
- relevance and rigour of literature review
- credibility, appropriateness and relevance of research methodology and in the reporting of results
- quality and relevance of conclusions and recommendations
- value added by the submission to academic and practitioner understanding of sports marketing.

Format and style

Research articles should normally be no less than 4,000 and no more than 8,000 words.
Case studies of no less than 2,500 and no more than 5,000 words should be objective rather than promotional and should follow the following format: Background / Objectives / Implementation / Results / Conclusion. Interviews are welcomed, but should be discussed with the Editor. Book reviews should normally be less than 1,500 words.

Each article submitted for consideration should include an executive summary of up to 500 words, which gives a flavour of the article and includes the rationale for the study, methods used, key findings, conclusions and value added. A shorter abstract, of no more than 100 words, must also be included.
Footnotes and endnotes may be used but only where appropriate and as sparingly as possible.
Tables, charts, diagrams and figures should be in black and white and placed on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Where data or image files have been imported into Word for tables, diagrams etc., please supply the original files. Authors must indicate in the main body of the text approximately where each table, chart, diagram or figure should appear.

Jargon should be kept to a minimum, with technical language and acronyms always clearly defined.

The accuracy of references is the responsibility of the author(s). Authors should refer to the Journal for style or use the Harvard system of referencing found at: http://library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/harvard.pdf

Submissions format

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For more specific style questions, please consult either a recent edition of the Journal or the Editor.

Submissions protocol

Submissions should be sent as Word documents by email directly to the Editor. If this is not possible, three copies of the manuscript should be sent by regular mail with a copy on CD (preferably) or computer disc.

Authors should submit their manuscripts with a covering letter. Receipt of submissions is no guarantee of publication. Submission of a paper to the Journal implies agreement of the author(s) that copyright rests with International Marketing Reports Ltd if and when a paper is published. The copyright covers exclusive rights to reproduce and distribute the paper.

The Journal will not accept submissions under review with other publications. If the manuscript is previously published or copyrighted elsewhere, specific permission must be obtained from the Publisher before submission and the Editor of the Journal must be informed.

All research papers submitted will be double-blind peer reviewed. Authors will normally receive an assessment from the reviewers within six to 12 weeks.

The Publisher reserves the right to sub edit submissions for accuracy and consistency of style.

Based upon reviewer comments, the Editor will make one of four decisions:
● that the submission should be accepted for publication without amendments
● that the submission should be accepted for publication subject to minor amendments
● that the submission should be returned to the author(s) with recommendations for major changes before publication is considered again
● that the submission should be rejected.

Submissions accepted for publication will normally be scheduled to appear within 12 months of the author receiving written confirmation of acceptance from the Editor. Rejected manuscripts will not be returned.

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