

SPONSORSHIP IN SPORTS

¹Ana Gavrilović,

¹Uroš Selenić,

²Slavko Dragosavljević.

¹ Faculty of Sport, University Union Nikola Tesla, Belgrade,
Serbia,

² Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, University of East
Sarajevo.

DOI 10.7251/SIZ2301110G

ISSN 1840-152X

UDK: 339.138:796

<http://sportizdravlje.rs.ba/>

<https://doisrpska.nub.rs/index.php/SIZ>

PROFESSIONAL ARTICLE

Summary: Sponsorship as a form of propaganda and a direct way of communicating between the company and its target group of consumers is a significant part of modern marketing strategies of market players. For a company to succeed in any global, regional, national, and even local market, it needs to differentiate itself from its competitors, create a competitive advantage, instill honesty and trust in customers, and possess a certain amount of exclusivity. Sponsorship is one of the simplest forms of marketing relations to realize programs and goals. It represents the most significant source of financial resources for many sports club owners and organizers of sports events and athletes. Classical propaganda (advertising), with outdated and ineffective methods, cannot achieve this. That type of communication is increasingly proving ineffective due to its aggressiveness, convincingness, and indirect relationship with potential consumers. This paper presents types and examples of sponsorship in the sports industry as a way in which direct contact with the target market group, exclusivity, and connection public with the sponsored activity instills security and trust in consumers. Success is almost guaranteed, especially if the sponsored event, organization, or individual achieves notable results.

Keywords: sponsorship in sports, sponsorship contracts, exclusivity, target market group, sports, internal marketing

INTRODUCTION

Sponsorship is defined as "a business relationship between one who provides funds, resources or services and individuals, events or organizations, who in turn offer certain rights and associations that can be exploited for commercial purposes" (Sleight, 1989). Therefore, "it is a mutually beneficial relationship, which is regulated by the sponsorship contract. Most often sponsored: sports, artistic and musical events, socially beneficial activities, teams, competitions, individual personalities, fairs, exhibitions (Jefkins, 2003), but also various educational, health and social programs" (Lamb et al., 2013). The consumer connects the company - the sponsor with the successes of the sponsor, which affects the reputation of the sponsors themselves, the strengthening of the brand image and rating, and thus leads to an increase in sales and profits. Sponsorship is most often used in sports and art. The

reason is simple: these areas cannot be financed from internal sources and the state budget, and cooperation with the economy is necessary. Also, business organizations saw Sponsorship as another marketing way to improve results and expand the market. The problem was solved to mutual satisfaction. Sports organizations, sports events, or individual athletes now relatively quickly get the necessary financial resources for their sports activities, and companies - sponsors also quickly, directly come into contact with their consumers, acquire new ones and strengthen their image and rating.

Sponsorship has its motivational component and an advantage compared to propaganda. Namely, as a paid, professionally processed, and tailored advertisement for the target group, propaganda contains a hefty dose of aggressiveness and persuasion and causes repulsion among consumers. Consumers accept communication this way with a certain reserve because they believe every company will say the best about itself and its products. Sponsorship is devoid of such prejudices. By including and associating the company with an event, organization, or individual (assumed to be successful) in a non-coercive, indirect way, consumers identify the sponsor with the success of the sponsor and show trust.

During the last decade of the 20th century, Sponsorship in sports developed into a successful marketing strategy for many companies and corporations and sports organizations as a successful source of income. The turning point was the Olympic Games in 1984, held in Los Angeles, which achieved a significant surplus of 227 million US dollars for the first time in the Games. Corporations see their interest in sports sponsorship as strengthening product differentiation and image on the market, increasing return on invested funds, demonstrating good for citizens and interest in society, and creating positive media interest and publicity.

The critical factors in the growth of sports sponsorship, according to the analysis of American experts, are government restrictions on advertising cigarettes and alcoholic beverages, escalating costs of traditional advertising, more intensive media coverage of sports activities, an increasing number of global media, as a channel to reach an international audience with Sponsorship, proven success sponsorships. On the other hand, companies' two most essential resources are brand image and reputation because they diminish relatively slowly and are incredibly firm-specific. Accordingly, increasing public awareness of a brand or company and changing or enhancing the company or brand image and reputation are the most important reasons for organizations to enter into sponsorship agreements.

INTERNAL MARKETING OF SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

Today, sport has a significant influence on society. It plays a role in people's health, creating healthy leisure time, physical activity, satisfaction, and healthy relationships, especially for younger generations (Javadin et al., 2014). In most of the earlier research, the market orientation was on other domains, except sports (Agti & Louafi, 2019). However, sports businesses and organizations are market-oriented (Mondali Zadeh, 2019). A sports club is a group of individuals that provides entertainment, competition, and training in sports-related activities. Thus, sports clubs can have different goals for different segments, including training, development of individual potentials, improvement of fitness, physical and mental

abilities, creation of space for social interactions and communication, competition between people, and other clubs. Sports clubs are organizations that are guided by education, increasing an individual's physical and spiritual strength. In other words, sports clubs work towards maintaining the health and physical and mental activity of members, where the abilities of athletes vary when they gather to exercise for health and well-being (Ghorbani & Safari, 2017). However, Vamplew (2013) notes that all sports clubs include activities that involve playing and watching sports at a recreational or competitive level. Sports clubs have people responsible for administrative management and offer formal membership that allows their members to train, play, and compete (Vamplew, 2013).

ENTREPRENEURIAL AND MARKET ORIENTATION IN SPORTS

Essentially, "these clubs create jobs and lead to entrepreneurial activity within the sector of club managers and coaches looking to identify new ways to respond to market needs. Having an entrepreneurial orientation in sports is very important because there are many opportunities for creating economic value and the possibility of increasing economic performance. Entrepreneurial orientation is one of the most famous theories in entrepreneurial and managerial research (Pittino et al., 2017)." It contains decision-making styles, processes, and methods that shape the company's entrepreneurial activities (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Entrepreneurial orientation is a set of distinct but interrelated behaviors that contain aspects of innovation, leadership, aggressive competition, risk-taking, and independence and is essential to a wide range of for-profit and non-profit organizational settings, including the sports domain (Javadin et al., 2014). Small and medium-sized enterprises have more flexibility and can quickly adapt to changes in the environment and react faster than large firms (Jakubiak & Chrapowicki, 2018) and, as such, are often more entrepreneurial. Kao (1993) defined entrepreneurship as "the process of making changes; doing something different, thus creating wealth for the individual and adding value to society."

Adaptation is vital in small organizations in this changing business environment with evolving customer needs. This means that small organizations, such as sports clubs, must operate and adapt to these dynamic environments. Success in such a challenging market requires a conscious and quick response from both the market and customers. Therefore, the business must be thorough and ready to understand the competitive environment in which they work, and market orientation is crucial in such dynamic times. Marketing theory evolved from a production orientation where firms scaled up, assuming consumers would buy goods that were well-made and reasonably priced (Kushwaha & Dubey, 2018). Finally, companies with a market orientation focus on producing goods and services that, at the same time, most effectively satisfy the wishes and needs of customers. Therefore, the market orientation approach focuses on gathering information about the needs and requirements of customers and the capabilities of competitors, which leads to the creation of more value for customers by using the organization's resources (Awwad & Agti, 2011) and is essential for sports organizations that must be very sensitive to its members (Zheng-lun, 2008). Market orientation is necessary for entrepreneurial companies because it leads to learning, environmental

adaptation, and quick response to life opportunities and threats (Ma et al., 2012). Market orientation is also one of the most effective forms of organizational culture; creating superior customer value enables business success (Herman et al., 2018). Market orientation includes a set of beliefs that put customers at the center of attention to ensure the company's long-term profitability. Also, it emphasizes creating an effective and efficient business to produce the most excellent value for the customer and competitive advantage (Tsai & Tang, 2008). In market orientation, customers are prioritized, so market orientation is the main cornerstone of marketing (Ericsson, 2015). Lam et al. (2010) suggest that market orientation is considered a social learning process through which market orientation can be acquired and transferred to the level of the individual employee. A market-oriented organization can better identify the needs and demands of the target market. As a result, it can achieve customer satisfaction more efficiently and effectively than other competitors. Thus, a market-oriented organization can achieve goals such as market share and more profit than an organization that engages in less market-oriented activities. Market orientation also has a special place in organizations involved in sports today (Fadda, 2020). Farrelly et al. (2008) state that sports organizations need to better understand customer needs and competitor performance due to changing customer demands and increasing competitors. Therefore, market orientation contributes to the success of a sports organization.

Sports clubs are private associations whose goal is to promote and develop interest in a particular sport or physical activity and the participation of their members in those activities and competitions. Sports clubs are also usually associated with a health club. Ng (2009) states that companies, organizations, and sports clubs should increase the quality of goods and services provided to customers with a whole set of customer-oriented actions and beliefs. Therefore, sports clubs are service organizations, as their core offering is intangible, although they may need equipment and infrastructure to provide these services. Managing internal, external, and interactive marketing is essential for service organizations.

INTERNAL MARKETING

Internal marketing focuses on meeting customer needs. Internal marketing promotes company goals to employees within organizations. On the other hand, interactive marketing is a marketing strategy that uses two-way communication channels to allow customers to connect directly with a company (Eric, 2017). As with any service environment, employees play a central role in attracting, building, and maintaining customer relationships. Research suggests that internal marketing is essential for ensuring employees deliver on organizational promises and are the interface between customers and organizations (Huang, 2020).

Internal marketing was initially proposed as a unique dimension to encourage employees to achieve customer-focused goals, where the audience is the company's employees (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Today, internal marketing studies have a common theme, and internal marketing has been expanded to include several dimensions, including the production of internal information, the dissemination of internal information, and responding to the domestic market. One of the most comprehensive definitions of internal marketing is provided by Rafik & Ahmed

(2000), in which internal marketing is introduced as a planned effort using an approach such as marketing to overcome organizational resistance to change and balance, motivate and coordinate between tasks as well as integrate employees to implement effective corporate strategies, as well as the task of creating customer satisfaction through the process of forming motivated and oriented employees. For example, each member of staff at the Marriott hotel is allowed to spend up to a thousand pounds on their initiative to solve guest problems. Keeping a motivated workforce, despite angry customers, inadequate support systems, and boredom with some service jobs, is difficult. Some service companies award an employee of the month in recognition of exceptional service (Kotler, 2006).

TERM AND TYPES OF SPONSORSHIP IN SPORTS

Sponsorship is "the delivery of resources (money, people, equipment) by one organization (sponsor) directly to an individual, authority or body (sponsored), in order to enable another to perform an activity in return for the benefit of the sponsor's intended strategy, which can be expressed through corporate, marketing or media goals" (Maksimović & Raič, 2005). Sponsorship is "an aid given by an individual or a company for an independent activity (usually related to sports or art, although the field of activity is expanding considerably), which is not directly related to the usual activity of that person or company, but it is an aid from which the sponsor hopes for some profit (Stewart, 1994). Sponsorship is a technique, form, or form of realization of commercial relations between two organizations, in this case, between a sports and a profit organization or between an athlete and a company, as between the seller of a sports product/service and the buyer of a sports product/service, which is defined by the elements of the sport's image" (Tomic, 2001).

So, Sponsorship has a long history, and some of them are:

- the newspaper Blackburn Times (Blackburn Tims), which more than 100 years ago brought the news that the owner of the local foundry sponsored a football team with \$100;
- 1861 saw the first modern application of Sponsorship when the Spears and Pound companies sponsored a cricket tournament in Australia;
- In 1928, Coca-Cola bought the right to promote its products at the Olympic Games from the IOC;
- In 1976, Montreal produced a deficit of 2 billion dollars, which the Canadian government had to cover, as it was the guarantor of the Games and
- In 1980, Moscow experienced a similar situation as Montreal.

TYPES OF SPONSORSHIP

In the global market, Sponsorship in sports occupies the most significant share compared to other areas such as art, culture, and others. In sports, investments differ from sport to sport, depending on the received media attention, the popularity of the sport, and other factors that significantly influence the companies that decide to sponsor the sport. In sports, sponsors can choose to sponsor according to several possibilities offered to them in the market. Depending on their goals, they can choose to sponsor a sports event. The direction of Sponsorship, according to some,

ends with advertising and Sponsorship of a sports event. In contrast, others believe that Sponsorship should be viewed only as the co-products of a sports competition or as an opportunity to create, through commercial means, better conditions for preparing athletes for the competition. All of this is true, but there is a fundamental principle by which Sponsorship is directed into three broad groups.

Three directions of Sponsorship are distinguished (Tomić, 2001): Sponsorship of individual or unique activities, ventures, and programs based on the image and reputation of sports organizations and athletes, which is reflected in the Sponsorship of special activities of the organization (sports and their programs), as well as parts of the program, such as preparation for competitions, competition, selection and preparation of young athletes, then we have the Sponsorship of a sports event, based on the commercial principles of buying/selling certain rights, which are in the hands of the owners of those rights (sports teams, sports clubs, competition organizers and athlete) and Sponsorship of the overall image of sports organizations, including event organizers and athletes themselves. It relies on the global, general principles of business relations between the two entities and in which, apart from sponsoring their competitions, all other activities of athletes and clubs are included (Tomić, 2001).

INTERESTED PARTIES IN SPONSORSHIP

The relationships between Sponsorship and other communication techniques, such as advertising, personal selling, and PR, differ significantly in marketing. Practice shows that companies often prioritize Sponsorship over other marketing techniques to achieve business goals and plans. For Sponsorship to be implemented and developed, it should be in a suitable environment where the company's goals can be achieved. Sellers of sponsorship rights form the environment, buyers of sponsorship rights, mass media, and sports audiences. We divide the sponsorship environment according to function into spreading sponsor messages on the sports market and directing sponsor messages according to target market segments.

The initial interest of the sponsor is to increase sales and make a profit. In order to achieve those above, he should ensure effective promotion of his company and its products, inform potential consumers about the offer and methods of sale and purchase, to increase the demand for products. For Sponsorship to be more effective, attention should be paid to the mutual interests of the seller and the buyer of sponsorship rights. The interests are in the following positions: business interest of sports organizations, athletes, organizers of sports events, and other direct participants in sports activities and competitions (sports platform), which are aimed at increasing profits or simply forming sufficient budget funds for specific sports organizations and the athletes themselves, and business interest sponsors, which are aimed at increasing sales and making profits. To create a good sponsorship relationship, in order to form a quality marketing relationship between sellers and buyers of sponsorship rights, it is necessary to identify four basic dimensions of those relationships, viewed from the point of view of the seller of sponsorship rights: the target object, the goals of the target object, the target subject and the goals of the target subject.

EVALUATION OF INTERESTED PARTIES

During the sponsored program and after the end of the program, sports marketers should assess the cooperation between the seller and the buyer, that is, determine the program's effectiveness through evaluation. Evaluation is a tool that helps people collaborate effectively. For the sponsorship project, whose expiration date was defined when the contract was concluded, to be implemented again, it is necessary to give a realistic assessment of the realization of such programs. Such an assessment is given by the sponsor based on the criteria they use. It is not enough to analyze only the side of the sponsor but also the sports success of the organization, which is essential for sports workers and managers of organizations so that they can include the sports results of the previous cycle as one of the new opportunities when forming a new sponsorship offer.

The current size of sponsorship investments and their dynamic growth are significant. Cooper (2003) suggests two main ways to evaluate Sponsorship: reach (how many people were exposed to the Sponsorship through the media) and awareness (how many people remember the brand of the sponsored event). In general, research on Sponsorship has focused on effectiveness, consumers, and shareholder reactions.

Sponsorship agreements on international sporting events are becoming very important for companies operating internationally. These companies can use Sponsorship as a communication platform to increase their image, reputation, and visibility abroad, thereby attracting the interest of domestic and international investors. Freedman (Freedman, 1984) linked stakeholders' interests with corporate strategy. He supported that the success of an organization depends on the needs, motives, and goals of the stakeholders with whom the organization communicates. Stakeholder theorists suggest that a company's primary financial and social responsibility is to generate positive and serve the diverse (and often conflicting) interests of all involved stakeholders to maintain profitable relationships with them and succeed in the long term (Smith, 2003).

In the literature, four qualifications are given in the identification of stakeholders (Stark, 1994): a relationship (contractual or non-contractual) between stakeholders and the company must exist, the interested party seeks a concrete benefit and represents specific interests, the interested party exists in the company's environment and the interested parties can encompass different configurations, such as individuals and constituencies. A stakeholder is "any group of individuals who can affect or are affected by the achievement of an organization's goals" (Freedman, 1984).

SPONSOR OFFER

It is paramount to determine the needs of potential sponsors, which they need help to achieve. Offering different benefits to a potential sponsor can keep this relationship attractive. Sports marketers need to understand what businesses are looking for in a sponsorship. Preparing the sponsorship offer is essential in successfully implementing the marketing strategy of Sponsorship in sports.

When preparing offers, managers should pay attention to the fact that the sponsor's offer does not contain only the seller's proposals but should be formed so

that it also contains significant values for the sponsor. The offer should be formed so that it contains the necessary information that the buyer wants and wants to hear from the proposer of the offer or the seller.

The customer is particularly interested in (Tomić, 2001):

1. Characteristics of the primary consumer market, which is defined by the sports audience and which is controlled by the seller of sponsorship rights in the context of demographic, geographic, and other market segmentation criteria, including the payment capabilities of potential consumers in the sports market;

2. The size of the spectator market at the sports arena and the possibility of a realistic volume of ticket sales;

3. The number of participants in the competition, as a segment of the sports market, in competitions or mass practice refers to marathons, street races, cross-country, fitness, and recreational activities;

4. Projected quantitative market sizes of listeners and viewers of radio and television broadcasts, and

5. The level of the image of the target subject from the sports platform.

It is important to note that, in most cases, sponsors expect much more from sponsorships, which are available in the provided offer, such as influencing the elimination or avoidance of competitors' sponsors, strengthening one's image, showing as much as possible to the sports audience without complying with the level of publicity determined by the contract, spreading the good word about the company and its product, to reduce the frequency of negative publicity, to contribute to the development of communication channels, through contacts with other partners of sellers of sponsorship rights.

According to Tomić (Tomić, 2001), their positive approach to the commercial part of the work lies in the fulfillment of the sponsor's five minimum, but most important, conditions for joining the sponsorship contract:

1. Supporting and stimulating the sale of the sponsor's products;

2. Creation of positive communication channels with clients and retail dealers;

3. Active participation in the chain information system formed by participants in the sports and information process of sports activities: sports platform - SMI - sports auditorium - sponsors, to build the image of the company and the image of the product on the mass sports market;

4. Promotion of new products i

5. Realization of additional values, which the phrase can describe: "get more than invested." The right that a sponsor gets when signing a sponsorship offer to repay a specific part of their products or in monetary form, in any form for the seller of sponsorship rights, means realizing his goals.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL SPORTS MARKETING SPONSORS

Six examples of sponsorship marketing:

- Coca-Cola and the Olympic Games

Coca-Cola has been a sponsor of the Olympic Games since 1928. Nevertheless, its most successful collaboration was in the Campaign (That'sGold) during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. While some sponsors might be satisfied with simply displaying their brand at an event, Coca-Cola's sponsorship campaign went much

further. The Campaign was a year-long cross-platform social media campaign aimed at 13-20-year-olds. The three-phase strategy captured teenagers' attention before, during, and after the competition with photos and videos featuring influencers, musicians, and (of course) Olympic athletes.

Furthermore, she certainly achieved what was planned. The brand had an 88 percent accuracy rate for targeting teenagers and reached 77 percent of Brazil's teen population (21 million teens). Additionally, the entire Campaign had more than 30 million video views while it was active (according to Campaign). The campaign message struck the most important connection with fans. All about celebrating life's big and small 'golden moments,' the Campaign ensured no one was left out, regardless of whether they could get a ticket to the games. Patricia Pieranti, Coca-Cola's real-time marketing manager, explained that "everyone can be gold, just like everyone can have Coca-Cola. That is, it is not about performance. It is about the gold that happens behind the scenes (podium)."

- PepsiCo and the NFL

With a sponsorship marketing spend of approximately \$370 million, IEG ranked PepsiCo as the top US sponsor in 2015. However, the brand's most successful sponsorship venture must be the NFL Super Bowl, held annually in the US. As revealed by NS Business, Pepsi has invested \$100 million in this 2020 competition alone. Above all, Pepsi is a master at choosing mutually beneficial sponsorship marketing opportunities that allow it to form long-lasting relationships. A fantastic example of this is the multi-year Super Bowl halftime sponsorship. PepsiCo's support allowed the NFL to expand the show from one to 12 minutes of performances on a much larger platform. This meant that the NFL could expand the show's reach while PepsiCo could promote its products to a broader audience. So, this move has brought great benefit to both partners. The halftime show now often brings in more spectators than the game itself. Market Watch found that the 2020 Super Bowl had 102 million viewers, while J-Lo and Shakir's halftime show drew 104 million! By forming long-term partnerships with recurring events, PepsiCo can build strong relationships with consumers and event organizers, leveraging its sponsorship success repeatedly.

- Just Eat and The X Factor

Just Eat signed a multi-year sponsorship marketing deal with The X Factor in 2017 - which, despite declining viewership, is still considered one of the most extensive properties on commercial television. Marketing Week points out that the year before the deal was signed, 39 million people watched the show. The classic TV identities were at the center of the sponsorship deal, which was thought to be worth around £30m. They were supposed to appear during the program's beginning and end of commercial breaks. However, instead of stopping there, Eat took things to another level. The brand launched the "Chef Factor" - a national hunt for chefs to star in idents, parallel to the program. In addition, it offered consumers exclusive behind-the-scenes content and gift tickets during the series, along with "Just Eat's Xtra Bites." However, perhaps the biggest reason for the Sponsorship's success is that families and friends enjoying a night in front of the TV fit perfectly into Just Eat's target audience. Barnaby Dave, the company's marketing director, said: "We are a

weekend business, and food plays an important role in how families view The X Factor. So it fits into consumer habits".

- Rolex and TED

Rolex has sponsored TED since 2008, enabling non-profit organizations to continue sharing their astonishing talks with the world for free. Rolex was one of the first TED partners to take advantage of the platform, creating a branded, three-minute video specifically for the TED platform. The video highlighted his history of design and innovation and was shown as an advertisement against TED talks on similar topics. Many sponsors looking to customize their brand reputation rely on being associated with the sponsor. By creating tailored content that would appeal to TED consumers, Rolex was able to go one step further, positioning itself as a point of interest for consumers to enjoy. As the TED-Rolex partnership developed, it went beyond a direct sponsorship deal. They teamed up to create the wildly popular Surprise Me feature on the TED app in 2012, which is now estimated to have more than 200,000 downloads worldwide. A new feature from Rolex and TED allowed consumers to discover "amazing" TED talks based on their available time and their mood - not by topic. For Rolex, the collaboration reflected its commitment to investing in technology to improve the world while also playfully playing with the concept of timekeeping.

- Emirates and Arsenal

Emirates' Sponsorship of Arsenal is not one of the most creative sponsorship marketing examples, but it deserves a mention. Not just because of the massive amount of money involved. The airline signed its first sponsorship deal with Arsenal in 2004, where it won the naming rights to the stadium. The global destination, which receives 109,000 visitors each year, will be known as Emirates Stadium until at least 2028 after the airline signed a contract extension in 2012. The airline has also been Arsenal's shirt sponsor since 2006 and recently extended their sponsorship deal until 2024 for a whopping £200m. This is the most significant contract the London football club signed and will also be their most extended contract. Emirates' substantial financial investment greatly benefits the club's quest for trophies. Meanwhile, Emirates is getting the marketing rights to develop campaigns featuring Arsenal worldwide. Moreover, with Arsenal being such a household name, that opportunity is (almost) priceless. One of the Emirates managers said: "Our favorite part of the deal, however, is the agreement that Arsenal will fly on Emirates aircraft during their pre-season tours. In this way, instead of simply announcing its brand, the airline can use its specialty to provide transportation for the club and at the same time get much publicity." It is impossible to know how much revenue the sponsorship deal generates for Emirates. However, with the airline willing to pay £200 million to extend its shirt sponsorship deal, it is safe to assume they are getting at least that much value back (and probably a lot more).

- Nike and Cristiano Ronaldo

Global soccer icon Cristiano Ronaldo is set to become (arguably) the richest Nike athlete in the world after signing a lifetime endorsement deal with the sportswear brand worth up to \$1 billion. The pair began their partnership in 2003 when Ronaldo joined Manchester United. Since then, he has played for Real Madrid

and Juventus and competed in leagues and championships worldwide. By the time the partners signed their lifetime contract (in 2016), he had gone through more than 60 pairs of Nike football boots. While Ronaldo may have hit the jackpot, Sporttechie suggests that Nike may have pulled off a pretty good deal. In the year leading up to the deal, the footballer was posted 1,703 times on social media, generating 2.25 billion social interactions. According to Hookit, 347 posts mentioned Nike or featured the Nike logo. This activity reportedly brought Nike \$474 million in media value in 2016 alone. In other words, Nike only needed one more successful year like this one to make a billion dollars back. This partnership is an example of overlapping sponsorship marketing shares with other marketing partners. For example, the Nike hashtag displayed in a star's Instagram posts can be seen just as easily as product placement. The deal's focus on his social media presence could be interpreted as influencer marketing (a kind of referral marketing deal).

CONCLUSION

Sports have become an essential part of people's free time in recent decades. Sports organizations have evolved from local institutions dominated by honorary officials to professional, global players. The FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games are some of the most important and sought-after world sporting events played professionally. The 2010 FIFA World Cup, held in South Africa, earned \$2,408 million from selling TV rights and an additional \$1,072 million from selling marketing rights. It was estimated that the 2014 World Cup in Brazil generated a total turnover of \$4 billion for FIFA (Houston, 2017).

Sponsorship of a league, team, event, or individual athlete is an excellent example of using sports to achieve marketing goals. Sponsors are partners of the sponsored property as their clients who want to achieve specific results from their association with the property. For example, consumer brands retailer PepsiCo (PepsiCo) has sponsored the NFL for nearly 30 years and has extended its relationship with the league through 2022.

Today, sports sponsorship has become a comprehensive 360-degree communication tool. It not only raises awareness of the brand but also builds its image, establishes relationships, influences sales, and helps pursue many corporate goals. Put, sports sponsorship is when a sponsor provides an economic contribution or personalized services (advertising material, shirts, human resources, etc.) in exchange for promotional rights and for the benefit of raising its image on a public level. It is an excellent way for a brand to connect with the consumer through a successful sporting event, which can involve thousands of people.

Although not altruistic but an action in the interest of the sponsor supporting the activities in exchange for the benefit of the brand, sports sponsorship may be eligible for tax relief under certain conditions. The main objective of Sponsorship is commercial and related to the image. However, other secondary objectives should be considered, such as social acceptance, product revaluation, increase in sales, public opinion, etc. Since this is a significant economic investment, it is necessary that the values of the sponsor company and the user company match so that there is a standard brand positioning - it is essential, when evaluating the activation of

sports sponsorship, to have an effective strategy, with a complete analysis of critical aspects (target audiences, locations, ROI...) so the benefit is mutual.

What differentiates a sponsor from other companies, which use sponsorship motifs in their communications, are the rights acquired from their owners (e.g. athletes in advertising, celebrities associated with sports, fans, or sports equipment). However, to create an offer that will satisfy the customer, it is necessary to know his expectations because these rights give the sponsor a feeling of exclusivity and specialness.

Today, sport is very widespread in the media and includes brands (corporate sponsors), media (TV, radio, and so on), and large audiences (spectators). Since the beginning of the century, celebrities have been required to attract commercial income (Sponsorship or media interests). The concept of "sports celebrity" has appeared in the mass media in modern society and is exposed daily on radio, TV, social networks, etc. Although it seems obvious from a business point of view, it should be remembered that rights holders and sponsoring organizations often speak a different language, as the former primarily focuses on sports competition. At the same time, the latter want to invest their money efficiently.

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Received:21.09.2023.
Approved:18.10.2023.

Correspondence:
Ana Gavrilović
Faculty of Sport,
University Union Nikola Tesla, Belgrade, Serbia
e-mail: ana.gavrilovic@fzs.edu.rs