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# More Effective Sports Sponsorship – Combining and Integrating Key Resources and Capabilities of International Sports Events and Their Major Sponsors

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Working Paper 16-139

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**Abstract**
Organizations in the field of sports are becoming increasingly dependent on sponsors for their value creation and growth. Studies suggest that sports organizations (rights-holders) often fail to exploit the full potential of such sponsorship partnerships. The aim of the case study reported here is to explore key dimensions of value creation in sponsorship relationships from the perspective of a sports organization.
The case study was constructed on the basis of interviews with an organization in the administrative structure of European football, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and its major international sports event, the European Championships (EURO). Interviews were also conducted with two of its sponsors, and five independent experts. The interviews were conducted beginning in 2003, over the four EURO project life cycles starting in 2000, with a primary focus on the tournaments taking place in 2016.
We explore different types of sponsorship relationships based on their direct and indirect value creation function for the sports organization, and propose key capabilities that are required for the sports organization to successfully integrate, coordinate and combine resources with its major sponsors. Key capabilities that are explored in this context are: collaborative, absorptive, adaptive and learning capabilities. The ability of sport organizations to share and absorb knowledge from their partners and to integrate this knowledge into their planning and management processes was critical. The study shows how knowledge-sharing routines supported resource integration between sponsorship partners. There are few in-depth case studies on sponsorship management from the perspective of sports entities.

**Keywords**

Sponsorship, sports organizations, case study, Europe, business relationships, collaborative marketing, value co-creation, relationship portfolio management.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Introduction*

Sponsorship is a core marketing activity for many companies, and a vital source of income for many sports entities, such as the Olympics, the World Cup and other major international events, as well as leagues. On a global level, investments in sponsorship have almost doubled over the past ten years and in 2015 companies were projected to invest 45,2 bn USD in sponsorship (compared to 26,7 bn USD in 2006) (PWC, 2011). With higher investments, there has also been an increased professionalization on the part of sports organizations in supporting the business strategy of their sponsors. Sports entities (rights-holders) are being evaluated as strategic marketing platforms by their sponsors, and sports organizations increasingly invest in competencies and capabilities that support the business model of their partners (Farrelly et al., 2006; Lund, 2006; Lund, 2011; Greyser and Teopaco, 2009; Ryan and Fahy, 2012).

Organizations in the field of sports are becoming increasingly dependent on sponsors for their value creation, development and growth. Studies, however, suggest that sports organizations (rights-holders) often fail to exploit the full potential of their sponsorship partnerships (Farrelly et al., 2006). The aim of the case study reported here is to explore key dynamics of value creation and enhancement in sponsorship relationships from the perspective of a sports organization, and to identify key capabilities of the rights-holder that enable such value creation.

Rights-holders often collaborate with major sponsors and can take advantage of sponsorship-linked marketing and branding expertise of these corporations (Cornwell et al., 2005; Cornwell, 2008, Lund, 2011). Sports organizations can benefit from generating knowledge about their sponsors and by supporting them in activating their sponsorships. In successful international sponsorship arrangements there is often a partnership approach where resources are combined and knowledge is shared to reach mutual benefits (Lund, 2006, 2010, 2011).

Most sponsorship research to date has focused on the sponsor as a unit of analysis, rather than recognizing the important role of the rights-holder in the value creation process (Fahy et al. 2004; Ryan and Fahy, 2012). There are few in-depth case studies on sponsorship management from the perspective of sports entities. This paper, based principally on an in-depth case study of UEFA (Union of European Football Associations), makes a contribution to understanding sponsorship management from the perspective of the sports organization. It studies how a sports organization develops and manages its sponsorship portfolio by integrating key resources and by leveraging direct and indirect relationship functions of sponsors. It further identifies key capabilities necessary for strategic management of these relationships.

*Methodology*

The case study examined here is based on interviews with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and its international sports events, primarily the European Championships (EURO). The study of the event covered four EURO project life cycles starting in 2000 with a primary focus on the 2016 Championships in France. The data were primarily generated during the preparations for EURO 2016, but were also combined with data generated through previous case studies of UEFA and of its sponsors (e.g. Lund, 2006; 2011). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen respondents representing the rights-holder, two of its partners, and experts from the industry not directly involved in these sponsorship activities. In order to add to the robustness and richness of data, interviews were conducted on different organizational levels and in different business units. Interviews were also combined with the analysis of documents and reports.

*Results and Conclusions*

We describe different types of sponsorship relationships and their direct and indirect value creation functions. We further present key competencies of the sports event in terms of effective management of its sponsorship portfolio. Critical capabilities are presented as knowledge-based and relationship-based capabilities. We identify key capabilities of the sports organization defined here as collaborative, absorptive, adaptive, and learning capabilities. The ability of sports organizations to share and absorb knowledge from their partners and to integrate this knowledge into their planning and management processes is critical. The learning and adaptations that resulted from previous interactions added to the competencies of UEFA and to the efficiency and longevity of the existing sponsorship relationships.

Successfully integrating commercial activities and resources of sponsors into sports content can improve the audience experience and help audiences perceive sponsors as authentic and relevant. Collaborative capabilities include the ability to identify partners with complementary resources and to establish a relationship management infrastructure that facilitates interaction and resource combinations between partners. In turn, this enables the sports organization to identify and handle potential conflicts and to build trust. These capabilities have impact on resource integration and thus the value generated by and for the sports organization.

## 1. Introduction

Sponsorship has become an important income source for many sports organizations as well as a core marketing activity for sponsors. Sponsorship research has in the past mainly focused on the sponsor, under-representing the important role of the sponsored organization in creating value (Fahy et al., 2004, Ryan and Fahy, 2012). Sponsorship requires, however, the active involvement and combined resources of both parties (Lund, 2010, 2011). To understand the exchange relationship in a sponsorship situation, we need to consider both the ability of the recipient to manage its operations in such a way as to deliver a return on the sponsor's investment, as well as the value generated for the sports organization through collaboration with corporate partners. The study reported here explores key competencies that underlie value creation in a sponsorship program from the perspective of the sports organization. The findings are based on interviews with a large-scale organization in Europe, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and two of its sponsors.

Sponsorship has been defined as "a cash and/or in-kind fee paid to a property (typically a sports, entertainment, non-profit event or organization) in return for the access of the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property" (IEG, 2000). The great majority of studies concerned with value creation and strategy by sponsorship center around the sponsor as the unit of analysis, or the consumer's response to sponsorship messages. Their focus has been mainly on marketing communications issues (measuring sponsorship effects and effectiveness) and management issues (objectives and resource deployment from a sponsors' perspective). Previous studies have further focused primarily on management issues internal to the organization, viewing the sponsor as a closed system, and applying the resource-based view of the firm to the analysis of the means by which sponsors create a competitive advantage by combining tangible and intangible assets to support a sponsorship investment (Amis et al. 1999; Fahy et al; 2004). Further studies have also explored relationship dimensions in the sponsorship context by adopting three approaches in particular: alliances (Farrelly and Quester, 2005; Farrelly et al. 2006; Urriolagoitia and Planellas, 2007), an interaction approach (Olkkonen, 2002) and industrial networks (Olkkonen, 2001). They suggest that large scale sport sponsorship arrangements can develop into strategic alliances, often taking the form of co-branding activities. The studies have also found, however, that sports organizations may fail to exploit the full potential of such alliances on account of their lack of collaborative capabilities and commitment to the relationship, and a shortage of brand-building expertise. The result is often that sponsors follow their own strategy and the sponsored organization loses value creation opportunities.

Higher levels of investment in sponsorship introduce greater risk and demand greater involvement of both parties, both with one another and in the planning and implementation of sponsorship strategy. The positive outcome is often the opportunity to develop long term, cooperative, and mutually beneficial business relationships, pursuing marketing objectives by exploiting the association between the two.

## 2. Value co-creation in sponsorship relations and networks

Value is defined in many ways. In the business-to-business (B-to-B) marketing literature, value is often defined as the perceived difference between benefits and sacrifices (Flint et al., 1997; Biong et al., 1997; Walter et al., 2001). The value concept is complex when used as an analytical tool due to its subjectivity and relativity. It is perceived differently depending on who does the assessment, what is assessed, when the assessment is made and the purpose of assessment. Moreover, value can be seen from a customer/consumer or supplier perspective but also from the many perspectives represented by other stakeholders in a network. Among them are shareholders, intermediaries, consumers, government and in the case of a sports organization the audience/fans, member football associations and media actors. This network perspective in marketing is increasingly replacing a too simplistic context provided by the customer-supplier two-party relationships. The concept of value co-creation includes the interaction among many stakeholders who are involved in business and their ongoing integration of resources (Gummesson and Mele, 2010). It represents a multi-party approach to marketing in contrast to relationship marketing and customer relationship marketing, which usually are limited to a dyad of a single supplier and a single customer. Further many-to-many marketing embraces not only B-to-B marketing but also its dependency on business-to-consumer marketing (Gummesson and Polese, 2009). See also Lund (2010).

One school in B-to-B marketing defines value creation as the process in which parties in an exchange relationship make use of each other’s resources with the objective of creating value (Forsström, 2005). Value creation has been defined as the:

[. . .] process by which the capabilities of the partners are combined so that the competitive advantage of either the hybrid or one or more partners is improved (Borys and Jemison, 1989, p. 241).

*Creating value in sponsorship relationships – a conceptual framework*

We see the sponsorship exchange relationship as a type of business-to-business relationship where a sports organization (rights-holder) supplies its sponsors with commercial marketing rights. The literature on inter-organizational relationships suggests that suppliers (in our case the rights-holder/sports event) can generate value from interacting with customers (corporate sponsors) in ways other than through the revenues that are generated from them (Lund, 2011). Customers can in fact support suppliers in their value creation more indirectly by providing access to new markets, driving service innovations and by scouting for new customers through referrals and through networking (Walter et al., 2001). In the sponsorship relationship the sports organization can thus create direct cash flow by collaborating with sponsors, as well as indirect benefits which add value to the sports event and its sponsorship program more long term (Lund, 2010, 2011). Short-term sales objectives are often prioritized over longer-term indirect benefits since the organization depends on economic value creation for its survival. As we argue here, both direct and indirect value-creating functions of sponsors, however, need to be considered in order to develop a sustainable competitive advantage in the sponsorship market and in order to exploit fully potential resource contributions of sponsors (see Figure 1).

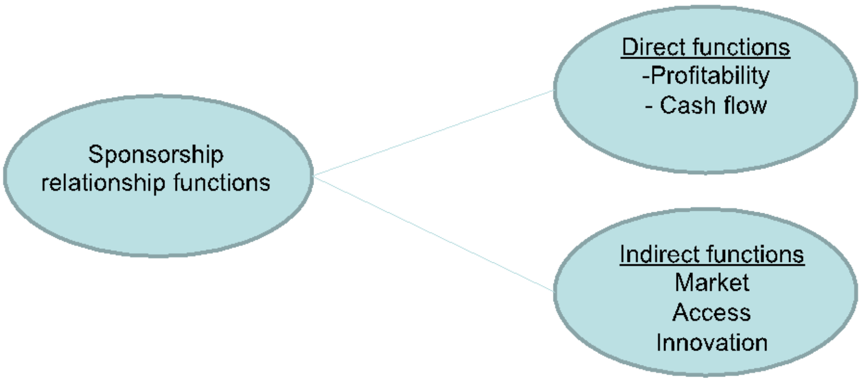


Figure 1: Direct and indirect sponsorship relationship functions (based on Walter et al. (2001))

Customer-supplier relationships can have both direct and indirect relationship functions for the supplier (Walter et al., 2001). In the context of sports sponsorship, direct functions of sponsorship relationships are linked to cash flow for the event generated from sponsorship rights fees. Indirect functions of sponsorship relationships are linked to access to new markets, specialized skills, complementary marketing investments and connections with new sponsors, as well as service innovations. In this case study we explore key competencies of sports organizations that underlie value creation in terms of these direct and indirect sources of value. Walter et al., (2001) further propose four types of relationships: selling relationships, networking relationships, high-performing relationships and low-performing relationships. These relationships are applied to the context of what we define here as sponsorship portfolio management. From a rights-holder perspective, selling relationships mainly focus on generating cash flow by maximizing revenues from rights fees. Networking relationships, on the other hand, add value in a more indirect way by generating awareness for the event among other potential sponsors or by broadening the audience or building consumer engagement, which may add value to the sponsorship program for future sponsors. They may further create a knowledge base within the sponsored event, which can facilitate interaction with future partners. Within networking relationships, valuable resources are gathered and/or created, e.g. know-how, market information and new event components or marketing rights. In so-called high-performing relationships both the direct and indirect value-creating functions have been optimized, and low-performing relationships do not create value in either way.

The main purpose of this study is better understanding of how sports organizations manage their sponsorship portfolio and the underlying capabilities for such effective management. In our exploration of key capabilities we draw on preconditions that have been proposed in a broader context of service management and business interaction, including relationship-based variables such as trust, commitment, and partner-specific adaptations, as well as knowledge-based factors such as absorptive capacity and learning competencies.

*Key determinants in sponsorship relationship management*

A critical determinant of success in sponsorship activities is the ability and willingness of partners to link sponsorship initiatives overtly to broader corporate strategy (Amis et al., 1999). A lack of such coordination has a negative impact since it requires the support of other marketing activities to be effective (Cornwell, 2008). A critical success factor for sponsorship relationships is the complementarity of resources between the two organizations (Parker, 1991). The success of the sponsorship program is determined by the extent of the organization's understanding of the sponsoring partner's image, the target markets, the strategic objective, and the ways in which those variables can be combined and integrated with the strategy of the rights-holder. If the sponsorship program of the rights-holder is not aligned with overall corporate objectives of its sponsors, sponsorship investment in the program will not be supported by marketing and other resources at different levels in the organization, and that is a prerequisite of effectiveness.

Sports organizations are increasingly being assessed by sponsors as marketing platforms. Their investments in relationship infrastructure, and other intangible resources and competencies, are important determinants of their competitiveness in the sponsorship market (Farrelly et al., 2006), and the failure of many sponsor relationships is attributable to the lack of such qualities. A critical element in developing a partnership is congruence and similarity or ”fit” between the organizations in terms of shared values, resource complementarities and shared objectives (Olkkonen et al., 2000; Thompson, 2008; Chien et al., 2011; Lund, 2010, 2011, 2014; Tyrie and Ferguson, 2013, Greyser and Crockett, 2002, Farrelly, Quester, and Greyser, 2005). The basic proposition in studies of co-alignment (or ”fit”, also termed 'contingency' or 'consistency') is that there are significant positive implications for performance in the fit between strategy and context, whether that is the external environment or such organizational characteristics as structure, administrative systems and managerial characteristics (Venkatraman and Prescott, 1990).

Since one party's input influences the other's outcomes, both can presumably benefit from aligning their strategies. Value creation thus depends on internal as well as inter-organizational feedback systems. It has been suggested that the outcome of partnerships depends on the ability of both partners to absorb and combine ideas and assets, on previous experiences with inter-organizational relations, and on a relationship structure that facilitates knowledge exchange (Reid et al., 2001). Value creation requires knowledge exchange between the partners and support structures that enable sponsors to generate value from the arrangement. The development of inter-organizational relationships entails a learning process (Håkansson and Waluszewski, 2002) since the value of resources is dependent on how they are combined. Learning and knowledge play a crucial role in terms of resource integration, adaptation and co-creation of value (Edvinsson and Malone, 1997; Vargo and Lusch, 2014; Dyer and Nobeoka, 2000; Håkansson, 1993; Håkansson et al. 1999). Communication between the organizations is important especially in the formative stages of a sponsorship relationship by stimulating joint planning (Farrelly and Quester, 2005).

There are different types of knowledge-sharing routines in inter-organizational relationships that permit the transfer, recombination, or creation of specialized knowledge (Edvinsson and Malone, 1997; Dyer and Singh, 1998). Knowledge is acquired both through formal measurement programs, including such tracking procedures as brand awareness studies and attitude monitoring, macro-environmental research on market trends, and different forms of psychographic audience research, as well as less formal systems for information sharing in the form of joint planning sessions and evaluations. In addition to its role of controlling sponsorship activities, measurement can also be used as a communication tool through which objectives and strategy are disseminated within the organization and across organizational boundaries. In some cases, measurement is jointly planned, and the results shared.

In developing an assessment framework for a sponsorship program, the study described in this paper further suggests that the process should include long-term and short-term, as well as financial and non-financial perspectives. In many cases, sponsored sports organizations evaluate the effectiveness of the program in purely financial terms, on the basis of attributable sales. This single short-term focus, detached from long-term strategy, is likely to result in decreased revenues for the organization in the future. Yet sponsors can add value to sports organizations through the medium of non-financial investment in marketing and strategic competence.

## 3. Structure and design of the study

The study proceeds from the supposition that sports organizations can establish a competitive advantage by developing, maintaining and exploiting relationships with commercial sponsors. Successful implementation of these processes demands a thorough familiarity with the sponsor by the rights-holder, in this case the sports organization, and a clear understanding of potential resource combinations. This study analyzes the process of value creation by sports organizations through interaction and partnerships with commercial business organizations over time, and sets out to identify key capabilities necessary for value creation.

The study applies a theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt, 1989) with the purpose of developing theory in the area of resources management in inter-organizational relationships and particularly on dynamics and processes in combining resources in sponsorship relations. The organization on which the case study is focused is the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and its international sports events, primarily the European Championships (EURO) for which it owns the commercial marketing rights and for which it is developing a sponsorship platform. The studied organization was chosen on the basis of its size and extensive sponsorship program. A second reason was the extensive access that was given to key representatives of the organization for interviews.

The event was studied over four project life cycles starting in 2000 with a primary focus on the 2016 Championships in France. The data were primarily generated during the preparations for EURO 2016, but were also combined with data generated through previous case studies of UEFA and of its sponsors (e.g. Lund, 2006, 2011). The data were generated through interviews over a period of several years in connection with the four project life cycles. A focused interview session with key representatives of the organization, however, was conducted in the summer of 2014 with a follow-up in the spring of 2015 and focused on the preparations preceding the 2016 tournaments in France. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen respondents. Six represented the sponsored organization and five were experts from the industry not directly involved in these sponsorship activities. The remaining four respondents represented its sponsors, two of which were international partners of very long standing while one had a finite partnership associated with a single tournament in one country. An interview guide was built on inputs from the formative stage of the research process. Face-to-face interviews and telephone interviews were conducted with representatives in Switzerland, Sweden and Belgium. The language was in most cases English, and the typical duration about one and a half hours.

In order to add to the robustness and richness of data, interviews were conducted on different organizational levels and in different business units. Interviews were also combined with documents such as measurement reports, interview guides, research plans, strategy documents, and presentations. As documents generally provide more consistent and precise data, they were also relevant in adding to the robustness of findings.

Traditionally, external validity has been seen as a major obstacle for the scientific acknowledgment of case study research. Critics state that single cases offer limited basis for generalization. Such criticism however, implicitly draws a parallel between case studies and quantitative research, rather than acknowledging the case studies as a basis for contextual and analytical generalization, where analytical generalization strives to generalize a set of results to a broader theory (Yin, 2003).

## 4. Case study findings

In the following section we describe the empirical context of relationship management in a sports sponsorship setting. We start with introducing the case study organization and the structure of its sponsorship program. We then present an approach to managing a sponsorship portfolio with a framework of four different types of sponsorship relationships and how they contribute to the sports organization in direct and indirect ways. The process of resource integration and coordination is addressed next, with specific examples of relationship management. We then discuss how the sports organization creates and enhances value in its sponsorship relationships.

*UEFA EURO and its value-creation model*

UEFA (the Union of European Football Associations) is the governing body of European national football associations. UEFA's main purpose is promoting, protecting and developing football in Europe through effective rules and regulations. One of its main activities is also to manage and own the European national team final rounds and club competitions. The European Championships (EURO) have become a vital part of UEFA as they are the main source of funding for member associations. The EURO is the largest European sports event in terms of audiences and revenues. As a governing body of football, while still maximizing revenue, UEFA has the overall mission of preserving and protecting sporting values and to promote football as well as generating revenues through national team competitions, which is the main source of funding for its member associations, i.e. national associations and clubs. The management model therefore requires a balanced approach that considers both short-term profit-oriented objectives and longer-term objectives of promoting football and engaging with international audiences.

This research case study primarily focuses on the European Championships (EURO), but also includes insights from UEFA’s two other main international competitions, namely the UEFA Champions League (UCL) and the Europa Cup. Today the EURO is the world’s third largest sports event after FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Summer games. Measured by TV viewing the EURO Final rounds are the second largest event after FIFA World Cup. The

EURO 2012 final match attracted 299 million viewers, and in 2008 237 million viewed the final (UEFA.com). Live match attendance at stadiums was 1.3 million in the tournament in Ukraine and Poland in 2012.

The global reach and interest in these events is largely linked to changes in the media industry over recent decades. Deregulation in many European markets and increased competition among television broadcasters have resulted in higher bidding for broadcasting rights, which has led to higher broadcasting revenues for sports events as well as to more active promotion of these events. This has helped to promote the sport and increase the level of interest among new audiences and has had a significant impact on the growth of football and other sports events.

Over the past two decades UEFA EURO has gone from 40,6 million Euro in total revenues in 1992 to 1,390,9 million Euro in 2012. Through the increased involvement of television media, football has become more commercially attractive to sponsors, who benefit from the broader reach and the opportunity to reach a global audience. This adds value to sponsorship as a marketing tool and sponsorship fees have increased rapidly as a result of increased interest from broadcasters.

The revenue model of international sports events such as UEFA EURO rests on four pillars that are interdependent: media (TV, digital, radio and print); corporations (sponsorships and corporate hospitality); merchandising (licensing partners); markets (audiences for tickets and TV). In terms of financial revenues generated from the UEFA Euro tournament in 2012, these consisted of: media rights (television, radio, digital) 837,2 million Euro (60,2%), commercial rights (sponsorship and licensing) 313,9 million Euro (22,6%), sales of match tickets 136,1 million Euro (9,8%), and corporate hospitality (i.e., entertainment packages sold to corporations with best seats combined with food and VIP treatment) 102 million Euro (7,3%). The audiences (i.e., supporters attending live matches and those viewing televised matches) are considered a core asset of the sports event and audience development is a key element when developing partnerships with all other stakeholders of UEFA. Managing short-term financial revenues in a balanced way with the long-term mission of promoting football to an international audience is therefore critical. Media partners, for example, contribute with financial resources as well as in building international audiences and in creating an experience for the TV viewers as well as in delivering brand exposure for sponsors. The sponsors also provide promotional elements through their marketing activities. Licensing partners with merchandising (i.e., football-related branded products and memorabilia) develop fan engagement and thus contribute to sponsorship-relevant assets.

*The sponsorship structure - levels of integration and coordination*

UEFA EURO was found to have a hierarchy of sponsors, with different commitment levels. In some cases, the sponsor considered a sponsorship arrangement to be a core ingredient of their branding strategy, and both partners were dependent on one other for the achievement of shared marketing goals. The degree of coordination depended on the level of interdependence. At one extreme was a market transaction with limited or non-existent coordination and information-sharing. This was the case, for example, in corporate hospitality arrangements, under the terms of which the company acquired the right to use the event only for client entertainment without any further collaboration or association. At higher levels, sponsorship partners tended to be more coordinated in their activities. This was the case primarily with official partners (promoted as sponsors in all international media coverage) where unique shared resources were developed. To a certain extent such collaborative arrangements were also developed with lower level sponsors such as official suppliers and local partners (operating only in the countries in which the tournament games took place).

Even though the primary objective of the sponsorship program is generating revenues to support member clubs, partner selection criteria also relate to potential resource complementarities of sponsors in terms of marketing/branding, service innovations, and networking. The organizers of the EURO actively look for partners that support their international strategy.

*"We want to be the number one sports brand in the world. In order to achieve this objective we have to be proactive, keep investing, setting the benchmark in different domains (Brand, TV production, social media…). But we also need to work with active partners. If you only have partners that invest into your property as a media buy, meaning that they focus on growing their brand awareness via their [advertising] boards around the field of play, then you don't get that much fan engagement, and such sponsors don't necessarily contribute to help UEFA reach its marketing objectives. So it is important for UEFA to have sponsors that commit to invest in their association with the competition [the event], promoting their brand and the competition, engaging with the fans, organizing grass roots tournaments etc. But in reality you cannot only have partners like that, for example Heineken or Nissan who spend a lot of money on top of their sponsorship fee to leverage their rights, activate, run events,*

*conduct social media campaigns, give away prizes and tickets etc. You also have other types of sponsors with a different approach, who usually buy commercial airtime on TV or advertising online or print, and they approach us because they want to grow their brand awareness, be around the field of play next to the UEFA brand and next to other blue chip companies."* (Senior sponsorship and licensing manager, UEFA)

*Managing a sponsorship portfolio*

We have studied different types of sponsorship relationships on the basis of their relative direct and indirect contributions to the sports organization/rights-holders, and the ability of the latter to take advantage of such relationship functions. *Selling relationships* are based on market transactions with limited interaction where the rights-holder offers standardized marketing rights to its sponsors. In these relationships the sponsor exchanges financial resources for standardized commercial rights provided by the sports event. These relationships do not require any significant relationship investments and are therefore less costly to handle for the sports organization. On the other hand they may not generate any indirect benefits related to marketing or networking. Although these relationships do not require as much coordination between the exchange partners as in more integrated partnerships, an organizational infrastructure is still necessary to handle the sales process and to manage the delivery of commercial rights. UEFA collaborates with an external agency for sponsorship sales. A team leader maintains an overview of the sales activities and all team actions, including negotiations and internal and external coordination and communication within UEFA about sales-related strategy. Within UEFA there were also functional and technical experts who supported the extended selling team with, for example, research and media reports. Additionally there were account managers with day-to-day contact with individual sponsors about rights delivery and implementation. This way of organizing the sales team corresponded to organizational roles proposed in previous literature on the management of selling relationships (Deeter-Schmeltz and Ramsey, 1995).

*Networking relationships* add value to the sports organization in other connected sponsorship relationships. These sponsors are actively marketing the event and building fan engagement. In these cases there is a shared interest in coordinating marketing activities since there are potential mutual benefits to be gained by sharing knowledge and information about strategies and plans. In addition to marketing their association with the event, some sponsors can also be considered driving forces behind innovation in the sponsorship program since they have a variety of needs and share high-level branding and consumer knowledge from which the event can benefit. Some examples of projects that had been driven by sponsor demand were fan spaces and public viewing outside stadiums. In response to this, UEFA developed the so-called Fan Parks and public viewing arenas where football matches were broadcast on big screens in different cities in the hosting countries. The Fan Park, which to a large extent resulted from the negotiations with a beverage sponsor, also added value to the overall sponsorship program since it increased consumer interaction. Strong and prestigious brands that became sponsors added market value to the sports event and to potential future sponsors. Referrals and/or recommendations from current sponsors could further result in new commercial relationships (Boles et al., 1997). In some cases strong brands would attract less known brands that benefit from the association with the strong ones. Sponsors may further be potential business partners with each other and have a complementary role in the value-added chain (Lund, 2010, 2011; Cobbs, 2011). The network of audiences of the sponsor can also strengthen the sports event in broadening its audience.

*"We see the network of our sponsors as a unique opportunity to engage with a wider fan base. We develop a promotional plan for each season for the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League for example. We see how to best integrate our sponsors and provide them with opportunities to leverage their sponsorship. The value of our brand would never grow as much without our partners' activation around the world. For that reason we want them to engage with our promotional campaign and get behind it.*

*But we also let each of our partners run their own campaigns, corresponding to their respective objectives, target audiences, key markets, using the competition's key assets such as the logo, brand, trophy, music,….. The commercial partners' campaigns create a direct association between their brands and the UEFA competition. Partners do amplify the awareness and reach of the competition thanks to their marketing activation. (*Senior Sponsoring and Licensing Manager, UEFA*)*

*High-performing relationships* offer both direct as well as indirect relationship functions. In cases of strategic sponsorship, a portfolio management combination of sales focus and collaborative focus is pursued. Sports organizations realize that their primary asset which determines the attractiveness to potential sponsors is audience interest and engagement, and therefore the core of the sponsorship strategy is also to involve sponsors in building this audience engagement. “*If a club or a sports organization is just out there looking for money without giving anything back they are doomed to fail. The single most important component for a sports organization is how much interest it can generate around its activities. This is in terms of both participants and fans, and for commercial sports in particular in terms of audiences. The interest that can be generated for the sports activities is more important than anything else. So we have a mantra to focus on the audience first and all our other activities are directed towards that objective. So we are not looking for sponsors just to get their money and burn that money. With a smash-and-grab attitude you will never create value in an activity and there will also be no interest in the long term.*” (Interview with sponsorship expert)

*Low-performing relationships* were those where neither direct nor indirect relationship functions had been fully exploited, and in these cases the relationship would be either terminated, renegotiated, or the sport organization would explore potentials for developing the relationship further. At the higher levels of sponsorship in the EURO, there was generally some form of direct and indirect benefit from the relationship with sponsors and these often involved some form of coordinated marketing strategy linked to the sponsorship.

*Integrated sponsorship relationships and coordination of activities and resources*

The sports organization benefits from integrating the marketing resources of its sponsors to build an interest around the event and around European football. The sponsors are often leading global brands. Their marketing resources and branding competencies, as well as the promotional activities taking place throughout their retail networks are considered valuable by UEFA in generating awareness for the event and in building engagement among the football audience around the world. In many cases the sponsors are considered co-marketing partners. The activities are coordinated through joint planning and reporting between the partners. Some of the components of the partnership are standardized (for example, the use of the EURO logo in promotional material of sponsors), while other components were developed with individual sponsors and are unique to each partnership. Higher levels of commitment are often related to higher levels of complexity, and in these cases partners often developed co-specialized resources where both invested in the relationship to form a complementary fit. UEFA and EURO especially had undertaken a number of collaborative marketing projects with sponsor partners, designed to strengthen the brands of both. An example was the Adidas football, which was designed in connection to each new tournament. Another case was the

”Carlsberg trophy tour” in Asia and their Grassroots tournaments. The partnership with Facebook added media infrastructure and content for fans. The sports organization also tried to have a proactive role in providing its sponsors with promotional platforms that would integrate their brands and commercial messaging with football content, for example in on-line social media. These co-specialized resources were also difficult to imitate for competitors in potential ambush marketing attempts, and co-specialization can thus be identified as a key source of competitive advantage for the sports organization (Teece, 2007; Farrelly et al., 2005).

One illustration of collective shared activities among sponsors and the EURO is the so-called Fan Park where live broadcasts of the games are held, together with a wide range of sponsor-endorsed entertainment centered around football, including live stage shows, celebrity guest appearances, match ticket competitions, exhibitions, and games. In the 2008 final tournaments one local sponsor (UBS) also hosted the so-called UBS arenas where fans could watch screenings of matches in different cities in Switzerland. In 2012 Hyundai organized similar live broadcasts outdoors in cities around the host countries. A key element in connecting sponsors with fans is to provide them with football-relevant content.

*“Another good example is Adidas where we organized a trophy tour. Adidas had the right to take the UCL Trophy around the host city for two weeks prior to the final. They developed a program of visiting schools and grassroots football clubs, and promotions to consumers to come and see the trophy and have their photo taken with it; we promote that and they promote it as well and we make that football-relevant. Heineken have a similar right but they have a global right so last year they took the trophy to Vietnam, to Nigeria and to Argentina. So it is in our interest as well to promote what they are doing and build a global base of fans.”*
(Brand manager, UEFA)

The activation and involvement of sponsors are considered an important part of the branding strategy of UEFA.

*“Orange for the previous EUROs have invested in the technology side so there is a value-in-kind. They helped ensure we had WIFI and mobile communications set up across Poland and Ukraine. So they were a very good fit.”*

*“Ford has in the past delivered company cars in the host cities around the finals, so they have provided a value-in-kind transportation network.”*

*“For the fans we have a partnership with Facebook, so FB actively help promote football content because they want to be seen as the place to go in social media when it comes to football. So they invest money to promote UCL and EURO and Europa League content.”*

*“Adidas designed the ball, so then we are a vehicle to talk about innovation. So we get the brand new design of the best quality footballs and we share the design with them and they help create a ball that fits the identity of our brand. At the same time Adidas is able to promote that their products are the best of the best.“ (*Senior Sponsorship and Licensing Manager, UEFA)

Another example is EURO affinity credit cards for consumers, developed with Mastercard and UBS. Each company actively marketed them.

*Developing value-creating sponsorship relationships*

Sponsorship relationships were developed through three different stages: a strategy design and partner screening phase, an operation phase, and an outcome phase. The first phase involved UEFA making decisions about its strategy and about potential collaborating partners. UEFA gathered information and knowledge about its own resources and competencies and how partners could contribute to its overall objectives. An understanding about internal needs and developing an alliance strategy were the bases for successfully identifying partners.

*“When we start developing a sponsorship strategy for a particular competition, we need to make sure it does fit with the overall marketing objectives (Brand, Media Rights, Promotion,…). On the sponsorship front we want to make sure that we get sponsors who can help UEFA achieve its marketing objectives, for example to further build the competition’s brand equity, become global, reach more fans, engage new audiences…. Sponsorship objectives should always be back-to-back with the marketing objectives set up front.” (*Senior Sponsoring and Licensing Manager, UEFA)

In the strategy design phase, the agreement is structured and negotiated with the specific partner. Key objectives with the partnership are evaluated and a working team is formed around planned co-marketing activities. When negotiating partnerships, resource commitments are discussed and strategies are shared between the partners at an early stage. The level of involvement also determines to what extent partners will engage in collaborative activities. On the international sponsorship level, a dialogue about needs, objectives and potential synergies starts before the formal contract negotiations take place. After the agreement has been signed, each sponsor is assigned an account manager who works with the sponsorship manager at UEFA to deliver the rights and to support sponsors in their activation. In its current structure, UEFA has appointed an agency to prospect the market for sponsors and to sell the commercial rights. The agency is also responsible for account management and day-to-day operations in close cooperation with UEFA. UEFA has ownership of the commercial rights, but the strategy for the sponsorship program is developed together with the agency.

*"Sponsors like Coca Cola, Adidas or McDonald's look for fan engagement and brand preference. They want to drive brand preference in retail, and to achieve that goal you need to activate a lot. They run promotions, events, offer unique experiences, gifts to their consumers. For example, you go to a supermarket and want to buy some beer. Heineken want to sell you a six-pack, on the packaging you can win tickets to a match, a trip to Ibiza, or for example a tee-shirt, or a mini football. Then on social media they will have promotions and invite consumers to meet stars and players. And for us this is very important. We usually discuss this on a contractual level and ensure the partner have a right but also an obligation to run promotions. We also hope they will further activate the sponsorship through additional promotions and advertising. In a few sponsorship agreements we even have an obligation for the sponsor to invest, per season, a fixed amount into marketing its association with the competition (advertising, promotion, activation). This is good for us because they are obliged to activate up to a certain level but it also gives the marketing staff of the sponsor some budget certainty over the three years to plan their activations accordingly. That is a practice that sponsors usually don't like; they want to decide how much to invest each year to activate their sponsorship." (*Senior Sponsoring and Licensing Manager, UEFA*)*

In the operation or management stage, the alliance partners develop an effective working environment that enables them to achieve their objectives. In this stage important information flow includes performance measures on both sides and feedback on how they think the alliance is progressing and whether they think it is performing according to plans. In this stage partners work together and social aspects of the relationship are important. It is important, for example, to develop and maintain a level of trust between partners in order to sustain an effective working relationship. Investments in the relationship in the form of working meetings and workshops are ways to engage partners in an open communication. Trust is important for the alliance performance since it reduces costs for continuous monitoring and contract renegotiation and fosters a greater openness and transparency which is required for a working partnership.

This leads to the outcome stage, one that clearly calls for further cooperation and feedback. Evaluation from both parties is an essential part of this phase.

*"We have an active dialogue with the sponsors through our agency, through them we share our research, reviews and database analysis of how the sponsorship is performing and all the activities we see from them. We do that midway through season and also before the season starts so we try to make sure that all our sponsors are fully informed and that they are able to make the most of their sponsorship rights. On top of that we have our promotional department where we are proactively sharing ideas and what we are going to do and how they can be involved to further activate their sponsorship. It is really important to us, to the degree where when we are doing sponsorship sales we are looking at the range of companies looking to be a sponsorship partner, and we have on instances taken lower money to have a sponsor that is active and that is willing to invest more in the partnership. We would look at a partner on the basis of their relevance, their activation plans as well as the money they are willing to put forward."* (Brand manager, UEFA)

## 5. Key capabilities of the sports event for integrated management of its sponsorship portfolio

In the following section we analyze the management practices and processes involved in establishing and maintaining sponsorships relationships and creating value through these relationships. We identify key capabilities in the form of *collaborative*, *absorptive*, *adaptive* and *learning capabilities* and discuss how these can be critical for effective integration, coordination and combination of resources between the partners (see Figure 2).

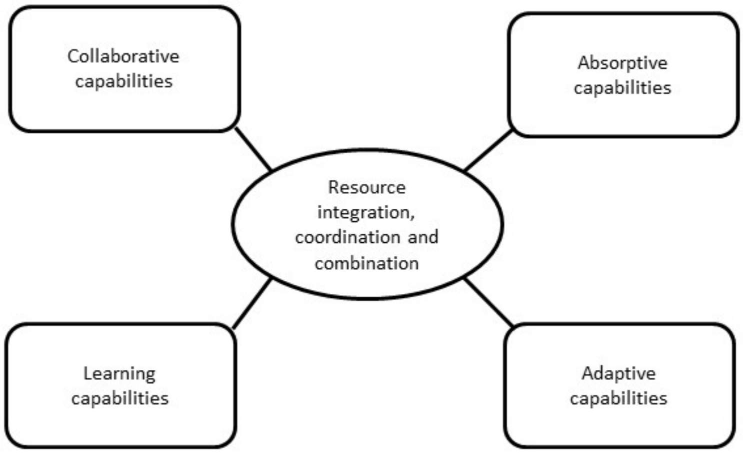


Figure 2: Key capabilities for successful integration, coordination and combination of complementary sponsor resources

*Collaborative capabilities*

The processes described in the three partnership development stages above call for significant collaboration. Collaborative capabilities involve selecting the appropriate actors to collaborate with, developing a collaborative relationship and successfully managing a collaborative process (Zacharia et al., 2011). This requires processes in place to monitor initiatives and resolve conflicts when they arise (Lusch and Vargo, 2014). A key element is that of selecting actors that have the relevant knowledge and expertise to engage in joint initiatives and that are open and willing to share their knowledge. It also involves investing in support infrastructure at individual and organizational levels to support sponsors in their value creation. Investments in the relationship can be seen as a signal for commitment and is an important part of the trust-building process. Studies have shown that mutual commitment is required to avoid tensions in the relationship. Unilateral commitment without the investments being reciprocated by the counterparties will lead to disharmony (Farrelly and Quester, 2005; Urriolagoitia and Plannellas, 2007).

The identification and combination of complementary resources was handled by individuals at both ends of the relationship. The sports organization had a team of designated account managers who reported back to the senior sponsorship and licensing manager. Critical information was shared and internalized to relevant parties in areas of brand and media management, event management and the people responsible for negotiating partner contracts in the following cycle. The agency operating as an intermediary between the sports organization and its sponsors handled day-to-day support functions linked to sponsor activation. The agency operated in close cooperation with UEFA with daily and weekly feedback and communications. UEFA also designed the strategy for sponsorship collaborations so it would fit its overall strategy for the event. The role of the agency was to screen the market for sponsors and to identify potential resource matches between the rights-holder and partners. It also had a service function through its account managers, supporting individual sponsors in their activation strategy. All this facilitated collaboration.

*Absorptive and adaptive capabilities*

Absorptive capacity has been identified as a critical learning factor in business partnerships and inter-organizational relationships. Absorptive capacity defines the "firm's ability to identify, assimilate and exploit knowledge from the environment" (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). Two factors have been discussed in the strategic alliance literature as determinants of absorptive capacity of partners: resource overlap and having prior relationships (Mazloomi et al., 2006). Similarity of resources and knowledge bases has been linked to absorptive capacity as has similarity of organizational structures and processes (Lane and Lubatkin, 1998). The resource overlap may, however, be only partial for the knowledge transfer to be efficient. As discussed by Inkpen and Crossan (1995), partners must be similar enough to understand each other but not so similar that learning opportunities are limited. Prior relationships can facilitate the absorptive capacity through the knowledge that has been acquired of the partner, as well as the trust that has developed between the partners.

Successful partner selection is typically preceded by proactive communication and knowledge-sharing about potential complementarities in terms of objectives, resources and skills, as well as about organizational fit in terms of culture and processes and willingness to collaborate. Knowledge-sharing and communication is also critical in the process of contract renewal as well as in the initial stages of building partnerships to identify potential resource complementarities.

*"We talk with our sponsors and our agency on a daily and weekly basis. So even though the strategy is UEFA's responsibility, we have an on-going dialogue with our key stakeholders. In UEFA Club Competitions, we have a contract period of three years with our sponsors, broadcasters and licensees, (2012/2015, 2015/2018…). Ahead of each new cycle, we organize a strategy workshop, followed by one-on-one meetings where we ask them about their business development, marketing strategy and sponsorship development in the future, what they are interested in investing in, etc. Their feedback helps us shape our commercial approach.*

*For example, we discuss with the partners, our agency and some internal departments about virtual advertising, whether the timing is right or if it is too early, whether it is technically, legally possible, what would be beneficial for the sponsors, is it a problem for broadcasters, for the fans, for the players, referees… We study many different options in order to build a comprehensive sponsorship package that works for UEFA and the partners. We have a collaborative approach because we need to sell something to the market that works for sponsors. If we come and say 'that's it' we will fail."* (Senior Sponsorship and Licensing Manager, UEFA)

*Learning capabilities*

Companies learn in two ways: through their own experiences and through the experiences of others (Lusch and Vargo, 2014; Håkansson et al., 1999). The existence of specific relationships within their networks thus determines the extent to which an organization learns. Also the specific characteristics of those relationships in terms of trust and power imbalance, for example, will influence the ability to learn through interaction with partners. To maximize the benefits from knowledge transfer, management has to decide from whom to learn and the form in which learning should take place. The literature on organizational learning has emphasized the importance of taking an interactive perspective on knowledge-creation between individuals and in business partnerships, studying how joint learning occurs between partners (Larsson et al., 1998). This literature attributes reasons for inability to generate collective knowledge to the lack of motivation, limited absorptive and communicative capacity, dynamics of power, opportunism and suspicion (Larsson et al., 1998). The motivation of exchange partners to learn from each other influences their openness and receptiveness. Lack of interest, neglect, or existing priorities of an alliance partner restrict organizational learning. There may also be a basic inability to accept knowledge that is not already recognized as important within a current knowledge base.

Knowledge-sharing and thus learning may be influenced by relationship factors such as reciprocal behavior of partners, as well as trust, motives and openness in the cooperation. This may be affected by certain actions, decisions or cultural differences between partner organizations, which can in turn affect knowledge transfer effectiveness (Liu and Vince, 1999). Different factors can be the level of knowledge protection by partners, learning intent and the level of trust between the organizations. Knowledge-sharing limitations from either side of the partnership will limit the knowledge transfer and the opportunity to learn. Das and Teng (1999) suggest that the level of trust combined with the control it exerts on its ally determine the confidence level of partners. It reflects the belief that partners will fulfill their commitment to the relationship and thereby encourages openness between partners and a willingness to share information. As discussed by Nieminen (2005), power imbalance between partners is often an important aspect in inter-firm learning. When one organization has control over key resources that are highly valued in the exchange relationship, this can lead to fear of opportunistic behavior, which can be harmful to the establishment of trust between the partners and therefore their openness.

Relationship factors associated with reciprocal behavior of partners influence the learning process. Trust, motives and openness in the cooperation may be affected by certain actions, decisions or cultural differences between the partner organizations, which can in turn affect knowledge transfer effectiveness (Liu and Vince, 1999). Knowledge-sharing limitations from either side of the partnership will limit the knowledge transfer and the opportunity to learn. In some cases the partners limit their exchange of information since there is a fear of opportunistic behavior from the exchange partner. Such behavior often results in the other partner responding by further reducing its own sharing. Increased knowledge protection will thus limit knowledge transfer (Mazloomi et al., 2006).
Such factors in commercial relationships as trust, cooperation, and the quality and quantity of communication taking place between partners are indicators of relationship quality, and are in turn linked to performance of the relationship. In the case study, instances were found of

information between the sponsorship partners becoming particularly sensitive as they approached contract negotiations, making them less transparent, as the parties were entering into a buyer-seller relationship rather than seeing each other as mutually beneficial partners. The sponsored organization used its intelligence about, for example, sponsor awareness, attitude shift, brand image and customer preferences to market itself profitably to potential sponsors. The sponsor, on the other hand, in the role of buyer, aimed to negotiate the lowest possible price. Some information which might influence the negotiations negatively was not openly shared.

*"We inform the organizers if we think they have to change things. We both have a common interest so we try to have an open discussion with them. At the same time, we try to protect our interests as much as possible through research and they do the same. They use their research to sell the properties. We want to buy something at the right price. We participate in their research telling them what we are looking for and they try to take this into consideration."* (Interview with sponsorship expert)

**6. Discussion**

This study explores key capabilities that underlie value creation and enhancement in a sponsorship relationship portfolio. We explore knowledge-based and relationship-based competencies of the sports organization that generate superior returns from their sponsorship relationships in terms of both direct and indirect value-creating functions. Key capabilities are collaboration, absorption, adaptation and learning - which are linked to resource integration between the partners.

The learning and adaptations that resulted from previous and ongoing contract negotiations added to the competencies of UEFA and to the efficiency and longevity of the existing sponsorship relationships. The solutions that were found and the adaptations and learning that resulted from these negotiations formed the basis for a continuous renewal of the sponsorship program and opened the door for new sponsors to join the program. As contracts were signed, both parties started investing in the relationship. This mutual commitment to the relationship and adaptations from both sides continued to develop trust. As discussed by Hallén et al. (1991), mutual adaptations are a component of the trust-building process. With the development of trust between the partners, a more active knowledge-sharing is established.

An important purpose of business partnerships is to make partners competitive through transfer and development of knowledge (Dyer and Singh, 1998, Hamel, 1991; Lane and Lubatkin, 1998; Larsson et al., 1998). The study has shown that learning and partnership orientation are interlinked. Learning between exchange partners supports partnership orientation which in turn supports learning. It takes time to develop efficient knowledge transfer in business relationships. Dyer and Singh (1998) discuss partner-specific absorptive capacity in terms of the ability to recognize and accept knowledge in a business environment and from a partner that is familiar to a firm. New knowledge interfaces develop new knowledge, which in turn gives the opportunity for new business relationships. A process of knowledge regeneration can thus be established. The adaptations that were made in connection with the extensive negotiations and the collaborative experiences that had been established through interaction with previous sponsors made the sponsorship program more attractive to future sponsors. The competitiveness of UEFA as a sponsorship opportunity was thus linked to its connections with certain sponsors and the value that was created through these partnerships. These sponsors contributed with knowledge as well as marketing resources, which made UEFA more attractive as a marketing platform for future sponsors.

Bringing sponsors together on a regular basis became an important part of the strategy. Also UEFA participated in meetings organized by its sponsors involving also advertising agencies and other marketing suppliers. Other actors such as the local organizers and municipalities were also continuously updated. The interaction in this larger network of actors helped generate innovative ideas. The event organizer was part of a group discussion, which was more multifaceted and multidimensional than in the interaction between isolated dyads (Håkansson et al., 1999; Gummesson, 2006). The network perspective helped understand value creation in the sponsorship program where experiences and solutions from one relationship could be applied to new situations and in other relationships. Further, non-competing sponsors also had the potential to add value to each other, and through an active dialogue with different partners UEFA learned to identify potential resource complementarities and conflicts of interest between different sponsors.

## 7. Concluding comments

Adaptation plays a key role in any marketing activity. A resource is valuable if it allows the firm to exploit commercial opportunities in a certain context. Being valuable is a function of strategic fit (Black and Boal, 1994), which is the degree of alignment among firm resources, firm strategy and competitive context (Winfrey et al., 1996). Marketing itself can be regarded as the process of adapting an organization to the needs of the customer. Long ago, Levitt (1960, p. 10) made the following statement on the marketing concept:

> *"Selling focuses on the needs of the seller; marketing on the needs of the buyer. Selling is preoccupied with the seller's need to convert his product into cash; marketing with the idea of satisfying the needs of the customer by means of the product and the whole cluster of things associated with creating, delivering and finally consuming it."*

UEFA has pursued marketing-oriented strategy when it comes to its sponsorship portfolio, where transferred knowledge is converted into customer value. This is to meet the needs and value perception of sponsors (Farrelly and Quester, 2005) where sports events are increasingly being evaluated as strategic marketing platforms by their sponsors. In high performing relationships, financial contributions from sponsors are combined with non-financial resources such as marketing and product innovations. These can be valuable if they support the objectives of the sponsored organization (rights-holder). Shared knowledge plays a key role here. By adopting a relational approach partners co-create value and operate on a more equal basis. The key element in the strategy was the investment in the relationship and also in service functions/capabilities which supported commitment of the sponsors.

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Ragnar Lund is currently a post-doctoral researcher at KTH. His main research areas include international marketing strategy, service management, as well as knowledge management in inter-organizational networks.
A long-term research interest has also included sponsorship and management in creative industries, and in this context he has been studying how culture and sports are linked to economic and societal development.

Ragnar holds a PhD from Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University and his thesis was entitled: "Leveraging cooperative strategy – cases of sports and arts sponsorship". In 2012 Ragnar was awarded the Jan Wallander Scholarship, a 3-year full time post-doc scholarship given for outstanding doctoral thesis by the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation for Research (Svenska Handelsbanken). As part of his post-doctoral position at KTH, he is currently leading the project: "Economics, culture and urban development", and has organized seminars and workshops with leaders from the fields of culture and business to discuss challenges in urban development with policy makers and leaders from academia. His research at KTH also focuses on service management in the banking sector. His research has been published in the *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences*, and the *Marketing Management Journal*. He has received best paper awards for his work by the Marketing Management Association in Chicago and by the World Business and Social Science Research Conference in Paris in 2014 for his research on service differentiation in the private banking sector. He has conducted several in-depth case studies of sports and arts sponsorship and recently he collaborated with HBS Prof. Stephen Greyser on a case study of the Guggenheim Foundation and its international partnerships, which was included in the Harvard Business School Working Paper series in 2015.

In his non-academic work he has had long-term consulting assignments with a special focus on organizations in the cultural and creative industries. Between 2004 and 2010 he worked for the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm where he was responsible for developing and implementing a sponsorship and fundraising platform and for recruiting corporate partners and major donors. He also worked with international tours of performing arts and arts exhibitions to China, the USA and Switzerland. Other consulting assignments included Grafikens Hus (Sweden's contemporary fine-art printmaking centre), Malmö Aviation as well as several large-scale cultural festivals and productions and also sports-related sponsorship projects.

His teaching areas include corporate communications and project management; in recent years he has been responsible for the Program of Cultural Management Studies at the Department of History at Stockholm University.

## Stephen A. Greyser

**Stephen A. Greyser** is Richard P. Chapman Professor (Marketing/Communications) Emeritus, of the Harvard Business School, where he specializes in brand marketing, advertising, corporate communications, the business of sports, and nonprofit management. A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Business School, he has been active in research and teaching at HBS since 1958. He was also an editor at the *Harvard Business Review* and later its Editorial Board Secretary and Board Chairman. He is responsible for 16 books, numerous journal articles, several special editions of journals, and over 300 published HBS case studies. Recent publications are *Revealing the Corporation* with John Balmer (on identity, reputation, corporate branding, etc.) and co-authored articles on "Monarchies as Corporate Brands," Heritage Brands (a concept he co-created), "Aligning Identity and Strategy" (*CMR* lead article 2009), a 2011 *Journal of Business Ethics* article on ethical corporate marketing and BP, "Building and Maintaining Reputation Through Communications", and a book chapter on "Corporate Communication and the Corporate Persona" (2013). He wrote the award-winning "Corporate Brand Reputation and Brand Crisis Management" in his co-edited "Corporate Marketing and Identity," a special 2009 issue of *Management Decision.* At HBS, he developed the Corporate Communications elective, creating over 40 cases and articles on issues management, corporate sponsorship, relations among business-media-publics, etc. His current research (co-authored) and most recent published articles are on the branding and identity of the Nobel Prize, including "The Identity of a Heritage Brand" (2015) and integrating the Nobel Prize's identity and reputation (2016).

He created and teaches Harvard's Business of Sports course, is a member of the University's Faculty Standing Committee on Athletics, has served on the Selection Committee for the Boston Red Sox Hall of Fame, is on the board of The Sports Museum, and has authored numerous Business of Sports cases and articles. The latter include "Winners and Losers in the Olympics" (2006) and several on sponsorship, most recently (2012) on Sponsorship-Linked Internal Marketing (co-author), and an HBS case on Bank of America's Sports Sponsorship. He also published HBS faculty commentaries on the Sochi Olympics. Two co-authored HBS working papers (2013) examined NBC and the 2012 London Olympics and how MLB clubs have commercialized their Japanese top stars. He has organized seminars on Fifty Years of Change in Intercollegiate Athletics, the Business of the Olympics, Sports in China, and "Fenway Park Comes to HBS," on the business of Fenway Park for its 2012 Centennial. He co-led an NFL pre-Super Bowl 50 sponsorship event at Levi's Stadium. His comments on the meaning of the Olympics for China were seen by tens of millions in China on CCTV after the 2008 Opening Ceremonies. At Doha GOALS 2012 he moderated a private conference session of global sports leaders (including Lord Coe) on improving the Olympics. He has recently written an analysis of "Nation-Branding via Big Sports." He received the American Marketing Association's 2010 Sports Marketing lifetime achievement award for "distinguished career contributions to the scientific understanding of sports business."

In addition, he is co-author of a book on arts administration and editor of one on cultural policy. A 2015 HBS Working Paper examined business sponsorship of museums.

He is past executive director of the Marketing Science Institute and the charter member of its Hall of Fame, and also an elected Fellow of the American Academy of Advertising for career contributions to the field. He received the Institute for Public Relations 2009 special award for "lifetime contributions to public relations education and research," and Lipscomb University's 2011 MediaMasters award for a "body of [communications] work that stands as a model and inspiration for the next generation." He was recognized by IE University (Spain) for his pioneering work in corporate communication. He twice was a public member of the National Advertising Review Board for U.S. advertising self-regulation. He has served on numerous corporate and nonprofit boards. He is a trustee of the Arthur W. Page Society, and he was the first academic trustee of the Advertising Research Foundation and of the Advertising Educational Foundation. He is a past national vice chairman of PBS and an overseer at WGBH and at the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), where he was the founding chair of its Trustees Marketing Committee. He served as Alumni Association president of Boston Latin School, America's oldest school (1635), and conducted its 350$^{th}$ and 375$^{th}$ Founder's Day ceremonies as *magister eventuum*; he received its 2005 Distinguished Graduate Award. He is an Honorary Fellow (2012) of Brunel University, where he has been a Visiting Professor and a member of its Business School's Advisory Board.

Known as "the Cal Ripken of HBS," in over 45 years of teaching at Harvard he has never missed a class.