

The Transfer of Sports Values to Sponsor Brands

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Abstract

Sport is becoming an activity of increasing importance in both developed and developing countries: over time more people participate in sport (active sport consumption), more time is spent watching sport (passive sport consumption) (Konning, 2009). In fact and despite economic recession and shrinkage of marketing budgets, worldwide sponsorship spending in 2009 is estimated at 44,8bn US\$ what represents an increase of 3,9% vs previous year (IEG, 2010).

Companies associate their brand to sport events through sponsorship as sports sponsorship is an effective strategy for companies to communicate with consumers. Increasing importance of sponsorship is due to the difficulty to reach key segments of the consumer markets through traditional media approach. The massive audiences of major global events and properties like Olympics, World Cup, NBA, and Formula 1 can cross the media clutter and enable brands to communicate through sponsorship.

Effectiveness of sponsorship, is measured as the ability to increase brand awareness and to establish, strengthen or change brand image (Cornwell and Maignan, 98; Gwinner, 97, Crowley 91; Cornwell et al, 2001). Past research has examined the effectiveness of these awareness building strategies but far less attention has been paid on brand image issues (Gwinner and Eaton, 99). There are some academic research examining whether the image of the sponsored events is transferred to the sponsor and what moderator variables could influence this transfer (Olson, 2010; Gwinner and Eaton, 99; Chavanat, Martinet and Ferrand; 2009). There is also some research about how goodwill varies depending on the type of sponsorship (Meenaghan and Shipley 99), but there is little research about whether *sport values* are actually transferred to the *sponsor* in the case of sport events.

Not all sport events are associated as strongly to sport values. Some sport events are becoming more an entertainment spectacle and others are just not so clearly associated to sport. If we think about Table tennis, Formula 1, Soccer, Swimming, Fencing or Cycling, it is clear that all of them are sports but, do all of them transfer sport values to the sponsors or just a specific event image?

The purpose of this paper is first, to analyze whether there is any transfer of sport values from sport events to the sponsor. In further research we will investigate whether this transfer works the same way in all sport sponsorship contexts and what individual variables, product category and type of event factors could moderate this transfer of values.