

International
Paralympic
Committee

The International Paralympic Committee and its Corporate Partners
- A study on Partnership Satisfaction -

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this final paper was to examine how the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) can evaluate its corporate partnerships and find out how satisfied the corporate partners are with the IPC's relationship management. Based on the brief the main research questions and the research objective were developed. Subsequently, a situation analysis on the current internal and external situation was conducted. This analysis led to the identification of the core problem which formed the basis for literature review. In the literature review relevant theories and models were analyzed and connected to the problem. Built on the findings of the previous research a knowledge gap was identified which served as a basis for the in-depth research methodology design. Subsequently, the in-depth research was conducted and the findings were analysed. Finally, all findings were combined in the conclusions leading to strategic recommendations to the IPC.

The core findings of the situation analysis highlighted that the IPC lacked a strategic focus on the corporate partnership relationship management. Furthermore, as evaluations had not been taking place on a strategic and regular basis yet, it was difficult for the IPC to assess how satisfied its corporate partners were. Therefore, relevant literature was consulted revealing that the constructs trust, commitment and pro-activeness could be used for measuring the level of satisfaction. With this as a basis the knowledge gap was defined as not knowing how the corporate partners actually perceive the relationship with the IPC. Furthermore, it was still not clear how to best evaluate partnerships.

The in-depth interviews with the representatives of the IPC's corporate partners revealed that on an interpersonal level they are satisfied with the IPC's performance while on the operational level some areas for improvement were apparent. Additionally, experts in the field of sponsorship were consulted who highlighted the importance of conducting regular evaluations with a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools.

It is recommended that the IPC keeps its highly personal approach to the partnerships as this was perceived as vital by the corporate partners. Furthermore, the IPC should place a greater focus on an early collaboration with the partners to be able to anticipate needs and goals and then act pro-actively. Also, a point of improvement would be a better handling of the information flow in demanding times. Finally, the use of a standardised questionnaire for the evaluations is recommended forming the basis for regular, qualitative and personal conversations between the IPC and its corporate partners.

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Disclaimer

This report contains and discusses privileged and confidential information. With respect to the persons, companies and institutions treated and mentioned in this report the entire document is subject to confidentiality from the submitting date of July 2, 2014 and henceforth for the following five years. Conclusions are made by the author exclusively and cannot be assumed or accredited to any actor involved throughout the research or report.

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby certify that this final paper titled "*The International Paralympic Committee and its corporate partners- A study on partnership satisfaction* " has been composed by me and is based on my own work, unless stated otherwise. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in this final paper. All references and verbatim extracts have been quoted, and all sources of information, including graphs and data sets, have been specifically acknowledged.

The Hague, 2nd July, 2014

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The following paper is the final research project of the study program *International Communication Management* at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. The research project will be presented as a final paper, completing the 3-years Bachelor-program.

The project was conducted in close collaboration with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) where the student completed her internship for her final semester. The topic of this final research project was identified together with the IPC and was aimed at supporting the Marketing and Commercial department on a strategic level.

1.2. The problem situation

In a first brief the student introduced the background and purpose of the project and discussed with the Marketing and Commercial team about possible areas to conduct the project. The most suitable area for both the IPC and the student was then identified to be the IPC's sponsorship activities.

As a non-profit organisation the IPC is in need of corporate partners that support the organisation in its operations. Therefore, it is crucial that the relationship with the corporate partners is on a mutually satisfying level. The IPC marketing and commercial director Alexis Schäfer and the IPC client services manager Bart Schell (2014) stated that the general objectives of each corporate partner are clear; however, the IPC would need to identify whether the set objectives are being met and corresponded with the expected outcomes of the corporate partner (Schäfer & Schell, personal interview, February 7, 2014).

Furthermore, Schäfer and Schell (2014) wanted to gain understanding about the corporate partners' satisfaction within the different areas of the partnership, and based on this identify ways to specifically tailor their services and messages. Hence, the IPC would need a standardized concept on how to monitor and manage the partner relationships in order to guarantee a mutually satisfying relationship (Schäfer & Schell, personal interview, February 7, 2014).

The interested party was the marketing and commercial department of the IPC, represented through its director Alexis Schäfer and the client services manager Bart Schell. The target groups of the research were the IPC's current corporate partners: Visa, Ottobock, Samsung, Atos, Allianz, BP and DB Schenker (IPC, 2014, starting page).

1.3. The goal

The IPC's goal regarding this research was to receive a recommendation on a standardized structure of the client services, including an insight into the corporate partner's level of satisfaction. Furthermore, the IPC wished to receive a concept evaluating the partner's satisfaction in the future (Schäfer & Schell, personal interview, February 7, 2014).

The advice question provided by Schäfer and Schell (2014) was:

How satisfied are our partners and how can we evaluate our partnerships in the best way?

1.4. Research objectives

The overall objective of the research was to identify possibilities to measure the partner's level of satisfaction and develop a suitable score card for the measurement of satisfaction. This was planned to be achieved by...

...examining the current level of partner satisfaction

...identifying qualitative and quantitative techniques and tools to measure partner satisfaction and

...combining those results and developing a communication concept to manage partner satisfaction.

1.5. Research questions

The central research questions to guide the research were:

Q1: How do the IPC's corporate partners currently perceive the relationship with the IPC?

Q2: What are ways for the IPC to evaluate their corporate partnerships in terms of the level of partner satisfaction?

In order to answer the central research questions, a number of sub-questions were used:

Desk research:

- What are the contextual factors and developments within the environment of the IPC that need to be considered?
- How does a sponsorship relationship develop over time?
- How can satisfaction be measured?

Qualitative:

- What role does communication play in the context of the problem situation?

Quantitative:

- How is the IPC's communication towards the corporate partners perceived by them?
- What are the partners' specific needs regarding the relationship management?
- What are methods to evaluate corporate partnerships?

1.6. Methods

1.6.1 Research Design

The research was carried out in 2 stages; Preliminary research and in-depth research, using two different approaches. Firstly, the research throughout the project was based on an exploratory approach. Secondly, the in-depth research was based on an empirical analytical approach in combination with an interpretive approach; thus, gaining an in-depth understanding of the problem and for being able to provide a suitable recommendation.

The research methods used within the preliminary phase mainly consisted of desk research based on a qualitative approach, supported by consultations with the project provider to gain further understanding of the organisation and the current situation. The in-depth stage included desk- and field research based on both, qualitative and quantitative research methods. Thus, semi-structured interviews with the current corporate partners were used to get an insight into their wishes and needs, representing a baseline study. The respondents were reached through established contacts of the IPC. Furthermore, qualitative expert interviews in the field of sports sponsorship were conducted. The research analysis was based on a deductive as well as an inductive approach as defined by Yin (Saunders, 2009, p. 489-490).

1.6.2. Data collection

The overall model used to structure and collect the researched data was the Bridge Model. The Bridge Model is used for international communication management students, linking the APA style report structure to the *Set-up of a communication plan* by Voss (2003). The model consists of six main stages. Firstly, a (1) **research proposal** had to be developed to outline the preliminary research plan. Secondly, a (2) **situation analysis** had to be conducted in which the problem and context of the problem were evaluated. Analysing the problem within the micro, macro and meso environment resulted in a SWOT analysis of the current situation. Furthermore, (3) related **literature** was **reviewed**. Within the literature review, models, theories and expert information that are relevant for the solution of the problem were critically assessed. In addition, the key factors and a framework for possible solutions were identified. Moreover, criteria for the definition and assessment of the problem were examined. The previous three stages served as a basis for the in-depth methodology. Within the (4) **in-depth methodology** the strategy and design of further research was defined, including desk and field research. The actual research process started in the (5) **in-depth research** phase in order to gain a holistic understanding of the problem. Within this stage the problem and the possible solutions were assessed and preliminary and in-depth research was integrated.

Consequently, the findings were presented and conclusions were drawn. Finally, a communication strategy and a communication plan was developed within the (6) **recommendations**.

1.7. Limitations

As explained above, the research project started with a baseline study which formed the basis of the concept development. Due to the time frame of the research project, from February to the beginning of July 2014, the possibility to actually test the concept is low.

1.8. Overview over the chapters

As explained in the introduction, the project was guided by two research questions deducted from the research objective. To give an overview, the chapters of the final paper are ordered as follows. Firstly, a situation analysis including the IPC's micro, meso and macro environment is presented. This results in a SWOT analysis leading to the identified core problem of the situation. Secondly, the literature review will outline and contrast relevant theories and models. This review will result in the definition of the knowledge gap leading to the in-depth methodology design. The next part shows the findings and analysis of the in-depth research. Finally, the conclusions and strategic recommendations will make up the last part of this final paper. Additionally, one can find the bibliography and the appendices at the end of the paper.

2. Situation Analysis

2.1. Introduction

The following section presents the findings of the situation analysis. It starts with an analysis of the IPC's micro environment, continues with the meso environment and finishes with the IPC's macro environment. All parts are looked at with regard to the problem statement and therefore, only include relevant information.

2.2. Micro environment

The analysis of the micro environment was focused on understanding the IPC's field of operation and internal structure.

2.2.1. The organisation

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is an international non-profit organisation with its headquarter in Bonn, Germany. It is the governing body of the Paralympic Movement which enables athletes with an impairment to compete in sport events on the beginner and elite level. It currently

employs around 70 people. The IPC oversees the organisation of the Paralympic Games (Summer and Winter). Furthermore, it acts as the International Federation for nine para-sports, coordinating and supervising World Championships and other competitions. The organisation is “composed of a General Assembly (highest decision making body), a Governing Board (executive body), a Management Team and various Standing Committees and Councils” (IPC, 2014, section: About the IPC).



Figure 1: IPC Organisation Chart (IPC, 2014, Who we are)

2.2.2. The Paralympic Movement

The Paralympic Movement has its official starting point in 1948 with the International Stoke Mandeville Games in Great Britain, founded by Sir Philipp Guttman. Over the following years these Games became the Paralympic Games and have grown ever since. Since the agreement with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) during the Summer Games 1988 and the Winter Games in 1992 the Paralympic Games were always staged in the same cities as the Olympic Games (IPC, n.d., section: History of the Paralympic Movement).

2.2.3. Vision

The IPC's vision is to *“To enable Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world”* (IPC, 2011, IPC Handbook, Chapter 1.1).

2.2.4. Mission (“The Aspiration”)

“The Paralympic Movement builds a bridge which links sport with social awareness thus contributing to the development of a more equitable society with respect and equal opportunities for all individuals”(IPC, 2003, IPC Handbook, Chapter 1.1).

2.2.5. Values

The values of the IPC are: “Courage, Determination, Inspiration, and Equality” (IPC, 2003, IPC Handbook, Chapter 1.1).

2.2.6. Strategic Framework

As outlined in the *Strategic Plan 2011-2014* the IPC follows a strategic direction with certain priorities and goals. The areas in which the IPC sees its priorities are:

1. Paralympic Games

The IPC wants to continue raising the profile of the Games, ensuring a successful flow of the overall Games organisation (IPC, 2010, p. 13).

2. Athlete Development

Another strategic goal is to provide opportunities for all athletes with an impairment to be part of the Paralympic Movement and participate in sporting events from the grassroots to the elite level (IPC, 2010, p. 16).

3. Paralympic Brand

Through the Paralympic brand the IPC wants to connect sports and social awareness and finally create an equal society (IPC, 2010, p. 20).

4. Funding

Facing the need to meet constantly raising demands for staging major events, the IPC has to have a guaranteed flow of revenue. Therefore, it has to identify sources and develop plans for increasing the funding in areas of development and sponsorship, grow current relationships and generate new partnerships. Likewise the plan indicates that the IOC-IPC agreement entails possible constraints for the IPC and needs to be addressed and managed in the future (IPC, 2010, pp. 24-27).

5. Organisational Capacity

The IPC has to manage and organize its workforce in order to achieve its strategic goal and constantly develop. This includes the recruitment of volunteers, education of its staff and the development of organisational plans informing employees, members and volunteers about the IPC's developments and work processes (IPC, 2010, pp. 28-31).

6. Strategic Partnerships

The most important strategic goal for this paper is the establishment and management of strategic partnerships. The IPC's partnerships are crucial as they relate to all previous goals, forming the basis for the IPC's operations. As this paper focuses on the corporate partners it is important to mention

that the strategic plan does not include the management of the corporate partners as a strategic priority, and rather focuses on the quest for new partners.

Conclusion of the Strategic Framework

With regard to the problem statement, it can be concluded that the *Strategic Framework* puts the focus on the development of the current activities. The IPC's corporate partners are mainly included in the section about funding explaining the partnership's value for the corporate partners. The section about strategic partnerships only mentions the Olympic Game's TOP sponsors, leaving out the IPC's own corporate partners indicating a flaw in the IPC's strategic focus (IPC, 2010, pp. 32-35).

2.2.7. Sponsorship structure

Placing the focus of the project on the corporate partnerships of the IPC, the sponsorship structure had to be identified. The IPC has two main types of corporate partnerships, Worldwide Paralympic Partners and International Partners, each providing a different value and sponsorship opportunities for corporate partners. Furthermore, it has one officially sponsoring logistics supplier.

Worldwide Paralympic Partners

Through the Worldwide Partner Programme the IPC grants the corporate partners the right to use Paralympic Games and IPC marks worldwide for the company's external and internal communications. Nevertheless, the rights for the Paralympic Games need to be obtained directly from the OCOGs (Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games). As most of the IPC's Worldwide Paralympic Partners are also IOC TOP partners, they enjoy exclusive protection of their category worldwide, meaning that NPCs cannot have sponsors belonging to the same product category. As opposed to the International Partners, the Worldwide Partners have no direct right to NPC sponsorship (subject of a discussion with the NPCs). The programme is available to the IOC TOP Partners as well as companies that belong to a Paralympic specific product category, such as prosthetics or medical devices (IPC, 2011, International Marketing Programme).

International Partners

The International Partner Programme offers the corporate partners a combination of exclusive IPC and selected NPCs' rights which can be adjusted according to the specific needs of the corporate partners and are to be discussed with the NPCs. Thus, the corporate partners can attempt to develop a partnership with NPCs that are situated in the strategic markets of the company. The International Partners also have the possibility to add an extra Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

focus by additionally partnering with the Agitos Foundation, the IPC's development arm (IPC, 2013, International Partner Programme).

Official Logistics Supplier

The Logistics Supplier provides logistics, customs clearance and freight forwarding services for the different IPC events, like the Paralympic Games and major championships. As the IPC only has one logistics supplier, DB Schenker, this company has the exclusive right in this category (International Paralympic Committee, 2014, Funding).

2.2.8. Funding

The IPC is funded to a maximum of 50% through the Paralympic Games revenue as the IPC sells all marketing rights to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Organizing Committee for a fixed exchange fee. Furthermore, the IPC receives support from the IOC TOP partners¹ and other global players (International Paralympic Committee, 2014, Funding). Additionally, the IPC members have to pay a membership fee which is used for the IPC's daily operations (IPC Handbook, 2011, 4. Membership).

2.2.9. Recent developments and changes

Over the last years the Paralympic Movement has experienced a significant growth. The IPC president Sir Philip Craven (2013) called the year 2012 "the Paralympic Movement's most successful year" (IPC, 2013, Section: Media Centre, Headline). The major contributing factor was the London 2012 Paralympic Games which were afterwards called "the best Paralympic Games ever" (IPC, 2013, Media Centre). The Paralympic Games' success mainly became visible through the great online performance, generating a growth of 130% of the number of followers of the IPC's Facebook page, and a record of 2 million visits during the Games on the website. Furthermore, the media coverage of the Paralympic Games has increased vastly, see Fig.2. Thus, awareness for, and interest in the Paralympic Movement has grown tremendously. This can also be ascribed to the great involvement of the IPC's corporate partners like Atos and Samsung. Samsung initiated the "Samsung Paralympic Bloggers"- Initiative which attracted 350.000 viewers on YouTube. Atos provided an "innovate SMART player" allowing all visitors to watch live competitions, results and social media activities (IPC, 2012, Press release).

¹ TOP partners: Coca Cola, Atos, DOW, Johnson & Johnson, McDonald's, Omega, Panasonic, P&G, Samsung, Visa

The Paralympic Games	Broadcasting Time	Cumulative Audience
Athens 2004 (Summer Games)	617 hours	1.86 billion
Torino 2006 (Winter Games)	285 hours	1.42 billion
Beijing 2008 (Summer Games)	1,810 hours	3.84 billion
Vancouver 2010 (Winter Games)	1,560 hours	1.59 billion

Figure 2 Media coverage of the recent Paralympic Games (Park, Olson, Yoh & Choi, 2013, p.5).

The Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games, from March 7 to March 16, again broke records in terms of media coverage and ticket sales. This suggests that the Paralympic Movement is still growing extensively in popularity and continues to increase its reach throughout the world (IPC, 2014, Press release).

2.2.10. Relationship with the corporate partners

According to Bart Schell (2014), the relationships with the corporate partners are diverse. Whereas for some, like Allianz and Ottobock, Schell feels that the relationship is rather good, others seem to disclose some areas for improvement. With Allianz, Schell (2014) explained, he has regular conversations, workshops and collaborative events are taking place and action plans are generally followed up. For others, he expressed the feeling that the relationship could be improved for example in terms of the communication flow. Although most contracts include the clause for an annual meeting for evaluation and planning purposes, Schell (2014) stated that there is so far no systematic way for actually conducting these meetings (Schell, personal conversation, May 26, 2014).

To manage the relationship the IPC provides the corporate partners with media and spectator analyses of the events where the partners were involved in (like the Paralympic Games). When looking at the IPC's definition of partner satisfaction, the meeting of obligations was stated as the baseline, along with being open for suggestions and recognizing all the activities the partners conduct (Schell, personal conversation, May 26, 2014). To conclude, the relationships between the IPC and the corporate partners are diverse and are therefore, difficult to be managed in a structured way. For further information please see 2.3.1. *Target group analysis*.

2.3. Meso environment

The analysis of the meso environment included researching the target group, the stakeholders' interests and power as well as the main competitors.

2.3.1. Target group analysis

The IPC has many different target groups for their operations; however, according to the objective of this final paper, the focus will be placed on the IPC's current corporate partners. The IPC has seven corporate partners which all have the exclusive right in their respective product or service categories (see section: Sponsorship structure). The contracts with each partner usually last for 2-4 years and then get renewed upon evaluation and discussion. The following table presents the target group analysis of the IPC's corporate partners:

Please see the following page.

	Size	Industry (all following sources: IPC, 2013, Partnerships)	Length of partnership	Type of partnership	Main objective	Main ways of communication
Worldwide partners						
Visa	10.000 employees Active in over 200 countries 14.600 customers (Visa, 2013, Global presence)	Payment services	2002-2016 (IPC, 2013, Partnerships)	Value in kind Exclusive marketing-, communication- and advertising campaigns (Visa, 2013, Sponsorenschaften) Sponsoring Paralympic Hall of Fame (IPC, 2009, Visa agreement) Developing technologies for people with impairment (IPC, 2013, Partnerships)	Visa only payment service at all international competitions Corporate credit cards for IPC- meaning that IPC only accepts Visa cards (IPC, 2009, Visa agreement) Paralympic Action plan	Annual recaps on marketing opportunities (IPC, 2009, Visa agreement) Paralympic Action plan
Ottobock	5.900 employees Active in 49 countries (Ottobock, n.d., facts& figures)	Therapeutical Medical Devices Rehabilitation and Mobility Healthcare Products	2005- 2016 (Ottobock, n.d., partnerships)	Supply specific products/services for national and international competitions Provide resources in low-development countries (Ottobock, n.d., partnerships)	Associate brand with IPC and encourage brand loyalty Raise brand profile Promote Ottobock's image as preferred partner in the field of medical technology Underline Ottobock's credibility as partner of the Paralympics since 1988 Product endorsement (IPC, 2012, Ottobock agreement)	Meetings twice a year (IPC, 2012, Ottobock agreement) Memorandums Meetings Financial plans (IPC Server) Regular calls (Schell, personal conversation, May 20, 2014)

Table 1 Target Group Analysis 1/3

Samsung	425.000 employees (Samsung, 2014, performance)	Mobile telecommunications	2006-2014 (IPC, 2013, Partnerships)	Presenting sponsor of Paralympic Sport TV until 2012 (IPC Internet channel) (IPC, 2010, Samsung agreement) Support in communicating Paralympic Movement (IPC, 2013, Partnerships)	Associate brand with IPC Encourage brand loyalty Raise corporate profile Product endorsement (IPC, 2010, Samsung agreement) Strategy paper (IPC Server)	Meetings (no time specified) (IPC, 2010, Samsung agreement) Workshops Information paper Strategy paper (IPC Server)
Atos	77.100 employees Active in 52 countries (Atos, 2014, We are)	IT Services	2008- 2016 (Atos, 2014, Paralympic games)	Marketing & Technology Agreement IT Services (Website, athlete data management) IPC Sports Fundraising initiatives (IPC, 2013, Atos Agreement)	Provide technology expertise Spread information about Paralympics (Atos, 2014, Paralympic games) Support of Atos CSR activities	Steering marketing committee (every 6 months) (IPC, 2013, Atos Agreement) Workshops Action plans (IPC Server)
International partners						
Allianz	148.000 employees Active in over 70 countries 83 million customers (Allianz, 2014, Übers uns)	Insurance and financial services	2006- 2016 (Allianz, 2014, Paralympics)	Transfer of knowledge/education Awareness creation (all: Allianz, 2014, Paralympics) 8 NPC partnerships (specific Operational Entities) IPC Sports partner HR Program (athletes become employees)	Internal employee motivation (Allianz, 2014, Paralympics) Paralympic fit to Allianz core business-Allianz Healthcare (Allianz, 2011, Spobis) Image association Encourage brand loyalty Raising corporate profile (IPC, 2013, Allianz Agreement)	Workshops Strategy plans Briefing paper (IPC Server) Annual meetings (IPC, 2013, Allianz Agreement)

Table 1: Target Group Analysis 2/3

BP	85.900 employees (in 2012) Active in over 80 countries \$375,765 million sales revenue (BP, 2014, bp at a glance)	Oil and gas	2013-2016 (IPC, 2013, News)	Athlete ambassadors All-year round noise (Allianz, 2013, Strategy 2013) Domestic partnerships with 7 NPCs (strategic markets) IPC to promote BP's target neutral programme Fundraising with Agitos Foundation (IPC, 2013, BP Agreement)	Focus on IPC Athletics (Allianz, 2013, Strategy 2013) Corporate image enhancement CSR (BP, 2013, Press release) Associate BP image with IPC, also in strategic markets (NPC Partners) Encourage brand favorability Excite customers Energize employees (IPC, 2013, BP Agreement)	Annual meetings (IPC, 2013, BP Agreement) Briefing paper (IPC Server)
Official Logistics Supplier						
DB Schenker	95.000 employees Active in around 130 countries €19.7 billion sales revenue	Logistics	Since 2004	Only value in kind Logistics support for events	"provide logistics concepts, support and services" (Schenker, 2014, Press)	

Table 1: Target Group Analysis 3/3

Conclusion target group analysis

The target group analysis revealed many differences between the corporate partners. As stated above, all corporate partners enjoy exclusivity in their category resulting in different objectives regarding the partnerships. Furthermore, the corporate partners are differently involved, with some providing specific products and services (Ottobock, Atos) and others carrying out campaigns and projects to raise awareness for the Paralympic Movement (Allianz, Samsung, BP). Regarding the communication, every contract includes a clause about annual meetings to be held; however, when looking at the organisation's internal file storage it is not clear whether this paragraph is actually followed. Research on this file storage revealed that for some corporate partners a range of communication documents exists (Atos, Ottobock) whereas for others not much can be found, which could relate to the different levels of involvement.

Additionally, a recent letter from Ottobock regarding the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Games indicates that this company is deeply satisfied with the general relationship ("The relationship between the Ottobock and the IPC is nothing less than a true partnership built on respect, mutual trust and common goals" (Gunkel, 2014, Letter Sochi 2014 Paralympic Games)). However, as of now no judgement on the relationship can be made and is subject to further in-depth research.

2.3.2. Stakeholder analysis

Summarizing the above sections it appeared that the IPC is placed in an environment with different stakeholders impacting its operations. Therefore, it was helpful to identify the major forces that influence the IPC and have an interest in its work. The stakeholder analysis below presents the main interest groups and identifies their relative power and interest:

Stakeholder	Power	Interest
Athletes with an impairment (10 impairment groups in 28 sports- IPC, 2012, Annual report)	Main target group of the IPC "The heart of the Paralympic Movement" (IPC, 2014, Who we are) Represent the Paralympic Movement	Participation in competitions Well organized competitions Support by IPC
General public	Power to influence the media in terms of viewing figures	Paralympics as a source of inspiration, motivation

	Decide whether to be part (watch the Games) Enable and include para-athletes in daily live	Entertainment Watch sports
Current corporate partners	Financial power Partner's business operations reflect on IPC Create awareness, enhance Paralympic Movement Enable development of Movement	Image enhancement Association with Movement Meeting of partnership objectives Well-functioning relationship Active partnership management of IPC Corporate Social Responsibility
National Paralympic Committees (NPCs)	Provide athletes Development of Movement regionally Create awareness in own country Provide promotional possibilities for partners	Guidance by IPC Support by IPC (Financially, strategic, development) Become partner of IPC's main partner
Other IPC Members (IFs ² , IOSDs ³ , ROs ⁴)	Guidance, surveillance of sports during Games provide specific guidance and knowledge Coordinate regional developments	Guidance and support by IPC
Governments	Provide funding Support regional Paralympic activities Create conditions for integration possibilities of athletes	Association with Movement

² "International Federations are independent sport federations recognized by the IPC as the sole representative of a Paralympic Sport" (IPC, 2014, Who we are)

³ "International Organisations of Sports for the Disabled (IOSDs) are independent organisations recognized by the IPC as the sole representatives of a specific impairment group" (IPC, 2014, Who we are)

⁴ "Regional Organisations are independent of the IPC and are recognized as the sole representatives of IPC members within a specific part of the world" (IPC, 2014, Who we are)

IOC (International Olympic Committee)	Marketing rights Decision right for host city of the Games	Image enhancement (social) Accordance with IOC rules Appropriate representation of IOC-IPC partnership by IPC IOC TOP Partners to become IPC Partners
Other competitors (e.g. FIFA)	Have the same corporate partner Point of comparison for the partners regarding relationship management	Retain their partners Provide competitive partner relationship care

Table 2 Stakeholder analysis

Power-Interest Matrix

In order to identify the most important stakeholders with regard to the problem statement, the *Power-Interest Matrix*, developed by Mendelow (1999) was used (Olander&Landin, 2005, adapted from Mendelow, 1981). This matrix helps to group stakeholders in categories according to their relative power and interest. Each of the resulting categories proposes a certain level of importance and suggests the way of treatment.

Power	HIGH	General public Keep informed	IOC Corporate Partners Key player IPC Members
	LOW	Governments Competitors Minimal effort	Athletes Keep satisfied
		Interest	HIGH

Table 3 Power-Interest Matrix

The stakeholder analysis revealed that regarding the problem statement the corporate partners are the most relevant stakeholders. This is due to their interest in a well-managed relationship in order to be willing to continue the collaboration and support the IPC's revenue flow. Also the IOC and IPC Members can be named as key players in this regard with a direct influence. As some of the NPCs also have partnerships with the IPC's corporate partners they have to guarantee a consistent and

satisfying relationship management and act according to the IPC's guidelines and standards. The IOC as another key player is interested in the possibility for their TOP partners to extend their commitment to the Paralympic Games and is therefore, focused on appropriate possibilities for their partners. Simultaneously, the IOC holds specific rights which possibly constrain the IPC in their activities.

2.3.3. Competitor analysis

The main competitors of the IPC in terms of commercial opportunities for sponsors are the International Federations of different sports. In relation to the problem it needed to be identified how they manage their partner relationship and which advantages and disadvantages the IPC has in relation to them.

The most important competitor is the FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) which is also sponsored by Visa. Visa gains global rights for all FIFA activities including the FIFA World Cup and creates special programs for visa-card holders (Visa, 2014, Fifa). The FIFA has a three-tier sponsorship structure- FIFA Partners, the FIFA World Cup Sponsors and the "National Supporters for each FIFA event" (FIFA, 2014, Sponsorship strategy). Most of the FIFA partners have a long-standing partnership, suggesting that the sponsors are satisfied with the relationship and it meets their objectives (Sportcal, 2014, Sponsorship, "FIFA"). However, a case to be named is a conflict that arose with *Mastercard* which sued FIFA in 2006. The reason was that FIFA granted the rights for the following two World cups to VISA, Mastercard's competitor. This violated the contract and eventually caused Mastercard to resign from the partnership. It can be assumed that this incident had some consequences for FIFA's image regarding their sponsorship relationships. However, as they are still staging the biggest sport event in the world, the effects on its image are minor (Reuters, 2006). The FIFA has a dedicated account management team working with each partner (FIFA, 2014, Sponsorship-Appeal).

Advantages and disadvantages of the IPC

In contrast to that the IPC has the obvious feature of adding a CSR focus to the sponsorship agreement, leading to an increased level of public recognition. This means that additional to the sporting nature, the IPC aims at promoting sport for people with impairments and thus, leading to a more inclusive society. Furthermore, the Paralympic Games are the second largest international multi-sport event providing a high level of exposure (IPC, 2014, FAQ). However, the public attention and awareness is mainly existent during the time period of the Paralympic Games or in the pre-Games phase, which leads to a decrease in exposure in between (Allianz, 2013, Strategy 2013).

2.4. Macro environment

The macro environment was analysed according to the DESTEP-Model (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 183). However, only relevant information for the problem statement and project objective were included. Therefore, the demographic environment was disregarded as the demographic characteristics of the IPC's target population are very broad and do not affect the partnerships with the corporate partners directly. Likewise, the ecological environment was left out due to irrelevance.

2.4.1. Economic

After the economic crisis in 2008 the statistics now indicate a process of recovery in the major global economies. Economies like Germany and the US show a slight growth and seem to move forward after the drawbacks caused by the recent crisis (OECD, 2014, slide: 11). This also has a positive effect on the sports industry. During the crisis the sponsorship renewals have stagnated but are now steadily increasing (Van Riper, 2013). In fact, a study by the International Events Group showed that the worldwide market for sponsorship was estimated at \$48.6 billion in 2011 with sport sponsorship making up 68% (Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Ross, Maroco 2013).

When looking at the IPC's corporate partners, events in their daily operations could affect the partnership with the IPC as well. For instance, BP faced a great crisis in 2010 when an oil platform exploded in the Gulf of Mexico causing a massive oil spill leading to a great case of environmental pollution (Mervin, 2011). This resulted in a damage of the company's image causing the BP to search for "image restoration strategies" (Harlow, Brantley& Harlow, 2010, para.: 2). Part of this strategy was the partnership with the IPC to restore the public image and focus a part of the company's operations on a good cause.

2.4.2. Social

Regarding the social environment, an important aspect to be considered was the public's awareness for and interest in the Paralympic Games. This is because it affects the corporate partner's level of exposure and thus the value they gain from the partnership. Analyses show that the public's awareness for the Paralympic Movement has changed significantly after the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Before, the Paralympic Games were often disregarded, always staying in the shadow of the Olympic Games (The Nielsen Company, 2012). However, after the London 2012 Games, seen as "the best Games ever" various countries could detect a "seismic effect in shifting public attitudes to disability sports" (IPC, 2013, Media Centre; Telegraph, 2012, para.1). This means that the overall

interest of the public rose and thus affects the perception of the IPC's partner's target groups of the companies.

2.4.3. Technological

Technological trends for businesses indicate new ways to optimize their operations, save cost and time and increase effectiveness. Thus, these trends could help the IPC to optimize their partnership relationships and achieve their objectives regarding a more effective relationship management. The focus of IT solutions in communication is placed rather on the outcome than on the specific tool. This means that customer satisfaction and communication effectiveness is in the centre of attention, tools and IT solutions are judged on their success. A major strategy is the connection of different types of media to make the stakeholder's experience more holistic and valuable. Additionally, companies are increasingly focusing on interactive communication systems to improve their support services to stakeholders, creating a two-way and thus, holistic interaction with them (Patterson, 2013). Examples are the integration of videos, infographics and images on the company's website (IPC, 2014, Website).

2.4.4. Political

When looking at the influence politics have on the IPC operations, the recent example of the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Games was obvious. With the Olympic and Paralympic Games being awarded to bidding cities the involvement of politics in the Games is inevitable. The Games often serve as an image enhancement for the respective country, showing hospitality, organisation skills and social activity (Rivenburgh, 2004). However, attempts are being made to differentiate the actual sporting event from the political situation or condition in the countries.

2.5. SWOT

After having conducted the micro, meso and macro analysis of the IPC's environment, the major aspects were grouped in a SWOT analysis. The SWOT matrix presents the highlights of the analysis according to internal strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, it shows the external opportunities and threats that could affect the IPC's operations with regard to the problem statement.

<p>Strengths (S)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IPC steadily growing 2. Plans for receiving revenue 3. <u>International Partners</u>: Partners can focus on own strategic markets/ own objectives (with NPC's); possibility to add CSR focus 4. IPC provides partners with media analyses of the Games 5. IOC agreement: secures funding 6. London 2012 and Sochi 2014: record breaking in media coverage and spectators 7. Great involvement of some partners in Paralympic Games 8. Evaluations of partnerships are planned 	<p>Weaknesses (W)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IOC agreement : dependency regarding partnerships and host city of the Games 2. No direct focus on partnership satisfaction/partnership development in strategic plan 3. Only focus in IOC TOP Partners in strategic plan 4. No set structure for communication towards partners 5. Planned evaluations not conducted on a regular basis
<p>Opportunities (O)</p> <p><u>Corporate partners:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contract includes an annual meeting 2. Action- and strategic plans are developed 3. Atos/Ottobock: Variety of documented information exchange to be found on the IPC's internal information storage (server) 4. Ottobock/Visa: long retention rate 5. Ottobock letter concerning Sochi <p><u>Market:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Sport sponsorship industry is growing 7. Corporate image: Image crisis for some partners (need for positive association through IPC) 8. Rise in public awareness of Paralympic Movement 9. Technical trends: change of IT solution focus (towards customer satisfaction), interactive communication systems, 	<p>Threats (T)</p> <p><u>Corporate partners:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Different objectives 2. Different level of involvement 3. Often not much communication flow apparent <p><u>Competitors:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. IPC partners also sponsor big, successful sport organisations 5. Long retention rates between competitors and partners <p><u>Market:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Political influence on Games/IPC operations

2.6. Conclusion and Core Problem definition

To conclude, the situation analysis revealed several internal strengths and weaknesses of the IPC and external factors that affect the problem situation in different ways. The main objective, as discussed in the brief, was to identify the level of satisfaction of the corporate partners with the relationship

and how the IPC could improve its relationship management. Furthermore, an effective way to evaluate the relationships should be developed.

Examining the current situation it appeared that on an operational level the IPC shows efforts to satisfy their partners and provide them with suitable opportunities to leverage the partnership (S3, S4, S7). However, a strategic gap regarding a focus on the current corporate partnership relationships (W2) was detected. This was demonstrated as the strategic plan mainly concentrates on the revenue generation through the partnerships. Moreover, evaluations of the partnerships are planned but are not conducted regularly (S8, W5). This suggests that there exists a need for improvement of the relationship management strategy in order to guarantee a successful and satisfying relationship.

Furthermore, although the contracts between the partners and the IPC suggest holding annual meetings and action- and strategic plans are developed (O1, O2, O3) it is not clear how they are followed up and implemented (W5). The analysis of the target group (the current corporate partners) additionally showed that for some corporate partners there is not much proof of an effective communication flow (T3) which could be linked back to the lack of a strategic approach (W4, W2).

To conclude, the core problem can be defined as a lack of strategic focus on the corporate partnership relationship management. Furthermore, as evaluations have not been taking place on a strategic and regular basis yet, it is difficult for the IPC to assess how satisfied its corporate partners are.

Consequently, these findings suggested looking into related literature that examines how such partnerships can be managed and evaluated in order to ensure a satisfying relationship. First of all, it was necessary to look into corporate sport sponsorship in order to get a general insight into the processes and objectives of sponsoring companies. Secondly, it was important to identify how partnership relationships develop over time and how entities can manage them effectively at every stage. Furthermore, to incorporate a sound strategic approach to the evaluations the term partner satisfaction had to be defined and related back to the research objective. Thus, relevant models and case studies were used and applied to the problem situation at hand. Therefore, the key search terms were:

1. Corporate sport sponsorship
2. Sponsorship relationship development (life cycles)
3. Evolution of strategic alliances
4. Measurement of partner satisfaction

3. Literature review

The following section presents the findings of the literature review which was conducted to further understand the context of the core problem and reveal possible solutions. Relevant theories and models were critically analyzed. Moreover, key factors influencing the problem were identified in order to assess the problem and guide the way to possible solutions.

Scanning databases and university libraries revealed that a rather great deal of literature broadly relating to the topic exists. However, as stated at the end of this chapter, the review had its limitations regarding the applicability to this project. Nevertheless, the suitable studies mainly mentioned similar core ideas and findings.

3.1. Corporate sport sponsorship

Considering the projects goal to examine the IPC's corporate partners' level of satisfaction the construct of corporate sport sponsorship formed the basis for understanding those relationships. As Stotlar (2009) states, corporate sport sponsorship "is based on a mutual exchange between a sport entity and a corporation" resulting in a symbiotic relationship (Stotlar, 2009, p. 1, para.: 1). The exchange consists of branding and exposure possibilities for the corporation in exchange for the provision of a certain fee or value-in-kind such as specific products or services to the sport entity. The objectives pursued by the corporations reach from an increased awareness among the target group, over image enhancement to the pure sales objective, thus increasing the overall revenue (Stotlar, 2009, p. 7-29). In the specific case of sponsoring the Paralympic Games, the corporations can add a specific CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) focus which could have positive effects on the image as well (Park, Olson, Yoh& Choi, 2013, p.12).

All the above named characteristics of sport sponsorship suggest labelling those relationships as a form of strategic alliance, pursuing the aim of image enhancement and brand awareness (McAlister, Kelly, Humphreys and Cornwell, 2012, p. 5).

3.2. Evolution of strategic alliances

As mentioned above, the IPC's corporate partnerships fall into the category of strategic alliances. Therefore, it was interesting to identify the development of a strategic alliance in order to understand how to manage the relationship most effectively. In the literature strategic alliances are defined as partnerships between companies, business units or organizations that collaborate with the aim to realize "mutually beneficial objectives" (Radu, 2010, p. 168, para. 2). Thus, a strategic

alliance is a business-to-business collaboration that allows organizations to work towards a goal which is aspired to by both parties (Bugnar, Mester, Petrica, n.d. p. 204-205).

When looking at the evolution of strategic alliances, meaning the phases an alliance goes through, Wohlstetter, Smith and Malloy (2005) suggest three phases that every alliance passes: The (1) initiation phase, (2) operational phase and (3) evaluation phase (Fig. 3) (Wohlstetter, Smith and Malloy, 2005, p. 421). This division is supported by Urriolagoitia and Planellas (2007) who propose a lifecycle model approach for sponsorship relationships which they developed from strategic management literature (Urriolagoitia & Planellas, 2007, p. 158). Strategic management of relationships is found to be a key theme throughout the literature, guaranteeing a long-term interactive process with a high quality of interactions and thus mutually satisfying outcomes (Cousens, Babiak & Bradish, 2006, p. 3).

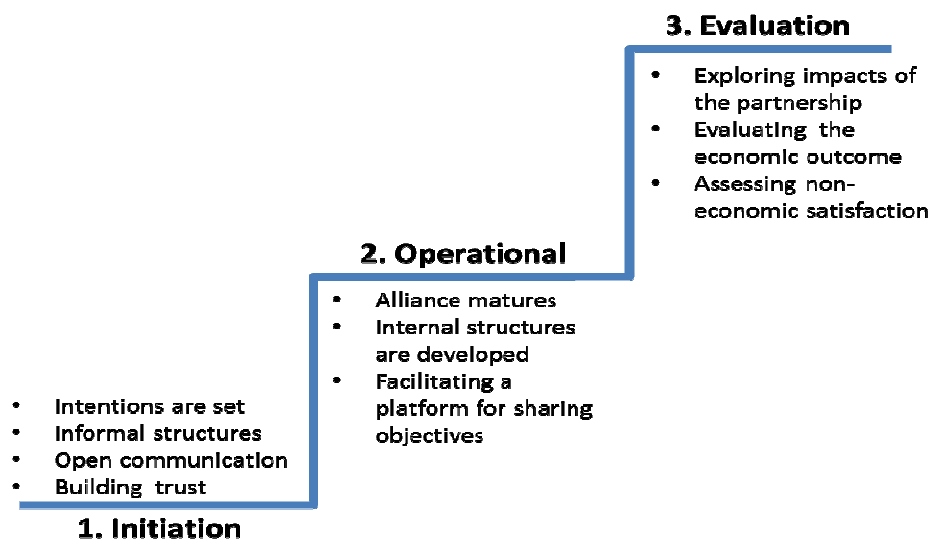


Figure 3 Phases of a strategic alliance

According to the researchers, each phase has different characteristics and purposes. In the initiation phase channels and structures are rather informal as the intention of the partnership needs to be identified. Wohlstetter, Smith and Malloy (2005) detected that trust is a key feature of a successful initiation of a partnership and could be created by open communication, mutual respect and shared values. The second phase, which is when the alliance usually matures and settles, is guided by the development of internal structures with the major characteristics being open communication, smooth governance, leadership and accountability. Providing a platform for the parties involved to share information, objectives and goals and to facilitate decision making is a key component for the strategic alliance's success (Wohlstetter, Smith and Malloy, 2005, p. 421).

As the IPC's goal is to evaluate the level of satisfaction among their partners, the evaluation phase of the proposed model was of major interest. In this phase the parties explore all negative and positive impacts of the collaboration. According to Wohlstetter, Smith and Malloy (2005) an alliance can be evaluated in two ways; formatively, collecting information about the alliance's implementation in order to refine the framework and summatively, making an overall judgement on its outcomes and impact to determine the strategic direction (Wohlstetter, Smith and Malloy, 2005, p. 422-432). This theory could be supplemented by Cousens, Babiak and Bradish (2006) who developed a framework for the assessment of sponsorship relationships ("FASR"). This framework is aligned with the above described model and adds the specific factors of satisfaction to the evaluation stage. The researchers stated that additionally to evaluating the economic satisfaction the evaluation must integrate the "quality dimension of the relationship" (Cousens, Babiak & Bradish, 2006, p. 18, para. 1). Thus, the idea of sponsor satisfaction will be analysed in the following section.

3.3. Evaluation of partner satisfaction

After having looked at the three phases it was important to identify how literature suggests evaluating partner satisfaction. At this point it has to be stated that previous research has stressed the difficulty to measure satisfaction. Therefore, it was decided to look at factors that could contribute to a satisfying relationship and use those as a basis for the further in-depth research.

First of all, Farrelly, Quester and Clulow (2008) propose two kinds of satisfaction, economic and non-economic satisfaction. Whereas economic satisfaction describes the "positive affective response to economic rewards that flow from the relationship", non-economic satisfaction deals with the "soft side of the relationship" (Farrelly, Quester and Clulow, 2008, p. 53, para.: 2). The latter was the relevant one for the projects purpose, evaluating the partners' satisfaction with the relationship to the IPC rather than financial outcomes of the relationship.

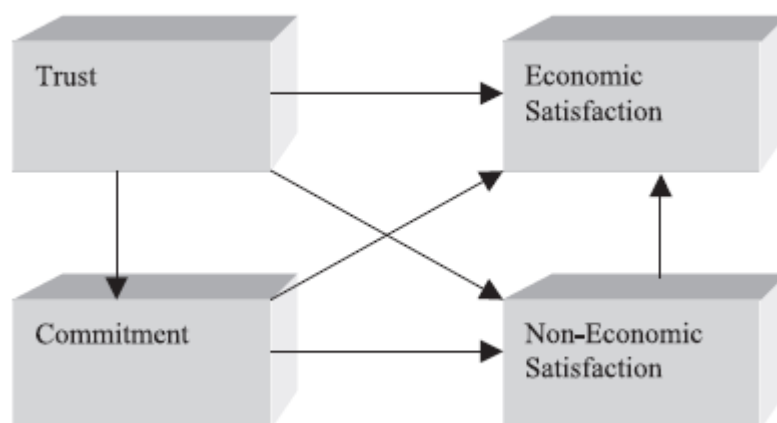


Figure 4 "Conceptual model of sponsorship relationship quality" (Farrelly & Quester, 2008, p. 214)

The literature emphasized the importance of evaluating sponsorship relationships in order to guarantee a successful collaboration and a high level of satisfaction (Farrelly, Quester and Clulow, 2008, p. 55). In their study Bugnar, Mester and Petrica (n.d) established factors that contribute to a successful development of a partner relationship. The factors are interdependence, strategic importance (commitment), transparency and trust (Bugnar, Mester, Petrica, n.d. p. 204-205).

3.3.1. Trust

In fact, trust was a theme which appeared in several sources (Radu, 2010; Farrelly, Quester & Clulow, 2005; Bugnar, Mester, Petrica, n.d. ; Wohlstetter, Smith & Malloy, 2005) constituting the most important force for an alliance's success. Radu (2010) noted that there are three forms of trust that need to be evaluated: Equality, responsibility and security (Radu, 2010, p. 168). Additionally, Kumar (2012) suggests using a "collaborative strategy" that is built on "trust, vision, value, pure competency and quantification" in order for the alliance to meet the objectives, see Figure 2. (Kumar, 2012, p. 32, para.: 2). According to him, trust is established when the parties involved transparently share knowledge, competencies and information (Kumar, 2012, p. 37).

Regarding the measurement of trust a comparative study by Seppänen, Blomqvist and Sundqvist (2007) provides an investigation into different approaches. They came to the conclusion that trust is a difficult concept to be measured due to its nature of being rather subjective and ambiguous. Still, they developed an overview over the different dimensions that have been used to define trust and explained that the most common dimensions were reliability, credibility, benevolence, see Fig. 3 (Seppänen, Blomqvist and Sundqvist, 2007, p. 255-256). Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) add the "assistance received from the partner, task competence and quality assurance" to the scale for measuring trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012, p. 1199, para.: 1).

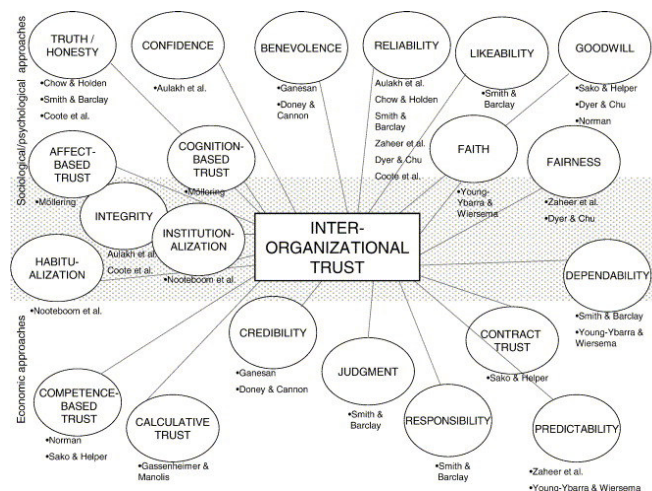


Figure 5 Dimensions of Trust (Seppänen, Blomqvist and Sundqvist, 2007, p. 255)

Moreover, both sources highlight the importance of good communication to the level of trust. Seppänen, Blomqvist and Sundqvist (2007) point out that a correlation exists between trust and communication which needs to be measured in the specific cases. To this, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) suggest that trust can be facilitated through two-way communication, interactional courtesy and communication quality (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012, p. 1199).

3.3.2. Commitment

The factor of commitment was mentioned as another decisive factor regarding the satisfaction among sponsors. As Farrelly and Quester (2005) state, commitment is the “willingness of the parties involved [...] to make short-term investments with the expectation of realising long-term benefits” (Farrelly & Quester, 2005, p. 58, para.: 5). According to a survey conducted by the researchers, many sponsors feel that the sponsored property is less committed to the relationship, resulting in uncertainty about the relationship’s stability. The sponsors sensed that entities must be more reciprocal in their efforts and contribute more directly to the growth. Incorporated is the wish of sponsors for sport entities to be more proactive in their activities to leverage the relationship (see also: 3.3.3. *Pro-activeness*) (Farrelly & Quester, 2005, p. 58).

It can be added that communication also plays a key role in this construct. According to Theron, Therblanche and Boshoff (2008), communication has a positive impact on the perceived level of commitment to the relationship. In fact, if the communication from one party is open and effective, the other party perceives the level of commitment to be higher (Theron, Therblanche and Boshoff, 2008, p. 999).

3.3.3. Pro-activeness

The researchers Westberg, Stavros and Wilson (2011) found that the proactive management of a sponsor relationship is favorable to a high level of satisfaction among the sponsors as changing environments and strategies can be detected and leveraged (Westberg, Stavros & Wilson, 2011).

3.3.4. Limitations

At this point it has to be stated that the conducted literature review had some limitations. First of all, most of the studies originated from the US, thus presenting a prevalently American view on the issue. This implied that further research would be required to test the studies’ applicability on non-American markets. Secondly, the literature found was not specific to the case of the IPC which suggested that there had been no research conducted on it. Moreover, the studies presented were all based on individual cases and research. Therefore, it would be important to identify how generalizable the studies are. The last main limitation is that some sources (e.g. Cousens, Babiak and

Bradish, 2006) mentioned external factors influencing the partnership as well. However, due to the project's time and scope limitations those factors were disregarded and would need to be researched further by others.

3.4. Conclusion and definition of the Knowledge Gap

As stated earlier, the core problem was identified to be a lack of strategic focus on the partnership relationship management. Furthermore, partnership evaluations regarding the level of satisfaction had not been conducted on a strategic background. Therefore, relevant studies and theories were considered to detect strategic ways for evaluating the corporate partner's level of satisfaction in sponsorship partnerships.

As a result of the literature review, the partnerships between the IPC and its corporate partners can be defined as a strategic alliance. The reviewed literature proposed lifecycles for such alliances through which they emerge and develop. Each stage of those lifecycles requires certain ways of management from the sponsored entity, to guarantee a satisfying relationship. Due to the project's goal of evaluating the level of satisfaction of the IPC's partners, the focus was placed on the third phase, the evaluation phase.

The literature revealed that evaluating relationships is of major importance to keep corporate partners satisfied. This links back to the situation analysis where it became clear that due to the IPC's constant growth and the rise of public awareness, the IPC needs to strongly secure well-functioning corporate relationships and thus, a secured income. This connection further stresses the importance of evaluating the IPC's corporate partnerships.

Furthermore, referring back to the core problem definition, it was necessary to develop a strategic approach for evaluating the corporate partnerships. Therefore, specific indicators that contribute to the level of non-economic satisfaction⁵ had to be identified to make the evaluation more specific. The indicators most mentioned were trust, commitment and pro-activeness. Regarding the measurement of trust, the literature suggested using the dimensions of reliability, credibility, benevolence, assistance received from the partner and the existence of two-way communication. Those dimensions could serve as the framework for measuring trust. Moreover, commitment was defined as the investment of resources by each party involved. However, the literature did not reveal any specific elements that would further specify the term commitment. Pro-activeness as another

⁵ the "soft side of the relationship" (Farrelly, Quester and Clulow, 2008, p. 53, para.: 2). Meaning the partner's satisfaction despite the financial gains.

construct was not clearly defined in the literature and thus presented a rather ambiguous term for the measurement of partner satisfaction. It is important to note that communication appeared quite often throughout the review and should therefore, be considered in the in-depth research. In general, all aforementioned factors were taken as a framework for the evaluation of the satisfaction level of the IPC's current corporate partners.

3.4.1. Knowledge Gap

The literature review proposed a framework for the evaluation of the IPC's corporate partners' satisfaction level. However, it was still not clear how the corporate partners actually perceive the partnership, how satisfied they are and what it should look like from their viewpoint. Therefore, it was decided to conduct further in-depth research to obtain direct feedback from them and be able to present the IPC with an evaluation of the current partnerships. Additionally, to support the findings of the literature review and elicit insights on strategic ways to evaluate partnerships most effectively, experts needed to be consulted.

4. In-depth research methodology

After having defined the knowledge gap, the methodology for the in-depth research was designed in order to obtain the missing information. The in-depth research design includes two phases. Firstly, a conceptual design describing the overall concept of each research question. Secondly, the technical research design providing a detailed plan regarding the methods, material, time and activities. The guiding question for the in-depth research was:

How satisfied are the partners with the relationship and what needs to be improved?

The general objectives regarding this research question were:

- Identify the level of satisfaction of the corporate partners
- Identify decisive factors for high satisfaction
- Identify the current flaws in relationship management of the IPC
- Identify concrete steps the IPC should take to enhance satisfaction
- Measure each of the constructs of satisfaction
- Include external feedback on the measurement of satisfaction (sport agencies)

4.1. Data sources

It was decided to use semi-structured interviews to conduct the in-depth research. The interviewees stemmed from two different groups. The first group consisted of representatives of the IPC's corporate partners (Visa, Ottobock, Samsung, Atos, Allianz, BP). The second group was formed by experts in the field of sponsorship. It was decided to firstly approach the sponsorship agencies that some partners (Allianz and Visa) work with in order to gain expert insights related to the project's case.

4.2. Sub-questions

In order to gain specific knowledge from the two groups, separate sub-questions were developed and operationalized to clarify the concept of each question.

4.2.1. Interviews with the corporate partners

The first question to guide the research on the corporate partners was:

1. **Which factors contribute the most to the partner's level of satisfaction in a sponsorship relationship?**

Conceptual design

This question was aimed at identifying the key areas that were important for the partners in terms of relationship management. The abstract concept which needed to be defined was "major contributing factors". In this case, the concept describes an attitude and a feeling of the respondents. To make the concept even more measurable it was defined along the constructs identified in the literature review: Trust (1), Perceived level of commitment to the relationship (2), Pro-activeness (3) and Appropriateness of the communication flow (4).

Technical design

Research strategy: Interview

Research material

1. How important is the reliability of your partner? How important is transparency?
2. How important is the partner's commitment?
3. How important is a proactive management of the relationship?
4. How important is the punctuality of information? How important is accurate information?
5. What are other important areas in a sponsorship relationship?

Research methodology: Semi-structured interview via telephone

The data was gathered through a semi-structured telephone interview. This telephone interview was chosen due to the distance between the respondents and the interviewer. Although a telephone

interview poses the risks of missing important non-verbal cues from the respondent, this method was chosen to be most suitable given the time and distance circumstances (Saunders, 2009, p. 349). Using a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to have a prepared list of themes and questions but at the same time leaves freedom to adapt the questions according to the interview. This means that you may omit some questions in particular interviews, given a specific organisational context that is encountered in relation to the research topic. The order of questions may also be varied depending on the flow of the conversation (Saunders, 2009, p.320).

Based on the answers of the first question, the second question was:

2. How do the corporate partners perceive the relationship with the IPC?

Conceptual design

The objective was to find out how the corporate partners feel about the relationship and consequently how satisfied they are. The concept that was ambiguous was “perception of the relationship” and thus, was defined as a feeling and an opinion. Furthermore, the indicators describing the concept further were the same the ones for the first question.

Technical design

Research strategy: Interview

Research material

- 1) How would you describe your relationship with the IPC? To what extent can you rely on the IPC staff? Do they understand your position in the relationship? Do you feel that they care for your welfare? How open/transparent are they in their communication/sharing of knowledge? Do you receive enough assistance?
- 2) Were formal partnership objectives developed? Do you feel they appropriately allocate resources to the partnership? To what extent does the IPC’s relationship management meet your expectations?
- 3) Does the IPC actively propose new activation opportunities? To what extent do they integrate your strategic goals into proposed sponsorship objectives? To what extent do the proposed activities meet your future goals?
- 4) Do you feel you receive enough information on the partnership progress/on current developments? Do you receive the tailored information for your purposes? What are your preferred communication ways and frequencies? How often is the relationship evaluated?

Research methodology:

See question 1.

Having identified the level of satisfaction in different areas, the third question was:

3. In which areas would the partners feel the need for improvement by the IPC in the partnership?

Conceptual design

The objective was to find out the key areas in the relationship in which the partners felt the need for improvement. The abstract concept in this question was the “feel of need for an improvement” which was defined with the variables feeling and opinion. The indicators further explaining the concept were the communication flow, the process of evaluation, involvement and transparency.

Technical design

Research strategy: Semi-structured telephone interview

Research material:

To what extent would you wish for more transparency?

Do you think the IPC could improve its communication towards you? In what way?

To what extent could you be more involved in the development of the relationship?

What are areas regarding the IPC's relationship management that could be improved?

Research methodology:

See question 1.

4.2.2. Interviews with sponsorship experts

The first sub-question leading the research with the experts was:

1. How would you as an expert evaluate partner satisfaction?

Conceptual design

With this question the objective was to identify the best techniques and tools to measure partner satisfaction and thus be able to improve the researcher's own measurement tool. The abstract concept was the evaluation of corporate partner satisfaction. This concept was measured among the variables knowledge and opinion. To specify it the indicators were set to be areas of satisfaction in corporate partnerships (1) and partnership evaluation (2).

Technical design

Research strategy: Semi-structured telephone interview

Research material:

- 1) What are the key touch points in corporate partnerships? How would you define customer satisfaction? What do most of your clients complain about? What are key areas where entities (like the IPC) fail/have flaws? How can entities build/measure trust and commitment? How do entities act proactively?
- 2) What are critical factors when it comes to the evaluation? At which point of the relationship (middle, end of contract etc)? How often during the partnership? How to deal with conflict situations?

The second question that framed the research for the experts was:

2. How do the experts perceive the relationship between the IPC and their client?

Note: This question only applied to the experts who were directly involved in a corporate partnership with the IPC.

Conceptual design

The question was aimed at establishing insights into how the experts reflect on the relationship of their client with the IPC in order to obtain an external expert view. The abstract concept here was the perception of the relationship which was described as an opinion and a feeling. The specific indicators were areas in which the partners are satisfied (1), areas of complaint (2), specific needs (3) and recommendations to the IPC (4).

Technical design

Research strategy: Semi-structured telephone interview

Research material:

- 1) Which are the key areas your client is happy about? What are their main objectives? Which activities are most valuable to them? How do they see the personal relationship with the IPC staff?
- 2) Which areas are they not happy with? Where do you see possibilities of conflicts? What do you perceive as conflicting situations?
- 3) What are the specific objectives of your client? Where do they place their focus? What communication preferences can you observe?
- 4) Any recommendations for the IPC in terms of its partnership management?

NOTE: It was expected that some respondents might not be available for a telephone interview. Therefore, the possibility to fill out an email questionnaire was created. This questionnaire used a semantic scale from 1 to 10. The questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

4.3. Constraints

The in-depth research of this project had some constraints. Firstly, due to the project's nature following a tight schedule the number of interviews was low. This means that the results were not generalizable which needed to be considered for the final recommendations and a further application of the study. Furthermore, the accuracy of the answers could not be guaranteed. This was due to the fact that the respondents might not have replied honestly to the questions.

4.4. Ethics

When conducting the interviews, several ethical issues were considered. Firstly, the respondents were informed about the purpose of the interviews and about the data processing. Secondly, the interviewer conducted the telephone interviews in a separate room (from the other employees) to guarantee privacy. Thirdly, the interviews were conducted in a liberal way, leaving freedom to the respondents to skip questions.

4.5. Time planning

Subquestions	Planning	Execution	Transcript	Evaluation
Corporate partners: Question 1-3	Contact IPC's corporate partners and arrange interview dates	Conduct interviews	Transcribe the interviews from notes	Evaluate
	1 Week	30 minutes each	1 Day each	2 Days
Experts: Question 1-2	Contact the agencies and arrange interview dates	Conduct interviews	Transcribe the interviews from notes	Evaluate
	2 Weeks	30 minutes each	1 Day each	2 Days

Table 4 Time planning in-depth research

5. In-depth Research results

The following section presents the findings and an analysis of the in-depth research. It was conducted among two target groups with different focus areas. The first target group was composed of the IPC's current corporate partners with the aim of identifying their level of satisfaction in the partnership. The second group consisted of different experts in the field of sponsorship who were interviewed to elicit suggestions on how to evaluate partnerships.

To structure this section, Saunders' (2009) recommendation of categorizing the meaning of the results was used (Saunders, 2009, p. 490). The categories were developed according to the findings of the literature review that identified certain factors among which satisfaction could be measured.

5.1. The IPC's corporate partners

Firstly, the IPC's current corporate partners were interviewed. After having contacted each of the partners via email, representatives from **Allianz** (Steffi Klein), **BP** (Seve Kyriacou), **Visa** (Kate Johnson) and **DB Schenker** (Matthew Clarke) could be interviewed directly via telephone. The representatives from **Atos** (Dorien Wamelink) and **Samsung** (Ryan HA) were not available for interviews resulting in them filling out an email questionnaire. Finally, the only partner that did not give any feedback was **Ottobock** as they preferred to talk to the IPC personally about the topic (Email in Appendix 7).

5.1.1. Important areas in sponsorship partnerships

In order to give an insight into the most important areas in sponsorships regarding the relationship management the corporate partners were asked to rate specific items on a scale from 1 to 10. Those items were identified through the previous literature review which revealed that the factors trust, commitment, pro-activeness and communication were the main factors affecting the level of satisfaction.

For the first item, the perceived level of trust, the partners were asked about the importance of reliability and transparency. The average rate for the importance of the entity's reliability was 9.6 and for transparency it was 8.6. The slightly lower rate for transparency can be explained through the fact that in some situations not every bit of information can and needs to be shared (S. Klein, May 23, 2014; S. Kyriacou, April 24, 2014; K. Johnson, May 6, 2014; Personal interviews).

The next items measured were the perceived level of commitment and the pro-activeness of the entity. On average, the respondents rated commitment with a 9.3 and pro-activeness with a 9. For most respondents getting the feeling that the entity takes real care and is individually committed

contributes at large to their satisfaction. As Klein (Allianz) put it, “I value a lived partnership” (S. Klein, personal interview, April 23, 2014). Regarding the pro-activeness of the entity, Kyriacou (BP) (2014) explained that especially in times when the relationship is still evolving pro-activeness is highly important (S. Kyriacou, personal interview, April 24, 2014).

The last item to be measured was the communication between the parties which was divided into punctuality of information and accuracy of information. Punctuality was rated higher, with an average of 9.3 than accuracy, rated with a 8.6. A reason for this difference could be that in times of major events, like the Paralympic Games, the corporate partners are highly dependent on timely information as many operations are interrelated and need to be managed on time. One deviating reply came from Kyriacou (BP) (2014) who “is mostly willing to compromise on the punctuality [...] if the quality is right” (S. Kyriacou, personal interview April 24, 2014).

Finally, the respondents were asked about other areas they consider important in a sponsorship partnership. Klein (Allianz) highlighted that the partners should share a similar interest and vision to make the partnership work (S. Klein, personal interview, April 23, 2014). Furthermore, Johnson (Visa) and Franke (SC Freiburg) pointed out that a high level of creativity contributes to a satisfying partnership (Johnson, personal interview, May 6, 2014).

To conclude, the constructs to measure satisfaction in corporate partnerships identified in the literature review were consistent with the findings from the in-depth research. All of the items were rated on the average above 8.5 which suggests a high importance of those aspects. Reliability and transparency which were grouped to the item of trust can be regarded as being most important.

A limitation of this part of the research was that the respondents were presented the specific items which they had to rate. This naturally limited their choice and framed the responses. Therefore, it has to be stated that this part’s purpose was only to test the constructs identified from the literature rather than developing new ones.

5.1.2. Level of satisfaction with the IPC

The second part of the interviews dealt with the level of satisfaction regarding the IPC’s relationship management. Again, the responses were grouped in different categories: Perceived level of interpersonal esteem (affective), operational level (rationale) and the ideal state for the information flow.

Perceived level of interpersonal esteem (affective)

This category was composed of the general perception of the relationship, the perceived level of trust and the feeling of being understood by the IPC. First of all, the partners described the partnership as “very personal and friendship-like” (S. Klein, personal interview, April 23, 2014); “friendly, warm, intimate, emotional” (S. Kyriacou, personal interview, April 24, 2014); “very strong with great service delivery” (K. Johnson, personal interview, May 6, 2014) and “excellent” (R. HA, Email, May 23, 2014). All those descriptions suggested that the IPC performs very well on its overall partnership management. This can also be supported by the finding that four out of the six respondents stated to fully or completely trust the IPC in acting upon their interests. Only Johnson (Visa) (2014) felt that “Visa’s interests are not always on the top of mind” at the IPC (K. Johnson, personal interview, May 6, 2014). Also Wamelink’s (Atos) answer was more cautious when saying that she trusts them “upon the scope of the sponsorship” (D. Wamelink, Email, May 13, 2014). However, in general, it can be said that the IPC scores well on the interpersonal level.

Operational level (rationale)

The operational level dealt with the actual business operations that take place during the partnership. For this project it incorporated the IPC’s reliability when following-up on agreed steps, the IPC staff’s accessibility and the frequency in which new activation opportunities are proposed. Referring back to the literature review, those items are part of pro-activeness which was identified as a major contributor to the partner’s level of satisfaction.

Regarding the reliability with follow-ups the general tone was that it is “generally good” and “they are reliable” (S. Kyriacou, personal interview, April 24, 2014; D. Wamelink, Email, May 13, 2014). However, some partners indicated that sometimes it takes a bit longer and always depends on the time period and the project. As Klein (Allianz) (2014) pointed out, the IPC sometimes faces a high workload, especially in pre-Games times which causes delays (S. Klein, personal interview, April 23, 2014). This was supported by Clarke (DB Schenker) (2014) who mentioned the IPC staff should be “careful not to take on too much” (M. Clarke, personal interview May 9, 2014). The IPC’s staff accessibility was across all respondents described as very satisfying.

Coming to the next point about the frequency of new activation opportunities, it became clear that this is area for improvement at the IPC. As the respondents stated, the IPC has become better (Clarke-DB Schenker), but could do more to incorporate the company’s future plans (Johnson-Visa). Furthermore, according to Klein (Allianz), developing new opportunities is not the IPC’s focus yet (S. Klein, personal interview April 23, 2014).

All in all, the interviews revealed that at the operational level the IPC is very accessible suggesting a well organised account management team. However, the actual level of pro-activeness by the IPC showed some areas for improvement.

Ideal state for the information flow

The ideal state for the information flow included two areas. Firstly, the corporate partners' preferred ways of communication and secondly, their perception about partnership evaluations in general. Regarding the ways of communication all partners suggested using a mix of tools from emails over regular phone calls to personal meetings. Kyriacou (BP) and Klein (Allianz) are already having weekly calls with the IPC (Bart Schell) which they greatly appreciate. As for Clarke (DB Schenker), he admitted to not having regular contact to the IPC yet which he partly attributed to himself (M. Clarke, personal interview, May 9, 2014). Johnson (Visa) would suggest having quarterly phone calls to talk about progresses and plans (K. Johnson, personal interview, May 6, 2014). Regarding personal meetings, the respondents proposed holding annual meetings in different locations.

The basic evaluation conducted through the interviews was highly appreciated by the respondents. They mentioned that it had never taken place before but regard it as highly valuable for the IPC. Johnson (Visa) (2014) pointed out that she would wish for such evaluations to happen in a more formal and structured way (K. Johnson, personal interview, May 6, 2014). Furthermore, the partners stated that such sessions should take place annually. An additional input appearing across the interviews was to establish regular meetings between all IPC corporate partners to facilitate the exchange of best practices and ideas on how the partnerships can develop (S. Klein, April 23, 2014; S. Kyriacou, April 24, 2014; M. Clarke, personal interview, May 9, 2014; K. Johnson, personal interview, May 6, 2014; Personal interviews).

To conclude, it became clear that the respondents in general were satisfied with the relationship, especially on an interpersonal level. This is vitally important, as only a well-functioning interpersonal relationship can form the basis for valuable and effective business operations. At the same time, as already revealed in the situation analysis the IPC lacks a strategic focus on the development of the corporate partnerships. This goes hand in hand with the finding that the IPC has never really evaluated those partnerships leading to uncertainty about the partnerships' standing. Therefore, it can be stated that the in-depth research has again highlighted the importance of such evaluations.

5.2. Sponsorship experts

The second group that was interviewed consisted of experts in the field of sponsorship. In the first round the marketing agencies that Allianz and Visa are working with were contacted; however, only Peter Mruk from Sponsorplan (Allianz) was available for an interview. Therefore, the researcher contacted other experts mainly upon the recommendations of Alexis Schäfer. The experts interviewed were Sally Hancock (Sponsorship consultant), Stepan Kolesnichenko (Coca-Cola), David Powell (redmandarin), Simon Drühmel (Deutscher Sparkassen-und Giroverband) and Hanno Franke (SC Freiburg).

5.2.1. Satisfaction in corporate partnerships

The first aspect the interviews dealt with was the respondents' own definitions of satisfaction in corporate partnerships. This was to identify the major areas contributing to the level of satisfaction to compare them with the results of the literature review. Sally Hancock (2014) defined satisfaction among different measures which appeared to be suitable for a rough framework for the evaluation of satisfaction. She explained that for her, satisfaction depends on the "level of client services, the extent to which rights are leveraged, the support beyond the contract, the response time and the incorporation of the client's [corporate partner's] perspective" (S. Hancock, personal interview May 19, 2014). Most of the other experts supported those items as valid, such as Drühmel (2014) who highlighted the necessary "add-ons to the contract" (in German: Kür), pro-activeness and the understanding of the partner's philosophy and goals (S. Drühmel, personal interview, May 23, 2014).

Consistent with the findings of the literature review, trust was also named as vitally important for a satisfactory partnership. As Mruk (2014) put it, trust is established through a high level of transparency and integrity (P. Mruk, personal interview, May 12, 2014). According to Franke (2014), organizing non-business related events for the partners also helps to build relationships and conveys a feeling of care and trust (H. Franke, personal interview, May 25, 2014).

To conclude, it can be stated that the results of the expert interviews show similarities to the findings of the literature review. Especially the factors of trust and pro-activeness were verified as being vitally important. Furthermore, Hancock's list of measurements seemed to qualify as a solid basis for measuring satisfaction in a sponsorship relationship. It is likely that the experts were familiar with the respective literature and have based their knowledge on this. At the same time, they use this knowledge in their daily work which would validate the findings of the literature review.

5.2.2. Evaluation of partnerships

The experts were also asked specifically about their opinion and specific recommendations regarding the process of evaluating corporate partnerships. Areas of interest were the proposed frequency of evaluations, the type of evaluation as well as the general format.

First of all, all experts agreed that general evaluations should take place (only) annually. A reason being that otherwise the corporate partners might get bored and tend to feel that the entity does not take the evaluation seriously (D. Powell, personal interview, May 23, 2014). Additionally, the experts suggested conducting event-related evaluations (S. Kolesnichenko, personal interview, May 21, 2014; S. Drühmel, personal interview, May 23, 2014).

According to Mruk, Hancock, Drühmel and Powell (2014), entities should use both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (face-to-face conversations) evaluations to obtain as much feedback as possible. Regarding the questionnaires, Hancock suggested using scales from 1-5 paired with open-ended questions to elicit detailed comments (S. Hancock, personal interview, May 19, 2014).

To conclude, the expert interviews supported the literature review's finding that evaluations are essential and highly valuable for guaranteeing a satisfying partnership. This underlines the importance for the IPC to implement such planned and regular feedback sessions in order to integrate a more strategic focus on their corporate partnerships, currently identified as a weakness (see 2.5. SWOT). Furthermore, the main items (trust, commitment and pro-activeness) identified in the literature review were supported by the experts and can be regarded as a framework for the evaluations.

6. Conclusion

This section presents the conclusions after having conducted all the necessary research and relates the findings back to the main research questions which were:

Q1: How do the IPC's corporate partners currently perceive the relationship with the IPC?

Q2: What are ways for the IPC to evaluate their corporate partnership in terms of the level of partner satisfaction?

As pointed out in the situation analysis, the IPC lacks a strategic focus on its partnership relationship management. Furthermore, structured evaluations had not been taken place. Therefore, the related literature was examined, which highlighted the importance of evaluations for corporate partnerships.

The key finding was that entities have to assess their corporate partner's level of satisfaction to be able to manage the partnerships most effectively. In addition, the identified constructs to measure satisfaction were trust, commitment and pro-activeness. Hence, those constructs formed the framework for interviewing the corporate partners about their satisfaction in the relationship with the IPC (Q1).

Relating to the first research question, the interviews revealed that the corporate partners perceive the partnership as very strong, personal and based on a high level of trust. This suggested that on an interpersonal level the partnership can be regarded as satisfying. Also on the operational level the IPC performs well, according to the partners. Only the area of pro-activeness was identified to show possibilities for improvement. The implication of this is that the IPC needs to place a greater focus on the development of new opportunities and collaborate more with the partners to integrate their future needs and wishes.

To answer the second research question, the expert interviews were vital. The interviews disclosed specific measures among which corporate partnerships could be assessed. By combining the expert opinions with the constructs found in the literature, a strategic framework could be developed to assist the IPC in evaluating their partnerships. Hence, it was found that the IPC could use the following measures:

Interpersonal level

Here, the IPC would measure the perceived level of trust and the perceived level of understanding of the corporate partner's philosophy and goals.

Operational level

At the operational level the IPC would measure the level of client services, the extent to which rights are leveraged, the support beyond the contract, the response time and the incorporation of the corporate partner's perspective.

The research helped to develop a framework which the IPC can use to evaluate their corporate partnerships (Q2). The following section will present this framework in form of a strategic recommendation to the IPC.

7. Recommendations

This section presents the recommendations to the IPC which are grounded on the findings and conclusions of the research. They are mainly deduced from the interviews conducted among the IPC's corporate partners. Those interviews can be regarded as a first assessment of the partnerships, forming the basis for future evaluations as desired in the research objective.

The section will be divided into firstly, recommendations regarding the strategic implications of the research findings and secondly, a communication strategy and –plan.

7.1. Strategic implications

Based on the research objective of identifying possibilities to measure the partner's level of satisfaction desk research as well as field research was conducted. The findings have some direct strategic implications for the IPC which should be taken into consideration when looking at the corporate partner's level of satisfaction.

First of all, the IPC should keep the personal aspect of its partnerships as this was highly appreciated by the respondents leading to a great score on the interpersonal level. This might also be a strategy for future corporate partners. Secondly, the current handling of the business operations is generally perceived well. However, it was revealed that in specific time periods, especially in the preparation period of the Paralympic Games, the IPC seems to face a high workload and therefore, causes delays in its information delivery. To prevent negative reactions of the corporate partners, several measures can be taken. For example, the IPC could together with the corporate partners develop an action plan highlighting the main questions and project steps. Additionally, this plan should clearly indicate deadlines before the main pre-Games phase.

Another challenge for the IPC is the level of pro-activeness. As some corporate partner perceived this as worth to improve it is recommended to increasingly focus on an early collaboration with the partners to be able to anticipate future needs and changes. This goes along with regular and thorough research on the corporate partners' business situation and plans which need to be incorporated in proposed collaborations. As already established with some corporate partners regular calls and meeting are vital to manage the aforementioned steps and keep the partnerships at a satisfying level.

Additionally, a suggestion that emerged from the corporate partners' feedback is organising a regular (annual) meeting between all corporate partners to facilitate the exchange of best practices and ideas on how to leverage the partnerships.

The last strategic implication to be mentioned is the necessary implementation of regular, formal and structured evaluations of the partnerships. Since it was mentioned as an objective of this research it can now be confirmed that the partners would highly appreciate it. A more detailed description of the evaluation tool can be found in the following section.

7.2. The Strategy

7.2.1. Main strategic idea

Going back to the central research objectives two strategic focus points appear. Firstly, the interviews helped to identify areas in which the IPC could improve the relationship management with its corporate partners. Those were explained previously in the strategic implications. Secondly, the project's objective was developing a strategy to evaluate the IPC's corporate partnerships in a structured way. Based on the reviewed literature and the in-depth research a framework for these evaluations could be created.

In general, the corporate partners should be approached in a direct way presenting the rational benefits of the above mentioned evaluations for them. Those benefits should be communicated in a mix of a personal and business style to engage the corporate partners and at the same time convey a professional approach. The central theme should evolve around fostering the partnerships with the main aim of making them more valuable, efficient and satisfying for the corporate partners. This should position the IPC as an organization that takes care of their partners and shows interest in their needs and wishes. Therefore, the message towards the target group, the corporate partners, is to align the strategic direction of the partnership to the partners' expectations and engage them into an exchange of objectives and ideas. Hence, the proposition should be that the corporate partners' feedback will be used to improve the relationship and develop the partnership along the partners' needs and wishes.

The strategy

The recommended strategy is to send out a standardised questionnaire to the corporate partner to elicit feedback on the IPC's overall performance in terms of its relationship management. Nevertheless, to gain as much feedback and input as possible, the IPC should consider this questionnaire as a basis for follow-up conversations taking place personally between the respective people. At this point, it needs to be emphasized that regular, personal feedback sessions are

inevitable for a well-functioning and steadily developing relationship and should take place at least once a year. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative tools should be used.

The questionnaire should be presented in two different sections. The first part should deal with the interpersonal aspect⁶ of the partnership while the second one should consider the IPC's performance on an operational level⁷. An optional idea is to also establish event-related evaluations to be conducted right after an event where the partner was involved in. This might help to gain additional feedback on direct performances and makes the partner's feel that their involvement in and opinion about the IPC's operations is highly valued.

Furthermore, the questionnaire should be designed in a user-friendly way that provides the respondent with explanations to each section and informing them about how to complete the questionnaire. The questions should be presented in a logical order and incorporate a mix of Likert-scaled questions (with scales from 1-5) and possibilities for additional comments and feedback. Vital is also the cover letter that accompanies the questionnaire. This cover letter should be appealing, emphasizing the respondent's benefits of filling out the questionnaire and highlighting its value to the IPC.

A sample questionnaire to be distributed and a cover letter can be found in the Appendix. Furthermore, one can find the questionnaire together with the measured constructs for a simplified evaluation of the received feedback (see Appendix 4-6).

7.2.2. The plan

As explained above the main tool to be used is a standardised questionnaire to evaluate the IPC's corporate partnerships among different constructs.

Planning

The process of evaluating the IPC's corporate partnerships can be divided into seven steps. Each step and its approximate duration can be found in the following schedule. Of course, this planning depends on the additional workload the IPC staff is facing.

⁶ Level of trust, understanding of the company's goals and philosophy

⁷ Quality of client services, leveraging of rights, quality of information flow, incorporation of the partner's perspective

1.Adjustment of the questionnaire (add event-specific aspects)	1 Day
2.Approaching each partner's contact person and informing them about the evaluation and its benefits	2 weeks
3.Distributing the questionnaire (via email)	1 Day
4.Receiving the filled out questionnaires (plus sending a reminder)	4 weeks
5.Analyse and assess the feedback from the questionnaires	3 weeks
6.Decide on further steps to be taken	Steps 5+6 need to be consulted within the team (approx. 4 weeks)
7.Inform the corporate partners about the implementation of their feedback	4 months after sending out the questionnaire

Table 5 Planning strategy implementation**Budgeting**

Aspects to be considered when implementing the proposed strategy are the costs that might arise. The material costs are low to non-existent as the questionnaire is planned to be distributed via email. However, when looking at the last step, it was recommended to have a personal meeting with the each partner's representative. Therefore, travel, accommodation and meeting costs might apply.

In contrast, the personnel costs are rather high. The IPC would need to dedicate a sufficient amount of time to the preparatory and aftercare work. Implementing a regular evaluation of the partnerships requires a regular monitoring of activities. Therefore, the IPC's marketing and commercial department would need to fully commit to this process and employ a thorough and careful handling of the corporate partners' feedback.

Procedure

It is recommended to create an account team who is to execute the evaluations and analyses. This team should consist of the IPC's employees dealing with the corporate partnerships (Alexis Schäfer, Bart Schell, Anirudh Singhal). Within this account team one account manager should be selected to coordinate and monitor the project.

Concluding remark

The IPC and its corporate partners have all shown great involvement and interest in this research project and have contributed to its successful realization. Hence, it was possible to give clear recommendations for the IPC to foster strengths and enhance areas of potential. As the IPC and its managers are perceived to be open minded, committed and motivated to work on improvements there is a strong probability for the recommendations to be implemented in a reasonable period. This will create a win-win situation for both the IPC and its corporate partners and will foster a successful long-term collaboration.

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Appendix 1: Transcript- The Brief

Date: February 7, 2014

Location: IPC Headquarter Bonn, Germany

Client: The International Paralympic Committee (IPC)

Interviewees (IPC representatives): IPC Marketing and Commercial Director Alexis Schäfer and the IPC Client Services Manager Bart Schell

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

The interview was conducted in German and translated back to English.

The brief started with the general introduction of the background of the final paper I (Sarah Bischoff) was to conduct. I explained that the paper would be a research paper, based on a strategic challenge the IPC was facing. Furthermore, I indicated that due to my study background the issue had to be somehow communication related.

The first thing that came to Schäfer's mind was the sponsor relationships the IPC has with its corporate partners. He explained (and was supported by Schell) that the IPC currently has seven main sponsors that support the IPC financially as well as provide value-in-kind for events and other operations of the IPC. Schäfer noted that all those relationships differ from each other in terms of the general relationship quality as well as the companies' involvement. Schell added that with some companies the relationship is not that good, noticeable through a lack of information exchange and cooperation. They furthermore stated, that they sometimes get the feeling that the communication send from the IPC does not really reach the "right goal" and "information is lost on the way". After I asked for clarification Schell explained that for example for Visa and Samsung it usually takes a long time for them to reply to emails or be available for conversations. Moreover, he said that he feels that the entire process of implementing new steps and plans is rather time-consuming.

Another issue Schäfer and Schell raised was that the IPC does not really know how satisfied the corporate partners are with the sponsorship relationship. They added that regarding the quality of the service provided by the IPC, the advice given and the general relationship there is no detailed knowledge about how well everything is perceived by the partners.

The above mentioned topics were then summarized by me in order to make sure everything was understood correctly. Subsequently, I asked them to tell me what their wished outcome of the project would be. Schell stated that in general he would wish for an "operationalization of the client services". He explained that it would be useful to have a structured concept that would help to formalize the processes of dealing with the partners. Schäfer added that it a tool for a more effective communication would be a great outcome, helping to filter out what information the partners really need.

In general, both concluded that a satisfaction study among the corporate partners would be an important step to prepare the ground for a development of specific communication tools. According to them, this could also help to develop a more pro-active approach to the management of their partnerships.

This first brief ended with me thanking Schäfer and Schell for their time. Furthermore, I explained that I would do some preliminary research to find out if the project would generally be feasible and whether it would be improved by the university. Moreover, I asked whether they would be open for a second conversation to discuss ambiguities and make sure the research would go into a satisfying direction.

Appendix 2: Interview Bart Schell, March 26, 2014

(Clarifications regarding the problem statement)

1. What are the primary objectives of each partner?

- In general, the partnerships the IPC has are different from other partnerships.
- The main objective is global corporate campaigning, more value driven through the association with the Paralympic Movement
- It's borderline CSR, but more global ("we don't like the term CSR too much here")
- Atos: provide B2B support through their IT services
- Allianz: Transfer of knowledge (through created info-graphics)
- BP: Focus on athlete branding, athlete ambassadors
- Visa: Interesting example: After the Beijing 2010 Paralympic Games, the IPC's media coverage and therefore, commercial value rose. Visa's contract was expiring but they immediately wanted to get back on board. However, due to the economic crisis they wanted the rights without paying any fees

2. What is the focus of each partner (Paralympic Games, Summer/Winter, Athletes)

- Allianz has additional focus on IPC Athletics, they/IPC wanted the partnership to grow. This is part of the natural process in partnerships.
- They wanted to do more and create an "all-year-round noise"
- BP, focus on athletes and NPC partnerships
- Others no specific focus

3. Regarding additional opportunities, do you usually approach the partner or vice versa?

- It's usually arises in ongoing discussions and such additional possibilities are highly encouraged by the IPC. In the case of Allianz, it was the company that went more concrete and -made suggestions to the IPC.
- Mostly the IPC initiates such discussions and for example strongly encourage NPC partnerships
- NPC partnerships with IPC partners: strengthen the IPC memberships. Usually IPC asks partner about their strategic markets and then provides them with info about the NPC
- E.g. Visa and Samsung: Main focus is on the Games, and the IPC pushes NPC agreements with them
- About 75% of the activation opportunities are initiated by the IPC

4. Are the partners' strategic plans (to be found on the server) developed together with the IPC?

- For Visa, Samsung and Allianz: external agencies are responsible, develop those plans and present them to the IPC

- The IPC is always there to ask questions and provide support
- Allianz/Visa: the partnership with external agencies is more activities based/related. General partnership is managed with company directly
- Ottobock, Atos, BP: Contact is directly to the company

5. How often/in what way do you evaluate the partnerships?

- Usually at the end of the term
- Evaluations should take place every year (in form of workshops etc.)
- However, there is no systematic way

6. How do you/the partners follow up on action plans (on server)?

- The partners or agencies are the driving force in the implementation process and work project based
- IPC would have the possibility to increase its 'influence' by further promoting the implementation, initiating new ideas build understanding of the action plans and their impact

7. How would you describe the value of each partnership for the IPC (other than financial value)?

- Activities of each partner: building awareness, promotion of the Paralympic Movement
- Support of events (which sometimes could not take place without the partners): Paralympic Awards, Paralympic Hall of Fame (sponsored by Visa)
- Major competitions (e.g. World Championships) are improved by partner support
- Additional support of partners (Atos: IT services etc.)

8. How far is the IOC-Agreement a constraint?

- The IOC blocks the categories of their own partners ("TOPs") for the IPC and NPCs
- Otherwise not much influence on current partnerships
- Sometimes specific discussions if product categories almost overlap

9. How would you define partner satisfaction?

Baseline:

- Meet contract obligations
- Make them feel they have support
- Be open for suggestions/to help
- Recognize and value external and internal activities

10. Do you provide them with analyses of the partnership impact (Games reports, TV analyses)?

- Yes, they receive some TV analyses (viewing figures, coverage), analyses of IPC website/channel traffic. The Post-Games report are usually summarized and then sent automatically to them
- What could be increased is the information they get after the IPC Sport events.
- Allianz requested information and data on the impact of the Paralympic Awards ceremony which was difficult to provide

11. How would you describe your job tasks ("Client Services Manager")?

-First point of contact

- Oversee meeting of the obligations

Link between partners and other departments/NPCs

50% of job: Receiving/Passing on information ("clearinghouse"), Obtaining necessary information

Other 50%: Deal with extension of agreements, random marketing questions, IPC events and partners

"I usually have one contact person at the company/agency who is responsible"

Appendix 3: Transcripts of the in-depth interviews

Transcript: Interview with Allianz

Date: April 23, 2014, 14:15 hrs

Location: Phone interview, Conducted in German and translated back to English

Interviewee: Stephanie Klein, Allianz

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

After a short introduction and thank you, the interviewer explained the concept of the interview. It would be grouped in three parts, first talking about generally important areas in a sponsorship relationship for the interview (A). Secondly, it would deal with the specifics of the Allianz-IPC relationship (B) and thirdly, about possible areas of improvement in the IPC's relationship management (C). Klein did not have any questions regarding this structure. When starting the interview, Klein explained her position and role in the partnership. She usually works for the sponsorship agency "Sponsorplan" which advises and manages the sponsorship activities of the Allianz. Since a few weeks she has been "rented out" to the Allianz to directly work at the company.

Important areas in a sponsorship relationship

After Klein explained this, the interview started. The interviewer first asked Klein to rate different aspects of a sponsorship relationship on a scale from 1 to 10 regarding their level of importance. It was emphasized that this part was not focusing on the relationship to the IPC but on her general opinion. The first item (A1) she had to rate was the reliance of the partner which she rated with an importance of 10. She explained that she wants a partner to show a very fast reaction on requests. The next item was transparency (A2). She said transparency is also really important, but that there is obviously information you cannot really share, so she rated it with a 9. Afterwards, the researcher asked about the importance of commitment (A3). Here, she did not indicate a number, but stated that it is very important. She mentioned that she wants the staff to take great care and be committed individually. Furthermore, she needs to feel an appreciation of ideas brought up by the Allianz. A quote from her was "I value a lived partnership".

Because the researcher had the feeling that Klein was talking about the IPC it was asked how she perceives this "lived partnership" with the IPC. She explained that she thinks that it really is a lived partnership as both sides present new possibilities. Additionally, she brought up the topic of "Sponsorplan" being the agency involved. Klein stated that usually she finds it critical to involve an agency. However, with the Allianz, Sponsorplan and the IPC it is very specific as there are many direct (personal) relations between the people involved (e.g. the IPC Marketing and Commercial director Alexis Schäfer and the founder and managing partner of Sponsorplan Peter Murk). Klein highlighted

that it is supportive if the every person involved has a direct contact person who should not be changed to often to keep the communication ways coherent.

The next part to be rated was the punctuality of information (A4). Klein said that for the Allianz punctuality is essential and rated it with a 10. The next item (A6), pro-activeness of the partner, was rated between 9 and 10. Klein inserted that she feels the IPC staff, Bart Schell and Anirudh Singhal, act pro-actively and actively think about new possibilities.

When asking Klein about other areas in a sponsorship relationship that she considers to be important she had several ideas (A7). She referred back to saying that the relationship should not be purely seen as a business relationship but should be "lived". Especially, the senior management should show commitment and be present. Consequently, she wishes for regular personal contact: at least once a month together with at least two actual face-to-face meetings. The next area she perceived as very important is trust. For her, trust mainly becomes visible in the way the partners exchange information. Furthermore, the partner should not frivolously partner up with other companies and should implement the partnership in the best possible way. For Klein it is important that both partners share the same interest and have the same vision regarding the partnership.

IPC specific

The next section dealt with the specific relationship of the Allianz with the IPC and Klein's level of satisfaction with it. The first question was what extent Klein trusts the IPC in acting upon the Allianz' interest (B2). She stated that due to the personal character of the relationship she completely trusts the IPC. She said she would get enough information and would "give anything for this relationship". Additionally, she mentioned that the head of market management Eike Bürgel did a great job with building and developing the relationship which helped to grow it. Furthermore, she indicated that the partnering with the Paralympics immediately adds value as personal relations have greater importance than the pure business. She explained that one would get a lot back from the partnership as there is a great passion behind it.

The next question dealt with the reliability of the IPC regarding the follow-up on agreed steps (B3). Here she answered that she feels it is going ok. She acknowledged that in peak times the workload sometimes hinders the timely flow of information and feedback from the IPC gets delayed. Although not requested, Klein rated it with an eight.

When getting to the question about her satisfaction with the accessibility of the IPC staff (B4) she said that she is completely satisfied with it ("10"). Afterwards, the researcher asked Klein to rate her level of satisfaction about the frequency in which the IPC proposes new activities. She stated that she would rate it with an eight. Klein explained that the frequency is good; however, it is not the main focus as for both the IPC and the Allianz it is "more than a business partnership".

The last question in this section dealt with the evaluation of the partnership (B8). The researcher explained that this interview actually serves as some kind of evaluation and asked Klein what she thinks about it. She stated that this was the first time someone from her business partners asked her those questions and that she really appreciated it. Furthermore, she would wish for this to happen about once a year.

Areas of improvement

This part of the interview focused on areas in which Klein felt that the IPC could improve its relationship management. The researcher asked an open question and gave Klein some time to think about it (C1). After a while she indicated that in some phases, especially in pre-Games times, deadlines are sometimes not stuck to. She tried to explain this with the workload the IPC staff faces and said that it can be difficult to get documents and plans on time. Furthermore, she said that Bart Schell, [the IPC Client Services Manager] is her main contact person and also depends on the work of the other IPC departments. This also causes delays in dealing with certain topics, as sometimes there is “not enough pressure”. When asking Klein about her the Allianz’ involvement in the partnership she said that this is great (C4). However, she suggested adding regular meetings with all IPC corporate partners to learn about other best practices, how their relationship develops and which opportunities they seek.

Moreover, Klein stated that sometimes it is difficult to understand the structures in the different IPC departments. This sometimes causes confusion when staff changes and new positions are filled. To that she criticized that the Allianz does not get an HR update when there are new managers or directors employed and duties change within the departments. She would wish for a regular update on current positions and tasks that affect the operations of the Allianz in some way. This update should then also include new contact details.

NOTE: The questions A5, B1, B5-7 and C2-3 were left out. This decision was made due to Klein’s explanations that she gave in-between the questions. Including these questions would have disturbed the flow of the conversation.

Transcript: Interview with BP

Date: April 23, 2014, 14:15 hrs

Location: Phone interview

Interviewee: Seve Kyriacou, BP

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

After a short introduction and thank you, the interviewer explained the concept of the interview. It would be grouped in three parts, first talking about generally important areas in a sponsorship relationship for the interview (A). Secondly, it would deal with the specifics of the BP-IPC relationship (B) and thirdly, about possible areas of improvement in the IPC's relationship management (C). Kyriacou did not have any questions regarding this structure. When starting the interview Kyriacou explained his position and role in the partnership. Seve Kyriacou is the head of the international Olympic and Paralympic Program and joined three years ago when he became part of the "London 2012 team", preparing for the Olympic Games.

Important areas in a sponsorship relationship

After Kyriacou had explained this, the interview started. The interviewer first asked Kyriacou to rate different aspects of a sponsorship relationship on a scale from 1 to 10 regarding their level of importance. It was emphasized that this part was not focusing on the relationship to the IPC but on his general opinion. The first item he had to rate was the reliance of the partner which he rated with an importance of 10 (A1). He explained that it is important for him that the partners follow through on commitments and takes action accordingly. The next item was transparency (A2). He said that it always depends on what is relevant. Thus, he does not want to see everything. However, he emphasized that especially regarding key events both partners need to share a lot. To conclude, he rated transparency with an eight. Already having talked about commitment before, the next question focused on the punctuality of information (A4). Kyriacou mentioned that of course it is always good to receive information better sooner than later. However, he highlighted that he is mostly willing to compromise on the punctuality of information if the quality is right. He stated that he wants to get the information in the right way, not necessarily always on time. Following this, the researcher asked Kyriacou about the accuracy of information (A5). He replied that this would always depend on the context. For example, for the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Winter Games, the IPC had to send them information about the accreditation for BP's staff. Kyriacou explained that he had never done that before, so he had to depend on the IPC to send them really accurate information. However, in cases where a quick decision is needed, he could compromise on the accuracy. Finally, he rated this item with an eight.

The next item, pro-activeness of the partner, was rated with a 10 (A6). Kyriacou stated that pro-activeness is highly important for him, especially as the strategy with the IPC is still evolving. Moreover, he added an example of the IPC's pro-activeness. He described that they suggested for BP to partner with the IPC Athletics Championships in Swansea this year. For him, this was surprising because he had never thought of that. Nevertheless, he mentioned that such activities would enable BP to recalibrate their own strategy and move forward.

When asking Kyriacou about other areas in a sponsorship relationship that he considers to be important (A7) he first stated that the topics talked about before had covered the main points and that he had nothing to add. However, after thinking about it for a while he suggested to for BP to get access to the IPC Governing Board. He explained that such a meeting took place in Sochi and was really helpful for the development of the partnership. Thus, he would wish for a frequent meeting, maybe once a year.

IPC specific

The next section dealt with the specific relationship of BP with the IPC and Kyriacou's level of satisfaction with it. To start this part, the researcher asked Kyriacou how he would describe the relationship with the IPC (B1). The words he used were "very friendly, warm, intimate, emotional and lots of positive things". He said that it would not feel like some kind of commercial transaction but more like a partnership with a common vision. As BP is also a partner of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), he said that he has a possibility to compare it. And his experience was that the relationship to the IOC is much more business-like and less relationship oriented.

The following question was to what extent Kyriacou trusts the IPC in acting upon BP's interest (B2). He stated that he "absolutely and fully" trusts the IPC. He brought up the topic that BP was mentioned in at the IPC's general assembly meeting which he did not expect at all. For him that was a sign of the IPC's full commitment to the partnership, which, according to Kyriacou could also be traced back to a great leadership by the IPC president, Sir Philip.

The next question dealt with the reliability of the IPC regarding the follow-up on agreed steps (B3). Here Kyriacou answered that he thought it generally is good. However, he remarked that sometimes things take a bit longer. When being asked about an example, he talked about having had a meeting with the Agitos Foundation in Sochi. It was agreed that the IPC would send a proposal for possible collaboration which BP is still awaiting. However, he referred back to the beginning of the interview emphasizing that here would value quality much more than a rushed proposal. What he added to this point was his impression by the IPC staff's performance in Sochi. He explained that there were strict deadlines and the programme was changed. But, according to Kyriacou, the IPC staff "managed everything incredibly. They got things done and worked well beyond their official duties".

When getting to the question about her satisfaction with the accessibility of the IPC staff he said he is highly satisfied (B4). He noted having a weekly call with Bart Schell where they review ongoing actions and follow up on plans. He added that he perceived the partnership with the IPC as a “high level relationship” where both parties still have to learn how to go. What he acknowledged was that he also met Xavier Gonzalez [the IPC CEO] which he greatly appreciated.

Afterwards, Kyriacou was asked about his preferred ways of communication (B7). He commented that the weekly calls, set in the calendar, are really important. Furthermore, email was mentioned as a good way to communicate about daily issues. Regarding face-to-face meetings Kyriacou wished to meet Bart Schell about two to three times a year and the senior management about once to twice a year.

The last question in this section dealt with the evaluation of the partnership (B8). The researcher explained that this interview actually serves as some kind of evaluation and asked Kyriacou what she thinks about it. He said this is really important and explained that BP does this at the company as well. He would wish for this to happen once a year.

Areas of improvement

This part of the interview focused on areas in which Kyriacou felt that the IPC could improve its relationship management. The researcher asked an open question and gave Kyriacou some time to think about it (C1). He indicated that he suggests a great website improvement of the IPC. For him, it is not user-friendly especially regarding the events. Kyriacou finds it difficult to filter events and often is confused about the navigation on the website.

Furthermore, he remarked that both the IPC and BP should jointly communicate their partnership, but first need to think about where to place the partnership. What he also suggested was to organize a gathering between the IPC governing board and the BP senior management. He acknowledged that this comes with many challenges such as the worldwide locations of the members.

Additionally, Kyriacou admonished that he would have liked some kind of “activation workshop” right after the agreement was signed. This workshop could have dealt with questions like “what to do with the partnership”. It could have furthermore, helped to develop specific action plans and have everyone understand how the partnership should evolve. However, Kyriacou also acknowledged that right now, BP needs to decide on the strategic direction of the partnership.

Finally, Kyriacou suggested to implement a regular partner workshop with all IPC corporate partners involved. According to him the partners could share the mechanisms they have put in place, so that a platform is created where ideas and best practices could be exchanged and discussed. He would propose to have such a meeting once a year.

NOTE: The questions A3, B5-B6 were left out as Kyriacou had talked about the items in other questions already. Additionally, the questions C2-C4 were left out because Kyriacou came up with his own ideas and the researcher decided not to push him into certain directions but wanted to keep it as open as possible.

Transcript: Interview with Visa

Date: May 6, 2014, 19:30 hrs

Location: Phone interview

Interviewee: Kate Johnson, Visa

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

After a short introduction and thank you, the interviewer explained the concept of the interview. It would be grouped in three parts, first talking about generally important areas in a sponsorship relationship for the interview (A). Secondly, it would deal with the specifics of the Allianz-IPC relationship (B) and thirdly, about possible areas of improvement in the IPC's relationship management (C). Johnson did not have any questions regarding this structure. When starting the interview, Johnson explained her position and role in the partnership. She explained that she is the Global Olympic and Paralympic Sponsorship Marketing Manager for Visa and has been involved in the partnership for nine months.

Important areas in a sponsorship relationship

After Johnson explained this, the interview started. The interviewer first asked Johnson to rate different aspects of a sponsorship relationship on a scale from 1 to 10 regarding their level of importance. It was emphasized that this part was not focusing on the relationship to the IPC but on her general opinion. The first item (A1) she had to rate was the reliability of the partner which she rated with an importance of 10. She explained that for her this is very much connected to integrity which she mentioned as a very important area in sponsorships. The next item was transparency (A2). She said that she would put an 8 here as there are obviously some things that cannot be shared. When asking about the importance of the commitment of the partners (A3) she clearly rated it with a 10.

The next part to be rated was the punctuality of information (A4). Johnson stated that it is very important for her, especially in critical times with major events or projects happening she needs a thorough follow-up with all necessary information received in time. Connected to this was the question about the importance of the accuracy of information (A5). Again, she rated it as very important; though, emphasizing that the punctuality and the accuracy have to be "put in relation to each other" and the relative importance always depends on the situation. The next item (A6), pro-activeness of the partner, was rated with an 8. Johnson highlighted that both the sponsor and the sponsored property need to focus on pro-activeness, although she remarked that often it is rather the property's responsibility.

When asking Johnson about other areas in a sponsorship relationship that she considers being important (A7), the first thing she mentioned was creativity. She explained that she has often

confronted the IOC with this [Visa is also an Olympic sponsor] but feels that more needs to be done on this. According to her, thinking creatively about new offers helps to understand what the client's [sponsor's] focus is. Another topic Johnson brought up was account management. When explaining this part it became clear that she specifically talked about the IPC now. She described that she mainly hears from them in pre-Games times, rather than having regular, quarterly calls to plan everything together well in advance.

IPC specific

The next section dealt with the specific relationship of Visa with the IPC and Johnson's level of satisfaction with it. To start this part, the researcher asked Johnson how she would describe the relationship with the IPC (B1). She replied that she perceives it to be very strong as they just have renewed the contract with the IPC. She added that the Sochi 2010 Paralympic Games were very successful with great "delivery of services by the IPC". The next question was to what extent Johnson trusts the IPC in acting upon Visa's interest (B2). Johnson stated that she feels that sometimes the IPC has other priorities and the Visa's interests are not always on the top of mind. Therefore, she suggested that this was an aspect to be improved and rated it with a six (although not required).

The next question dealt with the reliability of the IPC regarding the follow-up on agreed steps (B3). Here she answered that she feels the IPC is very reliable. Of course, she inserted, it sometimes depends on the events, but for example regarding the Paralympic Hall of Fame [which Visa is sponsoring] they really follow up on all activities planned.

When getting to the question about her satisfaction with the accessibility of the IPC staff (B4) she said that she is very satisfied with it. Especially, Bart and Alexis are very well reachable and reply to emails and calls.

Afterwards, Johnson was asked about her preferred ways of communication (B7). She commented that phone is the best way, taking place on a quarterly basis. Additionally, she would like to meet up in person with the IPC staff about once a year. Furthermore, she would wish for a partner workshop to connect with the other partners. She added that since the Games in Sochi she has only heard from the IPC once which she regrets a bit. This question then went straight over to the last one from this section, as she suggested the IPC should conduct a recap after the Games and discuss the event and its outcomes with the partner. Johnson mentioned that Bart Schell proposed a more informal review of the Games to which Johnson explained that such informal conversations often fall on the priority list. Therefore, she wishes for a formal review [also more formal than the one conducted here] which "could open up discussions and questions". Furthermore, the IPC should come to Foster [the headquarter of Visa] to conduct a proper evaluation, including discussions about the future plans of both Visa and the IPC. Johnson emphasized that according to her the IPC could do much more on proposing new activities that fit to Visa's objectives and future plans which should be discussed in

such meetings. Moreover, she stated that with two years to go to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games this would be a good time to have such a meeting and talk about those things.

The last question in this section dealt with the evaluation of the partnership (B8). The researcher explained that this interview actually served as some kind of evaluation and asked Johnson what she thought about it. She stated that this should happen after every Games at least through telephone and in a more formal way. She explained that such a formal evaluation would be helpful for the IPC to understand their partners better and to identify new possibilities for both parties. She would expect an evaluation to review different areas of the partnership. First of all the Games in general and everything connected to it. Secondly, specific projects such as the Hall of Fame and thirdly, the collaboration with the athletes which she considers to be extremely important. Johnson emphasized that if the IPC does not pro-actively approach the partner on such matters a well-functioning relationship could not be guaranteed.

Areas of improvement

This part of the interview focused on areas in which Johnson felt that the IPC could improve its relationship management. The researcher asked an open question and gave Johnson some time to think about it (C1). She indicated that the IPC could improve on suggesting new projects and opportunities. Johnson explained that often Visa plans its projects and discusses them internally. However, if the IPC would come up with more ideas it would help her to better advocate the partnership internally which would lead to more support and engagement. To that, Johnson stated that the IPC relies too much on the partner regarding activation opportunities and pro-active and creative thinking. Although she mentioned again that she perceives the partnership to be very strong she indicated that this point could improve.

An example she brought up was a recent talk with Alexis Schäfer where he described a new Paralympic online platform that the IPC was thinking to implement. Johnson said that this sounded really interesting to her as Visa would appreciate having “constant content” also in-between the Games. Therefore, she suggested that such ideas could be discussed collectively in a bigger group in order to be able to find new and creative ways to set it up.

NOTE: The questions A5, B1, B5-7 and C2-3 were left out. This decision was made due to Klein’s explanations that she gave in-between the questions. Including these questions would have disturbed the flow of the conversation.

Transcript: Interview with DB Schenker

Date: May 9, 2014, 10:30 hrs

Location: Skype

Interviewee: Matthew Clarke, DB Schenker

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

The interview started with some small talk about the purpose of the interview and the role of the interviewer. Afterwards, the interviewer explained the concept of the interview. It would be grouped in three parts, first talking about generally important areas in a sponsorship relationship for the interview (A). Secondly, it would deal with the specifics of the DB Schenker-IPC relationship (B) and thirdly, about possible areas of improvement in the IPC's relationship management (C). Clarke did not have any questions regarding this structure. When starting the interview, the interviewer asked about Clarke's role in the partnership. He explained that he started working with Schenker in 2003 in the Global Sport Events division. After Schenker's agreement with the IOC he started managing this sponsorship agreement and has been part of the Athens, Torino and Beijing Games. He further stated that being the Head of Sport events at Schenker, his tasks are to associate Schenker with Sport events, especially to events that "have the power to change sport, like the Paralympics". Furthermore, he attempts to establish longevity and a long-term partnership with the partners. Thirdly, his task is to find the balance between sponsorship investments and the revenue and solve the challenge of covering the expenses with the gross profit.

Important areas in a sponsorship relationship

After he had given the introduction he switched to the first section without being led to it and started to talk freely about important areas in a sponsorship relationship. Although the interviewer had planned to let Clarke rate different items of the relationship she decided to let him list what was important to him without framing the questions. The first thing he mentioned was the accessibility of both parties. He further explained that accessibility would include easy and regular communication in an open and transparent way. For him this would also include establishing structured communication ways through which for example a board member from the one party is enabled to talk to the other party's board member.

Following this, he inserted the topic of Schenker's "toughest issue" which he stated as being rather expensive. After having said he would be quite honest in this interview he explained that Schenker's managers are under great pressure to make profit. He feels that it is often difficult to explain to possible clients the reasons for the pricing and he admitted that this was something Schenker needs to work on.

Afterwards, Clarke got back to the topic and stated that a good quality of information is of major importance. He indicated that there is always the challenge of delivering the right information and be aware about the client's framework and understand how and which information the client wants. Furthermore, he said that in a sponsorship relationship the parties have to share their objectives. For him this includes "among others understanding timelines, capacities, issue, plans, systems and duties". He added that those objectives need to be reviewed regularly.

IPC specific

After Clarke had talked that freely about the important areas, the interviewer decided to guide the second section about the specific relationship a bit more. To start this part, the researcher asked Clarke to what extent he trusts the IPC in acting upon DB Schenker's interest (B2). Clarke stated that he trusts them on a "reasonable level to strong level". An example he brought up was that Schenker's board members had a meeting with the IPC CEO Gonzalez and the IPC President Craven in Sochi and where extremely happy about that. According to Clarke, such meetings should happen more often to create personal relations and build up more trust and for Schenker to get a greater insight into the Paralympic Movement.

The next question dealt with the reliability of the IPC regarding the follow-up on agreed steps (B3). Here Clarke answered that it is very good. He added that with the IPC growing they get better and better and according to him, have claimed not to be like the IOC which for him is a very positive characteristic.

When getting to the question about her satisfaction with the accessibility of the IPC staff (B4) he explained that everyone is really busy at the IPC which he related back to Sochi and the "crazy work they did there". He remarked that they should be careful with not taking on too much.

Afterwards, Johnson was asked about her preferred ways of communication (B7). He commented that so far communication does not happen on a regular basis though he admitted that both parties need to be more disciplined. In fact, he disclosed that it "might actually be more Schenker's call". He suggested to have a two-four weeks call and a regular meeting in Bonn or Frankfurt. Clarke emphasized that the key is to define and definitely set such meeting and be persistent on actually conducting them.

The researcher switched then to the question about the frequency of proposed activities by the IPC (B6). Clarke expressed that it got better over the last years. He actually stated that this topic was a key discussion point with Alexis Schäfer (IPC Marketing Director) and Georg Schlachtenberger (IPC COO). Clarke explained that Schenker had the feeling the IPC would perceive the partnership as a purely value-in-kind and nothing more. However, Clarke stressed that this has changed now and the partnership is much more engaging. An example he brought up was the IPC's 25 years celebration in October 2014. Clarke described that the IPC and Schenker had discussions about how to involve

Schenker in this and came up with some ideas, like inviting Schenker's board members as speaker or providing shuttle services for the event's participants.

The last question in this section dealt with the evaluation of the partnership (B8). The researcher explained that this interview actually served as some kind of evaluation and asked Clarke what she thought about it. He stated that this had never been done before and he really appreciated the IPC's initiative to do it. He assumed that probably as the partnership is rather relaxed people have not yet seen the need for such evaluations. Clarke indicated that with the IOC such reviews happen quite regularly, including "good and bad practices, lessons learned and future plans". Additionally, he mentioned that with the IPC Schenker sometimes has discussion but he that he wishes for more. As an example he talked about Schenker's objective to gain closer relations with different NPCs which would need to be followed up upon. Moreover, he specified that he would wish for Schenker to be able to attend more events (not only the Paralympic Games) to be able to better "understand what it means to be a Paralympian".

Areas of improvement

Subsequently, the researcher asked Clarke about other areas in which he would see the need for improvement (C1). He stated that we could not think of much more, despite from having more regular conversations. Moreover, proposed to organize a "get together" with the other partners.

Furthermore, Clarke talked about the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games which DB Schenker is also sponsoring. What he highlighted was that the organizing team had created a specific sponsor intranet that informs about the event, activations, ticketing and much more. What he likes about this is that he can access all necessary data himself and can find tailored sponsor information. Thus, he remarked that the IPC could maybe also implement something similar. To this, Clarke noted that the information received by the IPC is often too generic and not really tailored to the IPC sponsors.

The interview ended with Clarke asking about how this information from the interview will be processed and the researcher explained that this was part of a whole study and should give the IPC and insight into the partner's needs and remarks. Clarke stated that he would be really interested in the outcome and would be happy to hear about the results.

NOTE: The questions A5, B1, B5-7 and C2-3 were left out. This decision was made due to Klein's explanations that she gave in-between the questions. Including these questions would have disturbed the flow of the conversation.

Transcript: Interview with Sponsorplan

Date: May 12, 2014, 16:00 hrs

Location: Phone interview conducted in German, translated to English

Interviewee: Peter Mruk, founder and managing partner of Sponsorplan

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

The interview started with Mruk asking about the background of the project. The interviewer explained that it is for the final paper of the interviewer's Communication studies and is conducted in close collaboration with the IPC. As Mruk had received the interview questions in advance via email he was already aware of the interview's content and started right away.

Areas of evaluation and frequency

Mruk started with his definition of satisfaction in a sponsorship relationship (AA1). He explained that the satisfaction always depends on the KPI and the objectives the partner has set. Otherwise, he said that the press, the public development, the support and the accessibility of the property contributes to a good level of satisfaction. Another aspect he mentioned was having a good relationship to the key account and decision makers. Moreover, he stated that a partnership needs to have as few "moments of stress" as possible. An example he mentioned was that recently the Allianz was asked to release the banking part in its protected sponsor category in order for the IPC to be able to partner up with banks etc. Mruk explained that this naturally causes stress for the Allianz as they would be giving up something without any gain. Another stress factor for Mruk was a time lag for activations and agreed plans. As an example he mentioned the IPC website whose release took much longer than previously communicated.

Mruk continued to the second question about the main touch-points in sponsorship relationships (AA2). Firstly, he mentioned the setting up of the contract and secondly, the collaborative activations such as branded content. Moreover, he mentioned the key account on the daily working level and the board members on the management level. The last aspect he pointed out is the hospitality at major events.

The third question about the building up of trust was rather difficult he explained (AA3). However, he mentioned that properties need to guarantee transparency, integrity and have to measure the outcome of the partnership on their own initiative. Furthermore, he suggests using a feedback questionnaire together with a regular exchange of the mutual level of satisfaction. When the interviewer asked how often Mruk would conduct such feedback sessions he stated to do it at least

once a year. However, if a change of staff has happened he would suggest to do the feedback sessions more often.

The next question dealt with the way in which entities could act proactively (AA4). Mruk highlighted that the organisations must propose new activations spontaneously and without being requested, surpassing the regular sponsor rights package. Furthermore, he proposed to include the corporate partner into the entity's own communication, e.g. in press conferences, possibly after consideration with the partner. Moreover, Mruk would give the corporate partners some additional free of charge rights which conveys the feeling that the entity really cares about them. An example he brought up was inviting partners to visit different events and competitions. Additionally, he emphasized that partners always need to be kept informed; about the industry, the organisation and the different sports. Important here is, according to him, a mix between regular and ad hoc information.

Mruk continued with the next point about areas in which he hears the most complaints about the sponsored organization (AA5). The main aspects he mentioned were a lack of transparency, professionalism, pace and flexibility; although, those aspects always depend on the nature of the organisation, he explained. Mruk added that some of those items were rather difficult at the IPC in the beginning. He explained that there was not much awareness about "performance and performance in return". However, Mruk stated that through the partnership with the Allianz the IPC was required to adapt their processes and managed to build up a great client service structure.

To the question about how frequently entities should evaluate their partnerships, he only said to do it regularly (AA7). Connected to this was who, in his eyes, would be the best person to evaluate the partnerships (AA8). Mruk described that it should happen at both the daily working level as well as the management level. To the interviewer's remark about what he thinks about external agencies conducting the evaluation Mruk stated that he would not use them to keep the feeling of trust and transparency on both sides. However, he agreed that external agencies might help detecting the real critical points, but only in partnerships that are quite damaged already. He would furthermore propose use a mix of questionnaires and conversations to get as much feedback as possible.

Regarding his perception of the Allianz-IPC partnership Mruk described it as trustful, matured and cooperative (BB1). In the following, he mentioned the areas in which the Allianz was happy with the IPC (BB2). The aspects he mentioned were the key account management and support, as well as that the sponsorship understanding has grown steadily and has reached a good level.

The next aspects Mruk talked about were the Allianz' key objectives regarding the partnership (BB3). The first thing he mentioned was promoting the Paralympic Movement through different activations. Secondly, he pointed out that gaining visibility was major objective of the Allianz. Furthermore, Mruk emphasized that a rather new focus is the internal engagement of employees to strengthen HR ties. This was something the Allianz will focus more on in the past. The last aspect he mentioned here

was that the Allianz aims to be a pioneer. He explained that for example through the Allianz infographics they want to be known for “transfer of knowledge” and bring the Paralympic sport closer to the public.

The next part focused on areas in which the Allianz still sees some potential for the IPC to improve (BB4). According to him, for the IPC it sometimes takes quite long to provide feedback on certain projects. As examples he mentioned the contract with IPC Athletics, the new IPC website and feedback regarding branded content.

To conclude the interview, the interviewer asked Mruk whether he had any additional recommendations for the IPC. He pointed out that he really appreciates that since shortly there is a regular call between the IPC (Bart Schell) and the Allianz (Steffi Klein). However, he recommended to the IPC to offer better accessibility to their network, including other partners and experts in the field. Additionally, Mruk would suggest an improvement of the IPC’s database management. He criticized that currently it was not possible for him to directly access certain information about athletes or general Paralympic news and knowledge. To that, he stated that some activities could be more efficiently dealt with if he/the Allianz had access to this information.

Interview with Sally Hancock

Date: May 19, 2014, 13:00 hrs

Location: Phone interview

Interviewee: Sally Hancock, Consultant in sponsorship strategy, design and planning

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

The interview started with a brief greeting and thank you. Sally explained having a very tight schedule and only about 15 minutes. Therefore, the interviewer briefly explained that the interview would contribute to the final paper of the interviewer's Communication studies and is conducted in close collaboration with the IPC. Hancock did not have any question.

Partner satisfaction

Firstly, the interviewer asked Hancock about her definition of partner satisfaction in a sponsorship relationship. To this, Hancock first needed a clarification as to whether a "partner" would be a commercial partner. The interviewer affirmed that. So, Hancock explained that she would define partner satisfaction across different measures: the level of client services, the extent to which rights are leveraged and the support beyond the contract. She added that this meant the value added through the organisation. Furthermore, she stated that the response time of the organisation is very important to the level of satisfaction. Especially in times of big events, like the Paralympics, she explained, is the speed of responses of vital importance. To this she added that it is also critical that issues are dealt with appropriately and well on time to reduce the risk of conflicts. The last thing Hancock named as having an influence on the satisfaction level is the extent to which the organisation works from the client's perspective. She concludes this part saying that there are various measures to look at sponsorship satisfaction; however, she considered those to be the "main headlines". Additionally, Hancock described that she would definitely do such measurements, go to clients and ask for their feedback, because she would want to know how everything is going and what could be improved.

Evaluation of partnerships

The interviewer asked Hancock how, regarding those measurements named before, she would suggest evaluating partnerships. To elaborate, the interviewer asked whether it should be rather generic or partner specific and which form it should take on. Hancock stated that it should be on a generic basis and this should make up a significant part of the evaluation. She explained that otherwise you cannot compare the different partnerships appropriately and draw conclusions. Hancock further said she would "look for 60% generic and 40% specific". Furthermore, she mentioned that she generally uses or receives questionnaires with scales from 1 to 5, letting the respondent indicate how satisfied they are with the different aspects. This would generate the most

accurate answers, she said. Additionally, Hancock would add open-ended questions asking the partners what to improve or how to increase their level of satisfaction. An additional option would also be to leave space after every question for the respondent to insert comments.

Now, the interviewer asked at which point of the partnership one should conduct the evaluation. Hancock mentioned that it would depend on the length of the contract. However, she recommended to do it at least yearly or every six months. Doing it more often, like quarterly, would be too much in her opinion and could be difficult to compare results and changes.

Moreover, the interviewer asked who would be the most suitable person to do the evaluation, the direct contact person or an external agency. Hancock thought that it should definitely come from the direct contact person at the organisation who should ask their counterpart at the partner for this feedback. She added that when receiving such an evaluation from she would sometimes distribute it among her colleagues and have them complete them. Then she would also do the evaluation and would take the average of all forms to send it back.

Key areas where entities (like the IPC) have flaws

The interviewer continued asking whether Hancock could tell her about her experience regarding areas in which many entities fail or have flaws. Hancock firstly indicated that she had never worked with the IPC directly; however, she knows Alexis Schäfer (the IPC Marketing and Commercial Director) and Xavier Gonzalez (the IPC CEO). She inserted that during the London 2012 Games she works with Paralympic TV (the IPC Youtube channel). Compared to the Organising Committee of the London 2012 Games, Hancock felt the Paralympic TV team was much stronger organised and worked well in terms of understanding their counterparts and fostered dialogue. According to her, they held the position to always try out things to see how it works instead of rejecting requests immediately.

Hancock further mentioned that she is now working with the Commonwealth Games which are rather big in the UK. She realized that the IPC has much more opportunities regarding commercial partners than the IOC and that the IPC should leverage that.

The researcher inserted that in the past Hancock had worked with the FIFA and asked whether she had any examples for this case. Hancock replied that this was already 7-8 years ago and that she is now focusing much more on the Olympic and Paralympic sport. She added that it is always good to assist your (global) commercial partner in operating on the national level as well. Hancock also mentioned that in her opinion the IPC has much potential with commercial partners and should focus on developing strategies with them.

Additional recommendations

To conclude the interview the interviewer asked Hancock whether she had any additional recommendations or experiences she would like to share. Hancock replied that evaluations of partnerships should always have two approaches; a qualitative and a quantitative. She stated that having already talked about the quantitative aspect with the questionnaires, the qualitative aspect is also vitally important. With qualitative she implied regular face-to-face conversations. Hancock emphasized that the organisation should always be prepared to be open to dialogue. Furthermore, organisations need to see that they can only learn and benefit from such feedback and can then create mutually satisfying relationships. She also criticised that from her experience, regular conversations somehow get lost as soon as a major event is coming up. She suggested that especially in such times a regular exchange is highly important.

After having thought a bit she remarked that she never received any post-games evaluation neither from the Olympic nor the Paralympic side. She thought that the problem could be that “the local organizing committees disappear so no one manages the aftercare”. Connected to this the interviewer asked whether this meant that such responsibilities have then to be transferred to the IOC and IPC which Hancock affirmed. She added that regarding the IOC she could state that they usually care more for their global partners and do not include the national partners too much. This was a shame, she said, as the national partners are often much more involved as they also spend more in community work. Therefore, according to her, they could provide much more feedback on the overall performance.

To conclude, the interviewer thanked Sally for her time and wished her a good day.

Interview with Stepan Kolesnichenko

Date: May 21, 2014, 14:00 hrs

Location: Phone interview

Interviewee: Stepan Kolesnichenko, Coca-Cola (Sochi 2014 Olympic/Paralympic Games Project Executive)

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

The interview started with a brief greeting and thank you. Then the interviewer explained that the interview would contribute to the final paper of the interviewer's Communication studies and is conducted in close collaboration with the IPC. She further described that the goal of the project was to find out how to best evaluate sponsorship relationships and to see how satisfied the IPC partners are.

After this, Kolesnichenko immediately started talking about his involvement with the Sochi 2014 Paralympic Games. He explained that he started working with Alexis [Schäfer] in 2009 at the OCOG (Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games). Inbetween, he took a break to do his MBA and then took on the lead for the Paralympic areas at the Games. He stated that he feels that regarding the Paralympics there were a lot of missed opportunities due to a very short-term decision for Coca-Cola to be involved. However, he mentioned that also being part of the Paralympics was a big decision.

As a big corporation they did some research before the event, he said. Coca-Cola researched about the Russian population's attitude towards the Paralympic Games and found out that most of them were really looking forward to having the Paralympics in Sochi; however, they were not too keen on attending them. Kolesnichenko explained that the trigger mainly was to not put the Paralympics as a separate event but include them into the Olympic activities. The idea that came up was to appoint a dedicated person to manage the Paralympics, which was Kolesnichenko. He feels that this was an important step as he could work on how to leverage the sponsorship together with the IPC. A strategy he developed was doing something for the Torch relay, although not as much was possible as for the Olympic Torch relay. Kolesnichenko inserted that prior to the Games the company believed that the Russian people would not be as motivated to come to the Paralympic Torch Relay as the Olympic one had just happened before. However, to his surprise, a similar amount of people showed up at the route, cheering for the Paralympians.

Furthermore, Kolesnichenko stated that regarding the Paralympic Games, Coca-Cola suffered a lot from the lack of decisions made by the management, as the Paralympic Games were not the main priority. For him, this was Coca-Cola's main failure which has already been set on the agenda for the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. As an example, Kolesnichenko mentioned that only during the Olympic Games, he heard that the Coca-Cola showcase was not planned to be present at the Paralympic

Games anymore. However, he explained that through a “enormous investment” they somehow managed to somehow change and adapt the showcase to make it fit to the Paralympics.

At this point of the interview the interviewer asked whether Kolesnichenko felt that the investment was worth it. Very straight forward, he said it was “absolutely worth it”. He mentioned that they had the same number of visitors during the Paralympics as during the Olympics which was a great success for them. Kolesnichenko highlighted again that all decision being made regarding the Paralympics only happened last minute which put the organizers under a lot of pressure. He stated that this approach will definitely be changed for the next Games in Rio 2016.

Partner satisfaction

Now, the interviewer asked Kolesnichenko regarding the evaluation of sponsorships. She asked about which measures were important for him if an organisation was to evaluate the partnership. He replied that for him brand love would be the most important point. Additionally, he stated that of course sales would also be a key measurement. Kolesnichenko inserted that in his opinion, also partnering with the Paralympic Games added significantly to the overall satisfaction of the Sochi 2014 sponsorship. He even said that if Coca-Cola had not been part of the Paralympics the success of their involvement would have been much lower.

To get some more insight into the evaluation of the partnership, the interviewer asked him whether any kind of “after-care” after the Olympic and Paralympic Games had taken place. Kolesnichenko explained that there was an after-action review together with the Rio Organizing Committee to work out aspects for improvement at the upcoming Games. Here, Kolesnichenko mentioned he also got in contact with Alexis [Schäfer] talking about an increased level involvement of Coca-Cola with the Paralympics. He stated that Coca-Cola might be planning to not only buy the incremental packages but is also considering to become a full “TOP Sponsor” of the IPC.

To elicit some feedback about the evaluation of partnerships the interviewer said that as Coca-Cola has been a partner of the IOC for quite some time how he experienced their evaluation of the partnerships. He replied that in general he was really happy with the partnership; they have one dedicated manager caring for the partnership which conveys the feeling that the IOC treats Coca-Cola as a separate partner with a high level of care. However, he criticized that sometimes the IOC is offering specific assets of the Games only to some partners and does not involve the others.

As the time for the interview was almost up the interviewer asked Kolesnichenko whether he had any general recommendations for the IPC. He mentioned that he pushes or would push the IPC to offer support in dealing with the national Paralympic Committees (NPC). As an example, he brought up the case of the nominations of the Paralympic Torch bearers: he had contacted the Russian NPC to ask them to provide possible candidates. However, they got back to him saying there were no

candidates available, which, in his eyes, could not have been the case. Moreover, he emphasised that they did nothing to support Coca-Cola's campaigns. Therefore, according to Kolesnichenko, the IPC should "motivate, inspire and explain them the importance of the Paralympic Games". They should be behind the scenes liaising between the partners and the National Committees.

Nevertheless, Kolesnichenko highlighted that the IPC does a very good job. He always feels that they, especially Alexis, understand Coca-Cola's position and objectives and tries to accommodate all wishes and needs.

To conclude the interview, the interviewer thanked Kolesnichenko for his time and interesting insights. Kolesnichenko asked about how this interview will be integrated into the project and whether he could receive the final outcome. The interviewer replied that it will be compared and put together with the other interviews and then be integrated in the analysis. She told him she would try to provide him with a copy.

Transcript: Interview with Simon Drühmel

Date: May 23, 2014, 09:30 hrs

Location: Phone interview conducted in German, translated to English

Interviewee: Simon Drühmel, Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband, previously: German Sport Marketing Agency

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

To start, the interviewer explained that she was currently interning at the IPC and was simultaneously writing her final paper for her studies of Communication Management. She explained that the paper is written in close collaboration with the IPC and that Alexis Schäfer had suggested interviewing Drühmel for some expert insights. Drühmel did not have any questions regarding this.

Sponsorship satisfaction

The interviewer asked Drühmel about how he would define sponsor satisfaction (AAA1). He replied that that it is not that easy to define as it relates to different levels. Firstly, he said that the collaboration with the rightsholder is of great importance. This includes the fulfillment of the contract as well as the general role the rightsholder plays in the partnership. According to Drühmel, this role can be determined by the level of pro-activeness, the frequency and quality of proposed opportunities as well as the degree of development regarding the partnership and the rightsholder itself. Secondly, he stated that it is important to see how the objectives and goals of the sponsor are perceived and translated into activities by the rightsholder. Additionally, Drühmel explained that those two aspects can be seen as interrelated as well as separate from each other.

For the next question, the interviewer asked Drühmel about the main touchpoints in sponsorship relationships (AAA2). He responded that first of all, it is vital that the rightsholder understands the partner's position in the partnership. This includes for example their philosophy and their goals. Furthermore, he mentioned that the rightsholder has to tailor the activities individually to each partner, based on their needs and wishes. Drühmel pointed out that next to the obligations, set in the contract, voluntary features (in German: "Kür") to facilitate development are crucially important. As an example, he mentioned that if a sponsor wants to do something that purely brings measurable outcomes, it does not make sense for a partner to content wise propose not measurable activities. Drühmel highlighted that for a partnership to work it is necessary to have a basic understanding about what should be achieved with the partnership.

Moreover, he explained that many (sponsoring) companies have a lack of resources in sponsorship areas so that it is highly contra-productive if the rightsholder does not show understanding for the

company's business. What he pointed out as essential is the quality of the exchange between the parties as well as the level of trust. Another important point Drühmel mentioned is that sponsors get a say in the planning of activities. A key is also to provide them with information prior to the public to convey involvement and respect.

Now, the interviewer went back to beginning when Drühmel talked about pro-activeness (AA3). She asked him what he thinks a pro-active organization does or looks like. He replied that it is important for an organization to understand its role in the industry; so, how valuable is its business and what are the values for sponsors to become engaged. If an organisation has a good standing, those values are obvious and mostly the organisation does not need to do much. However, for all organisations aside, it is crucial to use the exchange on its own initiative, build up trust, provide sponsors with information in advance, show transparency and let the sponsors participate.

The following question was focused on areas in which Drühmel thought many rightholders have flaws or could improve. Quite directly, he stated that service and support are areas that are often disregarded by organisations. According to him, this includes also what those organisations to beyond the contractual duties and to what extent the partnership "is lived and developed". He added that sustainable care is vital for a partnership to grow and develop. Moreover, the speed in which organisations respond to requests is decisive for the perceived quality of a partnership.

Evaluations of sponsorship partnerships

Subsequently, the interviewer explained that the interview would now continue to the section about the evaluations of sponsorship partnerships. She asked Drühmel at what time of the partnership he would suggest evaluating such partnerships. He expressed that in principle he would only say regularly and that it always depend on the nature of the partnership. Nevertheless, he remarked that obtaining sponsor feedback after an event might be very helpful. Generally, he stated that extensive evaluations dealing with the entire partnership should take place on a yearly basis. Drühmel inserted that when working for the DSM (German Sport Marketing agency) they would conduct event related evaluations as well as biweekly calls to update each other on the general progress.

The next question was about who in the rightsholding organization should be the one to conduct the evaluation and whether it should rather be the direct contact person of at the organisation or an external agency (AAA6). Drühmel stated that it is difficult to say. However, he would always suggest finding a mix of participants for such conversations but that they should mainly stem from the operational side. Regarding external agencies he expressed doubts about their suitability in such cases. He explained that often they could not really assess relationships enough to be able to work out the key points. Additionally, an issue could also be that agencies (have to) follow their business aspect rather than focusing purely on the evaluation. Nevertheless, Drühmel admitted that agencies

could clearly be involved in supporting the rightsholding organisation strategically and help to develop the framework for the evaluation.

The interviewer added the question about which form an evaluation should take on; rather a questionnaire or a face-to-face conversation. Drühmel proposed using a mix of tools. For evaluations that require quantitative data and are more target-oriented he would use simple questionnaires. However, to obtain more detailed and qualitative feedback Drühmel would go to the personal level and conduct face-to-face conversations. A possibility he mentioned was also to use video conferences to add a personal touch to regular phone calls.

Concluding, the interviewer wanted to know whether Drühmel had any additional recommendations or tips for the IPC in this regard. Being responsible for the sponsoring of the DBS (German Disabled sport association), he said he would reply to this question based on the disabled sport in general. The first thing he mentioned was that such organisations need a large amount of openness and transparency which has always been the case at the IPC, Drühmel said. However, he explained that in this segment it is vital to note that most partners show understanding and accept that some developments take longer than in other segments. However, this makes it imperative for the rightsholding organisations to focus on developing themselves professionally in terms of their offerings, their networks as well as their professional competencies.

To finish the interview, the interviewer stated that she did not have any questions anymore and would like to thank Drühmel for his time. Then, Drühmel asked whether it would be possible to receive the paper once it was finished. The interviewer replied that she would try to send it to him after consideration with the IPC.

Transcript: Interview with David Powell

Date: May 23, 2014, 15:30 hrs

Location: Phone interview

Interviewee: David Powell, expert in sponsorship strategy at Redmandarin

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

To start, the interviewer explained that she was currently interning at the IPC and was simultaneously writing her final paper for her studies of Communication Management. She explained that the paper is written in close collaboration with the IPC and that Alexis Schäfer had suggested interviewing someone from redmandarin for some expert insights. Powell did not have any questions regarding this.

To start the interview, the interviewer asked Powell to provide her with some information about his background. He graduated in history and then joined a brand planning agency. At the agency he did a lot of brand proposition development work and conducted a number of data analyses. The main areas he was involved in were created analytics techniques together with segmentation work, cluster work with the purpose of identifying purchase drivers. Then in 2006, he joined redmandarin in the research department and took on a leading role in 2008. Then in 2012 he became a partner. He further described that at redmandarin only 5-6% of their work is purely related to evaluations as business do not really pay too much for evaluations. What they do is trying to integrate evaluations into the broader marketing work. Furthermore, he does not support standardised evaluations as every industry and company has its own standards and procedures which need to be incorporated.

Sponsorship satisfaction

The interviewer asked Powell about how he would define sponsor satisfaction (AAA1). He replied that this is a really tricky thing as most people have a rather **wrong** perception of satisfaction in sponsorships. He explained that often times people assume that if a partnership gets renewed, the sponsor must be satisfied. However, Powell emphasized that one should not confuse satisfaction with renewal. According to him, satisfaction is much more visible in the relationship area. For him this means that a partnership is productive and is highly successful on the social part of the relationship so that both parties like to talk to each other. Furthermore, he stated that sponsorship is different from other marketing markets as it is not mainly about selling tangible products. It is much more ambiguous and fluid, as sold rights leave much room for different interpretations. An example he mentioned was using ambassadors. Having bought the rights to use ambassadors for a certain amount of time does not necessarily mean the company actually gets the expected value. Ultimately,

he explained that as an agency, redmandarin would always search for rightsholders that aim at accommodating their partners' wishes and show deep understanding for their business and strategies. Moreover, he mentioned that one of the biggest dilemma that small of growing organisations (to which he counted the IPC) is the increasing value. With that he meant that in the beginning, sponsors come in at a certain level and and pay a set fee. Through the sponsor's campaigning the rightsholder is exposed more to the public, resulting in a tremendously increased value. At the time of the renewal the rightsholder is then worth much more than in the beginning; though to a great extent through the sponsor's support. This is something that many sponsored entities fail to see which in turn is often very frustrating for the sponsor.

Evaluations of sponsorship partnerships

Subsequently, the interviewer explained that the interview would now continue to the section about the evaluations of sponsorship partnerships. She referred back to beginning when Powell explained that he would not favour standardised evaluations too much. Though, she asked him whether he would still think that in some ways there is a strategic way to evaluate partnerships (AA2). Powell replied that this is a very difficult situation. He explained that generally, rightsholders had to provide the sponsors with any kind of research although he would not focus too much on research directed at the partners [the interviewer assumed that he was talking mainly about the evaluation of the partnership value]. Powell furthermore stated that for rightsholders it would be much more valuable to invest in research about their own brand to find out what their exact propositions are, what the public thinks about them and identify ways to engage sponsors. He added that this would help them to understand where they stand and where they are headed. Such research is of much value as it can be distributed to prospective sponsors as well as current sponsors to inform them and trigger new ideas and opportunities.

To follow up, the interviewer asked him whether he thinks that eliciting feedback from the sponsors is valuable for rightsholders and in what way this should be done. Here, Powell stated that such feedback is "hugely valuable" and he would suggest doing it both informally and formally whereas the balance always depends on the client's personality. Some might feel more comfortable in semi-autonomous feedback session through questionnaires while others would open up more "during a beer in the pub". In any case, he finds it a very good and helpful practice for rightsholders.

Afterwards, the interviewer asked how often he would conduct such evaluations to which he responded with "definitely not more than once a year". The interviewer inserted the question whether there was a reason for this answer. To that he described that most sponsorship campaigns usually run for a longer time which would mean that more frequent evaluations would not deliver any new insights. Additionally, some sponsors might get tired by too many questionnaires in a short

period of time which also leads to the assumption that rightsholders do not take the evaluations seriously and just send them out “because it needs to be done”. Nevertheless, if these questionnaires are sent out annually and are followed up by proper face-to-face conversations it conveys a more serious feeling.

The question dealt with the person who should conduct the interview and whether it should be someone from the rightsholder or an external agency. Powell mentioned that such evaluations should definitely be conducted directly by the IPC, in the best case initiated and communicated through a senior manager. While thinking about the benefits about employing an external agency, he described seeing two different aims in such evaluations. Firstly, to identify ways in which the rightsholder can improve and secondly, to build up the relationship and establish trust. Therefore, he stated that an agency would only be able to reach the first aim, while the rightsholder itself could achieve both.

Additionally, the interviewer wanted to know whether he could tell from experience in which areas rightsholders have the biggest challenges. He highlighted that badly written contracts present the main problem. Due to the aforementioned ambiguity in sponsorship rights, the contract really need to specify the exact terms and conditions to avoid conflicts through different interpretations. Powell mentioned that the best rightsholders involve the sponsors quite early, operate highly productively and smooth out issues early.

To conclude, the interview asked Powell whether he had any additional recommendations regarding the behaviour of rightsholders. The only thing he could think about was that rightsholders must have a good understanding of their own brand and audience and then understand their sponsors passion and objectives. Additionally, they need to be creative and willing to market the brands collaboratively.

The interviewer ended with the interviewer thanking Powell for his time and wishing him a nice weekend.

Interview with Hanno Franke

Date: May 24 2014, 17:00 hrs

Location: Phone interview conducted in German, translated to English

Interviewee: Hanno Franke, Director Marketing and Sales at the SC Freiburg

Interviewer: Sarah Bischoff

Introduction

The interview started with a brief greeting and thank you. Due a personal relation to Franke, the interview was rather informal. However, at the beginning Franke explained that he was not sure whether he was the best contact person, as the SC Freiburg is not too much involved in conducting research on their sponsor's level of satisfaction. He also admitted that what they are doing in this regard is not enough and would need to be improved as well. To this the researcher asked to what extent he is involved in the services provided to the sponsors to find out in what way he could add value to the project. Franke stated that he is highly involved in dealing with the sponsors. Therefore, the interviewer decided to continue with the interview.

Partner satisfaction

Firstly, the interviewer asked Hancock about her definition of partner satisfaction in a sponsorship relationship (AAA1). Franke stated that the most important aspect for him is that the sponsor's objectives are achieved. Mostly, those are: brand prominence and –development, image building and hospitality. He inserted that he sometimes is really surprised about how few companies actually measure the outcomes of their sponsorship. Especially, regarding their image sponsors often disregard the assessment of the sponsorship success. Furthermore, Franke pointed out that in his experience the hospitality part contributes the most to the sponsor's level of satisfaction.

The second question dealt with the question about the main touch points in sponsorships (AAA2). For his sport he explained that the days of play are most important as this is when most activities happen. However, he also admitted that those days are also guided by a lot of emotions (especially on his side). This makes it imperative for the club to host meetings apart from this great emotional influence. Therefore they host workshops twice a year mainly for relationship management purposes. He described that in these workshops he tries to connect to the sponsors, convey the feeling to be there for them and work pro-actively. Connected to this the interviewer asked how organisations can work best in a pro-active way. He said they have to actively approach the sponsors prior to them having any complaints. Moreover, the additionally organised events, mentioned above, help to facilitate dialogue and exchange, giving the club the opportunity to foresee the sponsors' needs. What he also considered as really effective is the organisation of the celebration of the start and end of the season. Those involve the sponsors and always bring "personal fun". An additional

way of acting pro-actively is for organisations to really get to know the sponsors and make use of the created networks, Franke explained.

The interviewer continued to the next question about areas in which Franke thought many organisations have flaws. Quite directly, he indicated that a lack of manpower and knowhow oftentimes leads to bad client services. However, he also stated that for example in the “Bundesliga”, the clubs are becoming much more professional. Often, the people working in the marketing departments originally come from external agencies giving them a broader knowledge about the entire marketing process.

Evaluation of partnerships

The interviewer now got back to the beginning when Franke said he does not really do evaluations of the sponsorships. She asked whether he would still be able to talk from his experience and say something about the evaluation of partnerships. To that, Franke mentioned that the SC Freiburg segments its sponsors and places the greatest focus on the national sponsors. Of those sponsors they also know the numbers regarding the sponsorship outcome, he explained. What the SC Freiburg also assesses is the hospitality program. Here, they measure the quality of the services and the overall feeling about the hospitality program. To assess this, he distributes questionnaires, but only about every two years.

Additional recommendations

To conclude the interviewer asked Franke whether he had any general recommendations regarding this issue. He again pointed out how surprised he is that a great number of sponsorships are not evaluated at all. Furthermore, he pointed out that many deals are made in ad-hoc decisions and do not follow any concept. However, he highlighted that one of the most important aspects in sponsorships is creativity in the planning process to be able to fully leverage the sponsorship. Here, the interviewer inserted the question as to what extent this was also the entities responsibility. Franke replied having a clear opinion about that. He stated that close to the business, it is definitely to a great extent the entity's/club's responsibility to make recommendations as they know the business best. Nevertheless, everything that goes beyond the business aspect needs to be developed and managed from the sponsor's side.

The interview finished with a thank-you to Franke.

Questions for Atos

Basic information:

Name: Dorien Wamelink

Age:

Position, Role: Marketing Director Olympics & Paralympics and other Major Events and Ascent – Thoughtleadership program of Atos

Length of involvement in the partnership: since 2010

How did the relationship with the IPC evolve? From a short term focus to a longer term focus and having business relationship and sponsorship dimension beyond the 1x per 2 years Paralympic event

A Important areas in sponsorship relationships

To understand which areas in a corporate relationship are most important for you, I would like to ask you to rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 meaning not at all and 10 meaning very important.

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is the reliability of your partner for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

2. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is transparency for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

3. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is the partner's commitment to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

4. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is the punctuality of information for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

5. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is accurate information for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

6. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is a proactive management of the relationship for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

7. What are other important areas in a sponsorship relationship for you?

Most important that sponsorship is only interesting if it is business relevant to us. With all the items listed above positively (hence all ranked with an 8), if there is no business relevancy of the sponsorship and the understanding of the sponsorship property of that, the value is minimal.

B IPC specific

This part deals with your opinion and feeling about the sponsorship relationship with the IPC.

1. How would you describe your relationship with the IPC? Long term, trust and willingness
2. To what extent do you trust the IPC in acting upon your interests? I trust the IPC to act upon on the scope of sponsorship and representing to the both best interests
3. How reliable is the IPC when it comes to the follow up on agreed steps? Reliable.
4. How satisfied are you with the accessibility of the IPC staff? Very. Easy to access
5. Do you feel that the IPC fully understands your position in the relationship and acts upon your objectives? Yes, although sometimes the wishes and ideas are beyond realizing practicalities and short term needs, context and reality.
6. On a scale from 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with the frequency in which the IPC proposes new activation opportunities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all								Very important	

7. What are your preferred ways of communication with the IPC (Telephone, email, meetings etc.)? Both by email and phone and in person
8. How often would you like to have the partnership evaluated by the IPC? 1x per year, unless we see critical areas where we are behind need more or see opportunities

☐

Monthly

☐

Quarterly

☐

Annually

C Areas of improvement

What are areas regarding the IPC's relationship management that could be improved?

As Atos we have 2 relationships: a business relationship (delivering projects) and a sponsorship relationship. At the moment we have addressed that we could improve the alignment and sharing of status in those areas

Questions for Samsung

Basic information:

Name: Ryan HA

Age: 36

Position, Role: Sponsorship Manager

Length of involvement in the partnership: 4 years

How did the relationship with the IPC evolve?

Samsung signed a sponsorship contract with IPC since 2006 from Torino 2006 Paralympic Winter Games.

A Important areas in sponsorship relationships

To understand which areas in a corporate relationship are most important for you, I would like to ask you to rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 meaning not at all and 10 meaning very important.

8. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is the reliability of your partner for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

9. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is transparency for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

10. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is the partner's commitment to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

11. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is the punctuality of information for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

12. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is accurate information for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

13. On a scale from 1 to 10 how important is a proactive management of the relationship for you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very important

14. What are other important areas in a sponsorship relationship for you? Ability to get ROI from the sponsorship relationship

B IPC specific

This part deals with your opinion and feeling about the sponsorship relationship with the IPC

9. How would you describe your relationship with the IPC? Excellent

10. To what extent do you trust the IPC in acting upon your interests? We fully trust IPC

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Completely

11. How reliable is the IPC when it comes to the follow up on agreed steps? They've been great

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very reliable

12. How satisfied are you with the accessibility of the IPC staff?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very satisfied

13. Do you feel that the IPC fully understands your position in the relationship and acts upon your objectives? yes

14. On a scale from 1 to 10 how satisfied are you with the frequency in which the IPC proposes new activation opportunities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all									Very satisfied

15. What are your preferred ways of communication with the IPC (telephone, emails, meetings etc.)? Email, phone call, meeting

16. How often would you like to have the partnership evaluated by the IPC? I don't recall anything IPC evaluated Samsung. I believe this sounds internal information

☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually

C Areas of improvement

1. What are areas regarding the IPC's relationship management that could be improved?

IPC has been such a great partner. I don't have anything particular in terms of improvements.

Appendix 4: Sample Cover letter

Dear XXX,

As discussed in our previous conversation we would like to ask for your feedback on our partnership.

The purpose is to make this partnership as satisfying as possible for you.

Eventually, we at the IPC would like to identify aspects in which we could improve our relationship management with you. Hearing about your opinion and feeling about the relationship will help to make the partnership more valuable and effective.

As we highly appreciate your opinion and are committed to constantly increase your satisfaction with our relationship, we kindly ask you to take a few minutes and fill out the attached questionnaire.

Please feel free to contact me for any clarifications and questions.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

XXX

Appendix 5: Sample questionnaire

Corporate Partnership Evaluation

Name, Company:

Role, Position:

A) Interpersonal aspects of the relationship

To get a general impression about how you feel about your partnership with the IPC, please rate the following items.

	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Rather agree	Agree	Comments (Reasons)
The IPC acts upon our interests.						
The IPC handles information carefully.						
The IPC understands our general business.						
The IPC understands our business philosophy.						
We feel the IPC is fully committed to the partnership.						

To make your feedback more specific and valuable, feel free to add additional comments:

B) The operational level

To get your feedback on the operational side of the partnership, please rate the following items.

	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Agree	Rather agree	Comments (Reasons)
We are satisfied with the overall quality of the IPC's client services.						
The IPC staff is accessible when needed.						
Information is sent out in a timely manner						
Information is accurate						
The sponsorship rights are leveraged to a satisfying extent						
The IPC proposes new opportunities in a frequent manner						
The IPC is knowledgeable about our future objectives and considers them when proposing new opportunities						

Thanks a lot for filling out the questionnaire and thus, contributing to making our partnership even more valuable.

Appendix 6: Sample questionnaire with constructs

Corporate Partnership Evaluation

Name, Company:

Role, Position:

A) Interpersonal aspect of the relationship

To get a general impression about how you feel about your partnership with the IPC, please rate the following items.

	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Trust The IPC acts upon our interests.					
Trust The IPC handles information carefully.					
Understanding The IPC understands our general business.					
Understanding The IPC understands our business philosophy.					
Commitment We feel the IPC is fully committed to the partnership.					

To make your feedback more specific and valuable, please add additional comments:

B) The operational level

To get your feedback on the operational side of the partnership, please rate the following items.

	Disagree	Rather disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Comments
Quality of client services We are satisfied with the overall quality of the IPC's client services.						
Accessibility The IPC staff is accessible when needed.						
Quality of information flow Information is sent out in a timely manner						
Quality of information flow Information is accurate						
Leveraging of rights The sponsorship rights are leveraged to a satisfying extent						
Leveraging of rights The IPC proposes new opportunities in a frequent manner						
Consideration of future objectives The IPC is knowledgeable about our future objectives and considers them when proposing new opportunities						

Thanks a lot for filling out the questionnaire and thus, contributing to making our partnership even more valuable.

Appendix 7: Email Ottobock

Hi Sarah

Thanks for sending us the questions.

I have spoken with Christin Gunkel, our Chief Marketing Officer.

We have a face-to-face meeting with Alexis and Bart in June and think it is better to discuss these topics directly with them then.

Have a great weekend.

Many Thanks

Anna

From: Intern Marketing [<mailto:marketing@paralympic.org>]

Sent: Wednesday, April 23, 2014 3:49 PM

To: Parisi, Anna

Subject: RE: Project: Sponsorship satisfaction of Ottobock

Hi Anna,

I hope you are well. As promised, please find attached the questions I am planning to ask you in the interview.

If you have any remarks or concerns, please let me know.

I am looking forward to hearing about possible dates.

Thanks and kind regards,

Sarah

From: Parisi, Anna [<mailto:Anna.Parisi@ottobock.com>]
Sent: Dienstag, 22. April 2014 10:43
To: Intern Marketing
Subject: Re: Project: Sponsorship satisfaction of Ottobock

Hi Sarah

Thanks for your email.

I will get back to you with some suitable times shortly.

In the meantime, can you please send me the questions you will ask during the interview.

Thanks

Anna

----- Original message -----

From: Intern Marketing <marketing@paralympic.org>
Date: 22/04/2014 10:00 (GMT+01:00)
To: "Parisi, Anna" <Anna.Parisi@ottobock.com>
Subject: Project: Sponsorship satisfaction of Ottobock

Dear Anna,

My name is Sarah Bischoff and I am working in the Marketing and Commercial department at the IPC. I am currently working on a project which is aimed at exploring the level of satisfaction of the IPC sponsors. The project should help to understand how satisfied you from Ottobock are with the relationship with the IPC.

Furthermore, the project should identify aspects where the IPC could enhance its relationship management with Ottobock. This should contribute to working out Ottobock's needs in order to make the partnership even more valuable and effective for you.

As the opinion and evaluation of Ottobock is very important to this project I would like to interview you. The interview would be conducted via telephone and would take about 20 minutes. It would be a great help for Ottobock and the IPC if you would find the time for this short interview.

Please feel free to contact me for any clarifications and questions.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards and a good start into the week,

Sarah

Sarah Bischoff | Marketing & Commercial Department

Appendix 8: Research Proposal



International
Paralympic
Committee

FINAL PAPER
- FINAL PROPOSAL -

BISCHOFF, SARAH (11002867)

Academy of European Studies and Communication

Management

The Hague University of Applied Sciences

03rd March 2014, Mr. Lazenby

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1. Background

The following research proposal forms the basis for the final research project which will be carried out as the final assignment of the study program *International Communication Management* at the The Hague University of Applied Sciences. The research project will be presented as a final paper, completing the 3-years Bachelor-program. This research proposal's purpose is to present the identified problem situation at the organisation the student is interning at, in this case the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). Furthermore, it outlines the scope of the planned research, the planned methods as well as the time planning. It therefore, serves as an overview over the planned research project.

2. Client brief

2.1 The organisation

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is an international non-profit organisation with its headquarter in Bonn, Germany. It is the governing body of the Paralympic Movement which enables athletes with an impairment to compete in sport events on the beginner and elite level and currently employees 70 people. The IPC oversees the organisation of the Paralympic Games (Summer and Winter). Furthermore, it acts as the International Federation for nine para-sports, coordinating and supervising World Championships and other competitions. The organisation is "composed of a General Assembly (highest decision making body), a Governing Board (executive body), a Management Team and various Standing Committees and Councils" (IPC, 2014, section: About the IPC).

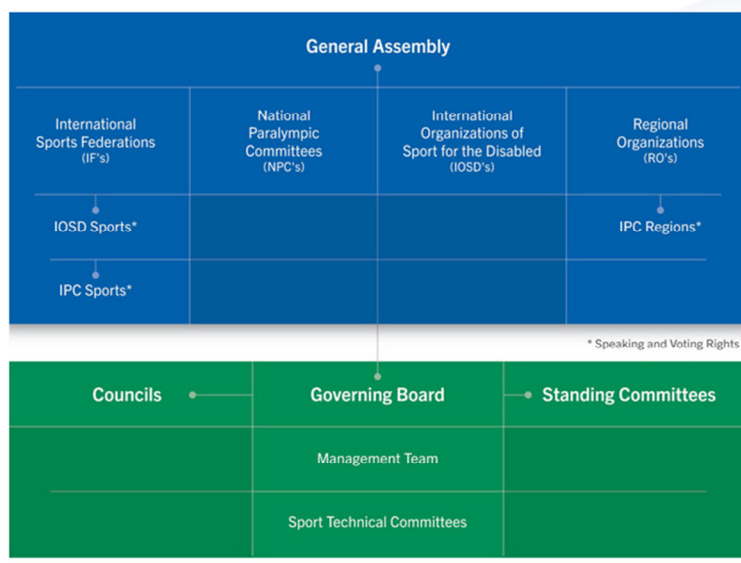


Figure 1: IPC Organization Chart (IPC, 2014, Who we are)

2.1 Target groups

The IPC has three main target groups. As the IPC organizes and supervises sport competitions for people with impairments, the first target groups are all athletes around the world who have an impairment, congenital or acquired. The general public is the second target group, as the IPC organizes the Paralympic Games, the second largest international multi-sport event. Being a non-profit organisation, the third target groups are current and potential corporate partners of the IPC supporting its operations. Furthermore, the IPC has various members which have a specific stake in the organisation as well. Those members are for example National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), International Sport Federations (IFs), International Organisations of Sport for the Disabled (IOSDs) and Regional Organisations (ROs) (International Paralympic Committee, 2014, Section: About Us).

2.2 The problem situation

As a non-profit organisation the IPC is in need of partners that support the organisation in its operations. Therefore, it is crucial that the relationship with the partners is based on a mutually satisfying level. The brief revealed that the IPC has a rather complicated sponsorship structure with partners from different industries; thus, having different objectives regarding the partnership. The IPC marketing and commercial director Alexis Schäfer and the IPC client services manager Bart Schell (2014) stated that the general intentions of each partner are clear; however, the IPC would need to identify whether the set objectives are being met and correlate with the expected outcomes of the partner (Schäfer & Schell, personal interview, February 7, 2014).

Furthermore, Schäfer and Schell (2014) want to gain understanding about the partners' satisfaction within the different areas of the partnership and based on this identify ways to specifically tailor their services and messages. Hence, the IPC would need a standardized concept on how to monitor and manage the partner relationships in order to guarantee a mutually satisfying relationship (Schäfer & Schell, personal interview, February 7, 2014).

The interested party in the situation at hand is the marketing and commercial department of the IPC, represented through its director Alexis Schäfer and the client services manager Bart Schell. The target groups of the research are the IPC's current partners: Visa, Ottobock, Samsung, Atos, Allianz and BP (IPC, 2014, starting page).

2.3 The goal

The IPC's goal regarding this research is to receive a recommendation on a standardized structure of the client services, including an insight into the corporate partner's level of satisfaction. Furthermore, the IPC would like receive a concept for being able to evaluate the partner's satisfaction in the future. (Schäfer & Schell, personal interview, February 7, 2014).

The advice question, provided by Schäfer and Schell is (2014) is:

How can we improve the communication between the IPC and the corporate partners in order to achieve a mutually satisfying relationship?

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework underlying the problem statement and brief is broadly categorized into the following fields of relevant theory:

1. Corporate sport sponsorship
2. Sponsorship relationship development (life cycles)
3. Evolution of strategic alliances
4. Measurement of partner satisfaction

Firstly, it is important to identify the process of corporate sport sponsorship and clarify general objectives of the sponsor and the sponsored. Established theories and models will be used in order to achieve a basic understanding what corporate sport sponsorship comprises. One book that will be used is the *Routledge Handbook for Sports Sponsorship* by Ferrand, Torrigiani and Povill (2007). An expert in the field of sport sponsorship relationships is David K. Stotlar, professor in Sport Management at the University of Northern Colorado; hence, his theories and publications will be also be used.

Secondly, theories regarding the development of sponsorship relationships have to be identified. The aim is to examine whether the relationships go through different stages, probably each requiring different efforts by both parties involved. A study that will be considered is "*Sponsorship relationships as strategic alliances: A life cycle model approach*" by Urriolagoitia and Planellas (2007) which presents a possibility to order sponsors into different 'life cycles' in order to be able to analyse the respective sponsor relationship. Furthermore the study "*Changes in sponsorship value: Competencies and capabilities of successful sponsorship relationships*" by Farrelly, Quester and Burton (2006) seems to present valuable insights regarding the problem statement.

Thirdly, the term *strategic alliances* will be used to frame the research. To specify the research even more it will be focused on the *evolution of a strategic alliance* and what effect it has on the relationship and communication efforts between the parties involved. A study that fits the term and will help to get basic insights is *Strategic Alliances in Action: Toward a Theory of Evolution* by Wohlstetter, Smith and Malloy (2005). Part of that is also an investigation on how the partner's strategic plans effect the development of strategic alliances.

Finally, it will be looked at possible techniques to measure the level of satisfaction of corporate partners. In general, partner satisfaction is difficult to measure as it has to be monitored over time and is subject to change rapidly. Therefore, it is useful to first define partner satisfaction within the context and then do a periodical survey among the partners in order to identify and monitor the level of satisfaction. A way to effectively design and conduct such a survey is the *Partnership Satisfaction & Impact Survey* presented by the FIIT Project that developed a guideline on how to design such questionnaires. This will be one foundation for the questionnaire design in regard to the measurement of partner satisfaction (Fitt for innovation, n.d.)

4. Objective

The overall objective of the research is to identify possibilities to measure the partner's level of satisfaction and develop a suitable score card to the measurement of satisfaction. This should be achieved by...

...examining the current level of partner satisfaction

...identifying qualitative and quantitative techniques and tools to measure partner satisfaction and

...combining those results and developing a communication concept to manage partner satisfaction.

5. Research questions

The central research questions to guide the research are:

Q1: How do the IPC's corporate partners currently perceive the relationship between the IPC and them?

Q2: What does a satisfactory relationship has to look like from the corporate partners' perspective?

In order to answer the central research questions, a number of sub-questions will be used:

Desk research:

1. What are the contextual factors and developments within the environment of the IPC that need to be considered?
2. How does a sponsorship relationship develop over time?
3. How can satisfaction be measured?

Qualitative:

4. Which communication tools are currently being used by the IPC and how are they being used?
5. How does the IPC define corporate partner satisfaction for their purposes?

6. What role does communication play in the context of the problem situation?

Quantitative:

7. How is the IPC's communication towards the corporate partners perceived by them?
8. What are the partners' specific needs regarding the relationship management?

6. Methods

6.1 Research Design

The research will be carried out in 2 stages; Preliminary research and in-depth research, using two different approaches. Firstly, the research throughout the project will be based on an exploratory approach. The preliminary research will be used to analyse the current situation and define appropriate literature. Secondly, the in-depth research will be based on an empirical analytical approach in combination with an interpretive approach; thus, gaining an in-depth understanding of the problem and enabling to provide a suitable recommendation.

The research methods used within the preliminary phase mainly consist of desk research based on a qualitative approach, despite possible consultations with the project provider to gain further understanding of the organisation and the current situation. The in-depth stage will include desk and field research based on both, qualitative and quantitative research methods. Thus, semi-structured interviews with the current corporate partners will be used to get an insight into their wishes and needs.. The prospective respondents will be reached through established contacts of the IPC and the respective client. Currently, the IPC has six partners who are the target group for the survey. It is planned to have a number of managers from each company respond to the questionnaire to enlarge the scope of responses and ensure a gathering of objective and representative data. Furthermore, qualitative expert interviews in the field of sponsor relationships or sports sponsorship in general will be conducted. It is planned to also interview external experts in order to get an objective insight into the field of sport sponsorship. Those experts might be selected from the sponsorship agencies some of the IPC's corporate partners are working with. The research analysis will be based on a deductive as well as an inductive approach as defined by Yin (Saunders, 2009, p. 489-490).

6.2 Data collection

The overall model that will be used to structure and collect the researched data is the Bridge Model. The Bridge Model is used for international communication management students, linking the APA style report structure to the set up of a communication plan by Voss (2003). The model consists of six main stages: (1) Research proposal, (2) Situation analysis, (3) Literature review, (4) In-depth research

methodology, (5) In-depths research and analysis and (6) Recommendations, whereas the first four stages represent preliminary research. Firstly, a (1) **research proposal** has to be developed to outline the preliminary research plan. Secondly, a (2) **situation analysis** will be conducted in which the problem and context of the problem will be evaluated. Analysing the problem within the micro, macro and meso environment results in a SWOT analysis of the current situation. Furthermore, (3) related **literature** will be **reviewed**. Within the literature review models, theories and expert information that are relevant for the solution of the problem will be critically assessed. Apart from that, the key factors and a framework for possible solutions for the problem will be identified. Moreover, criteria for the definition and assessment of the problem will be examined. The previous three stages serve as a basis for the in-depth methodology. Within the (4) **in-depth methodology** the strategy and design of further research will be defined, including desk and field research. The actual research process starts in the (5) **in-depth research** phase in order to gain a holistic understanding of the problem. Within this stage the problem and the possible solutions will be assessed and preliminary and in-depth research will be integrated. Consequently, findings will be presented and a conclusion will be drawn. Last but not least, a communication strategy and a communication plan will be presented within the (6) **recommendations**.

The data collection in general will be analyzed and assessed based on critical and creative thinking methods. Thus, the originality of ideas and thinking will be questioned. Furthermore, data and sources will be critically evaluated before being used. Last but not least, ideas and opinions will be based on reasonable arguments.

7. Research target groups

As the objective is to measure the level of satisfaction of the IPC's corporate partners to guarantee mutually satisfying sponsorship relationships, the target groups that will be researched are the current partners of the IPC. Those are: Visa, Ottobock, Samsung, Atos, Allianz, BP (IPC, 2014). When conducting the research the specific employees that will be contacted are the marketing managers of each company.

8. Limitations

As explained above, the research project will start with a baseline study which will form the basis of the concept development. Due to the time frame of the research project, from now to the end of May 2014, the possibility to actually test the concept is rather low. Therefore, the client would need to conduct a follow-up survey in order to test the developed communication concept.

9. Time planning

