

Sponsorship Development Plan

Case: Porvoon Salibandyseura's Women's Team

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<p>This research was conducted as a commission for Porvoon Salibandyseura's Women's Team (PSS.) The aim was to find ways to improve their sponsorship situation, as due to the overall financial difficulties it is challenging to fund the operation. The research method used was a qualitative research and the objective was to gain a detailed perspective of organizations sponsorship co-operation. The material was gathered by interviewing six different companies which were able to provide us with detailed information on their sponsorship operations.</p> <p>Sponsorship is a broad concept that is part of the marketing communications plan. In this research, marketing communication is presented briefly and sponsorship as its own marketing promotional tool.</p> <p>The validity and reliability of this research were effected by the fact that we were able to gather only six interviews, therefore the results could not be generalized. Despite that, the results provided the research with an effective base to demonstrate sufficient conclusions for the commissioner and concrete examples of different co-operation possibilities.</p> <p>This research demonstrated that planning, communication and follow-up are crucial for an effective and functional co-operation. Even though the basic aims for organizations in sponsorship co-operation would be the same, there are slight differences. Therefore, all sponsorship agreements should be individually formed according to the needs and wants of both parties. Thus, the team should focus on communication with the current and possible future sponsors.</p>	
<p>Keywords Sponsorship, floorball (Porvoon Salibandyseura's Women's Team), marketing communications tools, sports</p>	

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1 Introduction

Sponsorship is important for all operating sport clubs as most of them are run by volunteer work and get their resources from sponsoring. For companies it is a remarkable tool for marketing communications and more and more business interest lies on it as it is one of the fastest growing segments in marketing. Yet, it is challenging for club's to find sponsors and even more challenging to maintain the current relations as there are no certain ways of measuring the successfulness of a sponsorship co-operation.

Due to the economical situation of past few years sponsors have been really hard to find and get to commit to the co-operation for longer periods. Now the situation has improved slightly and companies have again more resources to be used for marketing and brand development. According to a research conducted by Mainostajien Liitto in 2011 Finnish companies used approximately 165 million Euros just on sponsoring in the year 2010 and about 60 percent (100 million Euros) of that went to sport sponsorship. Nevertheless, only one out of five said that they are going to increase their sponsoring in the future so the competition out of the sponsorship resources is though between the targets.

(Mainostajienliitto 2011.)

The aim of this research is to conduct a sponsorship development plan for Porvoon Salibandyseura's (PSS) women's team. The purpose is to analyze and define their current sponsorship situation and find ways to improve the co-operation between the team and its sponsors. Hopefully this research provides the team some new ideas on how to improve its operation and through that helps them to increase their funding.

Sponsoring is important for each sport and floorball can definitely be seen as a good target for sponsoring companies as it has increased its popularity remarkably during the past ten years. The amount of amateur players in Finland has grown considerably while in other big sports the amount has decreased. In the year 2010 there were over 354 000 amateur players in Finland when the same number from the year 1996 was 164 000 (Kansallinen Liikuntatutkimus 2010.) In a yearly conducted research one out of three

Finnish persons believe that the sport is going to increase its value even more in the near future (Taloustutkimus Oy 2011.)

Latest remarkable achievement for floorball is from summer 2011 when it was accepted as a full member of the international Olympic Committee. This means that the sport now has a chance to get to be a part of summer Olympics in the future. (Yle Urheilu 2011.)

In 2009, Helsingin Sanomat executed a questionnaire asking which new sport should be included in the summer Olympics, over quarter of the respondents replied by saying floorball. The sport has a rather bright future as it attracts youth and it is actively played among women. Still the journey to the Olympics is fairly long, as in theory new sports cannot be added until after the Rio De Janeiro Olympics in 2016. Nevertheless, this recognition is going to bring even more international attention towards floorball which is already played in five different continents. International floorball federation, IFF, has even had to modify the rules and equipments so that for example in Africa the sport can be also played outdoors. (Helsingin Sanomat 2009.)

1.1 Research problem and limitations

The aim of this research is to improve the co-operation between Porvoon Salibandyseura's women's team (PSS) and their sponsors. This research is conducted as a commission for the team. The aim is to improve the current sponsorship situation and in order to do that the current situation has to be determined and the weaknesses spotted.

The report will include theory on marketing communication and sponsorship. The aim is to find development ideas and the best ways of handling sponsor relations. Therefore some current sponsors will be interviewed as well as some potential sponsoring companies. These qualitative interviews will hopefully provide us the vision of the sponsor expectations.

In order to analyze the current situation and find ways to change the operation towards improvement this thesis was divided into the following research question and sub-questions:

- How to improve current sponsorship situation?
 - What is the current situation?
 - What are the expectations of the sponsors?
 - How to keep the gap between sponsors expectations and reality as small as possible?

The above mentioned sub-questions will hopefully open up the main research question and provide the facts to analyze all the needed aspects for finding the development areas.

Limiting factor in this research is that sponsorship is a part of marketing communications and now it is separated from it. This was done, because the marketing communications would have been too wide area to handle thoroughly and sponsoring was seen as the most important part at this point.

1.2 Previous studies

Sponsoring is a topic that has been widely researched and analyzed. Therefore there is lot of material that can be exploited in this research. For opening up the concept of marketing communications a book “Marketing Communications, a European Perspective” written by De Pelsmacker, P. & Geuens, M. & Van den Bergh, J. (2007) is examined. Also a Finnish book about the same topic “Markkinointiviestintä; merkitys, vaikutus ja keinot” Written by Vuokko, P. (2003) is utilized. For gathering detailed information about sponsoring a book “Summapeliä! Sponsorointiyhteistyön Käsikirja” from Alaja (2001) is exploited.

A previous study in field of sponsoring that can also be utilized in this research is “Kuluttajat ja sponsorit itäuusmaalaisessa kulttuurimaisemassa.” It is created by Helena

Venonen, Hanne Kanerva and Tove Thomasson and published in 2007. In this publication the writers researched both consumers and sponsoring companies in Itä-Uusimaa by questionnaires and interviews and even though the research focused on cultural sponsoring the basic attitude towards sponsoring in this specific area, where PSS also operates, can be clearly detected.

According to the mentioned research, companies in Itä-Uusimaa see sponsorship more as giving and supporting than a mean of co-operation. Still companies expect to receive something in return and most of the time that something is visibility. (Venonen 2007, 36.)

Through visibility sponsoring companies also expect to receive means for developing or supporting their image in the eyes of consumers. For example one CEO in Itä-Uusimaa said in the research that sponsorship is a clear business agreement that has to provide benefit for both parties, otherwise it is a donation and companies cannot operate just by doing charity. Most of the other respondents agreed with this statement but pointed out that at least the company can show good will and good social responsibility and through that gain means for supporting their image. Thus sponsorship should be a win-win situation and both parties should benefit at least somehow from the co-operation. (Venonen 2007, 36.)

Media attention is something that companies usually receive through sponsor co-operation. In the research of sponsoring in Itä-Uusimaa one company wanted to point out that it might not be the benefit that companies actively reach via sponsoring but rather a consequence of the co-operation. (Venonen 2007, 39.)

1.3 Theoretical framework and content of the report

The report includes an introduction to the research where the topic is presented. Meaning that the background is explained, the research problem and its purpose are determined as well as some previous studies are presented. The tight financial situation and its effects on sponsoring are shortly described as well. Additionally a short introduction of the current situation of floorball is given in that part. After the introduction part the report introduces

shortly the club, Porvoon Salibandyseura and their women's team that will eventually benefit from this research.

Theory part of the report will include a short introduction to marketing communication and image building before theory of sponsoring is more widely presented. The method of research is introduced before analyzing the actual results and at the end a conclusion of the findings is provided with development proposals.

2 Presentation of Porvoon Salibandyseura

Porvoon Salibandyseura also known as PSS is a floorball club from Porvoo, Itä-Uusimaa. The club was founded in the year 2003 when two smaller clubs, GamTe and SaFa merged together. The club has currently all together 32 different teams or groups playing in its colors and the member amount in the end of April, 2011 was 687. (Porvoon Salibandyseura 2011.)

In this chapter the club and especially its women's team is introduced thoroughly mainly based on an interview of Mika Haakana, manager of the team. Also the current sponsorship situation of the team is opened up and analyzed.

2.1 PSS and the team

According to Haakana it is not alone the players that are attracted to floorball but also the audience. He bases this thought on a research called Sponsor Navigator 11*, which indicates that Finnish people from ages 19 to 25 list men's league in floorball as the 5th interesting national series to be followed and women's as 11th. Only women's series that in this research got ranked higher than floorball was Finnish ice-hockey league. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

The popularity of floorball can be noticed in Porvoo from the increasing amount of players and audience, as well as from the phenomenon that the club's own junior players are starting to claim their places in the top series of the sport and even in national teams. This indicates that the work that has been done with the junior teams and players has not been vain and that the players have been eager to practice hard and develop their skills. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

*Sponsor Navigator is the widest sponsor co-operation research in Finland. It is conducted by Sponsor Insight, but unfortunately the whole research is not published. Suomen Salibandyliitto has provided some parts of the research for clubs to view.

Both women's and men's first teams succeed steadily in their own series; especially the women's team that has played in highest national level (SM-league) for six seasons already. Within those years they have received two medals; a bronze one in 2007 and a silver one in 2008. Additionally they have won the Finnish Cup twice, in years 2008 and 2009 (Porvoon Salibandyseura 2011.) Through winning the Finnish Cup the team has received the opportunity to be part of the European Cup but the success in these international fields has kept itself waiting. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

The vision of the team is clear; to be the best and the most qualified female floorball team in Finland. A three-year project towards this goal has already been started. The purpose is to build the bases of the team from own junior players of PSS which should be quite realistic as the girls' junior teams have succeeded well in their own series and gathered a bunch of medals during the years. From the season 05-06 on at least one of the club's female team's has won a medal and therefore been part of the top three teams in Finland (Porvoon Salibandyseura 2011.) So the skills are there they just have to be developed and utilized. The key factors for the project to succeed are qualified and patient coaching work, good co-operation relations with the sponsors and commitment to reaching the goals. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

The team has also gathered some media attention towards itself and it has had its moments both in TV and newspapers. Local paper Uusimaa writes about the team regularly. But as some inhabitants of Porvoo use Swedish as their mother language and do not order their paper in Finnish but prefer Borgåbladet instead, the team should somehow get more of their attention as well. Some articles have of course found their way to Borgåbladet's pages already but the amount should be increased. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

The television time that the team has gathered has still been quite limited. For example one whole game (Finnish Cup Final) was shown on a Finnish sport channel, Urheilukanava and some introductions on Finnish Swedish channel, Finlands Svenska Television (FST.) Haakana thinks that the television visibility should somehow be increased for the whole sport. Currently the Finnish men's league games are shown on television regularly and occasionally few women's games. Also some results might be

mentioned on sport news. Otherwise the sport does not get that much attention from television's direction. Hopefully this will change through the statistics and researches that indicate the constantly growing popularity of floorball. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

In 2008 two Haaga-Helia students, Laura Järvinen and Emmi Lindholm, arranged a charity game between PSS women's team and team FIBA, an associate of Lasten Klinikoiden Kummit Ry. The opposite team had gathered a group of Finnish celebrities to challenge the women's team of PSS. This event raised money for junior activities of PSS and was a great success on every scale. Even though the event was held in summer time (30.7.2008) the hall was full of audience. Usually it can be challenging to get people to gather around during summer vacation time but this event did not have that problem. (Järvinen & Lindholm 2008.) Of course the organizers had done lot of advertising and preparations before the event but still the interest towards the sport and the team can be detected from this kind of attitude. Also the local media attention was really high during the whole organizing phase.

2.2 Analysis of the current sponsorship situation

Even though the women's team has gathered some national media attention and more recognitions than the club's first men's team, the competition of the local publicity is tough. Also sponsors and support funds that the town of Porvoo provides for sport teams are behind a tough competition which includes other sports and teams as well.

The women's team has a support team operating behind it which does its best to get all the practicalities done and raise enough funds for the team, so that the players can focus just on playing and coaches can focus just on coaching. This support group aims to provide the team and all its members the needed resources for training and developing their playing skills towards succession. PSS has set its aims high outside the fields as well, as the goal is to have the best organization in Finland operating behind the teams. Though it is quite challenging, as this support team is also based on volunteer work and none of its

members has the possibility to work fulltime with the team's issues. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

As mentioned the support funds are not easy to gather as the financial situation has suffered and the companies are cautious with their investments. Because of this the strategy behind the team has had to be modified a bit. Before the aim was to get few sponsors with bigger support amounts, but as the situation has changed and the sponsors have cut down their support, the team is gathering smaller amounts of funds from many different resources. This of course makes the managing of the sponsorship agreements more difficult. The ideal situation would be to have one main sponsor who would cover most of the costs that the team has. This way the support team would also have a better possibility to nourish the cooperation and ensure the satisfaction of the sponsor. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

2.3 SWOT – Analysis of the team

A SWOT analysis of the team's current situation is provided in table 1. This analysis defines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the team currently has and is gathered together also based on a discussion with Mika Haakana. The strengths and opportunities are facts that might help to attract new sponsors and weaknesses and threats on the other hand facts that might not be so appealing to sponsors.

Strengths

The team is good, young and local as most of the players are clubs own junior players who have started their careers in PSS. Now they are given the opportunity to show their talent on the highest level in Finland and so far they have claimed all the expectations and maybe even exceeded a bit. They are full of enthusiasm and they hopefully increase the amount of audience even more as their families and supporters are mostly from Porvoo. Then again the team has foreign players as well who attract more audience. At least two "exotic players" from Australia are seen interesting as the sport is mainly played in Nordic countries. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

Table 1. SWOT-Analysis of the PSS Women's Team

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good, young and LOCAL team - Big audience - Foreign "exotic" players - Only women's team playing in SM-league level in Itä-Uusimaa - Only women's team playing on the highest level in Porvoo - Location 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young team - Lack of known "star players" - Player / Coach changes
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Popularity of floorball - Wide hobby base - Finding new sponsors and supporters / Creating new networks - Finding new fans - Co-operation with other clubs 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of success - Financial situation - Keeping up the interest of the sponsors - Lack of floorball's television time

Porvoo is located about 50 kilometers from Helsinki which provides lot of opportunities not only for the young players outside the fields but for the team as well. There is an opportunity to attract more new players, audience and sponsors. The team's middle age is around 20 years (Porvoon Salibandyseura 2011) thus studying might be approaching many

of the players. Because of the short distance it is still reasonable to play in Porvoo and study in Helsinki. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

There is no other women's floorball team playing on the highest possible level in Itä-Uusimaa and no other women's team in general playing on this high level in Porvoo regardless of the sport (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

Weaknesses

The team's young middle age can be seen as strength, but also as a weakness as they do not have that much experience on playing on such high level. It might also be that some of the sponsors do not want to commit to co-operation contracts for more than one year at a time because there is no previous success from this specific group of players. Even though the team has had its share of success, it cannot be stated as an argument as most of the players and both of the coaches have changed during summer 2010. Now the team has faced huge changes and they have to again earn the trust of the sponsors by succeeding. For the first year with a new line-up the goal was to be part of the playoffs and this though goal was for many people's surprise clearly achieved. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

Opportunities

The mentioned popularity of floorball in Finland can be seen as a major opportunity for the team when compared to other sport teams. Floorball is constantly growing and it has a wide hobby base among children, youth, as well as, adults. Therefore Haakana sees that the audience that can be reached through sponsoring is very variable.

The team has already started to try out co-operation with another floorball teams by exchanging players. One example was in the beginning of the year 2011 when Tiltu Siltanen a former goal keeper of PSS came from her current team NST (Lappeenranta) to play the rest of the season with her original club (Salibandylehti, 2011.) Same kind of

exchange was also tried out with a club from Kotka, but unfortunately not with the same success. PSS offered an opportunity for few selected girls in Kotka to come and play their league games if they did not for some reason have all their own players to take along. There were some difficulties in this co-operation because when the team would have really needed the support, they did not get it. But there was not any written contract done or clear terms defined which could have prevented the difficulties. If these kinds of co-operations would start to work regularly the same way that the positive case Siltanen it would again mean more visibility for the sponsors. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

As mentioned before the young and local players create the opportunity to increase the audience even more through appealing their families and friends to cheer outside the field (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

Threats

The biggest threat is that the team would not succeed and would lose their place in the league. This could probably decrease the interest of the sponsors and make it even more difficult to get resources. Therefore all the resources need to be safe and sound so that the players and coaches can focus on one thing only, playing. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

Also the financial state of the economy from last few years is a threat for the team and it has clearly affected the sponsor amounts. When the team has previously tried to get few sponsors with bigger support amounts, now they have had to take more sponsors and smaller amounts. This makes it difficult to follow up the sponsors and their satisfaction as there is not enough people or time to take care of the sponsor relations. Companies have had to tighten their costs and even though the situation is getting better it can be sensed that they are still careful with their investments. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

Lack of television time for the whole sport is also a threat when it comes to sponsor relations. Even though it is visible that the sport is increasing its popularity the television time is not increasing and that might be an unappealing factor for sponsors. (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.)

3 Marketing communications

This chapter will introduce marketing communications and how sponsorship is part of a marketing communications promotional tool.

3.1 What is marketing communications?

We communicate through speaking, gestures, body language, written, symbols, through technical support, being loud or silent. Thus, we can draw a conclusion that one way or another through these aspects we are sending out a message. Therefore, we communicate both consciously and unconsciously. (Vuokko 2003, 11.)

Furthermore, marketing communications involves all instruments which a company uses to communicate with its target groups and stakeholders in order to promote products and services or the company as a whole. (De Pelsmacker 2007, 3.)

Additionally, marketing communication can be defined through the 4 P's of marketing; product, price, place and promotion. These are called the tools within a marketing mix. (De Pelsmacker 2007, 2-3) As shown in the table 2, sponsorship is part of the marketing promotion mix. Sponsorship has credibility like any other marketing communications tool, however, it may be one of the tools that requires much more effort than other tools in exploiting and controlling it. (Vuokko 2002, 149.)

It is said that, marketing communications is like a coin, it has two sides, according to Varey (2002, 4.) He states that one side is known as the offer or the expression the other the inquiry the impression. The offer refers to one part of marketing communications concentrated to effectively and efficiently to provide information on their products and services to their customers. The offer part of marketing communications refers to learning from others about their possible interest and values thus relating these interests and values to a business' personnel.

Table 2. The 4 P's of the Marketing Mix

Product	Price	Place	Promotion
Benefits	List price	Channels	Advertising
Features	Discounts	Logistics	Public relations
Options	Credit terms	Inventory	<u>Sponsorship</u>
Quality	Payment periods	Transport	Sales promotion
Design	Incentives	Assortments	Direct marketing
Branding		Locations	Point-of-purchase
Packaging			Exhibitions & trade fairs
Services			Personal selling
Warranties			Internet

Table 2 demonstrates the four P's of the marketing mix tools; product, price, place and promotion and their sub categories.

Marketing communications is needed in business and consumer marketing, private and public sector, as well as in the third sector organizations. It is used in the marketing of current services and products as well as in the launching of new ones. Generally, the aim of marketing communications is to create more understanding between a company and its shareholders (Vuokko 2003, 18.)

When creating proposals for a sponsorship, event marketing, product placement or other PR opportunities, the marketing manager needs to accept it and form the criteria. When creating one of the marketing communications promotional tools, one has to ask whether it will work creatively and how it will offer good media value, what the costs are and the target audience needs to be defined. (Rossiter 2005, 378.)

John Rossiter refers to marketing communications as “marcoms”, which he defines to be different activities which share a common factor, and these activities are all concerned with marketing by selling a brand. Another common factor that draws these marcoms

together is that they sell the brands through communication with their customers. Moreover, marcoms are marketer-orientated messages that are placed in different medias and the purpose is to sell the brand through visual demonstration of or through speaking, in order to draw the customers attention. (Rossiter 2005, 6.)

3.2 Marketing communications and image

According to Kotler (2003, 566), an image is a set of beliefs, ideas and impression a person holds concerning an item.

Image communications improves the relations with possible target groups, has the ability to improve customer satisfaction and supports brand awareness and preference. Thus, has been said to have a positive influence on the target group. Moreover, image appealing products have strong effects on its consumers, as they are more attractive than written or spoken messages. (Pelsmacker 2007, 7, 581.)

An organization cannot decide which elements style its image. Its image is made up of several elements, such as, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, prejudices, experiences and observations. The figure below shows the elements on the left which the organization cannot influence and the elements on the right are ones which the organization has an influence on. All in all, an organization is able to influence its image in a more positive tone, if there are negative rumors or prejudices; however, that road may be a long one. A good image is made up of two influencing factors: good action and communications both internally and externally. (Vuokko 2003, 111.)

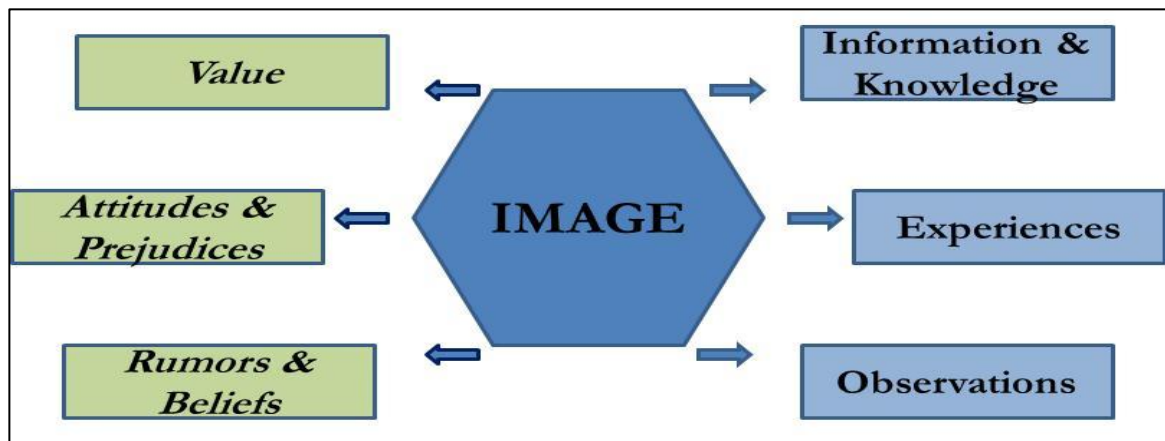


Figure 1. An Organization's Image Elements (Vuokko 2003, 111)

Figure 1, demonstrates an organization's image elements; value, attitudes & prejudices, rumors & beliefs, information & knowledge, experiences and observations.

3.3 Sponsorship as a marketing communications tool

Sponsorship is one of marketing communication's instruments. The main objective of sponsorship for many companies is to develop brand know-how. (Lipponen 1999, 14.) However, it is not an independent element thus it needs the support of other marketing communications tools to work efficiently (Tuori 1995, 1.)

Sponsorship is a powerful marketing communications tool which goes deep into imagination and demonstrates an organization's or brands values through putting it into practice. What other method can prove to do the same? (Valanko 2009, 65.)

Sponsorship in the long run is indirect communications, meaning that an organizations financial support for their sponsorship co-operation is usually aimed at different target groups than from which the organization usually awaits a substitution or benefits from. An example of this is an organization which sponsors an ice hockey team, the organization is rarely satisfied with the team members of the ice hockey team to just purchase their products or have a positive image towards the organization. Sponsorship pursues to have an impact on a target which has a positive attitude to the sponsorship

target itself, is interested in it, follows their activity or has a positive image on the sponsored object. (Vuokko 2003, 318.)

The sponsoring organization gives its sponsorship input for example money, to the sponsorship object. From that it receives the possibility to use the sponsorship target in its marketing communications and receive media publicity. The sponsoring origination also holds press conferences where it brings in front its support and the reasoning behind it for its target group which could be sports, culture etc. related. (Vuokko 2003, 319.)

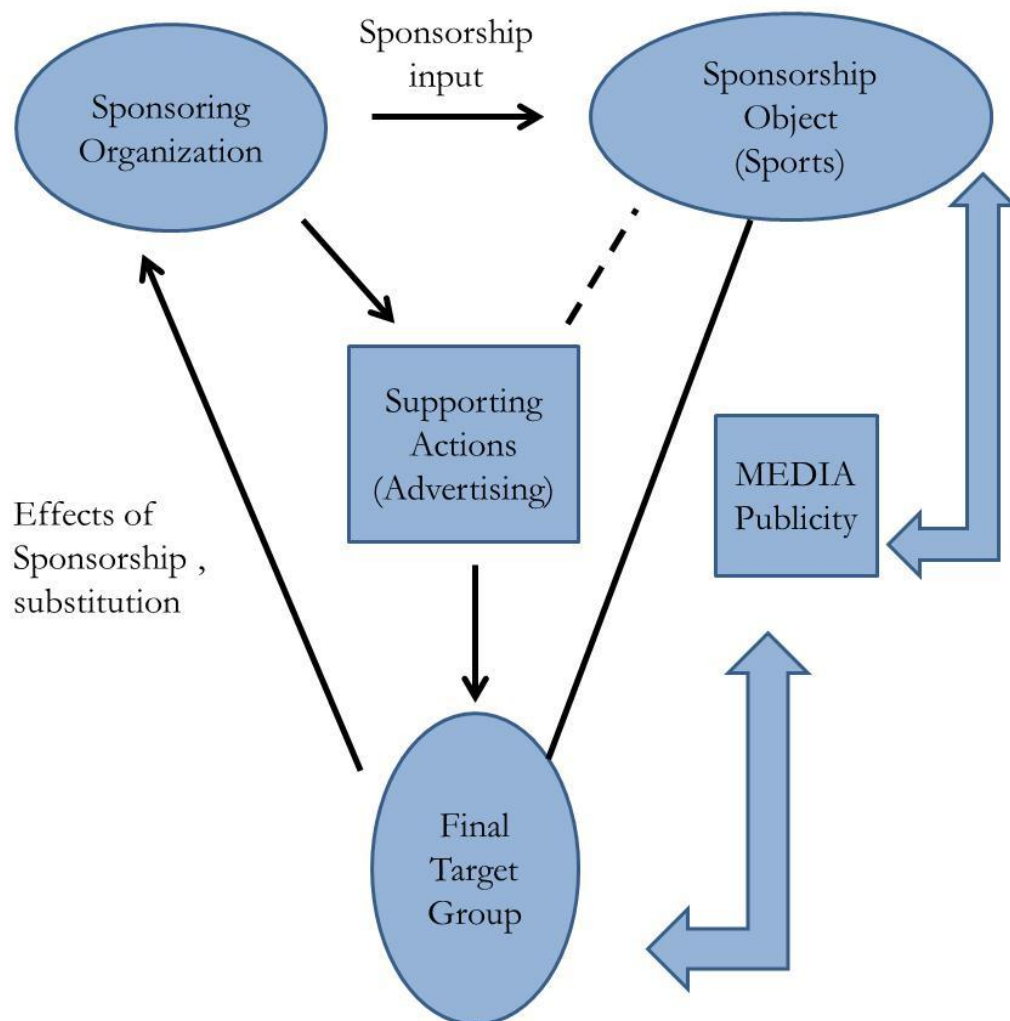


Figure 2. Sponsoring as a Marketing Communications Tool (Vuokko 2003, 319)

4 Sponsorship

This chapter will introduce the concept of sponsorship, what it is and what it is not. It thoroughly defines many aspects of the key concept within this thesis to provide an understanding of how it works in reality. It explains and emphasizes on the types of sponsorship, history, advantages and disadvantages of sponsorship, sponsorship as a marketing mix tool and how it differs from advertising and charity, strategies, objectives and so on.

Sponsoring is seen very important as altogether Finnish companies used approximately 165 million Euros just on sponsoring in the year 2010. About 60 percent (100 million Euros) of the whole amount went to sport sponsorship. The increase of the whole amount was 9 percent from the year 2009. Never the less the same research indicated that over half of the researched companies are going to keep their sponsoring on the same level as before, 24 percent are going to decrease their sponsoring expenses and only one out of five said that they are going to increase their sponsoring in the future. The figure below indicates the division of the sponsor funds between sports, culture and other targets. (Mainostajien Liitto, Sponsorointibarometri 2011.)

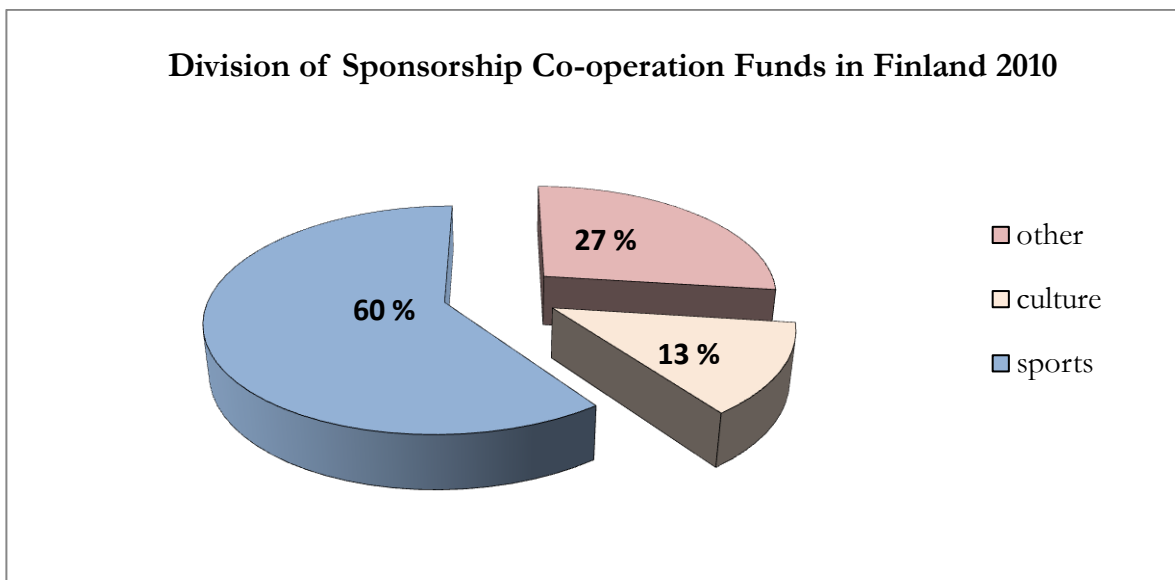


Figure 3. Division of Sponsorship Co-operation funds in Finland 2010 (Mainostajien Liitto, Sponsorointibarometri 2011)

4.1 Defining Sponsorship

The term sponsorship has evolved from the 1980's within the business world and news mediums and has kept the same form in many western languages. Moreover, it implies to the “rental” of an individual, group, event or another activity's image and its usage for specific marketing communications purposes. (Tuori 1995, 1.) The International Events Group (IEG) which is located in Chicago, defines sponsorship in the following way: a cash and/or an in-kind fee paid to a property (sports, events, arts, entertainment etc.) in return for an access to the commercial potential as-associated within this property. (Skinner 2003, 2.)

The only limit to sponsorship co-operation opportunities is one's imagination as almost anyone or anything can be sponsored. The main areas of sponsorship are sports, arts, education, community and broadcast and these events vary by size. (Smith 2004, 482-483.) An organization binds itself to an interesting target for sponsorship co-operation to demonstrate its target of interest, aims and product and/or services. (Vuokko 2003, 302.) The figure below indicates the sponsorship co-operation. The mentioned “rental” of image is the main idea behind sponsorship. (Alaja & Forssell 2004, 21.)

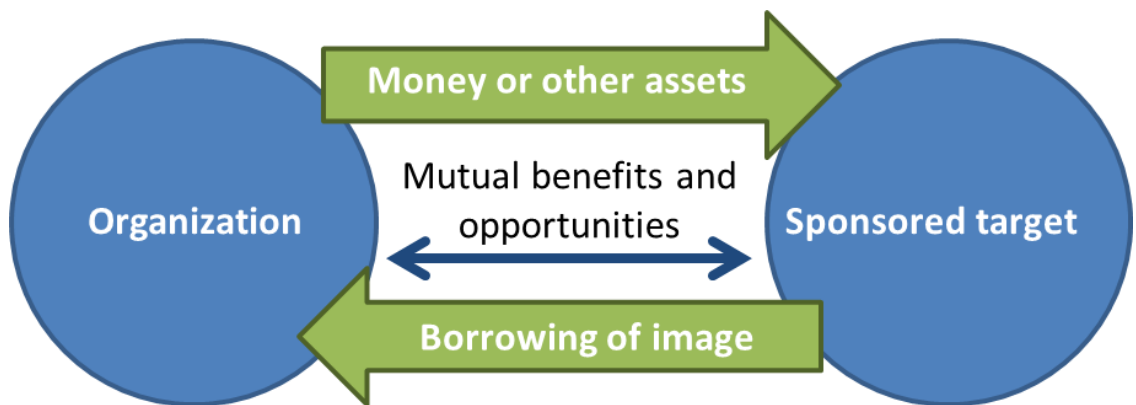


Figure 4. Sponsorship Co-operation Basic Framework (Alaja & Forssell 2004, 21)

Sponsorship gives a message a so called “face”, a reason to be interested in communications. The sponsorship target group is best reached through a presentation who’s face and body, verbal and non-verbal, work in the same direction supporting each other. Even though the organization is the one responsible for the expenses behind this presentation, the target is the one that usually imposes the speed. (Lipponen 1999, 12.)

Publicity is necessary in sponsorship in order for it to be a successful one. The publicity does not have to be targeted at a large audience, the only important aspect is that it aims its target group, despite the size of the group. (Vuokko 2003, 304.) In the research presented in the beginning it is stated that there are some differences whether the company is interested to know what kind of audience the sponsored target appeals to or what amount of people it gathers around. It is said that it can be about the quality or quantity, depending on the company. (Venonen 2007, 38.)

Sponsorship has two common players, the sponsor and the target of sponsorship. These two players have a sponsorship co-operation, which relies on a co-operation that is beneficial for both players. (Valanko 2009, 60.) A company can establish two various views to its sponsorship: goals associated with branding and goals associated with increasing the sales. Sport targets are the biggest sector of sponsorship co-operation in Finland and abroad. This is because sports targets are able to provide media visibility to and many targets have an organization and clear procedures to fulfill the sponsors requirements. On the other hand, the sponsor may face difficulties to distinguish themselves from other companies logos. For example, Finland has many various sport activities which the public know nothing of but they have high potential of success. Setting up a sponsorship co-operation with a sport related activity, through several years of co-operation, the sponsor is able to receive visibility and a strong role. (Vahtera 2011.)

Regardless of the industry, sponsorship is widely used and heard about in business circumstances. The act of sponsoring an event or an activity for a targeted audience brings more know-how and awareness to the audience of the sponsor’s potential, products and/ or services. Sponsorship is an increasingly powerful and fastest-growing tool used in marketing communications promotional tools worldwide.

Sponsorship is more than supporting, beneficial and unselfish. It can in fact really help people while at the same time achieving specifically defined communications objectives. Thus, some sponsors see the act of sponsoring as a form on enlightened self-interest, when a worthy event or activity is supported with cash or other considerations in return for satisfying specific organizational objectives. (Smith & Taylor, 482.)

Valanko characterizes sponsorship through twenty different traits that it composes; these traits are listed in table 3.

Table 3. Sponsorship Traits (Valanko 2009, 60-61)

Sponsorship Traits
1. Sponsorship has two different parties: the sponsor and the target of sponsorship
2. Both of these are different organizations, audiences or activities
3. Sponsorship is a co-operation between these two parties
4. Sponsorship co-operation is a rental and business contract for both
5. The target owns the rights and the sponsor rents the rights for joining
6. The relationship is based on a mutual co-operation, from which both parties benefit
7. Sponsorship effects imagination through association which work both ways
8. Sponsorship involves an input and an output and it provides material and non-material added value for both
9. Sponsorship can be money, a product, material or a service which will have a cost mutually decided by the parties
10. The target of sponsorship involves both materialistic and non-materialistic answers
11. Sponsorship's effects can be long- or short term
12. Sponsorship is based on an organization's strategic needs and is always an investment
13. Sponsorship has measurable goals, which accomplishments are followed
14. The measurable goals are intended for both the organization and its business

and the targets operations
15. Sponsorship builds a brand, its differentiation and meaning and is usually part of integrated marketing communications
16. It demonstrates an organization's values efficiently and concretely
17. Sponsorship requires work from both parties; the utilization of both own and shared co-operation solves the success of the co-operation
18. The goal of sponsorship is to increase an organization's sales through short or long-term; an organization's goal is to raise profit and sales. The same goes for the target. Co-operation increase an opportunity for more resources
19. Sponsorship goes to the audience's skin and mind and puts all the senses into use and provides experiences
20. It is a "win win win" situation: sponsor – target - audience

4.2 Is sponsorship advertising or charity?

Sponsorship can be believed to be a cheap form of advertising (Pelsmacker 2007, 322.)

Sponsorship is not a substitute for advertising or vice versa. They can be used side by side and make each other's effects stronger, but their objectives are naturally different.

Sponsorship can have a positive effect on an organization's advertising visibility. A sponsored project can be used as a marketing communications concept and a campaign can be built around it. Advertising can be used in a sponsorship theme and an organization can substitute for example a normal advertising campaign with a sponsorship theme in the media. (Valanko 2009, 56.)

Sponsorship differs from other marketing communications tools. Advertising as well as reporting, public relations, sales force, personal selling and straight marketing are straight forward influences. Sponsorship co-operation is indirect influence. The organization indirectly communicated with its target groups, thus media and other forms of marketing communications are needed. In advertising, media publicity is available to everyone and in a way it is a part of sponsorship co-operation. Co-operation is formed through advertising methods such as billboards. (Alaja & Forssell 2004, 25.)

On the other hand, sponsoring can easily be confused with charity as well. They are not the same thing even though both are supporting. The difference is that from charity companies do not expect to receive any commercial benefit. In the research introduced at the beginning one CEO said that sponsorship is a clear business agreement that has to provide benefit for both parties, otherwise it is just a donation and companies cannot operate just by doing charity. At least sponsoring provides the company a possibility to show good will and good social responsibility and through that support their image. (Vennonen 2007, 36.) Thus sponsorship should be a win-win situation and both parties should benefit from the co-operation (Alaja & Forssell 2004, 25.)

Sponsorship means to support and so does charity. How sponsorship differs from charity (Vuokko 2003, 302.)

- Charity does not expect to receive any benefits from donations, even though a good self conscience has its own advantage.
- In charity, the publicity is not important; however in sponsorship publicity is a big part of an efficient co-operation.
- Charity does not rely on a contract, when sponsorship does.
- Sponsorship has an evident marketing goal, when charity does not.

The sponsor wants to get something in return from its sponsorship object. Without that it is considered as a charity not a sponsorship. (Vuokko 2003, 320.)

4.3 Types of sponsorship

An organization may for example sponsor sports and culture related events and the aim may be at an individual, group, league, events or other types of events (Tuori 1995, 24.)

Sponsorship funds can be aimed at different types of sponsorship co-operations. The different types of sponsorship can be categorized under four main topics: event-related, broadcast, cause-related and ambush. (De Pelsmacker 2007, 332.)

Choosing the right type of sponsorship can be a tough decision and it will take time, as the decisions are not made in one day. The decision is based on research and experience on the target group's image, the number of people taking part in the event, profile, media interest, and an estimation of the TV audience. (Tuori 1995, 24.)

In an event-related sponsorship, which is the most common known form on sponsorship co-operation, an organization may sponsor a team, an athlete, tournaments, artists, exhibitions, concerts, festivals etc. In a broadcast sponsoring, an organization uses mass media to promote itself and its brands, thus an organization may sponsor a television channel such as a sports program or the weather forecast. Cause-related sponsorship implies when an organization sponsors for a good cause. An example of this is when a wealthy person donates money to schools. MUSH sponsorship implies Municipal, University, Social and Hospital sponsorship, thus relates to sponsorships with a good cause. Ambush sponsorship signifies when advertisers associate themselves with a certain event and without the payment of sponsorship. (De Pelsmacker, 2007, 332.)

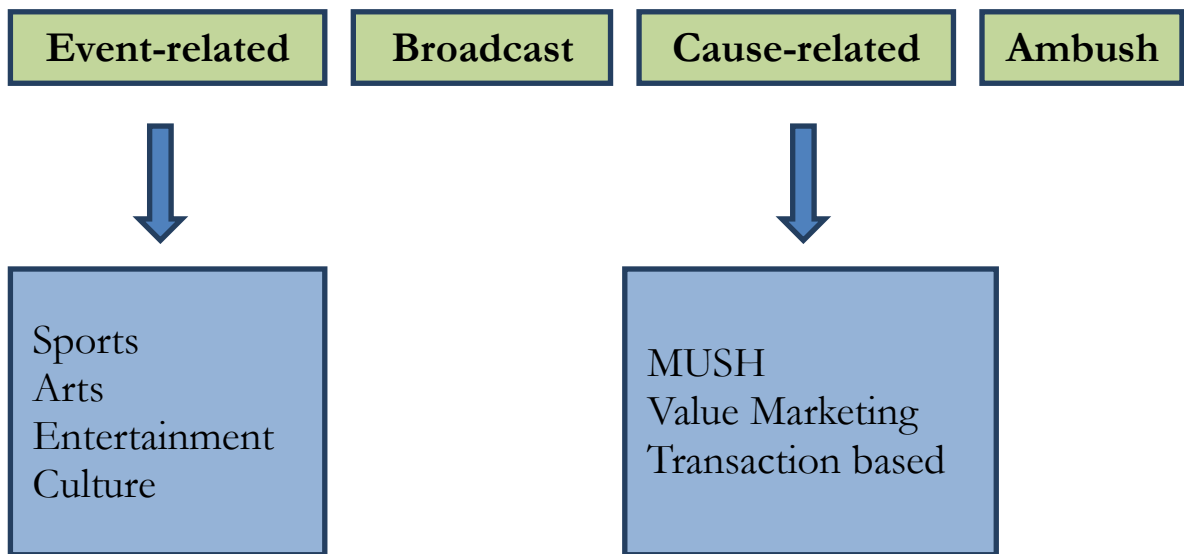


Figure 5. Types of Sponsorship (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Bergh 2007, 333)

Figure 5 demonstrates the four types of sponsorship; event-related, broadcast, cause-related and ambush sponsorship.

A company can build its image through creating or sponsoring different events. Sport events have been the most popular type of event, and event marketers are nowadays using various techniques to entertain clients and employees, such as, art museums, zoos and ice shows. (Kotler 2003, 327.) Worldwide, sponsorship co-operation bases most its resources on sports, making it the most popular target. Sports sponsorship is divided into six different categories which are sports organizations sponsorship, sports teams' sponsorship, athletes' sponsorship, TV and media sponsorship, sports facilities sponsorship and lastly event sponsorship. (Schwarz & Hunter 2008, 244.)

Moreover, figure 6 demonstrates the sponsorship co-operation in Finland among the sponsor and the target of choice, sports altogether account to over 80%. The second biggest target of sponsorship is culture with little less than 70% and other targets such as education, environment, society and science account to 55%. (Mainostajienliitto 2010.)



Figure 6. Sponsorship Targets, Finland 2011 (Mainostajien Liitto 2011)

4.4 Objectives of sponsorship

Sponsorship is a very flexible marketing communications tool, which is used to attain marketing (product and brand) communications objectives and corporate communications objectives. These two objectives are presented and how the two categories differ according to their target groups and types of objectives. As generally it varies from company to company which objectives are important for them. In marketing communications objectives; they concentrate on awareness building, image building and

sales and market share. These effects usually become visible in the long run, as through sponsorship organizations do not only concentrate on a direct increase in their sales and it takes time for a sponsor to receive recognition and visibility. In corporate communications objectives, an organization focuses on its internal marketing objectives such as general public, channel members and trade relations, employees and opinion formers and decision makers. Employer related goals are as important as the corporations goals as developing company identity and image it is important to transfer values received through sponsoring events to both the public and the company's own staff. (De Pelsmacker 2007, 312.) Generally speaking, the employer branding within a company is equally important for the company's image and identity as the public's viewpoint, as high quality staff is always hard to find and very important to the company's image.

Moreover, another important aspect of sponsorship objectives within the corporate communications is hospitability; by taking care of own staff members, salespersons, customers etc to establish trustworthy relationships. (De Pelsmacker 2007, 313.)

Table 4. Sponsorship Objectives (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Bergh 2007, 312)

Corporate Communications Objectives	General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase general public awareness of the company ● Promote or enhance corporate image ● Alter public perception of company ● Involvement with the local community
	Channel Members & Trade relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build trade relations ● Corporate hospitability ● Demonstrate good will
	Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhance employees relations & motivations ● Assist staff recruitment ● Facilitate prospecting for the sales force
	Opinion formers &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase media attention

	decision makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter adverse publicity • Build goodwill • Reassure policy-holders and stockholders • Personal objective of senior managers
Marketing Communications Objectives	Awareness Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness with actual customers • Increase awareness with potential customers • Confirm market leadership • Increase new product awareness
	Brand image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alter perception of brand • Identify brand with particular market segment
	Sales/market share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induce trial of new product • Increase sales/market share

Table 4 demonstrates the objectives of sponsorship, divide into sub-categories. In some cases, advertising is banned on products such as alcohol or tobacco products, that is when sponsorship jumps in and is the only way to receive media exposure. Furthermore, sponsorship is becoming more popular as a marketing communications tool and professional in the way that in many sponsorship co-operation situations they are tied on personal interest, or according to De Pelsmacker, “management or hobby of senior executives or their husbands or wives.” (De Pelsmacker 2007, 314.)

4.5 Sponsorship goals

According to Vuokko (2003, 304) The aims of sponsorship can be related to the making, changes and/ or improvement of an organization’s image. According to her the goals of sponsorship are:

- Media publicity and visibility
- Publicity within an organization or product
- Know-how of an image and reputation or change within an organization or product
- The progress of consumption, sales and increasing the market share
- Supporting product development
- Taking care of customer relationships, creating customer relation actions, demonstrating hospitability
- Taking care of interest groups
- Handling society, demonstrating society responsibilities
- Responses to competitors actions
- Motivating own personnel, internal company image improvements

Sponsorship aims for continuous and responsible in strengthening an organizations values and image, and to support the strategical goals for their target groups. On the other hand it also aims for clear shares, realistic and measurable goals, innovative and powerful benefits, following the effects of activities and long-term sponsorship co-operations. (Valanko 2009, 134.)

4.6 Sponsorship advantages and disadvantages

Sponsorship can be cost-effective by reaching a certain target group, thus allows access to these particularly aimed target groups as sometimes some types of audiences may be unreachable. Generally, sponsorship can attain objectives such as increased awareness, image enhancement, improved relationships with various audiences, increase sales etc. Moreover, it offers a creative view to co-operations, is measurable and reaches its audiences in an endless list of places, events, charities, campaigns. (Smith & Taylor 2004, 485.) Still the measuring is quite challenging even though the results can be followed and measured as they are difficult to allocate to sponsoring.

Companies use sponsoring as a supporting factor that they hope to fulfill their public relations and advertising. On the other hand according to Vuokko it is also used for gaining more media publicity, even though in the research conducted by Vennonen one participant mentioned, that media attention maybe more of a consequence rather than an aim. Still publicity, not necessarily media attention, is the requirement for successful sponsorship. Even smaller publicity is enough if it is directed to the right target group. Through right kind of publicity, companies search for means of developing or supporting their image in the eyes of the consumers. (Vuokko 2003, 304.)

Companies try to be visible there where customers, employees and decision makers are. Thus they want to sponsor targets that attract suitable audience for them. Creating new networks, maintaining current relations, developing image or even responding to competitors actions are the key benefits that companies can achieve through sponsoring. Therefore some companies are really eager to know what kind of audience does the sponsor target appeal to and others on knowing the amount of audience that it gathers together. (Vuokko 2003, 304.)

Sponsorship traits, in other words, the key that demonstrates its strengths and accomplishments in sponsorship co-operations are the indicator of its effectiveness. (Valanko 2009, 65.)

Through sponsorship, the so called “extra” resources provide an opportunity for versatile events, creating new ones, and developing older events and boosts up sport athlete’s competition levels, as they are competing for sponsorship money. (Tuori 1995, 9.)

Sponsorships, both on-going and short term sponsorships of special events, called event marketing have a shocking pace of failure. This is because most sponsorship events do not have a great effect on the company’s stock prices or sales. Two worldwide known sponsored events the Olympics and World Cup, produce a short-term effect on sales only. (Rossiter 2005, 376.) The reason for this sort of failure that people may not be aware of is due to the fact that sponsorships usually are usually planned poorly, and the effects are measured in a wrong manner.

It is said that sponsorship is dangerous and may undermine artistic honor. An example of this is if the sponsored target such as a football player behaves in a bad manner, it brings negativity for the company. (Smith & Taylor 2004, 486.)

Sponsorship may shift too much of the authority from the organizers to the representatives of the organizations. Moreover, a sponsored event may become economically attached to the sponsor, in a way that when the organization ends the co-operation the event goes bankrupt. (Tuori 1995, 59.)

4.7 Action strategies of sponsorship

Sponsorship has been evolving throughout the years; it begins from the needs of an organization and it a strategic solution. Sponsors aim to increase sales, profit, bring value to the core business etc. (Valanko 2009, 118.)

Sponsorship is always a strategy solution, which is implemented according to the organizations needs. Aims of a sponsorship co-operation have changed throughout the years. Sponsorship is widely used because it provides strategic solutions for the organization. (Valanko 2009, 115.) The aspects associated with sponsorship strategies are the following:

- Know-how
- Image (reputation, values, imaginations)
- Differentiation
- Meaning (credibility)
- Positioning
- Strengthening and changing of the market position
- Competition benefits, utilizing competition situations and their reaction
- Visibility, publicity, goodwill, entrance to a larger media base
- Company image or brand image
- Company and its activity's changes and product launching

- Product development and innovations
- Target groups and audiences (profile, connectivity)
- Customer base, customer ship, customer loyalty
- Distribution channel (as amateurs, as recommenders, as instructors)
- Media relations
- Society responsibilities in different forms (social, ecological, economical)
- Employer reputation
- Owners, investments
- Uplifting of profile
- Other external stakeholders, networks
- Own organization, working environment and activity
- Events, promotions
- Sales, campaigns

Visibility is still an important factor for organization associated in sponsorship. However, these other aspects have risen to be as important as well. Sponsorship, is associated with the organizations own basis which evolves from the needs and values of the organization. It requires strategies made inside the organization, which are associated with the development of the core business. The employer development is associated with the present and the future thus the reputation of an organization is associated strongly with the whole staff of an organization, which meaning has grown in sponsorship projects. (Valanko 2009, 115.)

Lipponen (1999, 47) categorizes the main types of strategies of sponsorship into four parts; brand in a little circle, large mass brands, patron and visibility maximization. Table 5 demonstrates these sponsorship strategies.

Table 5. Sponsorship Strategy (Lipponen 1999, 47)

	Specified need for recognition	Need for broad recognition
Need for positioning	Brand in a little circle	Large mass brands
No need for positioning	Patron	Vibility maximization

Brand in a little circle

Brand in a little circle does not need large media visibility, yet in that certain target group in which it wants visibility, it aims at a certain image. Moreover, brand in a little circle is able to execute event marketing by for example creating a cycling event in their name in their own local city. (Vuokko 2003, 307.)

Another example of a brand in a small circle is exclusive high-end brands such as Rolex and Ferrari, which follow this strategy. This strategy wants to optimize their operations and is active. (Lipponen 1999, 48.)

Patron

A patron functions in a carefully chosen target group without a clear aim of an image. An example of this type of a strategy is sponsoring an art exhibition keeping in mind that if the event attracts a company's key customers, they may notice the name and/or logo of the company in the ticket or in the entrance of the event. (Vuokko 2003, 307.)

A patron is satisfied with its position and does not communicate actively, and an example of this is a company that has regular customers and does not want to expand its customers base. (Lipponen 1999, 47.)

Large mass brands

Large mass brands aim for wide recognition and visibility as the name suggests. An organization may for example sponsor an international sports event such as tennis or soccer, music festivals or children's hospital project. Through these the sponsor aims to receive as much visibility and publicity. (Vuokko 2003, 309.)

Large mass brands want to keep up their image and visibility of their brand for various target groups. Examples of companies which use these strategies are Nokia, Apple, Coca-Cola, various international banks and so on. (Lipponen 1999, 48.)

Visibility Maximization

Visibility maximization is also interested in large target groups and wide visibility but have not specified a certain profile aim. For these types of sponsors, sponsorship is a way to just receive visibility. (Vuokko 2003, 308.)

Visibility maximization usually aims for a sponsorship co-operation in which the partner aims for a large visibility for its audience. Therefore, sports are usually the most popular target for this type of strategy. (Lipponen 1999, 51.)

The links between these various sponsorship strategies are shown in the figure 7. One organization may have various different strategies that they are using in their marketing and sales force. Furthermore, categorizing these strategies of sponsorship gives a base for analyzing the sponsorship primary goals and potential targets. (Lipponen 1999, 48.)

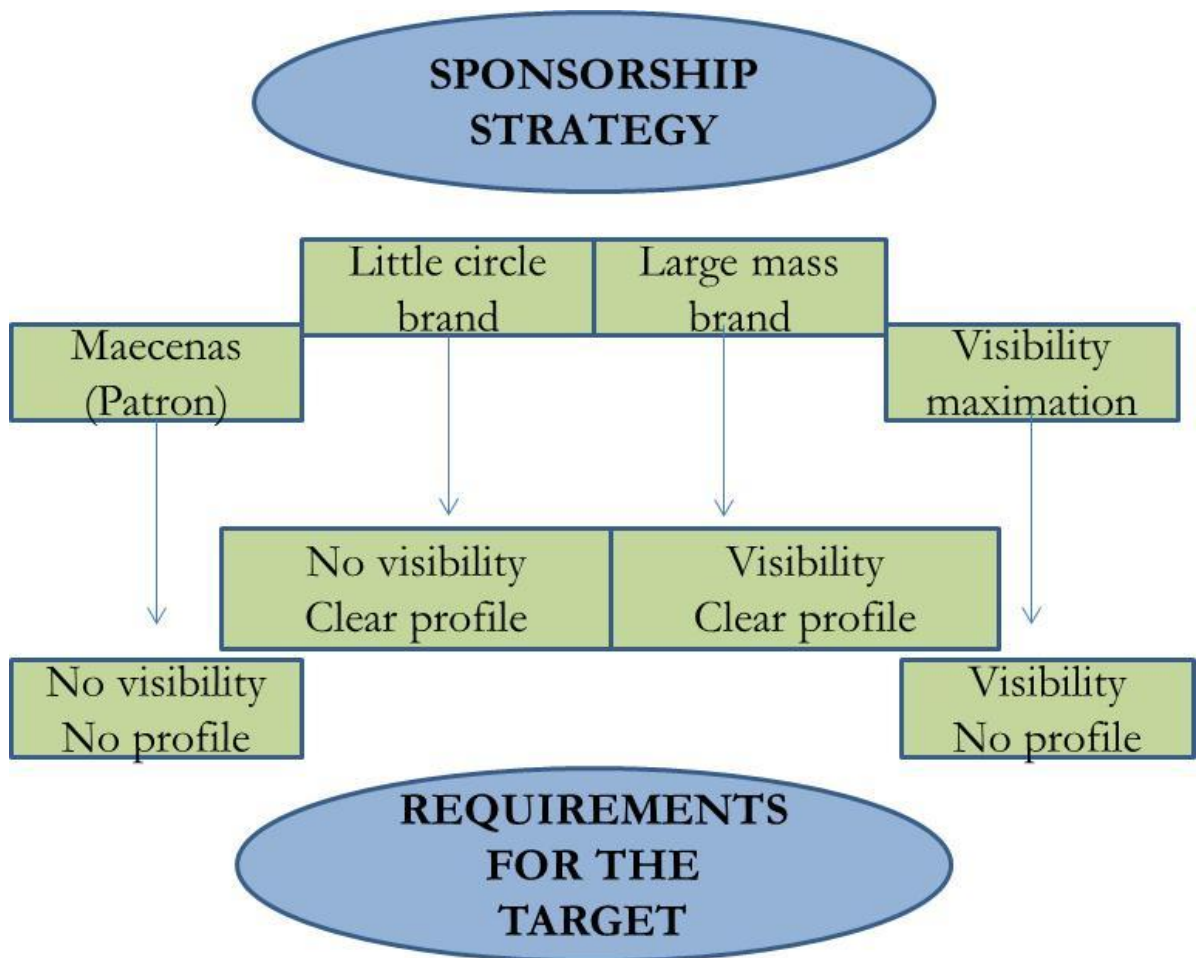


Figure 7. Criteria for Choosing a Sponsorship Strategy (Lipponen 1999, 49)

4.8 Sponsorship Process

It is important for the management of organizations to precisely think why they would sponsor a certain target, what their goals are as an organization and how does sponsorship aid in accomplishing them. Moreover, it is important to think about possible risks and opportunities that the co-operation is likely to bring along. Furthermore, how effectively the money invested into sponsorship profits and in what ground can a sponsorship contract be renewed. (Venonen 2007, 23.)

The one looking for a sponsor should beforehand take time to get to know the potential sponsor's business environment and decision making process. A company's annual reports

are a good way to get to know an organization as well as their mission and vision statements. (Vennonen 2007, 24.)

Tuori provides a figure of the process of sponsorship in seven steps (see figure 8). It is common that a sponsorship project usually comes from outside an organization. Thus, it may not be as useful in comparison if the organization itself finds a sponsored target. It is important to go through the sponsorship process before starting a co-operation, to avoid risks, and prepare oneself for the upcoming tasks. (Tuori 1995, 16.)

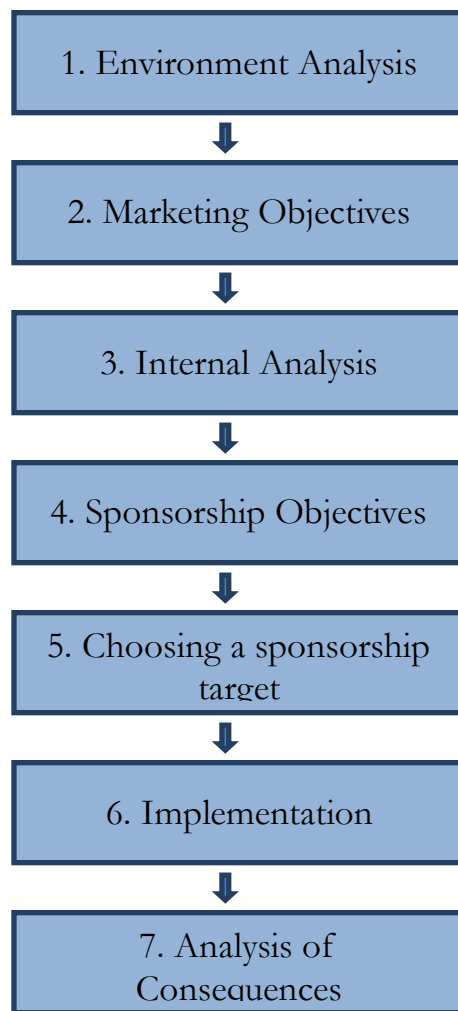


Figure 8. Sponsorship Process (Tuori 1995, 16)

The first step of the sponsorship process is the environmental analysis. A company that is looking for sponsorship possibilities needs to be aware of its environment and internal aspects. There are four important external aspects which affect the environmental analysis; product demand, competitors marketing actions, law and target group's values. (Tuori 1995, 16.)

The organizations internal factors also influence the process. These factors are economical resources, personnel resources and motivation to commit. It needs to be carefully calculated if there are enough resources for a sponsorship co-operation. The organization's personnel need to acquire enough skills and time for preparing the sponsorship process as well as managing it. It is important, that the key individuals and the different divisions really have an interest in commit to a sponsorship co-operation agreement. (Tuori 1995, 16.)

The one looking for a sponsorship co-operation should always think beforehand if sponsorship can be used as a means of marketing communications to financially support a cause. It takes time to find the right sponsors and can be frustrating at times, because there are a lot of negative answers and comments involved in the search process. At this moment, a sponsorship co-operation contract is a normal business contract, which takes resources from the management to fill out. If a company does not want to sponsor for whatever reason, a private financial aid can be considered as a donation that does not require any counterparts. (Venonen 2007, 23.)

5 Creating sponsorship co-operation

This chapter provides information on the benefits, aims, risks and difficulties faces in sponsorship cooperation between the sponsor the target group.

5.1 Sponsorship co-operation aims

A long-term sponsorship co-operation is valued by an organization, as it can be developed together even further and needs less resources than finding a new partner for co-operation. Trust is very important in these relationships and that both settle for the same goals. This kind of a relationship amongst both players can only be achieved if the international communication is working and everything in general works for both. (Vennonen 2007, 26.)

Sponsorship co-operation has been used for a long time to describe an organizations and different sponsees co-operation. It has a negative conjugation due to its historical background, because the frustrated parties in a sponsorship co-operation experience it to be as an aided activity, from businesses to the sponsees, without them actually getting anything in return. (Alaja & Forssell 2004, 21.)

Sponsorship co-operation is made up of two elements, a co-operation agreement and marketing communications. The co-operation agreement provides the rights and with marketing communications these rights are made into reality. The amount of marketing communications used varies from case to case and from organization to organization. (Alaja & Forssell 2004, 25.)

In general, sport sponsorship is a key form of sport marketing communications and if a big part of sport organization's marketing communications, promotional mix. It is historically proven that sport organizations, celebrities and events have attracted the highest sponsorship investments in comparison to other sponsorship targets. (Blakey 2011, 110.)

According to Valanko (2009, 106) sponsorship co-operation can be divided into four different levels or parts. These factors form the entire project. Sponsorship co-operation aims to provide multidimensionality, effectiveness and answers together and individually for both parties. Table 6 demonstrates the four levels on sponsorship co-operation as defined by Valanko.

Table 6. The Four Levels of Sponsorship Co-operation (Valanko 2009, 106)

The four levels of sponsorship co-operation
1. Both party's output, the offers of the target, the sponsors substitutes and rights and both responsibilities, like stated in the contract
2. The planning and carry-through of the co-operation through the help of shared operations, development, additional ideas and implementation together
3. The targets own activity and the benefits of the co-operation in them
4. The sponsor's own active utilization of the co-operation in their own activities

Sponsorship co-operation forms into a functional co-operation when a cultural player and an organization work together and come out with an output, for example a new service. A co-operation relies on common preparation and evaluations of the success. Co-operation implies that both players do what is agreed on yet when a co-operation becomes more concise it brings along dependency on the other player and information is shifted from a partner to another, which brings along more risks. All in all, a functional sponsorship co-operation requires strong commitment from both sides for their common targets. (Vennonen 2007, 20.)

5.2 Benefits of sponsorship co-operation

To receive the complete benefits from a sponsorship co-operation, it requires both parties to give their very best input and strive. The best situation would be that, sponsoring would

be a larger part of an organization marketing communications program, which would give the event even more visibility. (Vennonen 2007, 20.)

Sometimes a good sponsor may help with finding new sponsors. An organization with a good reputation gives a part of its positive image to an event to reassure the events credibility and reliability. When one reliable sponsor demonstrated its trust in an event, it is easier for other organization to follow along. Furthermore, a satisfied sponsor may also bring along its own company partners for a reliable event. (Vennonen 2007, 27.)

According to Alaja and Forssell sponsorship co-operation can bring along extraordinary opportunities (2004, 28.)

5.3 Risks and difficulties of sponsorship co-operation

Like in any other business process, also sponsorship co-operation has its own risks and a way of managing them. In the business world, it is common to categorize risks into two; company risks and risks that occur accidentally. Risks within the company bring financial losses, ruin a company's reputation which usually evolves from poor managing and wrong decisions. Accidental risks mean involve unexpected accidents in general and with personnel, when a product breaks or any other accident that brings along financial losses and possibly reparation responsibilities. Thus, risks should be carefully analyzed with the other player to avoid them from happening. (Vennonen 2007, 28.)

The availability of co-operation possibilities in the market is huge and diverse.

Organizations understand that co-operations demand a lot of hard work, effort, time and resources. Thus, it has been a trend in the past years that the demand for co-operations has been decreasing. (Valanko 2009, 106.)

There are many reasons involved in why a sponsorship co-operation may fail; such as marketing, the theme of the event, promotions, and operations during the event or the environment. Risks in co-operation can evolve from the know-how of both players, if they do not know each other's strategies well enough it brings along risks. (Vennonen 2007, 29.)

An organizations decision to take part in a sponsorship co-operation is always risky. Their decision to attach a target of sponsorship to their image is brave step. It is very usual that risks involved in sponsorship co-operations are rarely talked about in public and loses are not advertised. Thus, it is said that a sponsorship co-operation is a risky game in general, as even with analysis done beforehand you never are complete aware of what may come before you. However, experience and careful analyzing bring positivity to the risk management. A risk game is either a win or loss. (Alaja & Forssell 2004, 29.)

One way to manage possible upcoming risks in sponsorship co-operation is to make clear written contract which bind to do what was planned and promised. (Vennonen 2007, 70.)

6 Methods of research

As a starting point to this research a desk research was conducted, which means that secondary material created primarily to solve other research problems is utilized to solve, or at least support solving the research problem in hand. It is cost efficient to use as much existing material as possible. Still usually a field study is needed in addition, which again creates or provides primarily material, as it is collected especially for the research in process. Desk research is a cost efficient way to define the needed amount of field study, but it is important to use only sources that are trustworthy and updated. (Mäntyneva 2008, 29.) This research method was utilized especially in the theory part of this specific thesis.

There are two different research methods that can be used for a field research; qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research utilizes statistical methods and requires relatively big sample. It is also seen stiffer than qualitative method. (Mäntyneva 2008, 32.) For this research we decided to use qualitative method, which according to Mäntyneva usually has a relatively narrow but thoroughly considered sample because we wanted to get detailed information about sponsoring and find even some concrete examples of sponsorship co-operations that PSS's women's team could copy to their processes.

Qualitative materials can be gathered for example by participant observations, target group interviews or deep interviews (Mäntyneva 2008, 33.) We decided to use the last one as our primarily data collection method and contacted several chosen companies operating nearby the team via telephone and e-mail in hope to get a face to face meeting with the person in charge of their sponsorship co-operations. Unfortunately, tight schedules of company representatives forced us to execute some of the interviews via email despite our primarily plans. The face to face interviews were aimed to be more of a discussions rather than straight forward interviews with questions and short answers. Therefore the material supporting the interviews was kept as simple as possible and the questions were quite wide.

Things we wanted to know from the companies are listed below:

- what kind of targets they have sponsored in the past few years

- what factors affect the decision on whom to sponsor
- what is general length for sponsorship co-operation
- What kind of aims do they have for sponsorship co-operation
- What is expected from sponsorship co-operation
- How have the aims been achieved in the past
- What kind of experiences have they had in the past

The table 7 lists the interviews that we were able to execute with details of the company representatives as well as date and duration of the interview. E-mail interviews are specified in the table on the column “duration.”

Table 7. Interviewed Companies & Schedule

Company	Interviewee	Date	Duration
Borealis Polymers Oy	Leena Linna, Regional Communications Specialist	14.7.2011	20 minutes
Kemppi Oy	Minna-Maija Jokisalo, Communications Manager	9.9.2011	40 minutes
Liukkonen Pultti Oy	Jari Liukkonen, Chief Executive Officer	9.8.2011	e-mail reply
Metritiski Oy	Nina Kilpinen, Administration & Marketing	26.8.2011	e-mail reply

	Representative		
Neste Oil	Marjaana Suominen, Communications	12.8.2011	20 minutes
Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN)	Communications & Marketing Representative	10.8.2011	e-mail reply

All the company interviews were recorded with permission from the interviewee and they can be found in a MP-3 form. For analyzing the materials they were first written down and then divided into different themes to make it easier to compare and analyze them.

The companies included in this research were chosen based on location. The aim was to interview companies operating nearby the team that could be potential sponsors in the future. Borealis Polymers is the only one from the interviewed companies that is currently sponsoring PSS (the whole club.) Neste Oil was interviewed on a local level, meaning that Marjaana Suominen discussed with us about their support procedure in Porvoo, not sponsoring on their group level. Also Borealis Polymers Oy is a part of international Borealis group, but it is important to understand that results presented in this research describe only the sponsorship frame utilized in Finland.

The interview with Nokia Siemens Networks was excluded from the research. Even though they provided us a lot of knowledge, most of it was on international level and therefore could not be directly compared to the material gathered from other interviews. There would have been also some difficulties with confidentiality thus we decided that even though it would have brought more value to the research it was not worth the effort.

All the interviews that we managed to execute had a good atmosphere and each interviewee wished us the best with our research. The aim of creating discussions rather than interviews was on our point of view achieved. Many company representatives that we

contacted, but had to decline from the interview were truly sorry for not being able to help us.

In addition to the described company interviews we also interviewed Mika Haakana, Manager of Porvoo Salibandysseura's women's team. This interview was executed second of August, 2011 in Porvoo. It was not recorded as it lasted over 2, 5 hours and many other things outside this research were discussed at the same time. In the appendixes (appendix 1) can be found a frame for this discussion. Haakana provided us valuable support throughout the whole process and it was easy to co-operate with him.

7 Research analysis

In this chapter the important and relevant material gathered from the interviews is presented and analyzed.

7.1 Sponsored Targets

Ice-hockey is really popular in Finland and seems to be sponsored by quite many companies. From the companies that we interviewed at least four have sponsored their local ice-hockey teams in the past few years. Nina Kilpinen from Metritiski Oy mentioned that most of their sponsorship focuses on ice-hockey. She said that:

“The decision to sponsor Ice-hockey has been tactic in that sense that in Finland ice-hockey is really popular and therefore the visibility in the media is guaranteed.”

Thus it is clear that their aim is to receive visibility through sponsorship. Vuokko (2003, 304) also mentioned that media publicity and visibility are usual sponsorship goals for companies.

Borealis Polymers and Neste Oil were the only ones not mentioning this specific sport at all, but because they sponsor so many different sport teams, they did not list all the sponsored targets. Even though Marjaana Suominen from Neste Oil did not mention this in the interview, it can be found from their website, that on group level they have a sponsoring contract with Espoo Blues. The company has agreed to pay a certain amount of money for The Association of Friends of the University Children's hospitals from each goal that the team makes in their home arena. These funds are then used to purchase new equipment for the children's department in the hospital of Jorvi. (Neste Oil 2011.) This is an interesting way to do sponsoring instead of the typical and traditional way. Porvoon Salibandyseura's women's team could also think of similar offers to their sponsor so that the team could get some percentage of the amount and the decided “end target” would get the rest.

Many other sports were brought up in the interviews as well but ice-hockey was clearly the most common target. According to Haakana the mentioned Sponsor Navigator 11

research also confirms that ice-hockey is the most popular sport for sponsors. Other sports mentioned as sponsored targets in the past were horse riding, skiing, golf, motor sports (for example endure and F1), volleyball and floorball.

Junior teams were mentioned in several interviews as interesting targets for sponsoring. Leena Linna from Borealis Polymers Oy said:

“If for example company logo is printed on some team’s uniforms they would rather be printed on really young players shirts than first teams. The social good would be the goal instead of clear visibility in the eyes of the consumers.”

Handling society and demonstrating society responsibilities are goals of sponsorship also according to Vuokko (2003, 304.)

Nina Kilpinen from Suomen Metritiski Oy mentioned that they also support some juniors and said:

“...we want to focus also on junior talents and their success. The idea is that each junior is a talent for the future and we support him financially towards his goal.”

According to Haakana the team has had contracts with sponsors that the sponsored funds are divided between the women’s first team and a specified junior team (Haakana, M. 2.8.2011.) This possibility could be highlighted to sponsors with the information that if the club would not have first teams both in women’s and men’s series, the junior players would not have anything to reach for. Thus it is crucial for the club’s operation that both “main” teams continue to operate.

7.2 Sponsorship Co-operation Length

As mentioned, according to Vennonen’s research companies value long-term sponsorship as it provides the possibility to develop the co-operation together even further and it takes less resources than finding a new partner. According to Minna-Maija Jokisalo

“Kempfi aims for these long term sponsorship co-operations as it is beneficial for us as well as our customers.”

Jari Liukkonen from Liukkosen Pultti emphasized also that long co-operation is the reason behind their decision on who to sponsor. This of course indicates that they have been satisfied with their co-operation with the ice-hockey team, Pelicans. Even though, the company signs the sponsoring contracts only for one or two years at a time.

Most of the other interviewed organizations mentioned also that their contracts are typically signed for one year at a time. Therefore the team getting the support from the companies has to earn it year after year, not only by fulfilling all the possibly agreed conditions on the contract, but also exceeding them. As mentioned before, the unstable financial situation affects also the duration of the contracts as, unfortunately, sponsoring is easy to cut down from budgets.

7.3 Product Awareness

Product awareness is something that Borealis would like to increase through sponsoring. They produce plastic which is also used in floorball sticks and other equipment related to the sport, therefore they have started to sponsor floorball in the year 1995 and they still do. Most of their sport sponsoring funds goes to Borealis tournament which is arranged yearly in Porvoo in co-operation with PSS. About the product awareness Linna said:

“...there is products and social responsibility, thus increasing the knowledge of plastics and other products of Borealis when possible and share the knowledge of their good properties.”

The team could think of companies that have similar connections to the sport and contact them with a co-operation suggestion. These kinds of companies could be for example, like Borealis, raw material manufacturers or equipment manufacturers. A looser connection could also be found from the team’s colors. What companies nearby present their logos in yellow and black?

Kemppi oy has the same idea behind their sponsorship co-operation. According to Minna-Maija Jokisalo, traditionally speaking motor sports such as the F1 are associated with welding and welding tends to be a men's work thus this is the link between Kemppi's sponsorship co-operations with the F1. Furthermore, F1 is usually associated with high tech equipment and thus through this Kemppi hopes to bring up their brand. Moreover, simply the idea that car's need welding is a reason for the chosen sponsorship target, and it is easier for them to organize customer events for their target group. These customer events are of course arranged for taking care of customer relationships, which is also one defined goal for sponsorship (Vuokko 2003, 304.) Minna-Maija Jokisalo said:

“Events and competitions are usually remembered, thus Kemppi takes time in organizing these events.”

They made a co-operation with the Silverstone “garage” in England, and were able to share the know-how of their new brands, thus invited the press and customers to the event to watch the race. These are events that according to Minna-Maija Jokisalo will stay with one forever. Kemppi also creates events such as a previous one which involved a competition of who welds a car the fastest, thus it was fun for the competitors and customers.

Different kind of events could be also thought as a cooperation partners. Bigger local events could be listed and cooperation possibilities related to them thought of. Could there be some kind discount to the events with the season ticket to the team's games or could the team some other way be a promotional help for the events? Liukkosen Pultti mentioned that they occasionally use the players of Pelicans, the ice-hockey team that they sponsor, in their events and the experiences have been good.

7.4 Brand Visibility

Both Kemppi and Liukkosen Pultti mentioned clearly that their goal in sponsoring is to increase their brand visibility. Kemppi even specified that their sponsoring co-operation with the F1 is planned to increase their visibility more on international level and present

themselves to the world as a Finnish company, as previously they have been linked to an Italian company. Unfortunately according to Vuokko one of the biggest challenges in sponsorship co-operation is how to gain publicity and visibility? What kind of advertising is needed? (Vuokko 2003, 318)

Part of the sponsorship visibility could be how many people participated in the sponsoring event, therefore, what kind of people will draw their attention to the organization and what kind of a manner did the media inform about the sponsored event? (Vuokko 2003, 320) Therefore companies should think thoroughly the targets that they sponsor and research a bit their backgrounds. The team again could prepare good elevator speeches to tackle all the possible uncertainty.

As mentioned before, sometimes a good sponsor may help to find new sponsors. When a reliable company is already co-operating with the target it may increase the targets value in the eyes of other companies. Furthermore, a satisfied sponsor may even bring along its own business partners to sponsor, if they are really satisfied. Therefore the relations are crucial to keep in the best possible condition. (Vennonen 2007, 27.)

Neste Oil on the other hand does not actively seek for visibility, but as mentioned this is only on a local level in Porvoo and it is rather supporting than sponsoring. They arrange once a year an event where they hand out supports for the selected targets.

Representatives of local press are also invited to the event and they write an article about that. Still few times the company has met some criticism from the local people who wonder why the biggest employer in Porvoo area has not supported anyone, even though really the company has supported different teams and operators for over 30 years.

As mentioned earlier, through sponsorship organizations aim to receive at least one of the four known aspects which are visibility, feedback from the interest groups, publicity and mind image affects and last but not least, sales and marketing development. Metritiski explained that their goal is to directly increase their sales as their products and procedures are not yet branded. Still one of the challenges is to determine how does sponsorship support the sales? (Vuokko 2003, 318) Sponsoring is a fixed part of Metritiski's marketing communication. As Nina Kilpinen put it:

“Sponsoring is an essential part of Metritiski’s marketing communication and it has also been one tool in corporate identity building process.”

Linna from Borealis said that they get so many sponsorship applications that they have drawn flexible geographical borders for their sponsorship agreements. They want to sponsor local communities and through that support their image as an employer. Linna mentioned about the image building and increasing the knowledge of the company:

“...we would like to increase, by showing Borealis’ name in good connections and leaving it to mind, so that in the future it would be easier to attract new labor force. It is more about the image building when operating in BtoB field as sponsoring is not a way to directly increase sales.”

7.5 Sponsorship Challenges

According to Marjaana Suominen Neste Oil has considered concrete sponsoring also on Porvoo local level, but as it would require lot more resources on their behalf and the result measurement is not accurate, they have decided to rather stay just on supporting and sharing their supports for many targets. As mentioned before, companies need to carefully calculate if there are enough resources for sponsorship co-operation. It takes time, skills to manage the processes. (Tuori 1995, 16.)

Liukkosen Pultti also mentioned the challenge in measuring results received by sponsoring. Jari Liukkonen said that they cannot be sure what is gained directly via sponsoring as they have not done any research about it. Linna from Borealis agrees and says about adverts or printed logos:

“It is difficult to evaluate how good the visibility is and how does it effect.”

Still they continue to sponsor based on their assumptions and positive experiences. That indicates how important it is to keep the sponsors satisfied. Also different kind of sponsoring methods with clearly measurable results could be thought of. A simple example could be a small entrepreneur selling his products in the games of the team, for

all the sold pieces of products the entrepreneur would give an agreed percentage for the team. This example is similar with the presented Neste Oils cooperation with Espoo Blues.

The team needs to be prepared and make the process for the sponsor as easy as possible. Still enough time should be reserved to go through all the suggestions and steps of the possible co-operation so that the sponsor does not feel left out.

7.6 Sponsorship Experiences

All in all, Kemppe has been satisfied with their sponsorship partners. However they also feel that the co-operation could be made even easier and improved, if the sponsorship targets also had some concrete ideas on how to proceed with the co-operation.

“As placing the company logo is only the first step made before the actual co-operation starts” as Minna-Maija Jokisalo says.

New ideas and initiative approach would probably be warmly welcomed by many other companies as well. Marjaana Suominen from Neste Oil mentioned that they were positively surprised when a football club arranged junior activity in the company’s name even though it was not required in the agreement. This was exceeding the company’s expectations and it left a positive attitude towards the club as well as sponsorship in general.

Nina Kilpinen from Metritiski said that in the past they have been part of many interesting sponsorship cooperations and have been satisfied in the results. According to her:

“Many cooperation partners and customers have been found through sponsorship cooperations.”

8 Conclusions and Assessments

The results from the six (five used and analyzed) different interviewed companies provided us insight into how a successful sponsorship co-operation works. It is important that the team considers these aspects in search of improvements. The theory and field study both suggest that for a co-operation to succeed, visibility and publicity are needed. Many companies demonstrated that sports are the most common targets of co-operation and a long lasting co-operation is preferred as it saves resources and time. Even though in practice most of the contracts are signed just for a year or two at a time, they are usually renewed.

Based on the desk study and the interview with Mika Haakana it can be stated that floorball keeps showing growth in its popularity. Even though the competition is fierce and financial aid scarce the sport has the resources to compete with other popular sports about the sponsors. PSS women's first team needs to find ways to stand out from the crowd for sponsors to be attracted and after that they still have to work with the sponsors to ensure their satisfaction.

The teams current sponsor situation is not weak, but it requires lot of work from a small support group. Even though the team's administrative resources are limited they have high aims and many good ideas have been thought of.

The field study provided us with know-how that we can share with the manager of the team, Mika Haakana, for possible future improvements. Efficient communication would definitely be one of them. It would require closer co-operation with the existing sponsors, and getting to know the new sponsors and their expectations as well as possible. The expectations vary a lot and there are as many expectations as there are sponsors. Therefore they should be clarified thoroughly beforehand. As mentioned the contracts are renewed only if the sponsors are satisfied and expectations met. The satisfaction might also spread and be a marketing tool for the team to attract other possible sponsors and cooperation partners. Therefore also follow ups during the season would be valuable to ensure that all the cooperation goals are met.

As mentioned new ideas from sponsored targets are warmly welcomed by companies, thus the team should do its best to find new and innovative ideas to suggest. These suggestions should still be realistic and planned individually for each possible sponsor. The frame of the co-operation possibility should be solved as too wide co-operation suggestions might scare off some potential “smaller” sponsors. The gap between the sponsor expectations and reality can be narrowed only by communicating as there are not any specific general frames that the companies follow in sponsoring. Some invest more on it than others.

8.1 Validity and Reliability

Validity describes the research methods ability to measure the defined target. “When theoretical and operational definition are equivalent, validity is good” according to Mäntyneva. He also describes that in theory validity is easy to value as measured result just has to be compared to already existing verified results. In practice the challenge is that these verified results are usually missing. (Mäntyneva 2008, 34.)

Reliability describes the used research methods ability to provide other than random results. Thus it means research methods ability to reach trustworthy results. Reliability is aimed to increase by analyzing and processing the research as objectively as possible. Also the results should be repeatable, meaning that the results gathered should stay the same during time and if someone would like to repeat the exactly same research with exactly same methods, the results gained should be the same. Additionally the reporting should be so accurate that a reader would be able to execute the exactly same research just by following the steps of the report. What comes to generalization the results gathered should repeat itself. (Mäntyneva 2008, 35) Thus this research would have required so many interviews that eventually the same answers should have been received from many different companies and no-one could add anything new to it. Because of the topic and the narrow sample used, this was not achieved. Sponsoring is something that will continue to develop and will not stay the same for long periods of time and as mentioned earlier the only limit to sponsorship co-operation opportunities is one’s imagination. (Smith 2004,

482) Still the research was not in any scale unsuccessful one. We truly believe that the team can utilize the information gathered in this research.

In the future a wide marketing communications plan could be executed for the team. As mentioned in the beginning a limiting factor in this research was that it was separated from its frame, marketing communications plan.

8.2 Own learning

The thesis process has definitely been an engaging and somewhat challenging learning experience for us. From seminars to company interviews, it has provided us with new ways of thinking and learning as a team, we have also been able to use skills learnt throughout various courses. Moreover, our motivation levels have varied throughout the process and deadlines sometimes caused some frustration as both of us have entered working life, thus need to really manage our time effectively and get back to the educational “mode”.

Furthermore, it was more difficult to get in contact with companies as we thought. We contacted several companies via telephone, e-mail or other connections, however not many were willing to provide us with a short interview on their organization’s sponsorship situation. However, we wish to acknowledge those six companies that took time to participate in the project. The thesis provided us with know-how on how and why companies decide to sponsor various target groups and how these sponsorship co-operations work in reality.

Lessons which we learned throughout this process were the importance of a timetable and managing the provided time efficiently. It is important that a timeline is made before hand in order to keep up with the given deadlines and finish on time, or in the timeframe which was put in place when starting the thesis. If no timeline is made, it is easy to lose track of time, thus the project is easily delayed.

Another lesson learnt, is team work. It has been a continuous learning process in Haagahelia, to produce adequate work in teams/ pairs. We have worked on various projects throughout the university years together, so our advantage was that we know how both of us work and the work we are able to produce, so there were no shocks there.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

Interview transcript

Interviewer: Erna Takala / Päivi Pietilä

Interviewee: Mika Haakana, Manager, Porvoon Salibandyseura

Date and time: 2.8.2011, 7 p.m.

Duration: 2,5 hours

Location: Porvoo, Finland

Floorball

- Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats
- Floorball in Porvoo

PSS women's first team

- What kind of group / players?
- What kind of support group?
- Success
- Goals for the future
- Visibility
- Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats
- Sponsors
 - o Strategy
 - o Who handles and how?
 - o What kind of agreements?
 - o What kind of challenges / Limitations?
 - o What kind of expectations / wishes for the future?