SPORTING EVENTS AS A MARKETING TOOL FOR CORPORATE COMPANIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE DUBAI RUGBY 7’S.

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Sporting events as a marketing tool for corporate companies: A case study of the Dubai rugby 7s.

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Signed Statement
I declare that this dissertation has not already been accepted in substance of any degree and is not currently submitted in candidature for any degree. It is the result of my own independent research except where otherwise stated.

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April 2017

Abstract
This dissertation investigates why corporate companies use the sponsorship of sporting events as a marketing tool and the techniques they put in place to do so. A large majority of this dissertation will investigate the marketing strategies used by large corporate companies, using the Dubai Rugby 7's as a case study. This event is a sponsorship hub and attracts a wide range of companies, large and small to sponsor the event and be a part of what it has to offer, both in the terms of publicity, media coverage and positive attributes. Today, the event industry is a fast growing trade, and companies are coming up with their best and most effective strategies to stand out to their competition, grow their brand, and increase and maintain their market share. One way in which they are doing this, is by sponsoring sporting events and becoming associated with the experience. Identifying the motivations behind companies that choose to do this and what they get in return is the baseline of this study. The main findings of this dissertation reflect the key motivations behind corporate sponsorship, looking more closely at the benefits of sponsoring sports events in particular. Companies not only choose to sponsor sports events due to the sizeable media coverage that comes with it, but also to establish a personal connection with their client base, and attract future customers. Sports events enable the company to directly impact their target market, growing their brand image, showcasing new products and developing new relationships.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter is to introduce the key motivations for researching this topic and to provide key terminology that will be applied throughout this piece of academic writing. With corporate sponsorship, attitudes, models and techniques are constantly changing, as are the benefits that they provide to the companies who sponsor the events. This chapter focuses on introducing the motivations of corporate companies when sponsoring events, and how they are using this as a marketing tool. In this context, the case study of the Dubai rugby 7’s will be examined and introduced in this chapter. Companies constantly seek ways to increase their customer base and grow their brand image, which is why corporate sponsorship is such a necessary marketing tool. The aims and objectives of this research project are outlined in this chapter and form the support of this research project.

1.1 Setting the Scene

Today, it is essential that companies constantly come up with new ways to improve their business strategy, in order to grow their business and hold a larger market share. Xu (2005: p234) describes market share in the following context.

“Market share is among the most vital parameters in the market monitoring process. Like temperature to human health, market share is a key indicator of the health of a company. The majority of companies overestimate their market shares mostly because they do not engage in comprehensive competitor monitoring.”

In order to keep up with a fast growing and increasingly competitive market, corporate organisations such as banks, car companies and airlines, must find
new tools and strategies to target their desired market and grow their customer base. One way that is becoming increasingly popular is corporate sponsorship.

Corporate sponsorship is a method of advertisement in which certain companies will become associated with an event by paying a sum of money. Cause marketing, is the sponsorship of a charitable or non-profit organisation, and is one way in which companies are using it to their advantage. The growth of corporate sponsorship is currently at an all time high, the largest since the growth of overall corporate promotion in the 1990’s, with global sponsorship reaching $26.2 billion in 2003 (Hartland and Skinner 2005).

While the majority of sponsors of larger of events are larger companies, a contributing factor of the recent increase in corporate sponsorship is the number of small and medium sized organisations (SMEs) that are now becoming involved in the method. In the past, only larger organisations would consider sponsoring events as a way of generating support among their customer base and enhancing revenue, as they were the only ones who could afford it. However, in today’s market many smaller companies are also using sponsorship as a marketing tool, sponsoring anything from small local sporting events, festivals and community drives and even larger, more global events. By doing this, they are able to promote their name within their local environment and boost their market share.

1.2 Rationale

On a personal level, the author has worked closely within a number of events organisations, particularly within the sponsorship and marketing department in the run up to their events, and as a result, has an insightful interest in the area. Working within the industry has provoked a number of questions. For example, actually how effective is using corporate sponsorship as a marketing tool, especially in sports events. Sports events are known to carry a number of positive ideals behind them, such as hard work, positive energy and good health. One of the questions that interest that author is whether the sponsoring sporting
events can provide a company the opportunity to reflect these principles simply by associating themselves with the event? And what makes this possible? Furthermore, it is known that larger organisations typically hold the largest share in events due to their ability to afford more advertising space, and are therefore seen as the gold or platinum sponsors. This raises the question, does spending more money on sponsoring an event truly result in more of an impact on the audience? Or is it the way in which they market their company at the event and the strategies they use?

1.3 **An ever-evolving marketing tool**

Companies are able to benefit in a number of ways from sponsorship. Meyer (1999: p308) describes the potential benefits of corporate sponsorship as the following:

"[Sponsorships] can enhance a company's image and visibility; differentiate the company from competitors; help develop closer relationships with current and prospective customers; showcase products and services; unload obsolete inventory; and allow the company to compete more effectively against bigger firms that have much larger advertising budgets. In addition, tickets to sponsored events can be used as incentives for employees, vendors, and customers and to promote worker loyalty. And proponents say that if sponsorships are well-conceived and strategic, they can boost sales—both long-term and short-term—as they improve the community through the events they support."

Event sponsorship allows companies to target a wide variety of audiences other than just their customers, including employees, business decision makers and government officials. Sponsorship is able to surpass cultural and language barriers, making it a very valuable tool for companies who wish to partake in international trade. Occasions such as sporting events allow organisations to connect personally with their customers and generate an immediate response on the products they have to offer. Moreover, it allows customers to sample the
company's products and provide feedback, making corporate sponsorship superior in comparison to other tools such as focus groups, surveys and questionnaires.

The way in which corporate sponsorship stands out in contrast to other methods and the benefits that it holds is an interesting area of marketing and sponsorship. Why do companies focus so much time and effort in to sponsoring events? What methods and tools are the most effective? Why and how do they attract new customers? And will it continue to grow in years to come. These are all questions that spark a great deal of interest, and once explored in further detail will generate a much more holistic understanding of sponsorship as a marketing tool.

1.4 A case study of Emirates Airways Dubai Rugby 7's.

The Dubai Sevens is an annual rugby tournament held in Dubai, U.A.E. The tournament has a total of fifty-one sponsors, of different sponsorship levels, sizes and countries. The event attracts people from around the world. The event is a hub for global sponsors, with the primary event sponsor being Emirates Airline, Dubai's local carrier and arguably one of the largest airline companies in the world. Due to the corporate attention and customer base the event attracts, it is the perfect platform to use as a case study, especially considering the author has grown up in Dubai and has been able to experience and study the event first hand. By using this event as a case study, a further analysis of how companies use sports events as a marketing tool can be undertaken, identifying their motivations and strategies, as well as the response of the customers at the event.
1.5 Aims and objectives

The aim of this project is to evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of sports events as a corporate company-marketing tool. In order to achieve this aim, a total of four objectives have been outlined. These objectives are:

1. To critically review the literature on corporate and sporting events, as well as sponsorship and marketing.
2. To identify why and how corporate companies use sporting events as a marketing tool.
3. To identify the influence that corporate sponsorship has on customers at a given sporting event and explore why it works.
4. To make conclusions and recommendations to corporate sponsors in terms of maximizing their return on the event.

1.6 structure of content

This chapter has provided an introduction to the topic, including the rational and reasons for choosing this research topic. It also contains the aims and objectives to be achieved throughout this dissertation.

Chapter 2: This chapter consists of a critical literature review on the topic. The literature in this section includes current and past debates and issues, relevant academic literature and theoretical concepts. This chapter will evaluate key academic material related to the study.

Chapter 3: In this chapter the methodology behind the study will be defined, which will include the sampling techniques used, how results will be collected and examined and a rationale for the chosen research approach. Furthermore, in this chapter, any ethical issues will be considered, and the validity and reliability of the study assessed.
Chapter 4: This chapter will examine at the results, providing an analysis and a discussion of the data collected from primary research. The chapter will display the key findings from the research project and sanction the comparison to be made between the research described in the literature review.

Chapter 5: This is the final chapter for the research project and concludes the overall study. It will list any improvements to the research project, identifying any outstanding limitations. Furthermore, it will summarise the key findings and state the final conclusion.

1.7 Summary

Overall, there are a number of areas within the world of corporate sponsorship that would benefit from further analysis, identifying why the sponsorship of sports event is such a useful tool to organisations and how they benefit. Moreover, it would be interesting to understand what method of sponsorship at sporting events is the most beneficial, and why customers find them the most appealing. The term ‘corporate sponsorship’ is an ever expanding and fast evolving concept, especially in terms of sporting events that organisations use as a platform for their marketing tools and strategies. This dissertation intends to explore how corporate companies use the sponsorship of sports events as a marketing tool as well as to investigate which particular methods are most advantageous, and why so.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

‘A literature review is a written document that presents a logically argued case founded on a comprehensive understanding on the current state of knowledge about a topic of study’. (Machi and Mcevoy, 2012: p10). The aim of this literature review is to assess and review the research about how companies use sponsorship as a marketing tool.

2.2 Corporate Sponsorship

“Sponsorship is essentially a business deal, which is intended to be the advantage of both the sponsor and the sponsored.” (Mersham, Skinner, and Essen, 2001, p. 235). Skinner, (2001) discusses that if sponsorship is properly carried out, taking in to consideration the aims and objectives, corporate sponsorship arrangements can be a real benefit to the community in providing events and facilities that would not be affordable without the help of large organisations. According to Statista (2016), 15.3 Billion US dollars was spent on the sponsorship of Sporting events in Europe in 2015. When sponsoring events, the sponsor pays leverage expenditure. This ensures that the sponsor can adjust certain aspects of the event, which will aid in the marketing of their product. This will be in areas such as corporate hospitality and athlete appearances. By sponsoring an event, the organisation can design their corporate hospitality areas and use athletes to appear at private functions for clients to boost brand image.
2.3 Corporate events
While companies benefit tremendously from sponsoring events due to boosting their brand image, they also use it as a marketing tool to entertain current clients, potential clients and also employees. O’Toole and Mikolaitis (2002) discuss that within the event industry, the international corporate event market is the fastest growing in the industry. Furthermore, O’Toole and Mikolaitis discuss that when corporate companies sponsor large sporting events, they will use the sponsorship as a tool to communicate their corporate messages. An example of this is Etihad airways using the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix to communicate their idea ‘Flying reimagined’ (See appendix 10). This allows the organisation to share their views with the customer, creating a personal connection between the customer and the organisation. Other examples of corporate sporting events are; Barclays Premier league, Emirates Rugby sevens tournament, Red Bull Air Race, Principality Stadium (Cardiff) and the HSBC Abu Dhabi Golf Championship.

2.4 Sports events
Getz, (2012) describes an event as an occurrence at a given place and time. Sporting events can be classified into three different types, ranging in both size and frequency. More simply defined, these can be put in to mega (the largest), major, and smaller scale major events (the smallest).
The North West Sports Event Directory classifies sports events into the following groups:

Table 1: Sports events classification (North west sports event directory, 2017)

| **Mega events** | Mega events such as the Olympic Games or World Cup, which usually involve multiple sports or venues and have global media coverage. These events are generally held over a period of months or days. ‘Mega events, by way of their size or significance are those that yield extraordinarily high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige or economic impact for the host community, venue or organisation’ (Getz, 2012) |
| **Large scale events** | Large Scale Major events such as the F1 Grand Prix or Open Golf Championships, usually involving 10,000+ visitors per day with global competitors and media coverage. Generally held over a period of days, or regularly throughout the year. |
| **Small scale events** | Smaller Scale Major events attract a smaller number of spectators while remaining at the high calibre of competition of venue, such as national/European championships. They have 1,000-10,000 visitors per day with international/national significance and/or media coverage. These events may be held regularly throughout the year, over a period of days or on a single day. |
With all the types of events listed above, comes the need for sponsorship in order to get them to the level and standard required. Bowdin et al (2011) argues that large sporting events within the UK assist in creating a national identity due to the amount of attention and media coverage that they attract. As a result, sporting events are a large part of the country’s tourism industry, as they make the country a more appealing destination to visit.

As sporting events (such as Wimbledon) attract such a large media following, large organisations are motivated to sponsor them in order to gain positive exposure, and enhance their brand image. “Brand image plays a very powerful role in influencing business customers, especially in those markets where products or services are difficult to differentiate based on quality features.” (Glynn, 2009: p55). Furthermore, Bowdin et al (2011) also asserts that the UK has a reputation for sport due to the fact that it is the originator of a majority of the world’s team sports. As a result, the country is host to a wide number of sporting events, regarded as among the most prestigious in the world (Barclays Premier league and Wimbledon).

According to Collins and Jackson (1998), the overall value of sporting events within the UK was 1.5 billion pounds. It is clear that sporting events provide a large financial benefit for the country and its economy. A report by UK sport on the benefits of major events highlights the economic benefits of sporting events. This report highlights that the 2000 London marathon generated 63 million pounds worth of economic activity and the 1999 Rugby Union World Cup generated 83 million pounds to Wales. As well as economic activity, sporting events also provide jobs for local people. By sponsoring these major sporting events, organisations can associate themselves with these positive impacts and the benefits they provide. As described by Holmes et al., (2015) Events can provide opportunities for local people to gain skills and experience, in the terms of volunteers or paid staff.

2.5 Corporate sponsorship as a marketing tool

Bladen et al, (2012) describes that a key motivating factor, which encourages an organisation to sponsor an event, is the media coverage and attention they will
receive. As large sporting events such as the Fifa World Cup and the Olympics receive such high volumes of media attention, if an organisation chooses to sponsor them, their brand image will be broadcasted worldwide and would be associated with the success of the event. Etihad Airways, the largest sponsor of the Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, holds the lead for all event media coverage. Thus, brand logos are positioned on public areas such as the track, grandstands and other main areas of the event.

An event such as this will be broadcasted via radio and television around the world, meaning that a massive audience is targeted. As a result, when the event is broadcasted via TV, those tuning in will be able to see the Etihad brand logo. Furthermore when action shots are taken for magazine and newspaper articles, the brand image will be displayed in the background. Bladen et al, (2012) also asserts that the cooperation of target markets is an extremely important factor for the event and corporate sponsor. By understanding the target markets associated with the specific event, the sponsor can improve their brand image by increasing brand awareness using these target markets. This can be backed up by the A.I.D.A model (attention, interest, desire, action), an advertisers response of its marketing communications. This could be one of the following; to create attention around the product, to trigger consumer interest, to make them desire the product, or to make them purchase the item (action) (Clemente, 2002).

As a result, it is easy to understand by using corporate sponsorship an organisation can meet its long-term goals and objectives by strategically targeting individual markets.

2.6 Using corporate sponsorship as a marketing tool and the benefits it holds

Many companies seek to use corporate sponsorship as a means of building a relationship with their clients, customers and potential consumers. For example, large international companies such as HSBC will seek to sponsor events such as the Dubai Rugby 7’s, to improve their brand image and recognition, as well as impress current and future clientele. To build relationships with clients, they provide corporate packages and booths, with complimentary food, drinks and services. By inviting clients to these booths, HSBC are able to give their clients a
taste of what the company has to offer and interact with them on a personal level and in return the clients may choose to invest with the company and give them their business. Thus companies such are able to promote and market their brand.

‘Sponsorship is an important part of an integrated marketing communications (IMC) Plan. It can extend the impact of other elements of the marketing communications mix, such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling, in an environment where consumers are more open and receptive, making key messages more relevant and persuasive’ (Koekemoer et al., 2004). Appendix 11 shows a marketing model which displays an integrated approach to sponsorship, linking in with the importance of an IMC.

Once a company has been given the right to sponsor the event, they are expected to invite clients, provide catering and design their means of advertisement (Billboards, posters, games and competitions) Robinson, Hums & Crow (2000) argue that often companies will buy a sponsorship package, but not ensure that the benefits of the package are used effectively. Purchasing sponsorship rights shows that a company has an interest in the event, and is motivated to impress their current clients and attract new ones. By allowing the general public (or customers in the case of Dubai 7s) to interact with their brand, organisations such as HSBC can benefit from promotions such as providing free gifts, vouchers, cash prizes and competitions. This can result in growing their brand image and interacting with the public on a more personal and entertaining level, leaving a positive image in the minds of those who have interacted with them. As a result, people may choose to give the company their business in the future.

2.7 Benefits of sponsoring sports events

When sponsoring an event, it is important to choose one that relates positive attributes back to the business and will improve brand image and reputation within the given market. One way to do this is by sponsoring a sports event. Malcolm (2008) argues that sports events attract sponsors because of the widespread acceptance of the ideology that links sports with good health,
morality and worthwhile endeavor. Therefore, it is hoped that these ideologies will then be associated with the organisation and the products it has to offer. By sponsoring sporting events, people are presented a positive image of the company, the ideologies of the business and its contribution to society, thereby enhancing the reputation of the brand. This then links to corporate social responsibility. Beal, (2015) describes that businesses have a responsibility to contribute to economic outcomes that meet societal expectations. In other words, it is essential for large companies to give back to the economy, their customers and to society in order to retain a strong brand image.

Moreover, due to the large amounts of publicity that certain sports receive, corporate companies will seek to use the relationship with the event to its full potential in the terms of advertising. As a result, this will lead to greater media interest to the sport and increase the value of the corporate sponsorship. Grant (2008) argues that the benefits of media coverage extend beyond the direct infusion of revenue, meaning that companies will also be able to gain exposure from the event if it is covered by the media, allowing their brand to be seen (at times) all over the world.

By choosing the events correctly, organisations are able to directly break in to certain target markets. Kaser and Oelkers (2007) assert that for businesses, sponsorship can be a big expense but they do offer many benefits, such as becoming associated with an event in which the audience is the target market and in return earning the goodwill of the audience by showing commitment to the event. Relating to the Dubai rugby 7’s, one of the primary sponsors of the event is Emirates Airways. As Dubai is known as a fairly wealthy city, and rugby a middle to upper class sport, sponsors will seek to target people who would be interested with their product. According to business insider, Dubai is the 4th wealthiest city in the world (Business Insider, 2017) Emirates, is one of the worlds leading airlines and offers flights all over the world, so targeting people at an event such as the Dubai Rugby 7’s would benefit them tremendously due to the type of product they have to offer. It is assumed at any sporting event that the customers who attend are fans of the sport and therefore have some passion
or commitment to it. When people at these events see sponsorship they will relate it to their love of the sport and therefore experience positive emotions of the brand due to its commitment to the sport. Thus, by sponsoring sports events, organisations are able to show their commitment to the sport and its community, which will reflect positively on those attending, who may choose to do business with the organisation in the future.

2.7.1 Corporate sponsorship model
The model displayed above outlines how corporate organisations use sponsorship of events as a marketing tool in the terms of accessing their current and potential customer base. The company will use their offering of sponsorship to gain access to the event. Once they have access to the event they will utilise marketing strategy and put it in to place in order to capture their target audience. By doing this, they are able to make their name known, interact personally with their customers and build relationships with them, which will benefit the company in the future.

From the customers’ perspective, they are entering the event in order to be entertained, and most of the time will not be seeking out advertising. However, by entering the event they are indirectly exposed to the sponsorship that the companies have put in place, which then leads them to absorb the offering of the
sponsors of the event, which will eventually lead to them interacting with the companies involved.

2.8 Chapter summary
In this chapter, the current academic literature surrounding the area of corporate sponsorship has been measured in relation to the desired aims and objectives. The literature that has been discussed motions a healthier understanding of the subject, as well as looking into the key issues associated with it. The chapter has set a decisive definition for corporate sponsorship of sporting events, and how companies may choose to use it as a marketing tool. This definition will be discussed throughout the research project. A much clearer understanding of the target market has been established and the key motivations of companies choosing to sponsor sports events have been considered. The chapter also outlines what companies may wish to achieve from sponsoring sports events and the strategies which they may choose to use on the day. Furthermore, the different types of events have been classified, creating a more clear understanding of the size of certain events, how they are run, and the audiences they attract. The chapter outlines why companies may use the sponsorship of sporting events as a marketing tool, and how this particular industry will continue to expand in the future. To conclude, chapter two has given a helpful characteristic of this research project, contributing valuable sources and information, associating with past and future ideals around the subject.
Chapter 3:

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present and justify the research methodology for the study that will take place when conducting an investigation into why corporate companies use sponsorship as a marketing tool. Jones and Gratton (2010) describe research as a systematic process of discovery and advancement of human knowledge. Therefore, research is more than simply looking for facts; it is a systematic investigation to answer a question. The aim of this methodology is to explore in detail the research methods that will be used for the study, how they will be implemented and with whom, as well as why they are the most effective methods. The reliability and validity of these research methods will be surveyed, as well as looking into the potential drawbacks and limitations involved with these methods that may limit the overall study. Additionally, the ethical considerations will be explained in relation to the research methods, as well as why it is essential to all involved in the study.

3.2 Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches (Theory)

Primary research is what is considered as new research, which is conducted in order to answer a particular question, which involves methods such as interviews, surveys and questionnaires. Secondary research on the other hand is publicly available and uses information from previously researched studies. Veit, Gould and Gould (2013) describe that through secondary research, we discover what others have previously found out about the topic, whereas primary research allows us to discover and engage with our own original discoveries. Primary research has been selected for this study, as it will allow new, original data to be collected and analysed.
3.2.1 Quantitative approach

Quantitative research is inclined to be deductive. In other words it tests theory. This is in contrast to most qualitative research, which tends to be inductive. In other words, it creates or develops theory. (Nykiel, 2015)

A quantitative approach provides specific information on what people think from a numerical and statistical perspective. It allows information to be collected from a more consistent and data-led method (McMurray, Scott and Pace, 2004). In comparison to qualitative methods, this method is a lot more specific due to the fact that it makes use statistical analysis of data, using techniques such as distributions, correlations and Likert scales. According to Mujis (2010, p.1) quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics). Quantitative research methods include surveys, experiments and market research, however possibly the most popular method of quantitative research is the questionnaire. Gratton and Jones (2010) define that questionnaires are possibly the most commonly used research method when it comes to sport, and allow data collection from a large and diverse target group.

3.2.2 Qualitative approach

‘Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals lives’ (Ulhøi, 2007, p. 5). Qualitative data is the essence of interpreting material. ‘Qualitative research has been influenced by interpretivism as an epistemological position’ (Williamson and Whittaker, 2011). Interpretivism describes a range of approaches which challenge the traditional scientific approach of positivism. Simplified, qualitative research is largely investigative research, and is primarily used to gain further understanding of motivations and underlying reasons. Johnson (2016) describes that the goal of qualitative research is to reveal and
uncover new knowledge regarding multiple experiences and perspectives on an issue.

Qualitative research methods, such as interviews, which primarily focus on a smaller number of people, (otherwise known as a sample) seek to understand more detailed information. As described by Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2015), through using qualitative research tools such as interviews, focus groups and observation as well as small samples, in the form of informal one on one interviews and small group interviews, the data collected will be more in depth. In this particular investigation, interviews will primarily be utilised due to them being a good way of getting a better depth of understanding in to the events and the corporate organisations, which support them.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Interviews

Interviews are based on structure, and there are three main types; structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Lussier and Lussier, 2000). A structured interview consists of a list of prepared questions, in which all participants are asked the same thing. An unstructured interview has no pre planned questions or sequence of topics. Finally, a semi-structured interview has a set list of questions but the interviewer also asks unplanned questions. Focus groups are another qualitative research method. Focus group interviews engage the participants in detailed discussions about their feelings towards a particular issue or set of issues. Focus groups take in to consideration the way people feel about these issues in the light of other people’s feelings (Muratovski, 2015). For this particular type of interview, a semi-structured interview will be used as it helps avoid discrimination where set questions can be asked, but the interviewer can also go in to more detail if they feel necessary.

By targeting large corporate sponsors of sporting events within the UAE, such as the Dubai Rugby 7’s (Emirates), information as to why corporate companies
choose to use sporting events as a marketing tool, and the benefiting and defining factors will be uncovered. An interview will be set up with an individual in the UAE who represents a company called Al Mohebi Logistics, a large corporate company within Dubai, that regularly sponsors and organises events within the UAE. By obtaining this interview, a first hand account into the motivations of corporate sponsorship can be uncovered, as well as how companies use it as a tool to expand their business and reach their market. With any interview, the atmosphere is created by the interviewee- informal or formal interview- by creating the most appropriate atmosphere for the interview, questions and topics can be discussed in more detail, allowing more information to be gathered and more topics to be discussed further. One measure that must is approval from the corporation to dispatch any and all information given by the subject. In order to improve validity and allow triangulation, the interview should be verified with the corporation before being used. By developing and maintaining a positive interview atmosphere, the candidate will feel more comfortable in the interview, and consequently, will provide more information (Turner, 2004).

Contact was made for the interview through the researcher’s father, who was able to contact the subject via email and establish permission and a date for the interview (see appendix 6). The researcher ensured that the correct procedure was followed in the terms of ethics, by providing the participant with a participant information sheet (see appendix 3), which detailed the components and reasoning of the study. A consent form was also given to the participant to sign. The interview took place in the subjects office, at their main workplace in Dubai, U.A.E and lasted a total of 59 minutes 44 seconds, all voice recorded.

3.3.2 Questionnaire Survey

By utilising the research method of questionnaires at the Emirates Dubai Rugby 7's, the author was able to gain an incite as to how the consumers of the product feel about the sponsor of the event, more specifically the benefits that they think it has provided the event with. One important variable to consider before
formally using a questionnaire on the public is the design, as this can have a substantial impact when using the questionnaire. Beli, (2010) argues that pre-testing of the questionnaire is necessary with a small group as it allows us to see if any changes must be made in regards to the wording of the questions or question content. The questionnaire was tested on a small group of 3-4 people to gain feedback. In the case of this investigation, once the information was gathered it was be collated in graphs and charts. The questionnaires must be quick and easy to fill out and easy to analyse. Moskowitz, Beckley, and Resurreccion (2010) discuss that there is no optimal length of a questionnaire, but that it should be the shortest possible length that will answer project objectives. The questionnaire for this research consisted of 16 easy to answer questions, and should took no longer than 5 minutes. It consisted of Yes/No, options and scale, all with little or no writing required (Appendix 4).

In the terms of distribution, the survey was given to random attendees of the event in order to get the best results possible. “Self administered surveys by definition involve convenience sampling, as respondents decide whether or not to take part in the questionnaire” (McCormack and Hill, 1997). A convenience sample is a type of non-probability sampling and is made up of people who are easy to reach. Access was granted through the official Dubai 7s management team, who allowed the researcher to distribute the questionnaires during the competition.

3.4 Reliability and validity

It is of the utmost importance that when completing and conducting research, all data and results collected are valid and accurate. This refer to how reliable the data collection methods are, as well as how valid the tests carried out are in the terms of collecting the appropriate data they were created to. During the research period, the questionnaires and interviews were designed to ensure that all data is valid and reliable. Brace (2004) describes that the questionnaire writer must know what questions can be asked, how to ask them and how to assess their value. The following precautions were made:
Table 2: Questionnaire precautions (Brace, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precaution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Compare all data to test its accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clearly outline the current goals and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre test the questionnaire before it is released on the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In the terms of questionnaires, the target size must be large to ensure maximum data accuracy. Brace (2003) implies that the accuracy of a questionnaire can be improved by increasing the sample size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When interviewing the corporate companies, exclusively target them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Match assessment quota to current goals and objectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the terms of the questionnaires, the current goals and objectives will be taken in to consideration when designing the questions in order to gain accurate and specific answers required for the investigation. Furthermore, larger groups of people will be used when distributing the questionnaires in order to gain valid and reliable data, in large quantities. This way, the data can be analysed and compared accurately. Furthermore, before being distributed to the public, the questionnaire will be appropriately pre tested before hand. In the terms of interview sample size, events such as the Emirates Airways Dubai Rugby 7’s will be targeted.

3.4.1 Accuracy of interview

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and then sent back to the organisations to ensure that all the content is accurate and that they agree with what has been said. As well as ensuring the accuracy of the data, it provides the organisations the ability to make any changes to the information provided.
3.5 Ethics

Singh and Bussen, (2015) discuss that confidentiality in interviews and questionnaires is of the utmost importance, due to the fact that if the wrong information is distributed certain people could be at risk. When conducting interviews, it is especially important that confidentiality is taken into consideration. When interviewing the chosen companies during the research period, it is important that all information is kept confidential, if requested by the company. In order to ensure confidentiality, all information collected during the interview, is made available to the company for review. If the company feels any information is not suitable, it will then be disposed of. 'The identities and research records of those participating in should be kept confidential whether or not an explicit pledge of confidentiality has been given' (King and Horrocks, 2010) In order to ensure an ethical approach, all questions are moderated by the Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Committee. This ensures that all questions are appropriate for the study and do not hold any risks to the organisation or the university. A participant consent form is required to be filled out by the organisation that describes how their privacy will be protected (Appendix 5).

3.6 Limitations

This research may be limited by several factors. The correct permissions may not have been obtained for the questionnaires at the event. Furthermore, certain factors that are not controllable, such as not being able to distribute enough questionnaires on the day. Mitchell and Jolley (2013) describe that self-administered questionnaires have a low rate as not that many people return them. It is hard to predict people’s attitudes towards filling out the questionnaires, which therefore may mean that they decline, do not fully complete them, or do not answer each question honestly. Due to factors such as this, the data gathered from the questionnaires may be limited, causing an unsuccessful collation of data.
Regarding the interview, limitations may include not being able to obtain an interview with the correct company or individual due to availability or not being able to get in touch with them. Furthermore, the interviewee may not like the question and therefore answer dishonestly. Interviews are not always completely accurate as the interviewee is under no obligation to tell the truth. Kirby, (2000) outlines that the structure of an interview is often preset, which precludes the respondent from providing full and detailed responses. However, this is to be expected with any interview, especially if the individual is associated with the organisation. The results should be taken with a pinch of salt and the data should be analysed in depth to discover which information is actually relevant.

3.7 Chapter summary
this chapter has discussed in detail the research methods that took place, when they were carried out, why they justified the approach, methods and design, and what will happen with the data in the future, as well as discussing potential drawbacks and ethical considerations. Appropriate theory was applied and discussed with regards to the data collection methods and the methods used in this study were explained and justified. The chapter will look over the methodology behind the study of why corporate companies use sponsorship as marketing tool, and how this area will be explored.
Chapter 4

Results, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the analysis and further discussion of the results gathered during the research process of this topic. The aim of this project was to investigate why organisations choose to use the sponsorship of events as a marketing tool and the benefits it may hold to them. ‘Primary research is the study of a subject through firsthand observation and investigation, such as analysing a literary or historical text, conducting a survey or carrying out a laboratory experiment. Primary sources include statistical data, historical documents and works of literature and art’ (Berger, 2010). Throughout this investigation two forms of primary research were carried out, including a questionnaire which was filled in by attendees of the Dubai Rugby 7’s, and a structured interview. The data collected from this primary research will be discussed and compared to the literature, in order to create a comprehensive analysis of the findings.

4.2 Background information

4.2.1 Gender

Appendix 8 (Figure 1) displays the findings from question one, which asked participants their gender. From the results we can see that 47.5% were female, and 52.5 were male, which displays a fairly equal split in terms of gender. This ensures that the data gathered will be fairly unbiased in terms of gender and contributes less influencing factors to the results.
4.2.2 Age Demographic

As shown in appendix 8 (Figure 2) there is a fairly broad range of ages who took part in the survey. The age range was as follows;

18-30: 53.7%
31-40: 27.5%
41-65: 6.25%
66-70: 0%

From these results, it is clear that 18-30 year olds were the largest group of participants, with 31-40 year olds behind them. More participants were this age due to the demographic of the event, in a sense that these are the people which are attracted to the event. The 66-70+ age range was not well represented due to limited access to this age range at the event, which again links in to the target market of the event. Age is a large contributing factor to this study as older individuals who have jobs are more likely to understand the concept of corporate sponsorship and do business with the companies involved.

4.2.3 Occupation

Question three, as shown in table 3 aims to investigate the occupations of those at the event. From the results we can see that 28.75% of participants worked in oil and gas, 12.5% were airline cabin crew, 15% were engineers and 43.75% were in other lines of work such as teachers, doctors and retail. The results show that an extremely high percentage of those who took part worked in oil and gas, and the second largest amount worked in the airline industry. Which is interesting considering the two major sponsors of the event are BP and Emirates. This shows that companies understand the audiences, which these events attract, and is therefor why they choose to sponsor them. By understanding the target market, sponsorship can be used more effectively as a marketing tool by targeting the correct audience.
Table 3: Occupation of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oil &amp; Gas</td>
<td>28.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin Crew</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport Staff</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter/Waitress</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.4 Income per annum

Question 4, as displayed in table four asked participants their income per annum, due to the fact that this is a contributing factor to the companies in the terms of the events they choose to sponsor, in the terms of what income level they choose to target. The results showed that 25% of participants earned an average yearly income of £40,000-49,999. This figure displays that a majority of those who attend the event are earning a fairly decent yearly income, and are therefore in a full time job. The results also displayed that 20% of the participants earned between £25,000-29,999 and 12.5% earning less than £9,999 (who were mainly students). This information shows that the Dubai 7’s attracts a majority of people in full time jobs earning a fairly decent salary. Companies will seek to target these individuals as they are the ones most likely to appreciate the products the company has on display, and in return give the companies their business.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Income per annum (£)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-19,999</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000-24,999</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000-29,999</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000-39,999</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-49,999</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000-59,999</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000-79,999</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000-89,999</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 90,000</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3 Questionnaire survey findings

#### 4.3.1 Companies noticed by participants

Table 5 displays data from 80 participants who took part in the questionnaire, and shows which company stood out most to them based on the way they presented themselves at the event. The top three organisations selected as the most popular were Emirates Airlines, HSBC and BP. According to the official Dubai Rugby 7s website, the main tournament sponsor was Emirates Airlines, with HSBC and BP as platinum sponsors (Dubairugby7s.com, 2017). At the event, each organisation had large amounts of promotional material, such as corporate tents, banners, billboards and merchandise stalls. This information backs up the theory that by sponsoring large sporting events such as the Dubai 7s, companies are able to reach a large target audience and get their brand noticed. Emirates airlines, the primary sponsor of the event, received the most attention, with 32 participants stating it was the most noticeable sponsor. Moreover, HSBC and BP, the platinum sponsors of the event, were the second and third most popular. This also demonstrates that by inputting larger sums of money in to an event, companies are able to have a greater influence due to having more promotional space to display their brand name (billboards, tents and banners). Robinson, Hums & Crow (2000) claim that companies will often buy a sponsorship package, but not ensure that the benefits of the package are used effectively. Table 5 displays an effective use of marketing strategy by the primary sponsors of the
event, and outlines that by purchasing more advertising space, they are able to make a substantial impression on those at the event.

Table 5: Companies noticed by participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Number of times noticed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emirates</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSBC</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP</td>
<td>21.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Bus</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Rover</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowne Plaze</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnata</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 Reaction to company advertisements

Furthermore, figure 1 shows how people reacted to the promotional material at the event. Forty participants stated that the material amused them, 30% were interested, 17.5% ignored it and 2.5% had other opinions, (that it was over used and irrelevant). The results show that through a deliberate promotional strategy, organisations are able to capture and entertain people, leaving a positive image of their brand. The 30% participants saying that they were interested in the organisations materials shows that by interacting with the people at an event, organisations are able to capture a wider target audience and generate interest in their brand, which could then lead to new business opportunities. Furthermore, 50% of people said that they were amused by the techniques used by the sponsors, showing that companies can use sponsorship of events to create a positive brand image. Malcolm (2008) argues that sports events attract sponsors because of the widespread acceptance of the ideology that links sports with good health, morality and worthwhile endeavor. By using positive and engaging promotional strategies at the event, organisations are able to personally connect with their target audience and share their positive ideologies and principles.
4.3.3 Most appealing method used

Figure 2 shows the methods used by the organisations and which had the biggest impact. The results of the survey showed that billboards and sponsored seating had the most impact (73.75%), followed by competitions and give a ways (18.75%), then gift bags and free merchandise (5%), and corporate tents having the least impact (2.5%). Through the most effective form of sponsorship - billboards and sponsored seating - organisations can promote the names of their brands, making guests subconsciously aware of the companies and their role in the event. Grant (2008) debates that the benefits of media coverage extend beyond the direct infusion of revenue, and that companies can gain exposure if the event is covered by the media, allowing their brand to be seen globally. Through obtaining a large amount of advertising space, the brand is not only able to reach those at the event, but capture an international audience through media broadcast. Their brand logos can be seen on the main stadiums, stands and stalls and is able to captivate those watching due to the number and size of signs, posters and billboards. Swayne and Dodds (2011) contend that the advantage of billboards and posters is that they place advertisement close to the point of sale and provide a high frequency of exposure to those passing by. Thus, by investing money into the sponsorship of an event, organisations are able to use marketing
techniques such as billboards and posters to project their brand image. This allows them to reach a new, international target audience.

Figure 2: Most appealing method used by companies

![Method bar chart]

### 4.3.4 Would you give any of the companies your business?

Figure 3 investigates whether survey participants would choose to give the sponsors their business based on the advertising methods they used. The majority of participants reacted positively; 85% said they would, and 15% would not. This shows that effective marketing at a sports event such as the Dubai Rugby 7’s provides positive impressions of a business, and allows them to captivate their target audience via a positive platform. This also displays why sponsorship is an effective marketing tool for businesses to improve their brand image and reach a new target audience. Kaser and Oelkers (2007) argue that while sponsorship can be a big expense, it can offer significant benefits, such as becoming associated with an event in which the audience is the target market and in return earning the goodwill of the audience by showing commitment to the event. “Event sponsors choose to involve themselves with the sponsorship opportunities that offer the best benefits and most chance of success” (Parent and Smith-Swan, 2013, pg:305). Events such as the Dubai rugby 7’s portray positive aspects such as dedication, teamwork and positive energy. Therefore, by...
associating themselves with events such as this, organisations are able to use sponsorship as a tool in order to display their motivations and generate a positive brand image.

Figure 3: Would you give any of today's sponsors your business?

![Number of Yes and No responses to the question of whether respondents would give any of today's sponsors their business.]

4.3.5 Main motivation for companies to sponsor sports events

Figure 4 shows what participants perceived to be the main reason that motivates a company to sponsor an event. Results revealed that 31.25% people said it was to get their brand noticed, 21.25% said it was to get in front of their target market, 20% said it was to gain new clients and customers, 16.25% said to give people a taste of what they had to offer and 11.25% said to gain new contacts. This shows that customers understand the motivations of corporate organisations and know that they are there to gain potential customers and show what their brand has to offer. Thus, customers are able to decide whether or not to take part take in what the brand has to offer. O'Toole and Mikolaitis (2002) explain that corporate organisations use sponsorship as a tool to communicate their corporate messages. This allows the organisation and the customer to create a personal connection. If the customer can understand that the organisation is attempting to gain their business, they can have the chance to see how these companies run and what their views and motivations are. Therefore, it is essential that organisations create the best possible image at these events, as they are
essentially put in the spotlight in front of potential customers, who may or may not become a future client.

Figure 4: What is the motivation for corporate companies to sponsor events?

### Motivation for corporate organisations to sponsor events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get in front of their target market</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain new contacts</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get their brand noticed</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New clients and customers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give attendees a taste of what they have to offer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.6 Knowledge of the sponsors on the day

Figure 5 shows participants responses about knowledge of main sponsors of the event. Emirates (the primary event sponsor) was identified as the main sponsor mentioned 78 times, HSBC (the platinum event sponsor) 72 times and BP (also a platinum sponsor) 68 times. Due to their position in the sponsorship rankings, these companies had the most advertising space and therefore the greatest influence over the people. This shows that primary event sponsors, who are generally the highest investors, are able to gain more exposure through promotion at the event, backing up the theory that sponsoring a sporting event is an effective marketing strategy. Robinson, Hums and Crow (2000) describe that often companies will buy a sponsorship package but not ensure that the benefits of the package are used effectively. The Dubai rugby 7’s is a perfect example of organisations utilising marketing technique and strategy effectively in order to promote their brand. Through posters, corporate tents and stalls, it is evident that, if used effectively, organisations can use sponsorship as a tool to capture their target audience. All of the companies listed are highly ranked in the line of
sponsorship at the event and have therefore invested the most money. In return for investing more money, the companies are given more advertising space, which they can then use to gaining exposure, new customers and develop their brand image.

It should be noted that advertising and sponsorship are not the only criteria necessary to gain a positive brand image. As Osterman asserts, 'It is virtually impossible to build a positive brand image with advertising alone. Every consumer experience touching a brand reinforces it positively or negatively' (Osterman, 2007). Organisations must not only spread the name of their brand, but look for opportunities to apply unique marketing tools and strategy to capture the attention of their audience as effectively as possible. This research that by using a wide variety of techniques, partnered with a large investment and advertising space, organisations are able to have a positive impact on those attending an event.

Figure 5: Do you know who the main sponsors of the event are?

![Bar chart showing the number of times each sponsor was mentioned.](image)

Interestingly, Land Rover, only a gold sponsor of the event, was mentioned 37 times, while Airbus, a platinum sponsor of the event, was only mentioned 8 times. What made Land Rover stand out was the way in which it utilized its
advertising space. Although Land Rover did not have as much advertising room as Emirates, they positioned their stand in the center of the events village, and were constantly interacting with fans, holding different competitions and giving away free gifts. Their main attraction was a weekend long competition in which the winner would receive a brand new Land Rover. As affirmed in the literature, by allowing the general public to interact with your brand, you are able to entertain them and gain their trust on a personal level, leaving a positive image of your brand. Although Land Rover was a gold sponsor, they created a unique promotional strategy that allowed them to stand out to their competition and gain brand recognition.

4.4 INTERVIEW
An in depth interview was conducted by the researcher as the qualitative phase of this study. This gave an in depth and first hand perspective of the motives behind corporate sponsorship. In order for the interview to flow more freely, the whole interview was voice recorded. This gave the researcher more time to focus on what was being said and introduce more of a conversational tone to the interview. The main aim of the interviews was to focus on the motivations, strategies and benefits of corporate sponsorship, as well as to understand how the effectiveness is measured. This would allow an in depth study to be carried out, relating to the aims and objectives of this study. The subject of this study was the owner and CEO of a successful logistics company within the United Arab Emirates, who regularly sponsors events within the UAE, as well as creating corporate events to benefit his own company.

4.4.1 MARKETING STRATEGY AND MARKETING TOOLS
The first question asked was ‘Do you mainly focus on targeting general attendees of the event or use it as a marketing tool to attract potential clients?’ The purpose of this question was to find out who corporate companies prioritise when sponsoring events and hosting corporate events. Companies put large amounts of money in to sponsoring events in which their current clients attend, as well as potential new clients for the business to target. This question helps to establish a clear definition of the priorities of a company when sponsoring an
event, in the terms of who comes first, their clients or their potential new clients. Subject one stated that although both current and potential clients were targeted, the current clients were the ones who were targeted first. This is because current clients comprise the bulk of the companies’ revenue. Subject one discussed that once a company acquires a new client, they cannot simply be added to the list and forgotten about. The relationship which the company has with the client must be nurtured, so that the client feels valued and appreciated, which will then lead to them staying with the company and give them more business. The participant stated;

“So, the clients you already have, are actually a big bulk of the company’s revenue generation.”

“No matter how great the relationship is, you need to nurture that relationship so the key clients are the most important.”

As discussed by Koekemoer et al., 2004, sponsorship and corporate events are an important part of the integrated marketing communications (IMC) plan, and can extend to certain factors of the marketing communications mix such as public relations, sales promotion and direct marketing. Companies are able to directly benefit from corporate sponsorship in the terms of private booths and company stalls at events. It gives the company a chance to strengthen their relationship with their current clients, and show that they are valued. By doing this, they are also able to directly market their new products to their client base in a more relaxed atmosphere. The information given by subject one backs up this statement and shows that corporate sponsorship is a great way of growing and maintaining a relationship with a client base. By introducing corporate tents and booths at sports events, clients are taken care of and are able to see that the company focuses on personally connecting with their clients.

At an event, whether a company is sponsoring or hosting, an important aspect that a company should focus on is how people perceive their business. Companies promote their business positively, generating a powerful energy and memorable experience. Subject one explained that on the day of an event, a powerful strategy is used to make everything fun, positive and memorable, and keeping the business side of things to a minimum. The purpose of this is to build
positive feedback by providing positive interaction. When companies create a positive atmosphere around their customers, this will remain in their minds and alter how they perceive the company. Companies are able to use this strategy to retain the current clients, grow their relationship and build their market share. Koekemoer et al., 2004 considers that in an environment where consumers are more open and receptive, such as a corporate tent or booth, or even a public stall, key messages can be more relevant and persuasive. Subject one stated;

“By maximising your return an opportunistic viewpoint is lifted. Markets are cyclical – so you take advantage of me today – I take advantage of you tomorrow – because that positive relationship has been forged. If a relationship is not seen as being fair to both parties – it will never survive.”

This outlines the use corporate sponsorship as a marketing tool, and how it is useful to companies in the present and in the future. The approach behind corporate sponsorship is not only to become recognised and build publicity, but also to focus on the current client base and build relationships. When this is done, clients become more loyal, and in becoming more loyal, become more willing to give the company their business.

When holding a corporate event or sponsoring an event, it is important to consider the customers which you wish to target. As suggested by Koekemoer et al., 2004, sponsorship and corporate events focus on sales promotion, public relations and personal selling, which is why it is important to know who you are selling your product to and how you can target them directly. Subject one explained that his company tends to target their current clients, and they were very focused and used surgical precision in targeting their clients. This confirms how focused companies really are when they look to sponsor events, the time and effort taken with their promotional work. For example at the Dubai 7’s, companies such as HSBC, Emirates and BP are some of the main sponsors. They understand that this particular event will attract people from many countries, and as Dubai is a fairly wealthy city, know that current clients, as well as clients that they wish to attract will also be in attendance.
4.4.2 Utilising marketing companies

The subject also went into detail about how his company utilises marketing companies, used in the past for designing the event content. The two companies will work as a team to use the best strategies to target clients and potential customers. In other words, the marketing company is used as an events management tool. Companies will buy a sponsorship package but not ensure that the benefits of the package are used effectively. Robinson, Hums & Crow (2000).

As discussed by the subject, by teaming up with a third party such as a reliable marketing company, an organisation is able to take full advantage of the sponsorship opportunity and create the most effective techniques, generating positive customer experience. This supports research by Robinson, Hums & Crow (2000) that by taking full advantage of a sponsorship package or corporate event, companies are able to have more of an influence on their current clients and potential clients.

4.4.4 Focusing on the role of sponsorship at events

Kaser and Oelkers (2007) argue that, although it can be a big expense, sponsoring a number of events can have benefits, the most significant being becoming associated with an event in which the audience is the target market. As a result, the organisation may win the goodwill of the audience. The subject stated that his company would aim to sponsor between 30 and 40 events per year—a fairly substantial amount. This is because this particular company represents a variety of brands, each with its own target market. For any organisation, big or small that represents different brands, sponsoring different varieties of events is an essential as it gives access to different target markets. When associated with a number of different brands, companies can show their commitment to a variety of platforms, displaying support and brand diversity.

The subject discussed an example in which his company sponsors a variety of different cigar events for a number of brands. Furthermore, he stated that
although the company sponsors large events, he tends to focus on smaller events, due to the fact that they are able to spend more time with their clients and give more personal attention. This demonstrates that all companies have their preferred strategies, with some focusing on a smaller group of people in order to create a more intimate atmosphere, while some focus on larger scale events to generate maximum interest from future clients. Furthermore, with sports events, companies like HSBC will do both, creating public booths and corporate tents to focus on all areas of customer attraction and client retention. This is affirmed by research by Kaser and Oelkers (2007), which states that companies benefit from sponsoring different types of events as it gives them access to a wide range of target markets and shows their support to the cause, whether they choose to do it on a larger or smaller scale.

4.4.5 Communicating corporate messages to the target market

When a company sponsors an event, some of their primary motives are to attract new clients, retain current clients, and most importantly showcase the company’s qualities, motives and future plans. Corporate sponsorship allows a company to get a first hand perspective on the company’s projects, showcasing their standards and the messages the company wishes to share.

O'Toole and Mikolaitis argue that when corporate companies sponsor large sporting events, they will use the sponsorship as a tool to communicate their corporate messages. In the interview, the subject stated that while their customers were most often their primary target, this also depended on the product they were focusing on. The subject states:

“There’s only so much looking at a document can prove to you, but when they attend one of our events – they see it, sense it, feel it, taste it and smell it.”

This confirms research that contends that putting your product on display in front of your target market allows them to get first hand perspective of the products the company has to offer. By showcasing their products at events, the
subject discussed that customers are able to see what kind of company they are dealing with, by showcasing their company’s motivations, messages and high standards. The subject went on to say;

“It’s more about bringing confidence to our customers – current and future. That’s how we use these events as a marketing tool. Every single business we have – depending on what we do – is targeted in a different way.”

4.4.6 Media coverage

Bladen et al, 2012 describes the main motivating factor, which encourages an organisation to sponsor an event, is the media coverage and attention that they will receive from sponsoring the event. While placing their brand logo at large events may give a company a large amount of publicity, it is not the only reason companies sponsor an event. As confirmed by the subject during the interview, a major factor is displaying what the company has done for people in the past, and what it can do now. The subject stated;

“We believe you go for quality versus quantity. I would rather spend Dhs 1,000,000 on these kinds of initiatives versus taking an ad for a month and putting our logo there – that becomes more important from a brand perspective. From a corporate perspective where we are a logistics company – this is not that beneficial to us or our clients.”

Thus, an effective a strategy used by some companies includes spending on customer interaction, rather than paying large amounts for billboards and seating. The subject explained;

“Once we demonstrate to clients what we can do for them through events such as ours, then prospective clients see the benefit. They are already sold on your service – now you’ve got to sell them on the price. It’s a seamless transition.”
Yet, this sentiment contradicts what Bladen et al, 2012 say about media coverage being a main motivating factor. While for some companies this may be a motivator, it could be argued that the money would be better spent on creating unique consumer experiences to connect with customers on a personal level.

4.4.7 Risks

‘Brand image plays a very powerful role in influencing business customers, especially in those markets where products or services are difficult to differentiate based on quality features.’ (Glynn, 2009)

Risks are a major factor to consider when sponsoring or hosting a corporate event. If something goes wrong, it could have a substantial impact on the business and their target market. The subject discussed that the biggest risk to them is that it all goes wrong. If the event is poorly executed, customers leave disappointed. This creates a negative perception. Organisations must avoid risk in order to receive the best customer feedback, so that their brand image is not affected. Markets are often fairly saturated, with lots of companies offering the same product. This is where companies must use sponsorship as a marketing tool to stand out from their competitors. By organising well run and unique events, companies are able to differentiate themselves and promote a positive brand image. When asked if one bad event could lose a client, the subject answered;

“No. Not at all. You see, problems happen. It is how you manage the problem afterwards. If something goes wrong, you have to communicate that and do damage control. Be honest with the client. It’s management of the crisis afterwards that is critical.”

Any event will have risks, and it is up to the company to deal with them. By conducting damage control, and communicating with clients, even if something does go wrong, companies are able to retain their brand image by providing customer interaction.
4.4.8 Returns and effectiveness

Winning over the customer, making sure they had a good time and creating a strong brand image are some of the key factors a company will aim to get in return when sponsoring or hosting an event. The subject described that by doing these events, companies are able to interact with their team, spend quality time with clients and emphasise the human element, and that the returns are always intangible, not tangible. Bladen et al, 2012 discusses that the cooperation of target markets is an extremely important factor for the event and the corporate sponsor, confirming the subjects view. By understanding the target markets associated with a specific event, the sponsor can improve their brand image by increasing brand awareness. Customer satisfaction and positive feedback is a good way to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship strategy. If customers enjoyed themselves, then future business can be positively impacted.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The sponsorship of events, and in particular, the sponsorship of sporting events is a fast expanding region and is becoming more useful as a marketing tool for corporate companies seeking to build their brand image, expand their customer base, or promote new products to the public. The literature suggests that by sponsoring sports events, companies are able to promote their brand, allowing people to see them as a company with good morals and a positive image.

Research suggests that by putting forward money to sponsor an event, companies are able to achieve many benefits, such as media coverage and brand exposure. However, the research that has been done around the subject suggests that in order to maximise returns, companies should seek to create the most unique strategies in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors. This could be done by employing a third party marketing company to manage the event, in overseeing strategies, making improvements and implementing these approaches. Thus, companies can be sure that they are maximising their sponsorship opportunity and entertaining their target audience effectively. By
creating effective and unique marketing strategies, companies are able to use sponsorship as a marketing tool and maximise their returns on the event they sponsor, resulting in boosting their brand image, impressing clientele and achieving new business.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

This chapter will highlight the key findings of the project and outline how effective it is for companies to use the sponsorship of sports events as a marketing tool. The chapter will also identify any weaknesses found in the study and shape any recommendations for future research. An important part of this segment is to recap the aims and objectives of this study in order to ensure that they were achieved.

5.1 Research objectives

The aim of this project is to evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of sports events as a corporate company-marketing tool. This study evaluated the effectiveness of corporate sponsorship, the strategies used, their efficiency and how this reflected on customers. In order to achieve this, four objectives were defined.

Objective 1: To critically review the literature on corporate and sporting events, as well as sponsorship and marketing.

A review of the existing literature relating to this topic is outlined in chapter 2. A wide range of sources was explored, in order to deepen the knowledge surrounding corporate sponsorship, and how companies use it to their advantage when sponsoring sporting events. From the literature it is clear that corporate sponsorship provides many benefits to companies. It is also evident that corporate sponsorship, and more importantly the sponsorship of sports events is rapidly increasing. As a result, it is easy to understand why corporate sponsorship can help organisations to strategically target individual markets in order to meet their long-term goals and objectives. The literature also suggests that by using sports events as a platform for company promotion, companies are able to associate themselves with the event and capture the positive attributes that go along with an event, thereby creating a positive image towards their
company. Moreover, companies seek to use corporate sponsorship as a means of making personal connections with their client, improving their brand image and showcasing their products. However, it also suggests that once a company has secured the sponsorship deal, it is left in their hands to make efficient use of it, and use their most innovative strategies in order to secure the attention of their customer base.

**Objective 2: To identify why and how corporate companies use sporting events as a marketing tool.**

From the literature and research that was conducted, it can be concluded that companies use corporate sponsorship of sporting events as a way of increasing their brand image, attracting new customers, retaining current customers and showcasing future products. By using an effective marketing strategy, companies seek to create unique ways in which they can stand out from their competition and gain a new client base. Using strategies such as print advertising, corporate booths, public competitions and give ways, billboards and sponsored seating, companies can create experiences for their target market, allowing them to see what kind of company they are and what they can offer. As Peppers and Rogers, (2011) assert, "Interacting with customers acquires a new importance for a customer strategy enterprise – an enterprise aimed at creating and cultivating relationships with individual customers." (pg:56)

The interview which was conducted for this research suggested that retaining current clients is the most important factor in a companies business motives, as they are a primary provider of the companies income, therefore sponsorship is a key tool in retaining customer loyalty. By using corporate tents at sports events, companies are able to entertain their clients and interact with them on a personal level, one reason that sports events are a popular sponsorship platform. Sports events come with a positive energy, one that includes success, dedication and purpose. By associating themselves with a sports event, companies are able to share these key messages, which are noticed by clients. There is a similar rationale for interacting with the public at the event. By creating company stalls, providing free merchandise and competitions,
companies are able to establish a personal connection with people, and therefore are able to create a positive atmosphere. Those that interacted with the brand therefore leave the event happy, as they have seen what the company is capable of, and this may lead to the company gaining future business. Although companies gain a large amount of media attention from sponsoring a sports event, which is clearly a benefit, they can also focus on cultivating personal relationships with current and future clients, which is why they chose to use it as a marketing tool.

**Objective 3: To identify the influence that corporate sponsorship has on customers at a given sporting event and explore why it works.**

From the primary research that was undertaken at the Dubai Rugby 7’s, one strong conclusion was that the majority of participants would give the companies associated with the event their business. This is a clear indicator that by associating themselves with a sports event, companies are able to reflect the positive attributes associated with an event such as the Dubai Rugby 7’s and generate a positive brand image. The primary research also identified that customers at the event knew that the main aim of the companies sponsoring the event was to get in front of the target market, displaying that the intentions of the companies were clear to the attendees. Although very few said that they would not take any interest of the sponsorship, a large majority said that they enjoyed engaging with it and were happy that companies were involved with the event. This implies that sponsoring sports events promotes a positive impact on customers, and therefore organisations can directly benefit. However, as a small number of people did suggest that there was too much advertising, organisations should consider the amount of promotion they do at events, and focus on the quality of their marketing techniques rather than the quantity.

The primary research also outlined that the most common way in which the survey respondents noticed the companies at the event was through billboards and sponsored seating. This implies that by sponsoring an event, companies are
able to directly benefit from their brand logos being displayed around the premises. It also highlights the fact that when designing their banners and seating, companies should attempt to make themselves stand out to the crowd. However, it was also determined that customers felt that strategies such as free merchandise, competitions and company booths were also an effective and appealing way to gain attention. Thus, companies should not only place their company logos throughout the event, but also look for innovative strategies to attract the attention of their customer base and stand out from the competition. By focusing on ways to give back to their customers, companies are able to generate a personal connection and display what products they have to offer, while generating a positive brand image and building a reputation.

Additionally, primary research revealed that, although the majority of people at the event were familiar with some of the larger companies sponsoring the event, there were a number of companies that they had not heard of until the event. This shows that sponsoring sports events, and events in general, are excellent ways of getting company names noticed. In particular, a sports event with a large amount of media attention gives smaller companies the opportunity to establish their name and brand image, showcasing their company to a national and international audience. Stephensen and Thurman (2007) express this idea, “Great advertising opportunities have been created under the flag of corporate sponsorship programs that small business owners can take advantage of to reach a larger target audience than what they are used to” (pg: 311)

**Objective 4: To make conclusions and recommendations to corporate sponsors in terms of maximizing their return on an event.**

Throughout this project, the results of the primary research conducted were investigated, collated and displayed in the form of a number of charts, graphs and tables with the intention of drawing conclusions, about which marketing strategies were most effective and why, as well as defining any recommendations for the companies sponsoring these events.
Analysis of the findings demonstrates that by sponsoring a sports event, companies are able to associate their brand image with the positive attributes surrounding the event. This is made possible by positively communicating with the customer base in an innovative manner, showing that you support the event, the sport and the ideals surrounding it. Customers enjoy the sport and have a positive impression of the environment. This extends to a positive perception of the companies sponsoring the event. This one recommendation for companies is to create unique marketing strategies, which allows them to stand out from their competitors.

It could be argued that spending more money on sponsoring the sports event is more effective, as you have more advertising room and exposure of your brand. However, this is not always the case, as strategic marketing is as effective, of not more, than extensive advertising. Companies need to use the opportunity to create the most effective ways to market their product and thus gain brand recognition.

5.2 Limitations

Although the study successfully met its objectives, there were a number of issues which limited the research and therefore obstructed the research project.

One major limitation was the job role of the interviewee and the category of corporate sponsorship in which they were involved. The interviewee was the owner & CEO of a large logistics company, which regularly sponsors and holds corporate events. However, upon interviewing the participant further it became clear that they had little involvement in the sponsorship of sports events, and this hindered the findings. As a result, little information was gathered regarding the motivations of corporate organisations to sponsor sports events.

Another limitation of the research project was the number of questions on the survey that were not directly relevant to the research objectives. For example questions about gender, reason for attending the event, occupation and what
they spend their money on at the event were not directly relevant to the research objectives. These questions, of value if correlations were to be made regarding, for example gender and occupation, were not relevant as these correlations were not required in this research. This limited the project as more relevant information could have better satisfied the research objectives.

### 5.3 Recommendations

In retrospect, limitations can be used to an advantage, by locating the errors in the research project and suggesting improvements and solutions for them. This will result in a more focused and upgraded research process within this area in the future. As stated previously, a known drawback during the primary research process was the structure of the questionnaire. It was clear once the research had been analysed that there were a number of unnecessary questions asked throughout the survey, which could have been substituted with more worthwhile inquiries. The majority of the questions that were asked were good, however there were a number of questions that were useless and this was reflected in the results. A recommendation which could be offered in order to prevent this in the future would be to conduct a preliminary questionnaire, to see what questions were useful to the researcher and to gain any feedback from the respondents. There were two trial questionnaires given out to be tested, however at this point of the project feedback and the effectiveness of the questions was not an underlying issue. Dornyei (2002) describes that constructing an effective questionnaire involves a series of steps and procedures, including writing effective questions and drawing up an item pool, as well as piloting the questionnaire and conducting item analysis.

Finally, although the interview which was conducted generated some helpful and in depth research, there could have been a more specialised subject chosen to take part. If the project was to be done in the future, a recommendation would not be to take away this subject, but simply conduct another interview with someone who is more closely related to the sponsorship of sports events. By doing this, more favorable research will be gathered as the answers received will
correlate directly to the title of the research project. The reason that the author has chosen to keep the first interview was due to the fact that the information collected regarding corporate sponsorship in general was extremely beneficial to the analysis, and while it may not relate directly to sports event sponsorship it still provided useful results. Another recommendation for the future would be to re-design the questions that were asked and tailor them specifically to each subject. This will provide more specialised and accurate results.

5.4 Final Summary

By using the sponsorship of sports event as a marketing tool, companies are able to directly connect with their target audience and customer base, as well as engage with future clients by showcasing their brands intentions.

The sponsorship of sports events in particular allows companies to associate themselves with the positive attributes which these events entail, and generate a positive brand image to their customers as a result. The fact that they support a positive occasion is noticed by the audience, which allows the company to be seen as a decent company to do business with. In return, companies are able to attract new business and establish their brand image within their given market, increasing their market share.

It is clear from the literature surrounding this subject, and the results from primary research gathered, that customers undeniably notice companies’ participation in sports events, and choose to give them their business. Whether companies get their name noticed through effective billboards and sponsored seating, free merchandise and competitions, or sponsoring small local events, companies are able to directly benefit from using the sponsorship of sports events as a marketing tool, and gain their customers support. The concept of sports event marketing will continue to grow, and companies will consistently come up with more innovative and unique ideas to stand out against their competition, allowing them to benefit, grow and expand their reach.

APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1: APPROVED ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of their project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward it to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Alexander Morgan George</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Victoria Richards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>School of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>st20057248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>Events Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Sporting events as a marketing tool for corporate companies: A case study of the Dubai rugby 7s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>01/12/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve sampling of human origin from participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:

- Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain: No
- Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples: No

Application for ethics approval 13 January 2016
CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)  No
Complimentary projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)  No
A project for which external approval has been obtained (eg, NI S)  No

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.
If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project:
The aim of this project is to evaluate the purpose and effectiveness of corporate sponsorship company to sponsor an event and what benefits they will gain from it. The case study of the Emirates Dubai rugby 7s will be used and literature on corporate and sporting events will be critically reviewed. The project will focus on interviewing corporate sponsors of large events in Abu Dhabi such as the Red Bull air race and the Volvo ocean race. As a result of this, the project will aim to discover what motivates those companies to sponsor sporting events utilising qualitative interviews. The project also aims to identify effectiveness of sponsorship at sporting events by distributing a questionnaire survey to event spectators at the Dubai 7s in December 2016.

DECLARATION:
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework
I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

Signature of the applicant:  
Date: 29/11/16

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY

Name of supervisor:  Victoria Richards
Date: 29/11/16

Signature of supervisor:

Research Ethics Committee use only

Decision reached:
- Project approved
- Project approved in principle
- Decision deferred
- Project not approved
- Project rejected

Application for ethics approval v3 January 2016
PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A.1. Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?  No  
A.2. If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used.
Click here to enter text.
A.3. Describe the research design to be used in your project.
Research Methods:
A mixed methods approach using quantitative and qualitative approaches

Interviews:
In depth interviews will be undertaken with the official corporate sponsors of certain events including the Dubai rugby 7s and the Red Bull air race. These interviews will be designed to gain a first hand understanding of why the companies chose to sponsor these events. A total of three interviews will be conducted in the main office of the respective company, within an empty meeting room and will last for a maximum of 20 minutes. Access was achieved through the personal contacts of the researcher’s father, who organised the interviews. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The interviews will take place in Abu Dhabi over the Christmas break as the researcher is a resident of Abu Dhabi.

Sample (convenience and purposful sampling)
A quota sample of 3-5 corporate companies will be selected as they will provide the most accurate information in regard to the field being studied through purposive and snowball sampling.

Survey Questionnaire
A survey questionnaire of event spectators at the Dubai 7s taking place on December 1st & 2nd. The researcher will aim to gather a total of 50-100 questionnaires filled out by attendees of the 2016 Dubai Rugby 7s. The questionnaires will be self distributed on the day and participation will take no more than

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1 An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here
The supervisor of this project has previous experience of research involving human participants at undergraduate, Masters and PhD level in the areas of public administration, sports and leisure management, tourism, disability and social justice respectively. Her research has involved quantitative and qualitative methods such as questionnaires, focus groups, semi-structured and conversational interviews.

C. POTENTIAL RISKS

C1. What potential risks do you foresee?

- Not being able to obtain interviews
- No interviews due to time
- Difficult people to talk to/ get in touch with
- Not getting enough questionnaires filled in
- Safety of handing out questionnaires (People’s reactions/ views)
- Attitudes of people on the final days of the event.
- Questionnaires may not be fully completed.
- Participants may decline to fill in questionnaire.
- Not gaining written permission to distribute questionnaire at the Dubai 7s

C2. How will you deal with the potential risks?

Ensure that I have set up the interviews before hand and that all questionnaires are tested before they are released to the public.

Focus specifically on the first day of the event as there will be less commotion (drinking etc).

Ensure the questions are understandable, clear, short and with closed and open ended questions.

If permission is not granted at the Dubai 7s, will undertake an online survey using Qualtrix (same questions as paper version) through convenience and purposeful sampling.

When submitting your application you MUST attach a copy of the following:

- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
Appendix 2: Approved Ethics Application Summary

| Application for ethics approval | [x] | - | [x] | - |
| Participant information sheet | [x/ | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| Participant consent form | [x/ | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| Pilot interview/s | [x | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| Pilot questionnaire/s | [x | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |
| Letter/s to participating organisation/s | [x/ | [ ] | [ ] | [ ] |

First Submission: [x] Resubmission: [ ]
Date: 23rd November 2016

For use by the devolved ethics approval panel:
Panel Members: 
- Module leader: [Signature] 
- Supervisor: [Signature]
CSM Ethics Committee Representative: [Signature]
Date: 23/11/16 Date of reassessment: 30/11/16

Outcome:
- Project Approved: [x/ | [ ] | Reference number: 20160053 |
- Project Approved in Principle: [x | [ ] |
- Application not ready/incomplete: [ ] (Decision deferred)

Comments for projects not fully approved:
- Ensure that the selected companies have given permission to participate in interviews and questionnaires. Provide evidence to support this.
- Increase age group 50+
- Insert question related to topics & corporate travel in the questionnaire.
Appendix 3: Participant Information

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Sporting events as a marketing tool for corporate companies: A case study of the Dubai rugby 7s.

Cardiff Metropolitan University Protocol Number:

Project summary
The reason for this project is to investigate the reasons why large corporate organisations choose to sponsor sporting events. By participating in this study you will enable the collection of data as part of a study being taken at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Why have you been asked to participate?
You have been asked to participate in this study due to your position within a corporate organisation. You have been chosen as you fit the profile of the group being studied which is someone within a corporate organisation with motivations to conduct corporate sponsorship on events. Throughout the duration of the interview your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw yourself from the interview at any time. You will be required to answer a total of 10 questions and the interview will not last longer than 20 minutes.

Project risks
There is no intention to seek personal or sensitive data from the participant. The reason of this research project is to investigate what motivates corporate organisations to sponsor sporting events and what they gain from doing so. There is no knowledge of any substantial risks involved within the study. The participant may chose not to answer questions if they feel that they are inappropriate or off topic and also has the right to withdraw themselves at any time. Whatever decision is made by you will be respected.

How we protect your privacy
All information that you provide will not be revealed and will be held securely. Measures have been taken to ensure that you cannot be directly responsible for the information you provide. The researcher will hold personal details such as your name, age, gender and signature securely. A consent form will be signed by the interviewee before hand and will be held for a total of 5 years after the interview has been carried out. Other than that, all information and documentation used to gather data will be erased. The company may also wish to remain anonymous.

YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET TO KEEP

If you require any further information about this project then please contact:
Alexander Morgan George, Cardiff Metropolitan University
Cardiff Metropolitan University email: st20057248@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Example Questionnaire
**Questionnaire**

Sporting events as a marketing tool for corporate companies: A case study of the Dubai rugby 7s.

The purpose of this research project is to collect primary information in relation to how corporate companies use sporting events as a marketing tool, with a case study of the Dubai Rugby 7s. The data collected will form part of an international project. If you would rather not take part in this project I thank you for your time. If you are happy to take part in this project then could you please complete this questionnaire. All information provided will be kept confidential. Please the appropriate box(es).

1. Gender:
   - Male/Female

2. Age
   - 18-21
   - 22-25
   - 26-30
   - 30-35
   - 36-40
   - 40-50
   - 50-60
   - 60-65
   - 65-70
   - 70+

3. What is your occupation?
   -

4. Why did you come to the event today?
   - To have fun ☐
   - Spend time with family ☐
   - Fan/supporter ☐
   - Holiday ☐

5. What is your current income per annum? Please circle.
   - Under £9,999
   - £10,000 - £14,999
   - £15,000 - £19,999
   - £20,000 - £24,999
   - £25,000 - £29,999
   - £30,000 - £39,999
   - £40,000 - £49,999
   - £50,000 - £59,999
   - £60,000 - £79,999
   - £80,000 - £89,999
   - Over £90,000

6. What Companies have you noticed today? Please specify below.
7. What reaction did you have?
   - Interested □
   - Amused □
   - Ignored it □
   - If other please specify:----------------- 

8. What method used by the companies today has been the most appealing to you?
   - Billboards and sponsored seating □
   - Corporate tents □
   - Competitions and give aways □
   - Gift bags and freebies □
   - Anything else please specify:------------------

9. Would you give any of the companies that have sponsored the event today your business? 
   Yes/No

10. What do you think is the main reason that motivates corporate organizations to choose to sponsor events?
   - Get in front of their target market
   - Gain new contacts □
   - Get their brand noticed □
   - New clients and customers □
   - Give attendees a taste of what they have to offer □
   - Anything else please specify:------------------

11. What do you spend your money on at the event?
   - Food □
   - Drink □
   - Merchandise □
   - Anything else please specify:------------------

12. Do you know who the main sponsors of today's event are? If so could you please name them below?
   --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   --------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   --------------------------------------------------
   --------------------------------------------------
13. Where have you mainly seen the names of the sponsors today?

- Stands/seating ☐
- Stalls ☐
- Banners ☐
- If other please specify: ---------------------------------------------------

14. How likely are you to give the sponsors of today’s event your business?

Very likely ☐    Likely ☐    Unlikely ☐

15. Were you aware of any of the companies before today’s event?

Yes/No

16. Please add any further comments that you have on today’s event?

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Thank you for taking part in this questionnaire.

---

Appendix 5: Participant consent form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Cardiff Metropolitan University Ethics Reference Number: 
Participant name or Study ID Number: 
Title of Project: Sporting events as a marketing tool for corporate companies: A case study of the Dubai rugby 7s. 
Name of Researcher: Alexander Morgan George

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [ ]

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [ ]

3. I agree to take part in the above study. [ ]

4. I agree to the interview being recorded [ ]

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications [ ]

6. I would like my organisations’ name to be anonymised in all publications [ ]

_______________________________________   ___________________
Signature of Participant                  Date

_______________________________________  ___________________
Name of person taking consent                  Date

_______________________________________
Signature of person taking consent

Appendix 6: Email to confirm that the participant has agreed to take part in the study.
Subject: Local Middle East partners with Middle Logistics

Early Entry, 2-12th April 2023, UAE
Organized by Middle Logistics

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your interest in our event. We are pleased to announce that our Middle East partners have successfully joined Middle Logistics. This is a significant milestone for our organization as it further strengthens our presence in the Middle East.

We hope to see you at the event and look forward to discussing future collaborations.

Best regards,

[Name]
Appendix 7: Interview Prompts

Semi-structured interview

Marketing strategy and marketing tools

1. Do you mainly focus on targeting general attendees of the event or use it as a marketing tool to attract potential clients? (Corporate boxes, tents etc)
2. What strategies do you use to ensure you promote your business in a positive manner?
3. What marketing strategy would you use when sponsoring an event?
4. What marketing tools would you use to support your strategy?

Focusing on sponsorship at events

1. How many events do you look to sponsor per year?
2. Focusing on sponsorship at the events, what is the role of sponsorship and what does it entail?

Target market and target events

1. What type of events do you look to sponsor? And why do you choose these particular events?
2. What are your primary target markets? And what events do you typically look to sponsor.

Promotion

1. When sponsoring the event, what forms of promotion do you use to endorse your brand? (Billboards, sponsored stands, booths, games, competitions)
2. How much money would you usually spend on sponsorship at a large sports event.
3. When sponsoring events do you look to give attendees a sample of what your business has to offer?

Operations and strategies on the day

1. What are your operations and strategies that take place on the day of the event?

Risks

1. What risks are involved when sponsoring a large event such as the Dubai Rugby 7’s?

Returns
2. What benefits would you receive from sponsoring a large sporting event?

How effectiveness is measured

1. How is the effectiveness of the sponsorship measured? (Using customer feedback etc)
Appendix 8: Quantitative Results

Figure 1: Gender of participants

![Gender distribution chart]

Figure 2: Age demographic of participants
Series 1

- 18-21: 20
- 22-25: 4
- 26-30: 1
- 30-35: 15
- 36-40: 8
- 40-50: 12
- 60-65: 2
- 65-70: 1
- 70+: 1
Table 1: What is your occupation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oil &amp; Gas</td>
<td>28.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin Crew</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport Staff</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter/Waitress</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Reason for coming to the event

![Bar chart showing reasons for attending an event](image)
### Table 2: Current income per Annum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Income per annum (£)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-19,999</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000-24,999</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000-29,999</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000-39,999</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-49,999</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000-59,999</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000-79,999</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000-89,999</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 90,000</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 9,999</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Companies noticed on the day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company name</th>
<th>Number of times noticed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emirates</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSBC</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP</td>
<td>21.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Bus</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Rover</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowne Plaze</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dnata</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 4: Reaction to company advertising

![Reaction Chart]

- Interested: 24
- Amused: 40
- Ignored it: 14
- Other: 2
Figure 5: Most appealing method used by companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Billboards and Sponsored seating</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitions and giveaways</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate tents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift bags and freebies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Would you give any of the companies that have sponsored the event today your business?

Number

- Yes: 68
- No: 12
Figure 7: What do you think is the main reason that motivates corporate organisations to choose to sponsor events?

![Motivation for corporate organisations to sponsor events.](image)

Figure 8: What do you mainly spend your money on at the event?

![Purchase options](image)
Figure 9: Do you know what the main sponsors of today's event are? If so could you please name them below?

![# of times mentioned](image)

Figure 10: Where have you mainly seen the names of sponsors today?

![Series 1](image)
Figure 11: How likely are you to give the sponsors of today's event your business?

![Pie chart showing responses to the question: Very Likely (13), Likely (40), Unlikely (27).]
Appendix 9: Qualitative Results

Interviewer:
For the purpose of my dissertation I have hot a few questions that have been written out and given to me by the ethics committee at my university. There is about 15 questions here. Would you mind if I go through them please?

Subject:
Not at all.

Interviewer:
Fantastic. The first section is Marketing Strategy and Marketing Tools. The second is focusing on the Sponsorship of Events, the third is Target Market and Target Events. The fourth is promotion. The fifth is Operational Strategies on the day of the event, the sixth is Risks and the seventh is Returns.
So, the first question is: Do you mainly focus on targeting general attendees of the event, or is it used as a marketing tool to attract potential clients? With the use of corporate boxes, tents etc.

Subject:
It would be both.

Interviewer:
Ok.

Subject:
We would target our current clients first – they are the ones paying the bills in the first place – so we cannot avoid them.

Interviewer:
Yes, of course.

Subject:
There’s an old saying: One bird in the hand is better than 10 on the tree.

Interviewer:
Yes, I realise that.

Subject:
So, the clients you already have, are actually a big bulk of the company’s revenue generation.

Interviewer:
Definitely, yes.

Subject:
So you cannot ignore them and you can never take them for granted. Ever. You cannot take the approach of: I’m already dealing with them and that’s it. That’s the mistake Hillary Clinton made when she did not visit certain states during her
election bid. She took them for granted and lost the election. She took for granted those states were hers and then they turned. And, as a results, she lost her bid for presidency.

Interviewer:  
Yes.

Subject:  
The same thing happens in the corporate world. You cannot take your clients for granted.

Interviewer:  
Yes, for sure.

Subject:  
No matter how great the relationship is, you need to nurture that relationship so the key clients are the most important.

Interviewer:  
Yes, I understand that.

Subject:  
By far. Then comes the potential clients – as I mentioned. As I said, for me, at least, priority is current clients, second priority is future clients that we are targeting.

Interviewer:  
Yes – great. Absolutely.

Subject:  
If there’s anything more specific you want me to get into, let me know.

Interviewer:  
Of course. Thankyou. The second question: What strategies do you use to promote your business in a positive manner?

Subject:  
I think ......energy! Very important.

Interviewer:  
Ok.

Subject:  
Positivity. Positive energy and success is highly contagious. People like it. People like being around positive people. People like being around positive energy. So it is very important when a client comes to an event, that there is a positive mood around. So, how do we go about doing that? Various ways. You get a lot of expert advice. When clients attend one of our events, they should be entertained and have a good time – so it’s all positive stories to take away.
Interviewer: 
Yes, for sure.

Subject: 
If you have a friend that calls you all the time with bad news, after a while it’s human nature that you are going to avoid that person. But, if you have a friend that always lifts your spirit, that’s different. Corporate events and corporate marketing is exactly the same thing. You need to create a mood that is very positive and clients will love it and remember you.

Interviewer: 
Yes.

Subject: 
One of the things that we as a company do, when we organise events, is to focus on the fun aspects. How do you make it fun? How do you make it great? How do you make it memorable? How do you make it so when clients leave the event, they leave with a good impression? These are questions we ask in the planning process of an event.

Interviewer: 
Yes, I agree.

Subject: 
From our perspective, we try to keep the business aspect down to a minimum.

Interviewer: 
Ok.

Subject: 
And then, in that way we are building positive feedback by offering positive interaction.

Interviewer: 
Yes, I understand.

Subject: 
And, that is where it starts. That is how you start and end the business side of it.

Interviewer: 
Absolutely.

Subject: 
That’s how you start moving towards the commercial side. You don’t go straight for the kill. This is the way we do it at least.
So, by keeping it positive at the start and creating good first impressions from the “get-go”, do you think that helps the relationship in the future?

Subject:
I think people and corporations don’t put enough emphasis on the human element. I really do. I think this is one of the biggest problems: Everything is too sterile. A lot of companies work in a clinical fashion – very mechanical.

Interviewer:
Yes, I understand.

Subject:
Every part of the component does it’s part to make the wheels move. I think what differentiates corporations, or multi-national companies, or public-listed companies from family businesses – which are more successful historically – is the human element.

Interviewer:
Yes.

Subject:
And you are less bound by pressure of meeting your next quarter, right? So, if you look at public companies, they are mainly driven by whether or not they make their numbers for the next quarter. And, they have a very systematic way of working. What I think is that family businesses operate laterally versus horizontally. So, that gives you that flexibility. As a family organisation you can afford to take your time. There is not that constant pressure and pressure makes people do what is not in their, or your, best interests for the long-term benefit of the organisation.

Interviewer:
Absolutely:

Subject:
Let me give you an example. During good times – and we experienced it here in Dubai – a lot of companies were taking the excessive demands on real estate – on rents and so forth – and jacking up the prices with a “take it, or leave it,” approach. That was the mentality with their suppliers, clients and prospective clients. During bad times – when the market was down and companies were struggling – those same companies were giving very little support. People were not willing to wait for payments. Our attitude was that during good times we could charge whatever we wanted – but we did not – so that during the bad times you could ask your clients for support. I can rely on that relationship I have cultivated. It’s reciprocity. Here is where family companies prevail. By maximising your return by taking an opportunistic viewpoint is lifted. Markets are cyclical – so you take advantage of me today – I take advantage of you tomorrow – because that positive relationship has been forged. If a relationship is not seen as being fair to both parties – it will never survive.
Interviewer:
Yes, that’s true.

Subject:
And that applies to anything – not just corporate functions. Apply all the same respect that you confer on family to that of your business and your dealings with clients and prospective clients. Even if that means you are not maximising your return to its full potential.

Interviewer:
Ok. Thank you very much. What marketing tools would you use to support your strategy, as well as to sponsor your events?

Subject:
Well, that depends on who we are targeting. For us, normally, it is very direct. We would go directly after our clients. We have a list of who our clients are and we have a list of who we are trying to target. And, we personally, are very focused. We use surgical precision. We don’t do radio announcements etc. We are strategically direct and target clients and prospective clients with precision.

Interviewer:
Ok – can you expand on that please?

Subject:
That’s on the business side. On the charity front, we don’t give any marketing to that at all. We keep a low profile on that front. We don’t use our charitable work as a tool. It is not for us to make money and headway with.

Interviewer:
That’s great.

Subject:
That’s not part of our marketing philosophy. But when we do events – whether it be cigar evenings or corporate events or hospitality – the strategy is done with surgical precision and focus. Generally, we utilise marketing companies we have used in the past – but we use them more for the actual event content.

Interviewer:
Ok. Could you expand a little on that comment.

Subject:
About 75/80 percent of that guest list comes from us. The marketing company may offer suggestions. Our strategy is direct. We send direct mail from our company. The marketing company will simply follow up. For us, the marketing company is more for event management. That’s where they have to earn their pay. It’s their job to keep the attention of the guests.

Interviewer:
Yes.
Subject:
So, that’s the way we operate.

Interviewer:
Ok – fantastic. Moving on to the second section now, which focuses on the sponsorship of your events. How many events do you look to sponsor per year?

Subject:
Overall, 30 to 40 events per year.

Interviewer:
Ok. And what do you benefit from doing such a large number of events – as that is quite a lot for one year.

Subject:
The reason is that we represent a lot of different brands and each brand has its own target market.

Interviewer:
I see.
Can you give me an example please?

Subject:
For example – take CigarWorld – where we represent exclusive deals with Cuban cigars, as well as representing a few Dominican Republic cigar brands. Those are highly targeted. We do small niche events. If you overcrowd those events, you lose the personal one-on-one relationships with clients. If you have an event with cigars, of let’s say 1000 people, then it becomes more of a Gala dinner. Nobody gets quality time. Much smaller events in different locations, where the smoke is more manageable etc – then becomes easier to manage. It gives our team an opportunity to interact more directly with the guest. Personal attention is key.

Interviewer:
Yes – very important, I agree.

Subject:
We prefer doing it this way, instead of having a huge event that is literally “meet and greet.”

Interviewer:
A good strategy for sure.
Subject:
I mean, that’s also important. We also do bigger events, but our preferred strategy is smaller events, targeted in a more surgical way.

Interviewer:
Ok. I understand. And, just to focus on sponsorship of your events – what is the role of your sponsorship and what does it entail? What is the process behind it and what does it mean for you?

Subject:
Let me give you an example of something we are considering in terms of an event now.

Interviewer:
Sure.

Subject:
We are considering creating one huge smoking event for cigars – but this is a major one, so we are talking about creating an event which will become so bit it will become a regular part of the Dubai entertainment calendar. And this will be 1000 plus people. We want to create the “Hollywood Oscars” of the cigar industry – but mostly here in Dubai.

Interviewer:
Sounds interesting.

Subject:
Yes. We will be bringing in international celebrities like Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone, as well as senior leadership in Havanas (the cigar company). The idea is that of an award ceremony. The process of this is simply having the idea – this is my idea – and then bringing in all the key players. In this case, the Havanos Corporation – the controlling arm of Cuban cigars globally. Once they sign off on it, that is the first step of legitimising it to cigar afficianados world-wide. Then other companies start coming in – Rolls Royce, Cartier and a lot of luxury brands have expressed an interest. Their feeling is, our customers are their customers. Somebody who will spend $100 on one cigar and burn it in 30 minutes are the clients that want expensive jewellery or luxury cars. That is their target market. We go through an elimination process – how many sponsors do we bring in and so forth. That also depends on what the total cost will be.

Interviewer:
Yes.

Subject:
If we think the cost will be $1 000 000 – one of the questions we have to ask is, are we going to charge people for attending or not. If yes: how much etc. Or are we going to charge the full amount, or perhaps a partial charge. Or are we going to subsidise it. This is the process. Depending on the answers to that process, the budget and predicted revenue are more or less formulated.

Interviewer:
Right. How do you focus on your target market with so many players in the mix for such an event?
Subject:
The shortfall is where you go out to seek sponsorship. Too much access result in grand dilution. Then all of a sudden it's not about your target market. In this case, the cigar company – but rather about the companies that want to jump on the band wagon. So, it's very important that if a sponsor comes in, they are really in the background. That it is primarily a Havanos event. People should remember that.

Interviewer:
Ok. I understand.

Subject:
Those are the kind of questions we have to deal with – how much exposure etc – and it all begins with the idea and subsequent endorsement by the major stakeholders. In addition we do an estimate of the costs and discuss how we intend to generate the revenues for that costing. Once you have those components in your hands, then you can start creating a strategy. This is where the marketing company can play a role.

Interviewer:
Absolutely

Subject:
They save us executive time. They are paid a marketing fee to put the event into action. That is the process that we follow.

Interviewer:
Ok. Great. Now we will move onto target marketing and targeted events. What type of events do you usually look to sponsor and why do you choose those particular events?

Subject:
Our target is towards social events – at least where I get involved. Again, we have many different events that our various companies do – a lot are very focused on a certain subject. For example we have visiting chefs from our principals who come in and we invites chefs from all the top hotels and we put a competition in place. Prize money is up for grabs. That is very targeted. Only chefs are invited. No spectators. This is important because the chefs get a first-time experience with the products. They are able to stretch their creativity and the boundaries of the product. It’s a good educational programme and ultimately when they go back to their workplaces, they will remember it and hopefully, place more orders of our products. That is very targeted and we do a lot of those. We do several a week. Those are trade to trade and something I get personally involved in. Where I do get involved is more on the social side. Such as the cigar events, or sports events and government initiatives.

Interviewer:
Ok, perfect. What are your primary target markets, and what events do you typically sponsor?

Subject:
Our customers are the primary target – depending on what product we are doing. Take Mohebi Logistics for example – our Dubai World Trade Centre facilities are about to go live. That is a world-class facility. The best of its kind in the UAE and something unique. For the opening we would be inviting prospective customers from our current customer base – one of which is Compass – Nestle, L’Oreal and others – to come and have a look at our new facilities. We like to be seen as a company investing in the future – even though they may not be partaking in that facility – they need to know they are dealing with a company that has an appetite for investment. That is very important. It gives the message they are dealing with the right company that is willing to put their money where their mouth is. They also get to see we are implementing world class standards – that event reinforces that.
In this case we use recycled sewerage water and used in the cooling systems. Those initiatives gives an environmental angle to it. Clients like that – it gives a clear message the company is corporately responsible – it cares. The clients attending the event get to see that first-hand. To the new customers we are targeting, an event of this nature showcases our work. And the oldest rules of humanity still stand today with this old saying: “You dig a hole with a shovel.” With all the leaps in technology, using a shovel is still the primary way we dig holes.

Interviewer:
Yes. Can you explain in what way?

Subject:
The same thing applies to businesses. Ultimately people believe what they see and until they don’t see it – they don’t understand the magnitude. They don’t grasp the intangibles of it. There’s only so much looking at a document can prove to you, but when they attend one of our events – they see it, sense it, feel it, taste it and smell it. Talking to people face to face – all of that brings a very different dimension to the overall experience. It’s very different than sending a powerpoint presentation to someone. When people physically come and see something, it generates confidence. It’s more about bringing confidence to our customers – current and future. That’s how we use these events as a marketing tool. Every single business we have – depending on what we do – is targeted in a different way. That’s how we do it for Mohebi Logistics. For our consumer division, it’s something else – for our supermarkets it may be a totally different strategy. It really depends on the nature of the business.

Interviewer:
Yes, I can see how that would work.

Subject:
We believe very strongly on the person-to-person element in all of our events.
Interviewer:
Can you explain how that would work please?
Subject:
We believe you go for quality versus quantity. I would rather spend Dhs 1,000,000 on these kinds of initiatives versus taking an ad for a month and putting our logo there – that becomes more important from a brand perspective. From a corporate perspective where we are a logistics company – this is not that beneficial to us or our clients.
Our message to clients at these events is saying look what we can do for you and look what we can do for others. Look what value our events have brought to others. Once we demonstrate to clients what we can do for them through events such as ours, then prospective clients see the benefit. They are already sold on your service – now you’ve got to sell them on the price. It’s a seamless transition.

Interviewer:
I understand. Perfect. So, now, moving onto promotion. When sponsoring an event, what forms of promotion do you use to endorse your brand in terms of billboards etc?
At the event itself what do you use to endorse your brand and make it known?

Subject:
We like to demonstrate the product itself. So, if we are promoting, for example, KitKat, then people should be given the opportunity to taste the product. In our case, because we’re consumer driven, in our line of business – clients need to touch, feel, taste and consume the product. That, for us, is the key focus.
And of course, all the attributes that go with it – brochures, marketing people etc. People who know how to promote our brand. Delivery of a message in many cases is more important than the message itself. It’s how you deliver it that counts. It’s the delivery a client takes away with them. A product today is no longer just a product – it’s the “augmented” product. That means the entire experience surrounding that product.

Interviewer:
Yes.

Subject:
Your whole opinion of the product come down to the message you are trying to promote in its entirety. The whole experience. If you want to take an event or promotion to the next level you have to manage the entire experience – not just the product. And here is where the delivery and the subconscious and conscious and the tangibles, as well as the intangibles become critical to creating an experience surrounding the company or product. And that’s the take-home factor. Today, marketing and the customer interaction is a key focus. Steve Jobs understood this. When he opened an Apple Store, people thought he was crazy – he created a whole experience.

Interviewer:
Yes, exactly.
Subject:
Today, Apple has a higher footfall, believe it or not, than Walmart. It's the product experience. From our perspective, when we do promotions and marketing we look at the full experience, not just the product. That would include, of course, posters, brochures and the like. Not necessarily billboards. The manufacturer of our product may do that, but from our perspective as the local distribution company – we don’t use billboards to promote our company. We are more focussed on the take-away aspect of an event. I think nothing has more value than when a client touches your product, feels it etc. But you have to have a great product for that.

Interviewer:
Of course.

Subject:
I think that one of the most important things is you have to know your own product’s limitations. People don’t expect 100 percent, but what people admire is honesty. You establish trust – it is always the right policy to be honest and sincere about the product you are promoting.

Interviewer:
Yes, I believe that.

Subject:
The experience a client or prospective client receives at an event or promotion is a key component. Delivery, experience, honesty. People will respond in kind and that is a universal truth.

Interviewer:
Absolutely.

Subject:
When you do marketing and events management and you apply those same principles, clients respond. I’ve seen it time and time again.

Interviewer:
Perfect. That was a great response. Thank you very much.

Subject:
Pleasure.

Interviewer:
The next question is, how much would you spend on the sponsorship of a large event?

Subject:
The biggest one we have spent on is over Dhs 2 000 000 for one single event.
Interviewer: Ok. And when sponsoring an event do you look to give your attendees a sample of what your business has to offer?

Subject: Oh yes, for sure. That will come in the product itself and literature. However, literature is something they need to ask for more. It’s there on site in case – we don’t push it down their throats. It’s there if the client wants it. The idea is for the clients to sample and experience of our products.

Interviewer: That sounds logical. Now, moving onto operational strategies on the day. For any event you sponsor what would be your operational strategies for that event? What would you look to do?

Subject: From my perspective as a CEO?

Interviewer: From your sponsorship team. On the day of the event, what would be their plan? What do they need to do?

Subject: To make sure everybody does what they say they are going to do. I know it sounds elementary, but you would be surprised! The sub-contractors generally have a tendency to disappoint. The team’s responsibility would be to make sure they show up when they are supposed to and to make sure everybody is in place and setting up the event according to plan. To make sure the small details are looked at. There is a fine line between a great event and a mediocre event. Success is in the smallest of details.

Interviewer: Yes.

Subject: That is absolutely what differentiates a great event from a poorly managed one. 90 percent of all events are the same. It’s the final 10 percent that really makes a difference. It goes into micro-management more than macro-management. How they are ushered in and greeted, the catering and much more. So, the purpose of the team is to make sure that everything is carried out as planned. Even though that sounds simple – I can tell you the biggest disappointment at those events is when people do not do what they are supposed to. My team micro-manages each event.

Interviewer: Great. So just taking care of the simple things, making sure everything is perfect, right? Because, as you say, the smallest things can go wrong.

Subject:
People do forget the simplest things – and that's what gets remembered. Perfection and getting it right is what sets companies and events apart.

Interviewer:
True.

Subject:
There are lots of products that are the same, so the product and the way it is promoted has to stand out.

Interviewer:
Moving on to risks. When you are sponsoring a large event, obviously there are major risks. What are the risks to you as a CEO and to your team?

Subject:
That it goes wrong.

Interviewer:
Right!

Subject:
That all of the small details we spend so much time on does not come about, is not executed properly and clients go away feeling disappointed.

Interviewer:
Yes – I get that.

Subject:
Ultimately, people will do what they want to do, but they would not have had the experience we expected for them. They would not have had the “wow” factor. So, really, for us, the risk is the “take me home” factor. From my perspective, that is one of the risks of a poorly run event.

Interviewer:
Exactly. Say that you create an event every year and you invite the same clients to it every year. Would you say one bad event could potentially lose you a client completely?

Subject:
No. Not at all. You see, problems happen. It is how you manage the problem afterwards. If something goes wrong, you have to communicate that and do damage control. Be honest with the client. It’s management of the crisis afterwards that is critical.

Interviewer:
Ok, sure.

Subject:
If you put your head in the sand like an ostrich, it could damage the prestige of the event. But, I don’t believe that one bad event will make others not return. That is more true for your first event – because that sets the bar. The expectation is not realised. But, if you have one bad Oscar’s – you are not going to tell me nobody will not attend the next one. It depends at what stage it happens and how many years it’s been running, as well as how bad it was. No matter how bad, anything can be recovered if the recovery method is properly handled. That is key.

Interviewer:
Yes, I agree. Now, I’m going onto returns please. What benefits would you receive from sponsoring a large event?

Subject:
Customer satisfaction for sure. Getting to know or organisation. Interaction with our team. Spending quality time with clients and really emphasising the human element. The returns are always intangible – not tangible. At least from our perspective. Clients go back after a great time, hopefully they will place more orders with us. It’s the long game.

Interviewer:
And now for the final question. In terms of effectiveness, how would you measure that for an event you sponsored? Say, for example, customer feedback.

Subject:
Many times you get it then and there. You feel it. Marketing companies often offer a feedback form. I am very against this type of feedback.

Interviewer:
Yes. It is very forced.

Subject:
You don’t want to bog down and bother your customers with that type of thing. People don’t like it. Especially if you are targeting a special category of executives.
When I am at an event, most of the guest will come to me to say goodbye. That is when you get feedback. You get it from the vibe at the event. If you are happy, most likely others will be too. You can feel it – just by looking at the crowd. Listen, watch and see. From our perspective, that’s the way we do it.

Interviewer:
So, it seems like you, as a CEO, attend a lot of your events and that is amazing. That’s what CEO’s should do. But, for an event, say for example, like the Dubai 7’s – which is sponsored by HSBC – their CEO is not going to be there, right? How would he measure the success of that event that he has put company money and time into? How would he successfully measure that event?

Subject:
One very easy litmus test: Different lists of clients – category of clients – how many show up. If they don’t show up, that is your first indication that people don’t see the value – that’s why they are not showing up.

Interviewer:
Ok.

Subject:
You get table fillers – because you need body count. Generally that is paid for and it means your events are not a great success. But HSBC does not sponsor just because of the corporate hospitality suites. They sponsor because of the mass market, the media and the billboards – so that is a whole different way of gauging an event. As an organisation, we align ourselves less and less with this type of event. In contrast, the HSBC’s real target, are the masses. The math is simple: how many of your clients showed up.

Interviewer:
Simple, yes.

Subject:
It really comes back to basics – you still dig a hole with a shovel. Go back to basics.

Interviewer:
That’s great. Mr Mohamed, thank you so much. It’s been a privilege for me to talk with you. This interview has been so helpful.

Subject:
It’s been a pleasure.

Interviewer:
Thank you. You have answered everything so extensively and in such detail. I really appreciate it.

Subject:
Great. Good luck. Let me know if you need anything more from my side. I am here for you.

Interviewer:
Of course – thank you.
Appendix 10: Etihad ‘Flying Reimagined’

(Etihad Global, 2017)

Appendix 11: marketing model to display an integrated approach to sponsorship

(Shambaughleadership.com, 2017)
References


*Welcome to the north west sports event directory* (no date) Available at: http://www.nwsportseventdirectory.co.uk/definition.html (Accessed: 3 April 2016).