

Foreword

The attention of both millions of viewers worldwide and a considerable number of on-site spectators has been on the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil just recently. A total of 64 matches were played in 12 cities and the excitement has been enormous with not only the audience and the players but also with the sponsors. Companies like Adidas, Visa, Sony, or Continental invested millions of dollars for the right of associating their brands with the event or particular teams and for leveraging these associations by means of collateral advertising and activation activities. However, the question remains whether or not all of that presence in a multitude of communication channels really paid off. Has awareness for the brands really been raised? Have client relationships really been cultivated through vivid brand experiences? Did the sponsoring companies' employees really feel positively about their employers engagement and has loyalty increased? And also, did the mental perceptions for the brands in consumers' heads really shift into the direction intended by the brand managers?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that not many of these questions are answered in the internal follow-up audits conducted by sponsor brands. Even though academic research in the field of sponsorship developed a multitude of frameworks and models on how to assess sponsorship outcome, the academic-practitioner divide is still considerably wide. Substantiating the surmise concerning this lack of contact between academic research and sponsorship practice, the number of research insights on sponsorship strategy and tactics (rather than the assessment of outcomes) having diffused to managers' work desks is very limited too. The present book is making an impact on practice by investigating a managerially relevant and, heretofore, under-researched aspect of sponsorship and brand management. While adhering to exceptionally high standards of empirical research, Dr. Gross provides fresh insights and viable advice on how to grow brands through sponsorship. His work specifically addresses the last of the above-mentioned questions. Namely, through which mental processes and on what image transfer routes do brand perceptions change in sponsorship?

The insights are fresh insofar as the between-sponsor brand image transfer that stands at the center of this study's consideration has up to now not been investigated with the thoroughness presented here. Imagine the brand manager that sees his or her brand sharing a perimeter billboard or any other sponsorship signage with a co-sponsor during the FIFA World Cup. In the past, it might have been that manager's intuition that led him to the assumption of this sponsorship ally probably imbuing the own brand. However, given the

results of the present study, we now have an initial piece of scientific evidence that in fact a sponsor brand can gain (or suffer) from brand attitude and brand personality traits innately tied to a co-sponsor. As the research framework does not only encompass the between-sponsor image transfer relationship but rather spans the entirety of transfer relations that might unfold among two sponsor brands and a sponsorship property, the investigation sheds light on how all of the individual brand level entities comprising a "sponsorship alliance" impact one another. Accordingly, a salient contribution of the present work lies in the finding that two brands concurrently sponsoring the same event may add an extra effect to the image gain they seek to garner from the property by cross-fertilizing with regard to their own images.

The viability of advice mainly arises from the conclusive implications as outlined for practitioners as well as from a number of concise ideas on the direction of future research. Through profound practical knowledge on the subject matter Philip Gross is well versed with regard to the needs and requirements coming along with executing and delivering on a sponsorship strategy. Building on this expertise, he understands to boil scientific findings down to the essence and deduct relevant propositions for both brand and property managers. Pointing to some fruitful paths for further investigation, he pays tribute to the field of study he immersed into as a scientist and paves the way for new insights to come. It is my hope that in contrast to depending on managers' intuition, growing brands through sponsorship may come to rely more on substantive research endeavors like the one at hand.

In that sense I wish this book a receptive and large audience in the communities of both practitioners and academicians.

Prof. Dr. Klaus-Peter Wiedmann

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Sponsorship Alliance

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