



Airlines, Sponsorship, and Football

This case study is for the purposes of education only and does not suggest any good or bad practice on the part of anyone mentioned in the case study.



Qatar Airways (Source: Oliver Holzbauer)

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ABSTRACT

Why would an airline sponsor a football team? Why would many Middle East region airlines do it? What is the benefit? What is the risk? To understand, let's look at the value of sponsorship, the way it works and the brand loyalty that it engenders. These factors together with the association of the brand with a sense of passionate connection as well as a deep human need begin to explain why airlines are smart to sponsor football teams. At the same time, are there risks given the intensity of feelings that fans have about their teams with their club, region or national associations?

RISING VALUE OF SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship has seen significant growth as a tool in the marketing communications mix over the last twenty years.¹ IEG values global sponsorship activity at \$62.7 billion in 2018. Statista.com gives the global sport sponsorship market at \$40 billion and rising in 2015.

Moreover, growth in spending on sponsorship outstrips that on advertising and the gap between the two is widening. The declining effectiveness of traditional media is one of the factors behind the growth of sponsorship.

Football plays an important role in the field of sport sponsorship. Seven of the 10 largest sponsorship deals in Britain were football sponsorships at the turn of the century.²

International brands, such as Chevrolet or T-Mobile, choose to sponsor football teams for a number of reasons. One driver of sponsorship is building awareness, and football is attractive

1. S. Cunningham, T.B. Cornwell, & L.V. Coote, "Expressing identity and shaping image: The relationship between corporate mission and corporate sponsorship," *Journal of Sport Management* 23 (2009): 65-86.

2. Simon Chadwick & Thwaites, D, "Advances in the management of sports sponsorship: Fact or fiction? Evidence from English professional soccer," *Journal of General Management* 30 (2004): 39-60.

because it draws a large, global audience not just in match attendance but via broadcast media and the Internet. Another key driver is the opportunity to link the sponsoring and sponsored brands together in the minds of the fan.

Sponsorship and Football

Among the many definitions of sponsorship are those which focus on the commercial value of sponsorship which can use: “associations connected with an event, a team, a group etc. for specific marketing (communications) purposes.”³

Sponsorship involves an exchange between the sponsor and the sponsored property whereby both parties gain some benefit. It involves a process in which the sponsor and the sponsored property become associated in the minds of customers.⁴

Sponsorship makes an important contribution to the revenues earned by football clubs, leagues and tournaments. It also plays an important role in the marketing communications mix of global brands, given that football has an increasingly global fan base.

Motives for sponsorship are not always commercial, however. Sometimes motives for sponsors can be philanthropic or those of enhancing the social value offered by the sponsor, through goodwill and building relationships in the community.⁵

The existence of goodwill – the recognition of the benefits of sponsorship for the activities that the customer is involved in – is also seen to be a prime differentiator between sponsorship and other promotional tools such as advertising.⁶

3. Sue Bridgewater, “Sponsorship and football,” in *Handbook on the Economics of Professional Football*, ed. John Goddard and Peter Sloane (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014): 117-129.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Why does sponsorship promote goodwill? This is to do with the mechanism by which sponsorship impacts brand awareness and loyalty, and that is by building on the customer or fan's attachment to something that is already attractive, and even beloved.

A sport, or a sporting hero, is a source of real attachment for many. Considering the passion with which people identify with football teams and their favorite players, it may not be a surprise that companies that come to be strongly associated with these also earn a place in the hearts of consumers.

Brands and Brand Relationships

Companies often enter into sponsorship arrangements: "to establish, strengthen or change brand image."⁷ Brand image is defined as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory."⁸ Brand and "brand image" are important assets and associated these in a secure and positive way in the hearts and minds of consumers can make a big difference in customer loyalty.

While every successful product or service brand fills a real need or want of consumers, those brands that we value the most have come to be closely associated with who we are. This means we have strong emotional connections with these brands based upon memories, associations and connections with our self-image. Companies that are able to align their

6. T. Meenaghan, "The Role of Sponsorship in the Marketing Communications Mix," *International Journal of Advertising* 10, No: 1 (1991): 35 – 47.

7. J. Eaton & Gwinner, K. P., "Building brand image through event sponsorship: The role of image transfer," *Journal of Advertising* 28, No: 4 (1999): 47-57.

8. Frank Go & Robert Grovers, "Three main debates," In *International Place Branding Yearbook 2012: Managing Smart Growth and Sustainability*, (Palgrave, 2013): 198.

communications and marketing activities in a clear way to make that connection to a consumer's values and needs strong, tend to enjoy the highest degree of brand loyalty.⁹

Sports tournaments and teams have a distinctive character that makes them very appealing as vehicles for association. Sport is a very high involvement activity. Whether playing or spectating, sports fans engage deeply in sport. They are not just rationally, but often very emotionally attached to the clubs and sports stars who they support. They exhibit fanatical consumption behaviour and are extremely brand loyal.¹⁰ Partnering, or linking a brand with a sports brand opens up the possibility of tapping into a special type of attachment and emotion and associating this with a brand.¹¹

Studies of sports brand loyalty sometimes build on social identity theory¹² which defines social identity as: “a person's sense of who they are, based on their group membership(s).” Social identity theory argues that groups (such as social group, local community, region, nation, family, football team) which people belong to, provide important sources of pride and self-esteem. Belonging to groups gives us a sense of social identity. Shared support, for example of a football team, provides fans with an important sense of belonging¹³ and is important for a sense

9. Carolina Rogel, *Star Brands*, New York (Allworth Press, 2015).

10. R. Madrigal, “The Influence of Social Alliances with Sports Teams on Intentions to Purchase Corporate Sponsors Products,” *Journal of Advertising* 29, No: 4 (2000):13-24.

Bridgewater, “Sponsorship and football.”

11. Madrigal, “The Influence of Social Alliances with Sports Teams.”

12. H. Tajfel, “The achievement of inter-group differentiation,” In *Differentiation between Social Groups*, ed., H. Tajfel, London (Academic Press, 1978): 77–100.

13. R.V. Kozinets, “E-tribalized marketing? The strategic implications of virtual communities of consumption,” *European Management Journal* 17, No: 3 (1999): 252-64.

of connection and of where we fit in the world, especially in an era of “virtual” and individual digital consumption behaviour.

On the other hand, social identity theory argues that belonging to groups can have potential downsides through the psychological concept of “in-group” and “out of group” effects. By these, people tend to exaggerate the similarities between people in their group, and the differences between their group and those in other groups, creating possibly rivalry and tensions.¹⁴

In most cases brands establish their connections to important values such as belonging, or social identity, by telling a consistent and multi-layered story about what they do and who they are. Sponsorship allows for this story to be told in a way that is more nuanced than traditional advertisements. Brands, however, should note that, in creating these strong associations with one group of fans, they might inadvertently be alienating other groups who support rival teams.

We are attached to a football team in part because of the fun of it, but also perhaps because of our memories of football, family support for the team, and its connection to our home or another valued place, but above all by a deep need for a sense of belonging. For fans, football teams are a part of who we are in a way that other companies would like to be. By aligning closely with a team or favorite player, particularly when that team or player a company derives an immediate association based on the value of belonging.

14. H. Tajfel & Turner, J. C “An integrative theory of inter-group conflict,” In *the Social Psychology of Inter-Group Relations*, WG. Austin & S Worchel eds., Monterey (Brooks/Cole, 1979): 33–47.

Airlines and Football: Making the connection

Football and airlines are a very natural fit. Football teams and players travel, they visit different cities, and they often fly to get there. Moreover, we identify with football players. We identify with the struggles to be successful and with their hard work and with their setbacks. They are like us, but they are our heroes. They travel with their families, they care about their safety, expect a high quality experience, appreciate good service, etc.

Airlines provide importance services to consumers in the hospitality, tourism and business arenas. Often whether or not to fly is not the question, but with whom to fly is. In terms of association with core benefit, safety is probably the most significant factor for airlines.

Concerns about safety will stop consumers from choosing a specific airline. Safety is a basic need that airlines must meet. It is therefore unlikely to be a brand differentiator, except in a negative sense. (As when there has been a safety issues in the news.) But what are some of the other benefits that could affect a choice to travel on a certain airline?

Self-esteem is a basic need that often drives luxury purchases. Feeling good about ourselves matters to us, and getting where we need to go in style and comfort surely helps with that. In many markets, and particularly in the Middle East, all of the airlines meet this need for self-esteem. All the airlines are luxury airlines providing a high level of service.

So, a sense of belonging is a brand differentiator, and it is a natural fit given that each airline is already identified with a specific country and national identity.

How and why, though, do airlines use sponsorship of football to their benefit?

Airlines and Football: The Benefits of Sponsorship

Deloitte points to the importance of the Middle East in the growing revenues of football, especially in Europe (Deloitte 2016, Deloitte 2018). This revenue comes both through broadcast and sponsorship revenue. “The Middle East continues to play an important part in this story both at a club and league level,” said Dan Jones, partner in the Sports Business Group at Deloitte (...) Commercial partnerships with Middle East-based sponsors are some of the most lucrative in the game, with three of the top five revenue generating clubs having Middle-East based shirt sponsors.¹⁵

Among some of the recent high profile sponsorship relationships have been a number of relationships between European Football Clubs and Middle Eastern airlines, Qatar Airways, Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airlines and Dubai’s Emirates Airline.

Research quoted in Arabian Business (2014)¹⁶ explains that airlines are attracted to sports and football sports sponsorships because sports fans make likely travelers and the demographic of sports fans is increasingly towards those with disposable income.

In a competitive market for passengers, Raymond Kollau, a market research agency focusing on the travel sector says:

“Sports are all about emotion (...) By aligning themselves with individual athletes and national sports teams, airlines are tapping into the general public’s emotions - which can be a powerful way of branding.”¹⁷

15 Deloitte Football Finance Report, (2016).

16. Nadia Khan, Analysis: Gulf airlines' obsession with sports sponsorship, Arabian Business (website), 29 December 2014, <https://www.arabianbusiness.com/analysis-gulf-airlines-obsession-with-sports-sponsorship-576567.html>.

17. Ibid.

This case study looks at some of the sponsorship relationships that exist between Middle East region airlines along with the benefits and challenges of these relationships:

QATAR AIRWAYS AND FOOTBALL

Qatar Airways has recently announced a number of new sponsorship relationships with prestigious football brands. These include¹⁸: Official Partner and Official Airline of FIFA, shirt sponsorship of Italian Serie A club AS Roma FC¹⁹ until the end of 2020-21 and sponsor of German Bundesliga, Bayern München.²⁰ Qatar Airways was also sponsor of Spain's La Liga club, FC Barcelona from 2010 – 2017.

Qatar Airways and FC Barcelona

Qatar Airways had a very successful sponsorship relationship with FC Barcelona of Spain's La Liga.²¹ This relationship both generated revenue for FC Barcelona and contributed to global awareness and positive associations with the success of the football club for Qatar Airlines. On its website, FC Barcelona showed the level of revenue which it had gained from the relationship with revenue growing from €15 million in 2010/11, €26 million in 2011/12, €29 million in 2012/13, €30.5 million in 2013/14, €32 million in 2014/15 and €33.5 million in 2015/16. Barcelona received an additional €5 million in 2014/15 as a bonus for winning the Champions League. In total, the sponsorship relationship was worth €71 million.

18. "Qatar Airways – Sponsorships," Qatar Airways (website), <https://www.qatarairways.com/en/sponsorship.html>.

19. "Qatar Airways becomes Roma's new shirt sponsor," The New Arab (website), 23 April 2018, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/4/23/qatar-airways-becomes-romas-new-shirt-sponsor>.

20. "Qatar Airways replace Lufthansa as Bayern Munich sponsor," *New Straits Times*, 21 February 2018, <https://www.nst.com.my/sports/football/2018/02/337349/qatar-airways-replace-lufthansa-bayern-munich-sponsor>.

21. Anthony Wright, "Barcelona reveal details of sponsorship agreement with Qatar Airways," Calico Finanza (website), 2017, <https://en.calciofinanza.com/2017/06/08/barcelona-reveal-details-sponsorship-agreement-qatar-airways/>.

From 2011 – 2013, the Qatar Foundation name was used on the FC Barcelona shirts and the Qatar Airways name was used between 2013 and 2017.

The relationship also saw a hugely successful integrated marketing communications strategy between the partners. The first advert, the Land of FC Barcelona²² featured star FC Barcelona players including Lionel Messi, shown teaching football skills and Andrés Iniesta as an artist. The advert was a massive success²³ achieving high levels of global coverage. Within the first 24 hours, it was visited 1,800,000 times on the FC Barcelona official Youtube channel and was shown on major TV channels around the world.

A second advert starred FC FC Barcelona players Lionel Messi, Neymar, Gerard Piqué and Luis Suarez among others visiting destinations from Qatar Airways extensive network of destinations, including the Maldives, Dallas, Paris and Seoul.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Akbar Al Baker, said of this advert:

“We are pleased to launch our new campaign, featuring some of the FC Barcelona stars and football greats. We hope that our passengers and football fans around the world enjoy this heart-felt journey as the players travel to a few of Qatar Airways’ destinations.”

22. FC Barcelona (website), <https://www.fcbarcelona.com/club/news/2014-2015/qatar-airways-and-fc-barcelona-present-the-new-advert>.

23. FC Barcelona (website), <https://www.fcbarcelona.com/club/news/2013-2014/major-success-of-fc-barcelona-and-qatar-airways-ad-in-first-24-hours>.

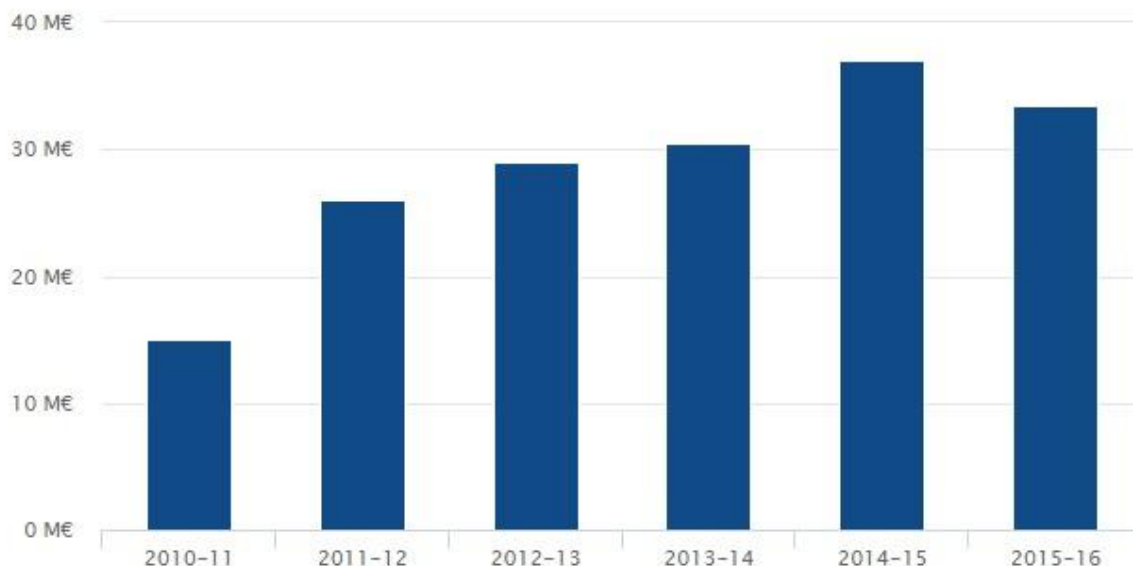


Figure 1: Barcelona revenue from QSI sponsorship agreement (Graphic: Ecofoot.fr)²⁴

EMIRATES AND FOOTBALL

Emirates says of its portfolio of football sponsorship properties:

“Football is a truly global sport and consequently has always been an important strand to Emirates’ sponsorship portfolio. Through the acquisition of sponsorship rights with governing bodies and leading teams, Emirates has become one of the most prominent brands within football.”²⁵

Among the sponsorship relationships of Emirates Airline are football partnerships with Arsenal and Emirates Stadium, Real Madrid, AC Milan, Portugal’s SL Benfica, Hamburg SV and New York Cosmos. The following section highlights some of these sponsorship relationships:

²⁴ Anthony Wright, *Barcelona revenue from QSI sponsorship agreement*: June 8, 2017 <https://en.calcioefinanza.com/2017/06/08/barcelona-reveal-details-sponsorship-agreement-qatar-airways/>
²⁵ “Emirates – Sponsorships,” Emirates (website), <https://www.emirates.com/english/about-us/sponsorships/football/>.

Emirates and Real Madrid

In 2017, Real Madrid announced a renewal of its sponsorship deal with Emirates Airline²⁶. The new deal, for a total of 280 million euros over 5 years and running until 2020/2021 is said to be the most lucrative sponsorship deal in world football. Higher than the of Manchester United sponsorship relationship with Chevrolet, which runs until 2021 for 62 million euro per year²⁷.

The sponsorship began in 2011²⁸ and was extended in 2013²⁹ with the Fly Emirates logo on the Real Madrid shirts, a branded VIP Lounge at the stadium, additional player access and advertising rights. Emirates also have highly visible branding at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium.

The relationship offers access to a large global fanbase and creates “meaningful connections with sports fans around the world.”³⁰

Emirates says of its relationship with Real Madrid:

“Our commitment to football includes Real Madrid, the world’s most successful football club, which has been part of our sponsorship portfolio since 2011 (...) With a global fan base of 500 million, and a massive social media following, it has touched fans and spectators in every corner of the globe.”³¹

26. “Real Madrid agree record-breaking sponsorship deal with Emirates,” As.com (website), 11 April 2018, https://en.as.com/en/2017/09/21/football/1506006163_369823.html.

27. “Real Madrid hits €70m with Emirates deal as revenue breaks records,” Insidefootballworld.com (website), 22nd September 2017, <http://www.insideworldfootball.com/2017/09/22/real-madrid-hits-e70m-emirates-deal-revenue-breaks-records/>.

28. “Emirates – Sponsorships,” Emirates (website), <https://www.emirates.com/english/about-us/sponsorships/football/real-madrid.aspx>.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31 Ibid.

As well as its relationship with Real Madrid, Emirates lists a number of other iconic football clubs amongst its sponsorship portfolio. These include among others: SL Benfica of Portugal, Arsenal FC of the English Premier League and AC Milan and Italy's Serie A.

Emirates and Arsenal

In November 2012, Emirates renewed its sponsorship partnership with Arsenal FC of the English Premier League. The relationship between Emirates and Arsenal FC began in 2004. On signing the extension of the shirt sponsorship deal, worth £150 million, until the end of the 2018-19 season. Emirates said:

“As three-time winners of the Premier League, 13 time FA Cup winners and regulars in the UEFA Champions League, Arsenal is one of the most prominently supported clubs in the world with a phenomenal global fan base.”

The deal was further extended recently³² until the end of the 2023-24 season. The deal is believed to be worth £200m (\$280m). It is the largest sponsor deal signed by the London club, and will see the Emirates shirt partnership, which began in 2006, run to at least 18 years, longer than their previous longest sponsorship relationship with Japanese electronics firm, JVC from 1981 to 1999.

Emirates also has the stadium naming rights for Arsenal's home ground, the Emirates Stadium, a state-of-the-art 60,000 seat arena in North London which was built in 2006. Arsenal's home will continue to be known as the Emirates Stadium until 2028³³.

ETIHAD AIRLINES

32 Bill Wilson, “Arsenal and Emirates in £200m shirt sponsorship extension,” *BBC News*, 19 February 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-43113951>.

33. Hardik Vyas, “Arsenal announce five-year extension to Emirates sponsorship deal,” *Independent*, 19 February 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/arsenal-sign-emirates-deal-extension-record-fiveyear-a8217656.html>.

Etihad Airlines of Abu Dhabi also has a number of global football sponsorship relationships including: US Major League Soccer, New York City Football Club, Manchester City Football Club, Melbourne City Football Club, Al Ittihad Football Club and Al Ain Football Club, Abu Dhabi. Amongst these are:

Etihad Airlines and US Major League Soccer³⁴

Etihad Airlines and US Major League Soccer first became partners in 2014. Recently extending this relationship, Etihad and MLS will continue to collaborate. Etihad describes this relationship as: “deepening its commitment to the US and Canada markets.”³⁵

Patrick Pierce, Vice President Marketing Partnerships at Etihad Airways, said of the relationship:

“We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Major League Soccer, reinforcing our long-term commitment to North American soccer fans. Etihad Airways and MLS share the same spirit of global connectivity through sports, and we are dedicated to celebrating soccer’s rising popularity in the U.S., Canada and beyond.”³⁶

Jennifer Cramer, Vice President of Partnership Marketing, MLS, said:

“At MLS, we are dedicated to serving our global audience, which is why it is truly exciting to partner with a premium global brand whose values and approach mirror our own. Together, we will continue to build upon our commitment to global soccer and its dedicated fans.”

34. “Major League Soccer today announced the multi-year renewal of its partnership with Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates,” Etihad (website), <https://www.etihad.com/en/about-us/etihad-news/archive/2017/etihad-airways-checks-in-for-a-new-sponsorship-journey-with-major-league-soccer/>.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

Etihad and Manchester City FC

When the sponsorship relationship between Etihad Airlines and Manchester City FC was announced in 2010³⁷ the ten year relationship, worth £400m was the largest deal of its type in sport.

The deal, which included shirt sponsorship for a further 10 years and Stadium Naming Rights for the Manchester City stadium, which was renamed as the Etihad Stadium was worth twice the previous record amount which had been paid by JP Morgan Chase for the new Madison Square Garden (this deal was worth \$300m or £187m)³⁸

Etihad Airlines also agreed separate sponsorship relationships with other City Group football clubs, including Melbourne City and New York City FC.

THE CHALLENGES WITH FOOTBALL TEAM SPONSORSHIPS

Given the passions that fan loyalty fuels, and the rivalry that it can create between fans of different teams, are there risks of aligning closely with a team?

Could there be negative impacts to sponsorship associations? Whilst football sponsorship is effective because of the deeply held loyalty of football fans, could this passion have disadvantages for the sponsor too? The image transfer achieved by a sponsorship deal takes place because the sponsored property already evokes a positive response which is transferred onto the sponsoring brand.³⁹

37. David Taylor, "Manchester City bank record £400m sponsorship deal with Etihad Airways," *The Guardian*, July 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2011/jul/08/manchester-city-deal-etihad-airways>.

38. Ibid.

39. Meenaghan, "Understanding Sponsorship Effects."

Consumer goodwill to the sponsoring brand creates a “halo effect” (Dion and Berscheid 1972, Dean 1999), increasing the goodwill towards the sponsoring brand and enhancing the perception of its quality. But what happens when a sponsorship arrangement has the opposite effect? There are two main reasons why this might happen and both of them take place in football:

- First, a good sponsorship arrangement might turn bad, because the sponsoring firm may suffer some problem – e.g.: financial problems, legal investigation – or because the sponsored club or star may tarnish their reputation in some way such that the sponsor is negatively affected by association.
- Second, the sponsorship arrangement may have a negative impact on those who have a strong dislike of one of the parties. That is especially likely in football.

Sponsors may have to consider the impact of choosing a sponsorship on fans of other, possibly rival, teams. In this case, whilst the sponsor may be making positive associations in the mind of one set of fans, they might simultaneously be creating negative associations for others. In football, strong emotional commitment from fans to their favoured team, is often accompanied by very negative attitudes towards rival teams.⁴⁰

Bergvist (2012) studies this phenomenon in the U.K, highlighting the intense rivalries which exist between small clusters of clubs. Studying the Swedish market and fans of AIK and the rival team Hammarby, Bergvist found that fans did form negative perceptions of the brand sponsorship their rivals.

40. Bridgewater, “Sponsorship and football.”

So, what are the implications for airlines of sponsoring Real Madrid, but possibly alienating FC Barcelona fans, or vice versa, or of sponsoring AC Milan, but negatively affecting the relationship with Inter Milan fans and so on.

Middle Eastern Airlines have wisely chosen sponsorship relationships with football clubs with strong global fan bases, but they might not be creating universally positive impacts and relationships in doing so. Could there be a potential risk as well as a benefit in creating such strong in-group and out-group associations?

Questions

1. Why are football sponsorships attractive to Middle Eastern airline brands?
2. What is the process whereby sponsorships of football brands enhances the brand of the sponsor?
3. Why may sponsorship of football clubs be more effective than other types of sponsorship?
4. What are the potential challenges which Middle Eastern airlines should consider in forming football sponsorship relationships?

Group Activity

1. Tabletop Exercise to Choose a Sponsorship Relationship

Divide into groups of 4-6. Imagine that you are the executives from an Airline in the Middle Eastern Region. Discuss together whether you should sponsor a football team? What are the possible risks and benefits? Now discuss whether you could achieve the same results with a different sponsorship relationship in sport eg sponsorship of an international tournament or a mega event? What are the benefits and risks associated with these different types of sports sponsorship properties?

Teaching Note

This case study discusses sport sponsorship and the reasons why it is growing in popularity as a means of marketing communication and relationship building for brands.

The case study both looks at the theory of sponsorship and the process of image transfer between sponsoring and sponsored brand and the strong connection which this can create between football fans and the sponsoring brand.

Examples of sponsorship between Middle Eastern airlines and football clubs are used as examples of the types of relationships that create value in football sponsorship and the reasons why these can provide benefit. The case also considers the potential challenges of these relationships.

Question 1. Why are football sponsorships attractive to Middle Eastern airline brands?

The case study provides a number of examples in which airlines discuss the benefits which the demographic of global football fans can provide for airlines. These are frequent travelers, and increasingly football fans have disposable income. Moreover, football and other sports create strong loyalty and strong emotions among fans and these positive sentiments can create a halo effect for the sponsoring brand.

Question 2. What is the process whereby sponsorships of football brands enhances the brand of the sponsor?

This question relates to the section which discusses how sponsorship is effective in building awareness or image transfer between brands. Students should use the concepts from this section to provide an answer which perhaps focuses on why sponsorship rather than advertising, as well as on the different types of potential impact of sponsorship in marketing communication and brand strategies. This might include a discussion of different motives for sponsorship (eg: commercial, philanthropic, social value creation). It might also look at the way in which sponsors motives can include creating brand associations and brand

loyalty. Sponsorship can also be designed to boost sales or to achieve other objectives, and answers might include the impact on flight ticket sales or in achievement of other objectives of the sponsoring brand.

Question 3. Why may sponsorship of football clubs be more effective than other types of sponsorship?

This question is specific to sponsorship of football rather than of other sports or other types of sponsorship properties. Students might take the approach of defining what is distinctive about football, and might also compare and contrast what is gained by sponsorship of football, given the characteristics of football fans, and football fans loyalty that they have identified.

It is expected that answers might consider the strong emotional attachment and loyalty between fans and the football teams they support, but other characteristics, such as the increasingly global fan base, availability of global digital media coverage and other aspects might also be included.

Some students might consider the questions use of “football clubs” and discuss the difference between sponsorship of football clubs, compared, perhaps with sponsorship of a football league, or tournament in which teams with many different groups of supporters would be involved.

Question 4. What are the potential challenges which Middle Eastern airlines should consider in forming football sponsorship relationships?

A number of potential challenges are identified in the case study but students should not be restricted to consideration of these and might use their own ideas and research. Challenges might include the potential downsides of strong emotional attachment, which might sometimes spill over into negative fan behaviour. These might also create strong rivalries between fans with different allegiances. The concept of in-group and out-group, as well as research into the impact of sponsorship deals on fans of rival clubs might help fans to structure their thinking and to apply these concepts to consideration of the case of Middle Eastern airlines sponsorship of football.

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