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Routledge Handbook of Sports Marketing

Simon Chadwick, Nicolas Chanavat, Michel Desbordes

Sports Sponsorship Decision Model

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315742021.ch8>

Barbara M. B. Sá, Victor Manoel Cunha de Almeida

Published online on: 15 Dec 2015

How to cite :- Barbara M. B. Sá, Victor Manoel Cunha de Almeida. 15 Dec 2015 ,*Sports Sponsorship Decision Model from: Routledge Handbook of Sports Marketing* Routledge.

Accessed on: 18 Nov 2016

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315742021.ch8>

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SPORTS SPONSORSHIP DECISION MODEL

A conceptual model proposition

Barbara M. B. Sá and Victor Manoel Cunha de Almeida

Introduction

Professional sports have gained recognition in the corporate environment as an extremely lucrative market that attracts investments and provides countless opportunities for enterprise (Shannon, 1999). By the end of 2014, it was estimated that the global sports market will have grossed more than \$140 billion (PwC, 2011). Most sponsorship investment has been directed towards sports, which already accounts for 70% of this type of investment in the USA (International Events Group, 2014). It is estimated that the 2014 FIFA World Cup earned \$1.4 billion from sponsorship deals, with more than 20 global enterprises choosing to link their brands to the most important football (soccer) event in the world (Valim, 2014).

As with the Rio 2007 Pan American Games, many companies were attracted by opportunities to associate their brands with sports in Brazil (Ramiro, 2007). According to Rosa (2009), it is expected that the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio will lead to a 40–50% increase in investments in marketing in Brazil and the country should obtain more than \$800 million exclusively from sponsorship deals of these events.

There are many options for companies that wish to develop ties with sports through sponsorship, but executives should think strategically to evaluate the opportunities and select those that have the greatest potential to help them achieve their desired goals (Farrelly, Quester and Greyser, 2005). However, the lack of knowledge regarding the best way of investing in sports marketing often leads companies to begin a process marked by frustrated attempts or unexpected successes in the development of their sponsorship strategies (Davies and Tsiantas, 2008).

The literature abounds with studies that separately analyse the different elements of a sports sponsorship decision-making process: the strategic decision to invest in sports (Fullerton and Merz, 2008; Mason, 2005; Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou and Dounis, 2008); the objectives of sports sponsorship (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998); different types of sports sponsorship activation (Fullerton and Merz, 2008; Miloch and Lambrecht, 2006); measuring the results of this type investment (Davies and Tsiantas, 2008; Lagae, 2005); and evaluation models to select sponsorship opportunity (Copeland, Frisby and McCarville, 1996;

McCook, Turco and Riley, 1997). When it comes to the creation of a portfolio of sponsorships, it is suggested that managers should also take into consideration the interactive system that is built by the multiple properties (Chanavat, Martinent and Ferrand, 2010), because the fit of sponsored properties helps create a brand showing consistency and clarity (Chien, Cornwell and Pappu, 2011).

Some of the authors mentioned highlight gaps in this field of research and suggest that new studies should be developed in order to: (a) increase knowledge of the process involved in acquiring this type of investment (Arthur, Scott and Woods, 1997); (b) investigate the dynamics of the sponsorship process (Copeland, Frisby and McCarville, 1996); (c) lead advances in the understanding of sponsorship processes (Meenaghan, 2001); (d) enable comparisons to be made between sponsorship practices and effects (Walliser, 2003); and (e) verify the effectiveness of alternative strategies to leverage or activate sponsorship (Speed and Thompson, 2008).

Although many studies have been developed in recent years, none of them analyse these issues in the integrated fashion that would make it possible to establish a clear connection between motivation, selection, activation and measurement of the results of sports sponsorship. This chapter intends to contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the sports sponsorship by investigating the phenomenon from the sponsors' perspective. The aim is to understand the decision-making process by gaining a greater understanding of a company's motivations for making the investment, identifying how opportunities are selected, how activation actions are planned and executed and how sports sponsorship results are measured.

Theoretical references

Sports sponsorship consists of a set of activities linked to a communication process that uses the marketing of sports and the lifestyle associated with it to transmit messages to a specific target audience (Mullin, Hardy and Sutton, 2004). It constitutes an association with sports established as an alliance that provides strategic partners with opportunities to add actions to the marketing mix and thus get better marketing activity results (Morgan and Summers, 2005).

Objectives of sports sponsorship

It is essential that companies clearly define what they aim to achieve with sponsorship in order to obtain the best return (Lee and Ross, 2012). In a typical sports sponsorship partnership, the sponsor provides resources in the form of funds, products or services in exchange for an association with an element that is external to the company and which offers promotional opportunities to enhance the value of its brand from the customers' perspective (O'Reilly and Madill, 2007; Pichot, Tribou and O'Reilly, 2008).

Attempting to achieve a broad understanding of what companies expect from sports sponsorship, this study classifies the objectives identified in the literature into six groups: (1) corporate objectives, such as return on investment (Koo, Quarterman and Flynn, 2006), conquering markets (Davies and Tsiantas, 2008), developing new business (Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992), increasing sales and undertaking competitive actions (Cornwell, Pruitt and Clark, 2005; Davies and Tsiantas, 2008); (2) brand objectives, such as improving corporate brand image (Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992), company or brand awareness and product or brand positioning (Cornwell, Pruitt and Clark, 2005; Davies and Tsiantas, 2008); (3) product objectives, such as product development, testing and launch (Barrand, 2005; Davies and

Tsiantas, 2008; Rines, 2000); (4) audience objectives, such as consumer perception towards the brand (Cornwell, Pruitt and Clark, 2005), customer satisfaction and loyalty, and recognition of the company as a sponsor (Davies and Tsiantas, 2008; Gwinner and Swanson, 2003); (5) relationship objectives, such as involvement with the community (Meenaghan, 1983), hospitality or development of a closer ties with employees (Cornwell, Pruitt and Clark, 2005; Davies and Tsiantas, 2008), and also media exposure or reaching opinion formers (Copeland, Frisby and McCarville, 1996); and (6) executives' personal objectives (Meenaghan, 1983).

Sponsorship selection: sports modality, type of sponsorship and sports property

Sponsors have become more selective in their choice of sports sponsorship, not only due to the increase in the amount invested in sports in recent years, but also to the number of proposals that appear on a daily basis (Lardinoit and Derbaix, 2001; Walliser, 2003). Establishing realistic objectives and choosing activities carefully can enable the company to maximise the results of a sponsorship (Davies and Tsiantas, 2008). The choice of sports sponsorship should be based on a rational decision using selected criteria (Meenaghan, 1983) and set out in a detailed plan included in the marketing communication, encompassing the selection of the type of sponsorship, the execution of the action, its integration with marketing communication and the measurement of the effects of sponsorship communication (Lagae, 2005).

The similarities between each sponsorship in a portfolio affect brand meaning and clarity (Chien, Cornwell and Pappu, 2011) and the existent interaction between sponsors and sponsored properties can influence brands' cognitive and affective dimensions (Chanavat, Martinent and Ferrand, 2009). Also, a sponsor–sponsee partnership that seems incongruent might not have a positive influence on a customer's behavioural and emotional responses to the brand (Nickell, Cornwell and Johnston, 2011). Companies should take into account the characteristics of the sports modality before taking the decision to sponsor (Lagae, 2005). This is the best way of identifying whether there is a fit between the sport's potential reach and the company's area of interest, and whether the audience that follows the sports intersect the company's target audience. Each sports modality affects consumers' emotions in different ways (Wann et al., 2008) and affects evaluations regarding the sponsoring company's endorsement of its products (Martin, 1996). Sponsors should select the opportunities that will better represent the image their companies desire to have (Ensor, 1987).

Another factor companies should consider is the type of sports sponsorship in which they wish to invest. Eight types of sports sponsorship were identified in the studies investigated: (1) sponsorship of sports teams; (2) individual sponsorship and endorsement of sports celebrities; (3) sponsorship of sports organizations or entities; (4) sponsorship of sports events; (5) sponsorship of sports facilities; (6) sponsorship of sports transmissions; (7) sponsorship of technologies; and (8) licensing (Fullerton and Merz, 2008; Lagae, 2005; Rines, 2000). Although there are many options for investment in sports, it is not always easy to make a choice and it is necessary to assess the opportunities and risks associated with each alternative to be certain that the company's objectives will be achieved (Rines, 2000). Selection should be made carefully, as a sponsee's image can be transferred to the sponsor (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998); also, multiple sponsorship interactions have the power to affect the brand image (Chanavat, Martinent and Ferrand, 2010). Knowing that each type of sponsorship requires a different investment, companies should question whether it is better to bet on a single type of sports sponsorship or on a combination of actions (Lardinoit and Derbaix, 2001).

Selecting the sports property is an important task when a company chooses sports sponsorship as a way of achieving internal or external marketing objectives (Pichot, Tribou and O'Reilly, 2008). Sports property is the term used to describe organizations, events or athletes sponsored by companies as part of their marketing strategies (Farrelly, Quester and Greysier, 2005: p. 341). Sports can provide various properties, such as teams, competitions, individuals, events or static advertising. It is precisely through a sports property that sports sponsorship occurs (Rines, 2000). A sports property can also be a major event, celebrity, entity, a developing athlete or even an event that is still unknown (Amis, Pant and Slack, 1997).

As sponsors wish to create involvement with an appropriate sports property (Madrigal, 2000), the professionals involved in selection should observe whether there is a clear fit between the company's image and marketing strategy, and the characteristics of the property being sponsored (Ensor, 1987). Various authors highlight the need for strategic decisions in the selection of the best property in order to achieve the company's aims (Farrelly, Quester and Greysier, 2005; Meenaghan, 1998). To better select a sports property, all available options should be carefully considered before taking a decision so that the choice contributes to ensuring that the company is able to achieve the objectives proposed with the sports sponsorship action, and consequently, that investments in sports are not seen as being costly and yielding disappointing returns (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou and Dounis, 2008).

Activation of sports sponsorship

Activation is defined as a set of strategic initiatives adopted by companies to position themselves in sports marketing (Fullerton and Merz, 2008). The term is also used to describe the activity developed through actions that exploit the property's potential to achieve specific marketing objectives. Activation contributes to the formation of a link between sponsor, sponsee, customer and sales (Rines, 2000).

The growing number of sponsors and the demand for companies' more effective financial controls has forced companies to imagine more creative and innovative solutions for the activation of their sports sponsorships (Miloch and Lambrecht, 2006). An activation strategy requires communication that clearly publicizes the association between sponsor, sponsee and a specific audience (Westerbeek and Smith, 2002).

Activation is able to influence a brand's recognition and recall rates as well as increase an event's level of familiarity. The recognition of sponsoring companies that activate their sports sponsorships can be as much as twice as those that do not (Miloch and Lambrecht, 2006). The disciplines typically used for activation of sports sponsorship are: the brand, promotions, hospitality, merchandising, relationship marketing and advertising (Rines, 2000), development of B2B strategies, internal communication, internet agreements and greater public relations efforts (Miloch and Lambrecht, 2006).

Measurement of sports sponsorship

Walliser (2003) explains that the evaluation of the results of investments in different types of sports sponsorship has constituted an important issue for marketing professionals who, due to the increasing cost of sports sponsorships, have been questioning the effectiveness of their actions (Lardinois and Derbaix, 2001).

The measurement of sponsorship is a complex activity (Lagae, 2005) and is usually performed using models and scales developed for other forms of advertising. From the consumers' perspective, this assessment is normally performed in terms of the levels of

recognition achieved, attitudes created or altered, brand recall, whether it is instantaneous or not, and level of press coverage (Bennett, 1999). Some measures used by companies to assess the impacts of sports sponsorship on consumers are: public awareness; change of attitude in relation to the brand's image, undertaken comparatively before and after the execution of the action; measures of affinity, evaluated in market research; and evaluation of the impact on sales, purchase intention and loyalty (Meenaghan, 2005). Despite academic efforts to develop more precise evaluation measures, the tests of association and recognition that have been proposed are merely superficial measures of the impacts of sponsorship that do not contribute to a better understanding of the ways consumers involve themselves in sports (Meenaghan, 2001).

Conceptual model

The Sports Sponsorship Decision Model (SSDM) proposed in this study (see Figure 8.1) was developed using the theoretical references to serve as the conceptual framework for the analysis. According to the SSDM, a company interested in investing in sports sponsorship should establish clear objectives that serve as a basis for the sponsorship selection decision, which can begin with the choice of (1) sports modalities or (2) types of sponsorship aligned with established objectives. The company should consider the opportunities and restrictions that occur when trying to match (3) sports modalities and types of sponsorship, given that not all sports modalities provide opportunities for all types of sponsorship and vice versa. Once the sports modalities and types of sponsorship have been defined, the company should select sports properties, the concrete locus of the sports sponsorship action. Once again, the nature of the sports property (4) should be aligned with the company's objectives. The company should also consider the restrictions between (5) sports properties and sports modalities and between (6) types of sponsorship and sports properties. The company should then decide on sponsorship activation actions to fully exploit the sports property's potential. These actions should be aligned with the opportunities and restrictions that result (4') from the nature of the sports property, (5') the sports modality and (6') the type of sponsorship.

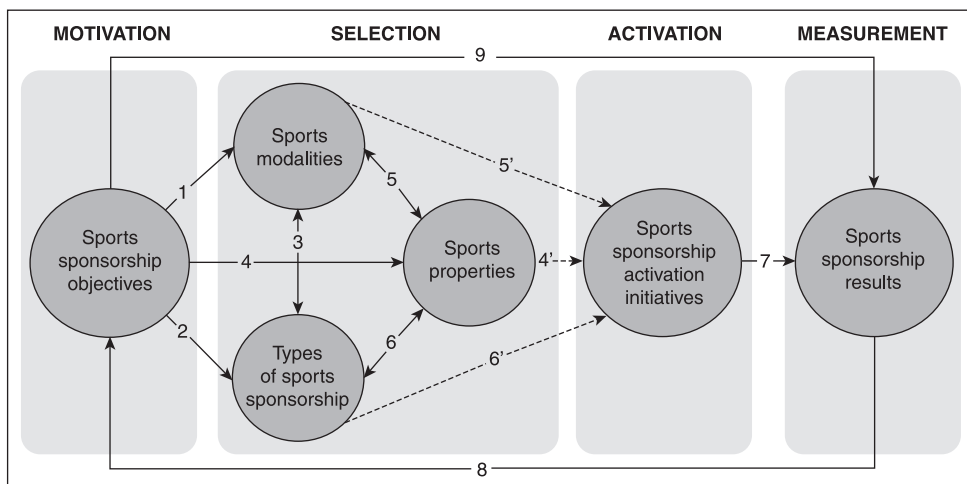


Figure 8.1 Sports Sponsorship Decision Model (SSDM)

The next step is to decide on the indicators that will be used to measure the results of the sponsorship, considering (7) the results expected from sponsorship activation actions and (8) the objectives initially defined. Finally, the company should use the results as a tool to refine (9) the objectives to be achieved through sports sponsorship.

Methodology

This chapter aims to contribute to the expansion of knowledge in the sports marketing area, more specifically regarding the theme of sports sponsorship, by investigating the phenomenon from the sponsors' perspective. The main objective is to understand the sports sponsorship decision-making process by analysing companies' motivations for making these investments, identifying how opportunities are selected, how activation actions are planned and executed and how the results of sports sponsorship are measured.

We decided to use the case analysis method to conduct the investigation. "Case study" can be defined as a description of a managerial situation (Bonoma, 1985) usually conducted when the researcher intends to obtain a better understanding of a given theme (Eisenhardt, 1989) typically by deeply analysing a restricted number of situations (Campomar, 1991) in the real context where they happen (Yin, 2001: p. 19). To achieve the aim of this research, the following four research questions were proposed:

- 1 What motives lead companies to become involved with sports and what objectives do they expect to achieve by investing in sports sponsorship?
- 2 How do companies select sports sponsorship opportunities and what criteria do they use to choose those they wish to become involved in?
- 3 How does the activation of sports sponsorship occur?
- 4 What are the indicators used by companies to measure the results of sports sponsorship?

Due to the nature of these questions, we conducted an exploratory study and developed it in two stages. During the first one, in-depth interviews were performed with eight sports sponsorship specialists, professionals who had worked in sports agencies as mediators of the relationship between sponsors and sponsees. The aim of these interviews was to acquire deeper knowledge of the phenomenon investigated as well as verify the adequateness of the semi-structured interview guide for the subsequent interviews with sponsors in order to perform an external triangulation of the information collected from the informants. In addition, complementary information regarding each sponsoring company was researched in secondary sources, reinforcing the validity of the study through external triangulation (Bonoma, 1985).

After the first round of investigation, we conducted another set of in-depth interviews with six executives in charge of the sports sponsorship areas from their companies. These executives represent a total of four companies selected for the purpose of this study, based on the criteria that, together, they embrace most types of sponsorships identified in literature. Petrobras is one of the biggest oil companies in the world and has been investing in sports since the 1980s. It has sponsorship agreements encompassing different sports, events, and entities, among others. Ipiranga is also an oil company that invests in athletes, teams, and events, mostly in race sports. Unimed-Rio is a medical insurance enterprise that chooses to sponsor athletes from different disciplines and supported one of the most well-known soccer teams in the country for 15 years. Finally, Olympikus – a big Brazilian sporting goods company – has licensing agreements, and was also the technological supplier of sports equipment to athletes, teams and sports organizations.

The analysis was performed using the critical realism approach. This approach holds that the existence of reality depends on our perception of what is real and that the analysis of this reality is only possible by understanding the cause and effect relations that exist in what is observed. By using this approach, researchers are able to reinforce the degree of analytical generalization of their findings and the ability to replicate them (Welch et al., 2011).

In order to apply the proposed method, first, a case-by-case analysis was performed to identify patterns. Second, the cases were compared to search for similarities and divergences in each of the categories of analysis: (a) objectives of sports sponsorship; (b) selection of sports sponsorship; (c) activation of sports sponsorship; (d) measurement of the results of sports sponsorship.

Discussion of results

What motives lead companies to become involved with sports and what objectives do they expect to achieve by investing in sports sponsorship?

The analysis of the four cases investigated suggests that companies that sponsor sports do so for different reasons: corporate or business, brand, product and relationship objectives, or to take advantage of tax breaks and even for personal reasons and also to link the company to a property with a high level of visibility, credit and success. The interviewees highlighted increased sales and brand visibility as important objectives for sponsors, as had been mentioned by previous researchers (Cornwell, Pruitt and Clark, 2005; Davies and Tsiantas, 2008). Their main aim is to conquer space in Brazil's most significant media groups, especially on television. The interviewed executives believe that sports sponsorship creates closer ties between the brand and customers by enabling corporate hospitality (CH) opportunities to interact with strategic customers as well as providing sales opportunities in stands set up at sports events or even in the points of sale, which can be used to undertake actions that communicate the company's involvement with sports, thus attracting more customers.

Other objectives observed were the expansion of existing business, as observed by Davies and Tsiantas (2008) and the development of new business (Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992). Companies attribute part of their success in closing deals with investors and in their strategies to conquer new markets to sports sponsorship. Objectives linked to the personal interests of executives as highlighted by Meenaghan (1983) as well as relationship actions with different interest groups also appeared in the interviews.

A particular characteristic of the Brazilian market also emerged from the interviews. Since the promulgation of the Federal Sport Incentive Act in the year 2000, Brazilian companies can use 1% of taxes owed to sponsor projects approved by the Ministry of Sport. Tax breaks have encouraged the development of sports sponsorship actions but the companies investigated in the study were still organizing themselves to use these benefits in their relations with sports while awaiting the outcome of ongoing adaptations to the law. Table 8.1 summarizes the study's main findings and relates them to the objectives identified in the literature.

How do companies select sports sponsorship opportunities and what criteria do they use to choose those they wish to become involved with?

Some of the companies investigated have a specific area responsible for sports matters. These sectors manage the strategies, execution and measurement of the results of sports sponsorships undertaken. In various cases investigated these sectors with decision-making powers are

Table 8.1 Sports sponsorship objectives

<i>Categories of Analysis</i>	<i>Olympikus</i>	<i>Unimed-Rio</i>	<i>Petrobras</i>	<i>Ipiranga</i>
<p>Corporate: increase sales, increase ROI and conquer new markets.</p> <p>Brand: improve brand knowledge, awareness and image, change the public's perception of the company and its products.</p>	<p>Increase sales. Guarantee the company's ROI. Consolidate the company's position in Latin America.</p> <p>Increase brand knowledge and awareness with more visibility and exposure. Position itself and be recognized as a brand of quality products and Brazilian sports brand. Endorse the quality of products winning consumers' trust and improving the brand's image.</p>	<p>Increase sales of health plans.</p> <p>Increase knowledge and awareness of the brand in the domestic and Brazilian market. Reinforce the positioning of health and wellbeing through association with sports.</p>	<p>Increase sales incentivized by promotions linked to sports. Consolidate the company's position in Latin America.</p> <p>Increase brand knowledge and awareness in new markets. Position itself as a brand with high-performance and technological products and a Brazilian company that invests in the development of Brazilian sports. Endorse the quality of products winning consumers' trust and improving the brand's image.</p>	<p>Draw more consumers to the stations to consume Ipiranga's products and services.</p> <p>Increase visibility of the brand, gaining more knowledge. Position itself as a brand with high-performance and technological products and reinforce the message of "In love with cars like all Brazilians". Endorse the quality of products winning consumers' trust and improving the brand's image.</p>
Product	Develop products with sponsees.	Not observed.	Develop, test and improve products jointly with sponsees.	Develop, test and improve products jointly with sponsees.
Relationship with strategic customers, opinion formers, the community and collaborators.	Not observed.	Develop a relationship with strategic customers in CH and with collaborators with the presence of the athletes in the company.	Develop a relationship with strategic customers in CH. Develop close ties with opinion formers and in surfing events.	Develop a relationship with strategic customers in CH. Facilitate the integration of new retailers by maintaining the sponsorship that was formerly Texaco's.
Personal	Not observed.	Not observed.	Not observed.	Some retailers may have personal reasons for sponsorship.

composed of one person or a small group of people. Companies' sports sponsorship strategies also vary from case to case. Most companies plan their actions, whether they involve initiating a new relation or renewing an existing contract, around one year in advance. In most cases it is the individual or entity seeking sponsorship that approaches the companies to request a sponsorship, as observed in previous studies (Lardinois and Derbaix, 2001; Walliser, 2003), but the opposite can also occur when companies see an opportunity to link their brand to a sports property.

The study revealed that only Petrobras employs specific software to support managers in the sports sponsorship decision-making process. The other companies were unaware of the existence of any kind of software that could help them take decisions related to sports sponsorship. In the cases investigated, no signs were found of an ideal set of evaluation criteria for the selection of sports sponsorship. Each company examines its necessities and translates these interests into factors that could help them determine whether or not to select a sports sponsorship opportunity, in line with the idea of evaluating benefits and risks of establishing the partnership (Rines, 2000). The following criteria emerged from the interviews: visibility, budget availability, congruence between the sports property and the sponsor's brand; attributes of the sports property and those desired by the brand; the audience interested in the property and the sponsor's target audience. In addition, companies also observed the potential of the properties evaluated to: increase sales, have an impact on the relevant target audience, develop a relationship with different audiences, exploit sports sponsorship with the company's internal audience, generate spontaneous media, generate a return on investment, and activate sports sponsorship. Sponsorship coverage and alignment with company strategy complement the selection criteria observed.

As regards sports modalities, the specialists said in their interviews that this was the first decision to be taken in the selection of sports sponsorship. The investigation of the cases also showed that various companies consider that the sports modality is an important criterion although they also chose according to types of sports sponsorship or specific sports properties. Companies seek sports modalities that are capable of contributing to achieve planned strategic marketing objectives (Ensor, 1987; Pichot, Tribou and O'Reilly, 2008), or possess attributes close to those desired for the sponsor's brand, following the idea of a need for congruency in the sponsor-sponsee relationship (Nickell, Cornwell and Johnston, 2011). Properties that have an interested audience and show characteristics that are congruent with the brand of the sponsoring company are also attractive. This can be observed in the cases of Petrobras and Ipiranga, that maintain links with motor racing, or Olympikus and its sponsorship of Olympic sports and football. These three companies have products that can be related to the sports sponsored, perhaps suggesting that the reason for prioritising involvement in a specific modality depends on the existence of products or services related to it.

In most of the cases observed, sports sponsorships are not chosen essentially according to the type of sponsorship. This may give the impression that this is a secondary decision but there have been cases in which the choice of type of sponsorship was the most important. The types of sports sponsorship seem to be more important as a selection criterion when they represent some kind of risk. Some companies that allege not having a preference for any particular type of sponsorship declare that they do not establish ties with athletes or are very cautious about sponsoring teams. In the case of athletes, bad behaviour inside or outside sports can end up being linked to the sponsor's brand. Image transfer from the sponsored property to the sponsor had been mentioned by other studies as a result of sponsorship (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998) but the negative impact of these relationships was what emerged. Poor performance can also lower the expected return on an investment in

sponsorship, given that its natural consequence is less space in the media. As regards teams, companies' main concern is the question of rivalry, especially between football teams, where the passion of one group of supporters' can mean the aversion of the other group.

Sports sponsorship can also involve exploiting an opportunity in the form of a sports property. Olympikus revealed that it became interested in the Brazilian Olympic swimming champion Cesar Cielo when he reached the top of the ranking. Another example of this type of opportunism can be seen in major sports events as they represent a unique chance for companies that wish to establish strong ties with sports like Petrobras, the main sponsor of the 2007 Pan American Games. For some companies, the sports property is what really matters in sports sponsorship. After all, a link to a sports property constitutes the very nature of sponsorship. Table 8.2 summarizes the main points highlighted in the interviews, showing that the selection criteria identified in this study correspond to those identified in the literature.

How does the activation of sports sponsorship occur?

Activation can occur through advertising, the use of electronic media, corporate hospitality actions, promotional actions and using properties for actions inside the company. These kinds of strategies had already been identified by Rines (2000) and Miloch and Lambrecht (2006). In the cases investigated, when companies use advertising to activate their sponsorships they create campaigns that highlight their support for sports as well as transmitting the desired messages. Companies can also activate sponsorships using electronic media. Specific websites to talk about the sponsorships, websites for the properties, online games and profiles in social media are examples of the forms of activation through the internet most widely used by the companies investigated. Corporate hospitality, which is already recognised as an important marketing tool by companies (Cornwell, Pruitt and Clark, 2005; Davies and Tsiantas, 2008), constitutes another form of activation. It improves sponsoring companies' networking capabilities, promotes greater product exposure and enables companies to develop engagement programs for employees. For these employees, motivational speeches are also an important form of activation. Table 8.3 presents a summary of the main activation actions identified in the study.

What are the indicators used by companies to measure the results of sports sponsorship?

The companies investigated evaluate their sponsorship investments by employing the same models typically used to assess other communication actions, as had already been identified by Lagae (2005). Traditional forms of advertising evaluation are commonly used in the cases investigated, as Bennett (1999) highlighted. The assessment is usually based on reports that present information on the visibility of sponsoring brands and sports events related to the property sponsored. Regarding the sponsor's visibility, reports typically address brand exposure in terms of frequency and length (inches) of citations and reviews on press media, as well as broadcast media (minutes). The data obtained is compared with what would be paid for traditional media. In addition, information can be gathered on the sports events, such as the attendance of each event and its corresponding media coverage. Interviews also revealed the use of indicators that come from market studies such as the "Top of Mind" research – a study promoted by media vehicles that indicates the most remembered companies according to specific criteria – to evaluate the effects of sports sponsorship on the perception of sponsoring companies' brands.

Table 8.2 Sports sponsorship selection

<i>Categories of Analysis</i>	<i>Olympikus</i>	<i>Unimed-Rio</i>	<i>Petrobras</i>	<i>Ipiranga</i>
Strategy	Greater involvement with sports from the mid-1990s. Investments planned nearly one year in advance.	Greater involvement with sports observed in 1998 with the beginning of a partnership with Fluminense FC.	Great involvement only with motor racing until the 1990s, after which it invests in other modalities. Interest in using the Federal Sports Incentive Act. Decisions planned nearly a year in advance and others even earlier.	Resumes sponsorship of tarmac motor racing in 2009. Interest in using the Federal Sports Incentive Act. Planning together with other communication areas nearly a year in advance.
Decision	Specific department responsible for sports-related decisions. Receives around 10 proposals per day, but is also pro-active in searching for interesting properties.	Specific department responsible for sports-related decisions. Did not specify exactly how many proposals it receives but evaluates all individually.	Single department responsible for sports-related decisions. Was not able to specify the exact number and only evaluates proposals that fulfil the directives' pre-requisites.	Sports-related decisions taken by the same area that deals with institutional communication. Receives around 80 sports sponsorship projects for evaluation every year.
Tools	Not observed.	Not observed.	Uses its proprietary evaluation tool called MetriCom.	Uses a spreadsheet containing the most important evaluation criteria.
Criteria	Visibility, congruence with what the brand produces, value, impact and sales increase potential. Short and long-term complementary sponsorships.	Seek properties with attributes desired for the brand. Verifies visibility, estimated audience, activation potential ability to generate returns, budget, internal exploitation potential. One-off and long-term sponsorships that complement Unimed do Brasil initiatives. Close and partnership-based relations with sponsees.	Activation potential, degree of adherence with communication policy, cost, coverage, relationship potential, estimated audience, spontaneous media potential. Fulfil directives of each sponsorship program and observe criteria stipulated by government bodies. One-off projects such as the 2007 Pan American Games and renewable ones (rally and others). Exclusive sponsorships and sponsorship deals with preference for long-term partnerships.	In motor racing, alignment with brand strategy, broad coverage, nationwide visibility. In other sports, it is sufficient to have good brand visibility and exposure. One-off and renewable sponsorships (aiming at visibility and exposure).

Modality/ Type/ Property	Popular modalities (soccer and volleyball), sports entity (Brazilian Olympic Committee) and specific properties (sponsorship deal with broadcaster Rede Globo in the 2010 FIFA World Cup).	Involvement with distinct sports, preferentially with athletes. In the case of football the company sponsors teams and participates on a one-off basis in facilities and events. Does not sponsor risky or combat sports.	Involvement with different modalities. Selection according to the coverage of a type of partnership. Does not sponsor individual athletes.	Concentration on off-road and tarmac racing. Investment in events, teams, drivers and transmissions. One-off involvement with other modalities.
Risks	Behaviour of individual athletes requires very careful selection.	Exercises caution with certain modalities due to attributes it does not wish to associate with the brand.	Rivalry between teams, limited duration partnerships with drivers.	Risks associated with regionalized actions that can create discomfort with retailers and the general population.

Table 8.3 Sports sponsorship activation

<i>Categories of Analysis</i>	<i>Olympikus</i>	<i>Unimed-Rio</i>	<i>Petrobras</i>	<i>Ipiranga</i>
Advertising	Use of the image of the sponsored property in company communication. Creation of teams that use the brand name in competitions.	Creation of teams that use the brand name in competitions. Incipient use of social media. Communication of sports sponsorship on the corporate website.	Use of the image of the sponsored property in company communication. Creation of proprietary teams and events, acquisition of naming rights. Present in all main social media networks with constant updating of information. Development of websites to communicate sponsorships. Development of online games and authorization to use the brand in electronic games.	Use of the image of the sponsored property in company communication. Creation of teams with the company name. Present in only a few social media networks, sparse use and rare information. Development of websites to communicate sponsorships.
Use of electronic media	Presence in only a few social media networks, but an intense one. Creation of a tool for socialization between ordinary sports practitioners. Use of the corporate website to communicate and activate sports sponsorship with spaces for interactivity between fans and athletes. Creation of online games. Not observed.			
Corporate hospitality	Not observed.	Use of CH for relationship actions with strategic customers and the internal audience. Distribution of promotional material.	Use of CH for relationship actions with strategic customers and negotiation of new deals.	Use of CH for relationship actions with internal audience and customers and negotiating of new deals.
Promotional actions	Distribution of promotional material.		Distribution of promotional material and promotional actions with customers in the points of sales and through the internet.	Distribution of promotional material and promotional actions with customers in the points of sales and creation of a sales stand at the event location.
Use of properties for actions in the company	Not observed.	Participation of sponsored athletes in motivational speeches for the internal audience.	Not observed.	Participation of racing drivers in the company's social actions.

Another way of evaluating the impact of sponsorship on companies' brands is to verify whether there was public recognition of the initiatives undertaken, which had also been identified in previous researches (Davies and Tsiantas, 2008; Gwinner and Swanson, 2003). The results of activation actions are also evaluated by observing the interactions that occur inside a hospitality centre, which contribute, for example, to the closing of deals and an increase in product sales. Another kind of evaluation is to observe the evolution in the quality of products used by the sponsored athlete or team. This was seen in the case of motor racing, with Ipiranga and Petrobras improving their products, and also Olympikus, which even developed specific products jointly with its sponsees. The study, however, found no evidence of models that can measure precisely how much of this improvement is due exclusively to sports sponsorship, corroborating the lack of measurement tools for evaluating sponsorship deals identified in the literature (Speed and Thompson, 2008; Walliser, 2003). Table 8.4 summarizes the main findings on this topic.

Contributions to academic research and managerial practice

The main contribution of this study lies in the proposal – based on the theoretical references and empirical validation using case studies – of the Sports Sponsorship Decision Model (SSDM), a model that articulates the main decisions that companies wishing to sponsor sports may have to face. It constitutes the first academic attempt to model the sports sponsorship decision-making process considering motivation; selection of modalities; types and sports properties; activation; and measurement of results; identifying how these elements interrelate to foster results aligned with company strategies. The SSDM model suggests that sports sponsorship strategies should consider these four blocks of elements so that the process is undertaken in an integrated fashion, ensuring that stage execution is aligned with planning and consistent with company objectives.

This investigation also provided empirical evidence to support previous findings of the sports sponsorship literature. It revealed that the companies investigated see this type of investment as an opportunity to enhance the value of their brands with their target audiences (O'Reilly and Madill, 2007; Pichot, Tribou and O'Reilly, 2008) and have different objectives when they involve themselves with sports through a sports sponsorship agreement. In the cases investigated, the study identified corporate, brand, product, relationship and personal objectives that had already been identified in the literature by other authors such as, for example, Meenaghan (1983), Kuzma, Shanklin and McCally Jr. (1993), Gwinner (1997) or Cornwell and Maignan (1998). It is necessary to establish clear objectives to be achieved with the actions independently of a company's motive for choosing to invest in sports sponsorships. Whenever possible, companies should seek congruence between the property sponsored and their business, as mentioned also in other investigated studies (Chien, Cornwell and Pappu, 2011). It should be highlighted that companies that have a clear vision of the objectives they expect to achieve through sports sponsorship seem to find it easier to select the opportunities that contribute to furthering their interests and reject those that do not fit.

We also verified that no pattern can be found in the choice of sports sponsorship actions by the companies investigated. They have been learning from their mistakes in order to improve their opportunity selection process, corroborating the literature's findings that the evolution of sponsorship skills depends on companies' ability to learn from their successes and failures (Kuzma, Shanklin and McCally Jr., 1993). It was also observed that although the companies investigated showed some level of activation of their sponsorships, especially through the successful development of portals, games and social media profiles, the results of

Table 8.4 Sports sponsorship results

<i>Categories of Analysts</i>	<i>Olympikus</i>	<i>Unimed-Rto</i>	<i>Petrobras</i>	<i>Ipiranga</i>
Visibility	Visibility reports with media impact developed by specialized firms and by entities and those seeking sponsorship.	Visibility reports with media impact developed in the media prepared by specialized firms and by entities and those seeking sponsorship.	Visibility reports with impact developed in the media prepared by specialized firms and by entities and those seeking sponsorship.	Visibility reports with media impact and frequency prepared by specialized firms.
Brand	Research to evaluate brand recognition and remembrance or recall.	Recognition and recall evaluated in Top of Mind research.	Qualitative research prepared jointly with other company communication areas.	Annual research to evaluate the company's positioning, recall, perception mobilization and change in the public's consumption habits.
Activations	Not observed.	Surveys of the company's target audience regarding receptivity of its actions.	Research developed by the company to evaluate results.	Not observed.
Sales	Reports of sales of CR Flamengo shirts, for example.	Unable to establish a direct relation with investments in sports sponsorship.	Closing of deals.	Increasing sales during promotion periods.
Products	Development and testing of products jointly with athletes.	Not observed.	Technical gains achieved with tests performed with teams.	Not observed.
Tools	Not observed.	Not observed.	Use of MetriCom, a proprietary project evaluation tool.	Not observed.

this study indicate that there are still many opportunities for the development of activation actions. This study's findings also suggest that initiatives that provide consumers with interaction opportunities can lead them to forge closer ties with companies. Given that sports is a theme that provokes interest and emotion, this relation can become even more intense.

This chapter did not identify any satisfactory model to evaluate the results of sports sponsorship. The empirical evidence corroborates the literature's findings, which show that as the methods currently used are based on models developed to measure the results of advertising (Lee, Sandler and Shani, 1997), they are inefficient (Bennett, 1999) to evaluate a complex tool like sports. However, it should be emphasised that despite all the difficulties, some activations performed by the companies investigated in this study make it possible to evaluate the direct effects of sports sponsorship. This may suggest that establishing assessment parameters for concrete activation actions would allow a more direct and less abstract measurement. However, this is a theme that needs to be explored more fully. The gap regarding forms of measurement remains to be filled and opens up a vast field of investigation into methods, models and variables that facilitate the evaluation of investment results.

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