Event Sponsorship's Impact on Brand Image

A Case Study of Haglöfs Night Trail Run

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Acknowledgement

During the ten weeks that I have been writing on this thesis, it has been an interesting and fun learning experience. I have learnt a lot about event sponsorship as well as on how to write a thesis. I hope this thesis will encourage future students to conduct more research within the area and practitioners to engage in event sponsorship.

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Abstract

Because of the increased competition on the market companies need to consider new ways to communicate their marketing. Event marketing is a tool commonly used by companies to link their business to an event which people attend and by doing so increase for example their brand awareness or building brand image. An important part of event marketing is event sponsorship which is what this thesis focuses on.

The aim of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding on how the use of event marketing, with focus on sponsored event, can build brand image. Based on that purpose the study will answer the research question of how event sponsorships can contribute to build brand image. In order to answer this question, a qualitative case study was made on the event Haglöfs Night Trail Run in which I have interviewed two of the sponsoring organizations Haglöfs and Addnature.

The results of this study indicate that event sponsorship can have an impact on brand image. The results also suggest that the process of choosing what event to sponsor and what that event entails is absolutely crucial for the impact it will have on brand image. The type of event as well as the similarity between event and sponsor is the most important variables to consider in event sponsorship.
Sammanfattning

På grund av ökad konkurrens på dagens marknader måste företag överväga och hitta nya sätt att kommunicera sin marknadsföring. Event marknadsföring är ett verktyg som används av företag för att knyta an sin verksamhet till ett event där människor närvarar och på så sätt öka till exempel varumärkeskännedom eller förändra image som deras varumärke har. En viktig del av event marknadsföring är sponsring av event vilket också vad den här uppsatsen kommer fokusera på.

Uppsatsens syfte är att få en djupare förståelse för hur användandet av event marknadsföring, med fokus på sponsring av event kan skapa och stärka varumärkets image. Baserat på det syftet kommer studien svara på forskningsfrågan hur vida sponsring av event kan bidra till att stärka och bygga varumärkets image. För att svara på den frågan har en kvalitativ fallstudie genomförts på eventet Haglöfs Night Trail Run och i vilken två av de sponsrande organisationerna har blivit intervjuade, Haglöfs and Addnature.

Resultatet av den här studien indikerar att sponsring av event kan ha en inverkan på varumärkets image. Resultaten tyder också på att processen där organisationer väljer vilket event de vill sponsra och vad de eventen innebär är absolut kritiskt för vilken inverkan sponsringen kommer att få för varumärkets image. Typen av event och likaså likheten mellan event och sponsor är viktiga varabler att överväga i sponsring av event.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

*In this opening chapter, the aim is to introduce the area of research for the study. It begins with an introduction to the background of the concept of Event marketing as a marketing tool and the basic ideas of sponsored events as well as brand image. It will then be followed by a problem discussion as well as the purpose and research question of the thesis. In the end of this chapter, the general outline of the study will be stated.*

Because of the rapid change and increased level of competition in most markets around the world today, organizations need to change their way to use promotion. During the end of the 1990’s, there was a change from having a focus on products when conducting promotion, to focus on the customers instead. (Behrer & Larsson, 1998) This means that organizations started to bring experience to the customers as a new way of marketing (Schmitt, 1999).

The concept of event marketing originates from the area of sponsorship and often refers back in connection to the Olympic Games, 1984 in Los Angeles. What separates event marketing from ordinary sponsorships is the fact that the sponsors of an event buy not only the exposure at the event. They also buy certain rights to use the event in their marketing in other ways. (Behrer & Larsson, 1998) The tool event marketing results in a better ROI (return on investment) than all other marketing communication tools (MPI Foundations, 2004). Event marketing is broad in its scope of use and can be applied in both large as well as small companies, regardless of the size of their target group. As a result, this type of marketing is becoming more common and is a tool suitable to use when for example building brand image. (Behrer & Larsson, 1998) Gupta (2003) states that event marketing is growing in popularity when it comes to the process of building long term brand image.

Event marketing has many definitions, one of them is “occurrences designed to communicate particular message to target audience” (P. Kotler, 2003, p.576). Another definition of the concept is ”interactive communication of brand values by staging marketing-events as a 3-dimensional brand-related hyperrealities in which consumers are actively involved on a behavioral level and which would result in their emotional attachment to the brand” (Wohlfeil & Wheland, 2006, p.644)
1.1.1 Objectives with Event Marketing

Event marketing is a marketing tool used to achieve a variation of different goals. The goals vary from creating and increasing brand awareness, sales, brand image or customer relationship (Eriksson & Hjälmsson, 2000). Companies choose among different objectives and according to Gupta (2003) studies shows that companies often mix more than one objective to form their own personalized objective. Event marketing objectives can be divided into five categories, namely corporate-related objectives, product-related objectives, sales objectives, media coverage and personal objectives. (Meenhagan, 1983, referred to in Eriksson and Hjälmsson, 2000) There exist a number of specific objectives within each category. The use of Event marketing can create an experience for the customer that exceeds their expectations. By using this experience, the organization can build the brand’s image. (Wood, 2009) That is the objective which this thesis will focus on, building brand image, which falls under the category of product related objectives (Meenhagan, 1983).

It is possible to use sponsorships of events as a tool to build brand image (Gupta, 2003). The concept of brand image can be defined as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory” (Keller, 1993, p.3). There is often more than just one single sponsor of an event. In fact, the average numbers of sponsors are three whereas one of the three acts in a position of being the main sponsor (Gupta, 2003). According to Keller (1993), when linking a brand to a certain event, the associations of that event might possibly transfer to the sponsoring brand’s image and the costumers’ memory regarding that brand. Jimmy Clark, who was a sponsorship consultant in Sweden during the 90’s, said that the biggest benefit of sponsorships is its ability to transfer image from the sponsored item to the sponsor (Behrer & Larsson, 1998).

1.1.2 Event Marketing in the Promotional Mix

When planning the marketing strategy of an organization it is important for the marketing manager to consider the four P’s of marketing namely product, price place and promotion (Jobber, Fahy and Kavanagh, 2006). The use of event marketing falls under the P promotion but is impossible to fit the use of event marketing to only one of the different tools within the promotional tool box. According to Behrer & Larsson (1998) Event marketing, and especially sponsorship, is a complex and versatile tool that can alter depending on the surrounding settings, purpose and objectives. Important to consider is the fact that the audience at the event will apprehend the event in different ways depending on personality, understanding and attitudes. (Wood, 2009) Hence, the type of event used will have a great impact on brand
image (Gwinner, 1997). The promotion tool box consists of advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, public relations, sponsorship, and action marketing. Event marketing integrates all of these tools, developing an entire individual tool. The way event marketing works as a versatile tool can be shown in the model below created by Behrer and Larsson (1998).

Figure 1: Event marketing in the promotional mix


According to Behrer and Larsson (1998), in the process of event marketing the need for the different tools vary depending on the purpose of the event as well as the level of information and integration. The figure shows how event marketing can use the different tools. An example is the usage of advertising to spread information about the event to the market, the usage of sales promotion in order to bring attention to the event, personal selling to adjust the information to the customers and public relations in the form of publicity. The dashed oval line represents event marketing and it is almost placed a little bit to the right towards image. Behrer and Larsson (1998) further states that it is possible for the dashed line to go more to the left as well, but the danger is that the message of the event might come across as more commercial. It can have a negative effect due to the fact that many people are sensitive for
commercial elements. (ibid) The sponsorship to an event can be seen as either something
great and beneficial, or as a commercial advertisement. (Gwinner, 1997) Interesting to note is
that the sponsorship of a small event has a better chance to be perceived as a good cause. This
is due to the fact that the event in question might not have had the funds without the
sponsorship to carry out the event. In this case, the sponsoring brand will achieve increased
goodwill and a stronger image. (McDonald, 1991) Furthermore, a stronger image will lead to
future increase of sales and that the long term result will still end up positive if the marketer
use image building event marketing (Behrer & Larsson, 1998). Jalleh, Donovan, Giles-Corti
and Holman (2002) argue that compared to traditional advertisement, the process on how
sponsorship communicates the message, image and targets their market is different. The
leaning towards sponsorships in the previous figure points out that sponsorship is a great tool
to use in the process of building brand image (Behrer & Larsson, 1998). Event marketing is
increasingly used as a marketing tool. The benefit of using event marketing, compared to
other promotional tools, is that event marketing has the opportunity to cut through the noise of
other advertisement and find the target the audience directly. (Gupta, 2003)

1.2 Problem Discussion
Event marketing works as a pull strategy since it pulls the customers to the event and does not
push the event on the customers (Wohlfteil & Wheland, 2006). Wohlfteil and Wheland further
argues, by referring to Drengner (2003) and Nufer (2002), that previous research has shown
that there exist a high level of interest and participation of the consumers when it comes to
event marketing strategies. Hence, the use of event marketing will gather customers with
similar values and characteristics, which will form a sort of segment. The benefits of using
marketing in the shape of experiential marketing are the emotional connection that the brand
has with the event. The sponsoring organization’s brand will be impacted by the event’s
image and vice versa. The event will represent what the sponsoring brands stand for and are
associated with. The sponsoring organizations will the same in way represent what the event
stands for. (Wood, 2009) Therefore by using event marketing the organization can choose
what type of event to engage in and what they want their image to be associated with. This is
a great way to create and transfer image from an event to a brand. In the process of brand
image building event marketing is getting more popular. (Gupta, 2003)

Jalleh et al (2002) states that compared to traditional advertising, which can deliver a complex
message and image, sponsorships use the link between the event and its image. They further
argue that the positive effects from an events image ends up affecting the image of the sponsor. For example, if attendees are having a great time at the event those positive feeling will be connected as a memory to the perception of the sponsors brand as well. (Keller, 1993) Since different attendees have different skills, the experience will vary among the attendees which will lead to a variably event image as well. Therefore the marketing manager needs to set the right level of challenge in the event to make sure it fits the skills of the attendees (Wood, 2009) in order to have a successful creation and transfer of image.

I find it interesting to work with how the use of event marketing, with focus on sponsored events can help to build brand image since it is a concept that is quite new. Also the somewhat lack of previous research and the fairly obsolete research on the topic encourage me to gain a deeper understanding on how it works today.

1.3 Purpose and Research Question
Based on the reasoning above, the purpose of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding on how the use of event marketing, with focus on sponsored event, can build brand image.

The following research question will help to gain the understanding necessary to achieve the stated purpose.

RQ: How can event sponsorships contribute to build brand image?

1.4 Demarcations
Because of the time limit set for this thesis, I have demarcated the study to examine how event sponsorship can contribute to building brand image from the sponsoring organizations point of view. By setting focus on the sponsoring organizations and collecting data concerning their views I will get professional trustworthy considerations and opinions regarding the use of event sponsorship.

1.5 Outline of Study
This section aims to briefly outline the study to facilitate for the reader. This thesis consists of a total of six chapters. The first chapter will describe the background of the study followed by the problem discussion and purpose. In the end of chapter one the research question will be stated followed by the limitations and outline of the study. Chapter two will present previous research on the area of event marketing, with focus on sponsored events. In the end of chapter two the conceptual framework of this thesis will be presented. In chapter three the
methodology of the study will be presented. The empirical data will be presented in chapter four and in chapter five the data analysis will be presented. The last chapter, chapter six, will present the findings of the study as well as conclusions of the thesis and implications.

**Figure 2:** Outline of thesis

**Source:** Author’s own construction
2. Literature Review

The following chapter aims to review literature and theories related to the research question and purpose of this thesis. It will start by presenting previous research regarding brand image, continuing with event marketing and the synthesis of sponsorships in event marketing. This will lead to a conceptual framework in the end of this chapter.

2.1 Branding

Branding is important since it helps an organization to differentiate their products and create a competitive advantage (Murphy, 1988). Managers in organizations need to be aware of the high level of importance that branding strategies have. The fact that the memory of a brand will influence future success is crucial to consider when developing marketing strategies and brand building. (Keller, 1993) The concept brand can be defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors.” (Kotler, 1991, p.442)

2.1.1 Brand Image

There exist many different definitions to the concept of brand image due to the fact that it is a difference of opinion among researchers. In this thesis the concept of brand image will however be defined as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory” (Keller, 1993, p.3). Keller (1993) further argues that in the process of branding, associations of the organizations brand is created in consumers’ memory and this is known as brand associations. Brand associations can be divided into three different types of associations, namely attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes are the things that the consumers remember about the product, for example, appearance and distinctiveness of the brand. Benefits are defined as “the personal value consumers attach to the product or service attributes – that is what the consumers think the product can do for them.” (Keller, 1993, p.4) Attitudes is considered as the customers believes concerning a brand, in other words, what benefits the brands products can result in for the customer (Zeithaml, 1988).

Event marketing, with focus on sponsored events, often aims to increase and building the brand image of an organization (Meerabeau et al, 1991). According to Behrer and Larsson (1998) a good brand image has many benefits. Behrer and Larsson (1998) further claim that a
strong and positive brand can lead to increased sales, stronger relationships with stakeholders, facilitation of the recruitment process as well as the launching of new products. Event marketing does not only have an effect on corporate image, it also has effects on the brand image (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Behrer & Larsson, 1998).

2.2 Event Marketing

In the following section the concept of event marketing will be further explained regarding the different type that exist as well as difference between traditional sponsorship and event sponsorship.

2.2.1 Event Marketing and Sponsoring

There often exist confusion of the concepts of sponsoring and event marketing. It is important to distinguish the differences between traditional sponsoring and sponsoring within event marketing. Traditional sponsoring is a contract between at least two parties and when an organization buys exposure at an existing event. The difference, as mentioned previous in chapter one, is the fact that the sponsors of an event buy not only the exposure at the event, but also buy certain rights to use the event in their marketing in other ways and use it in communication. Event marketing needs to be an activity that uses the event as an integrated communication, both within and outside the certain event. It is possible to call event marketing the developed form of sponsoring. (Behrer and Larsson, 1998) The figure below will show the different categories of event marketing.

**Figure 3: Traditional sponsoring and Event Marketing**

**Source:** Behrer and Larsson (1998) p.194
Traditional sponsorship is when having an existing event at someone else’s arena. An example of this is when an organization pay a fee for exposure at an already established sporting event, the world cup in cross country skiing. (Behrer and Larsson, 1998)

EM (1) is when an organization uses an existing event to pull customers to their own arena, for example if a shopping mall has a famous singer perform inside their mall. In comparison with traditional sponsorship, the organization who is liable for the marketing activities have more power of the associations connected to the event. (ibid)

EM (2) is when organizations create an event and carry it out at someone else’s arena. This type of event marketing is often used to communicate a connection between the associations of the event and the organization’s brand. (ibid)

EM (3) means that an organization create an own event and carry it out in their own arena as well. This could be an outdoor company creating an outdoor activity or fashion store creating a fashion show. (Behrer and Larsson, 1998)

2.3 Event sponsorship and Brand Image

As mentioned before, event sponsorship can be used as a tool to build brand image. In the following section the impact event marketing and event sponsorship have on brand image will be further explained by reviewing different models and theory concerning the subject.

2.3.1 Event Marketing’s Impact on Brand Image

Behrer and Larsson (1998) argues that it exist certain key factors that needs to be considered in the process of building brand image. The figure below shows the different factors and how they are connected to impacting image.

**Figure 4: Event and image**

**Source:** Behrer and Larsson (1998), p.156
These key factors in the figure above are the organizations’ communication, physical environment, social responsibility, service, ethics, products, local and public commitment as well as the behavior of the representatives of the organization in general. During an event these key factors acts in a concentrated and focused form, when in a normal situation these would be more scattered in time and space. (Behrer and Larsson, 1998)

The communication factor in the previous model entails the actual message both during and in connection to the event. The physical environment, where the event actually takes place will also have an influence on the image since it helps in the process of give a meaning to the event, the experience and the message. The products and/or services can be used in image creation by conducting events where the potential customers get a chance to try the products or services. It is also according to Behrer and Larsson (1998), important and possible to use ethics or social responsibility to build the image of an event. It can play a large role in the process of creating a message with the intent to develop goodwill and a link to the community. The local and public engagement of an event can also have an impact on image. A way of utilizing that factor is to use for example local arenas, locally produced raw materials, and sponsoring local events and communities. Lastly, Behrer and Larsson (1998) stated that the behavior of the company’s representatives is highly impacting on image. This could for example entail that the staff at the event are pleasant, good at communicating the message of the event and the solidarity between the staff at the event. (ibid)

The use of event marketing can create a new experience that gives extra value to the customers. When using this promotion tool the right way in for example communicating goodwill by supporting a good cause, it can lead to stronger relationships as well as a stronger brand image. (Wood, 2009)

2.3.2 Gwinner's (1997) Image Creation & Transfer Model

Gwinner (1997), states that when an event sponsor wants to transfer the event’s image to the sponsoring company’s own brand image, certain internal and external variables will form the process. The image of an event is set by the attendees’ common perception of the activity and this perception is formed by type of event used, the characteristics of the event and the individual factors as presented in the figure below. (ibid)
Figure 5: A model of image creation and image transfer in event sponsorship

Source: Gwinner (1997), p. 148

2.3.2.1 Event Type

According to Gwinner (1997) there are five different types of events most commonly used. These five are sports related-, music related-, festival/fair related-, fine arts related- or professional meeting/trade show related events. The type of event an organization chooses to work with will have a big difference on what image the event will have. This is due to the fact the customers have different perceptions or attitudes of different types of events and these perceptions will play a big role in image building and transfer process. Also, it is important to remember that even if the attitudes have an important role, the events image will also be impacted by the associations attendees have in their memory towards the meaning of the event (Keller, 1993). Gwinner (1997) states that the perception of an event also will be affected during the event because of the experiences and activities the attendees participate in. He also argues by referring to Bagzzi and Waeshaw (1990) that this is the most influential part of the brand building process since the experience is the newest memory existing in attendees’ memories. The experience will form the new associations connected to the event’s image and it will be affected by both the activity at the event as well as the people participating. This would mean that the target audience of the event is highly important such as the number of attendees and the type of participants. (Gwinner, 1997)
2.3.2.2 Event Characteristics

In the settings of an event there are certain characteristics that should be considered to create brand image. Important to consider is the size of the event which would entail the length and the number of activities/performers. Another characteristic that will shape the image of the event is the professional level the attendees have, if the event will be on professional or amateur level. Also the history connected to the event is important to consider. If the event previously has not been sponsored, the commercialization of the event might lead to a changed and aggravated image. The variables concerning the venue that the event takes place entail temperature, space and surroundings. The promotional appearance of the event is also an important characteristic to consider. Depending on the appearance the event can either be a commercial advertisement or a social responsibility activity. (Gwinner, 1997)

2.3.2.3 Individual Factors

Since image is something very complex and versatile, the image of an event might be different among attendees. Other than previously mentioned variables impact on an event’s image, Gwinner (1997) states that there exist three additional individual variables. The first is the number of images an event might have. This would mean that an attendee can perceive the event image as confusing, which can happen if the meanings communicated by the event are contradicting each other. Second, the level of strength the image has will impact the image of the event. Lastly, the history the attendee has with the event will shape the image. If an attendee has a long history and has visited the event several times he or she might have nostalgic feelings towards the event and have had time to form their own perception based on previous experiences. (Gwinner, 1997)

2.3.2.4 Moderating Variables

In Gwinner’s (1997) model some moderating variables to the image transfer are presented. These variables concern how they might moderate the transfer of image from event to sponsoring brand. (ibid)

Degree of Similarity

The level of similarity between the sponsoring organization and an event is crucial in the process of image transfer since it facilitate for the consumers to find a link between the sponsoring brand and event in their memory. This similarity can either be a similarity in image, product or service. (Gwinner, 1997) If the consumers find a similarity of the sponsor’s image and the event’s image it will lead to a more positive image of the sponsoring brand.
(Koo, Quarterman and Flynn, 2006). Similarity in image would entail that the event has the same image as the brand, for example a running event sponsored by an outdoor company which both has the image of exciting, adventurous and athletic. Similarity in product or services would mean sponsoring of an event that uses the sponsoring brands product or services in the activities. (Gwinner, 1997)

**Level of Sponsorships**
The second factor according to Gwinner, (1997) to consider is how the sponsorship is conducted. The more sponsors an event has, the less power and impact on image each sponsor will have. Hence, it is preferable to be an exclusive sponsor to an event or at least some kind of main sponsor with better exposure than other sponsoring brands. (ibid)

**Event Frequency**
The third factor is the number of times the event is planned to take place. Reoccurring events is to consider preferable when the image transfer then have more time to take place in the customers’ minds. (Gwinner, 1997) Although it is not always the case, a onetime event can generate much exposure and success which can lead to great media exposure and word of mouth promotion (MacInnis et al., 1991).

**Product Involvement**
The last moderating factor is the level of product involvement (Gwinner, 1997). By doing research in celebrity endorsement it has been shown that the level of product involvement which entails what level of relevance a merchandise has to the customer, will have an impact on brand attitudes (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983). As mentioned previously in this chapter, brand attitudes are a vital part of brand associations and therefore also to the image building process (Keller, 1993). Gwinner (1997) argues that this research made by Petty et al. (1983) would therefore entail that for low involvement products the event image would have a higher impact on brand attitudes.

**2.3.3 Image Transfer in Sport Sponsorship**
As an addition on the Gwinner’s (1997) framework that is previously described above the authors Grohs, Wagner and Vsetecka (2004) have made some alterations of the model and created their own model for image transfer in sponsorship. They claim that the sponsors post event image is impacted by the pre-event sponsor image, sponsor awareness and the events image as seen in the figure below. Another alteration they have made is the suggestion that
the individual factors in Gwinner’s (1997) model is to be consider external of the event and therefore have no impact on the event’s image. (Grohs et al., 2004)

Figure 6: Graphical representation of the sponsorship model

Source: Grohs, Wagner and Vsetecka (2004), p. 131

The pre-event sponsor image entails that they assume that a sponsor in beforehand of an event have an image that is created by earlier factors. This image will have an impact on the image the sponsoring brand will have post the event since it is a kind of starting point of image. The awareness of the sponsor’s brand Grohs et al. (2004) point out has a big impact on the post-event sponsor image since it represents how many people that is aware of the sponsoring organization. The sponsor awareness is determined by four drives namely Brand Prominence, Event-Sponsor Fit, Event Involvement and Exposure. Brand Prominence means how notable and outstanding the brand is to the customers and this will also affect how many people that are aware of the sponsoring brand. The event sponsor fit entails the similarity between sponsoring brand and the event, which can either be based on similarity in function or image (Gwinner, 1997). As for the event involvement the higher the involvement of the participants is, the more they are aware of the sponsoring brand. (Meenaghan, 2001) High exposure level of the sponsoring brand is claimed to have a positive effect on brand awareness as well. (Grohs et al., 2004) In the process of image transfer, the event’s image has an impact as well since it acts to change attitudes towards the sponsoring brand’s image amongst their target audience. (Gwinner, 1997)

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Previous in this chapter research and theories related to this thesis was described. Based on the literature review the conceptual framework will be presented below. Since all previous research and theories cannot be used in the data collection, the conceptual framework will
consist on the theories that are considered to be most relevant to this thesis. The conceptualization will lead to a frame of reference that will be presented later in this chapter.

2.4.1 Conceptualization

To be able to collect data on the research question, the following section will present a conceptualization of the theories chosen for data collection. This conceptualization will lead to a frame of reference which has the aim to guide the data collection.

2.4.1.1 Event Sponsorships Impact on Brand Image

In order to be able to answer the research question stated in chapter one, a connection between brand image and event sponsorships needs to be made. To investigate and understand, this thesis will primary use theories presented by Keller (2003) and framework of Gwinner (1997). Also a variable from the authors Behrer and Larsson’s theories (1998) will be used since those authors have clear arguments concerning event sponsorship, image transfer and brand image.

Concerning event sponsorships impact on brand image, Gwinner (1997) explain in his model “Image creation and transfer model” how the event’s image transfer to becoming the brand’s image by the use of event sponsorships. In his model Gwinner (1997) have used theories developed by Keller (2003) regarding the concept brand image. Keller (2003, p.3) define brand image as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory”. He further states that the associations are crucial for a brand to be successful. (ibid)

Gwinner’s (1997) framework has also been used, although in remade form, for more recent studies by e.g. Grohs et al. (2004) model for image transfer in sponsorship, which indicates that his theories are still relevant. Gwinner (1997) has also made connections and looked at previous research concerning celebrity endorsement to find a framework that will fit event sponsorships impact on brand image.

Definitions of the concept brand image and the importance of using brand strategy will be used from arguments made by Keller (2003). Such as his statement that it is important to be aware of the high level of impact branding strategies have and its necessity for success with future marketing strategies. (ibid)

According to Gwinner (1997) there are three factors that may impact the event image, but this thesis will only collect data on two of them. The individual factors Gwinner (1997) have in his framework are considered according to Grohs et al. (2004) as external of the event. I have
chosen to disregard those individual factors since this thesis is demarcated to the organizations point of view. The remaining two factors are event type and event characteristics. Gwinner further lifts up a number of moderating variables that may affect the image transfer from event image to brand image. These variables are the degree of similarity, level of sponsorship, event frequency and product involvement. (ibid) These variables will be used in the data collection, although they will be seen as “influential variables” instead of moderating variables. I want to investigate those variables impact on brand image instead of impact on the image transfer. (ibid)

In order to extend Gwinner’s (1997) framework this thesis will also add a variable from Behrer and Larsson’s model of Event Marketing’s impact on image. This since the factor, behavior of company’s representatives, seems really relevant for my research question and something that might impact the event image as well. The use of this variable adds a new dimension to Gwinner’s (1997) model.

2.4.2 Frame of Reference

The following table will explain more clearly which variables will be used for data collection, what researcher they come from, how they are used in process of image building and the definition of each variable.

Table 1: Variables for data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>How used</th>
<th>Definition of variable</th>
<th>Author of theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event Type</td>
<td>To form perceptions about an event’s image</td>
<td>Type of event: sports-, music-, festival-, fine arts-, or professional meeting related</td>
<td>Gwinner (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Characteristics</td>
<td>To form the event’s image by choice of characteristics</td>
<td>Event characteristics: Event size, professional status, event history, event venue and promotional appearance</td>
<td>Gwinner (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior of company’s representatives</td>
<td>To form the event’s image by good behavior</td>
<td>The behavior of sponsoring company’s representatives</td>
<td>Behrer and Larsson (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential variables</td>
<td>To influence the sponsoring brand’s image</td>
<td>Influential variables: degree of similarity, level of sponsorship, event frequency and product involvement</td>
<td>Gwinner (1998)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s own construction
Data will be collected on how the sponsors consider how the use of these different variables, which were mentioned in the previous table, can influence the event’s image and what influence that image will have on the sponsoring brand’s image. The following figure of the frame of reference is to be considered as an explanation of previously presented conceptualization and will show how the variables in the table 1: Variables for data collection, are connected. This thesis will collect data on the variables described in the figure below.

![Figure 7: Frame of reference](image)

**Source:** Modified version of Gwinner (1997). Authors own construction.

I believe this framework can answer the research question of this thesis since it will bring forth how companies consider different variables to be helpful and influential to use when building brand image in the use of event sponsorship. The framework regards many different aspects on what variables might have an influence on brand image. By collecting data on each variable, answers will be given on the estimated importance of each variable has according to interviewed organizations. By collecting data on what importance each variable in the model has to the sponsoring company, it will be possible to learn, according to sponsoring companies’ views, how event sponsorship can contribute to building brand image. This framework shows how the image of the sponsored event can affect the sponsoring brands image. By collecting data on this framework the purpose of this thesis can be reached.
3. Methodology

This chapter will explain the research methods available as well as justify the type of research this thesis has chosen to conduct to answer stated research question and to achieve the stated research purpose. The figure below illustrates the outline of this chapter.

**Figure 8: Chapter outline**

**Source:** Author’s own construction

### 3.1 Purpose of Research

The purpose of research can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. These different strategies can exist both on their own or together, since the boundaries between them are not always clear. (Yin 1994)

Exploratory studies aim to investigate with the purpose of generate a general understanding for the problem area. This type is good to use if you look for a clear understanding of a problem. According to Saunders (2009) there is three principal ways of how to carry out exploratory research: a search of the literature, interviewing experts in the topic and conducting focus groups. Exploratory research is flexible and possible to adapt as the research process goes on. (ibid)

Descriptive research is when there already exists a lot of knowledge within the problem area and you want to find answers to the existing theory. The topic on which conducting research on has to be clear in order to be possible to collect data on. (Saunders, 2009)

Explanatory research has the aim to study connections between causes and symptoms to find relationships between the two. It means find a connection between a situation and problem. (Saunders, 2009)
This thesis will focus on an exploratory purpose since it aims to find a deeper understanding on how event sponsorship can contribute to build brand image. It will also have a descriptive approach since it will describe previous theory on the topic as well as the empirical data collected. In a way it is also explanatory since it will draw conclusions, in the end of this thesis in order to answer the stated research question. However, the focus will be on conducting an exploratory purpose. Since the purpose of research now has been motivated, the research approach will be discussed in the following section.

3.2 Research Approach

According to Bryman and Bell (2003) there exist two different approaches on how to conduct research in social science, namely a qualitative or a quantitative method. The main difference between these two methodologies is that the quantitative approach focuses on collecting quantifications while the qualitative approach rather focuses on words. What approach is suitable to use depends on the problem of the research. It is also possible to combine the two approaches. (ibid)

3.2.1 Quantitative Approach

The quantitative approach means collection of numerical data and has a broad deductive approach concerning the research. The collected information must always be turned into data, in other words, be quantified before it can be analyzed. The quantification can either be the use of already numeric measurements as age or, the data can be coded, which means transformed into numbers. (Bryman and Bell, 2003)

3.2.2 Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach entails an inductive approach to the connection between theory and research and focuses mainly on words. The qualitative approach has the aim to find an understanding of the collected data and research problem. This is made by using methods like qualitative interviews, observations, focus groups, qualitative analysis of documents or an analysis of conversation. The qualitative approach aims to find the view of the participants, deep data and meaning on a micro level. It is more unstructured than the quantitative approach and aims to investigate people in natural settings. (Bryman and Bell, 2003)

3.2.3 Approach for this Thesis

This thesis will use a qualitative approach to research since it aims to gain a deeper understanding of how the use of event marketing, with focus on sponsored event, can build
brand image. A qualitative approach is also suitable to investigate a small sample and to get deeper knowledge and understanding. This thesis will use qualitative interviews to investigate a small sample to find this understanding. The choice of conducting interviews will be further discussed under section 3.4 Data Collection. Since it now is clear that this thesis will have a qualitative research approach, the research strategy will be presented below.

3.3 Research Strategy
Since this thesis will have a qualitative research approach there exist five different research strategies to use. (Yin, 1994) These strategies are experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case studies. Which one is appropriate to use can be determined by three different conditions. The first condition is (1) the type of research question asked. The second condition is (2) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events. The third condition is (3) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events. (ibid)

The type of research question can be either a “who”, “what”, “where”, “how” and “why”-question. Since this thesis is a question of “how” three different strategies can be used, namely experiment, history or case study. Control over behavioral events will not be needed and this thesis will focus on contemporary event which indicates the use of a case study to be most appropriate. (Yin, 1994)

3.3.1 Design of Case Study
Furthermore, Yin (1994) states that there exist four different type of designs of case studies, namely single-case holistic designs, single-case embedded designs, multiple-case holistic design and multiple case embedded designs. Holistic designs entails merely one single unit of analysis whereas embedded means multiple units of analysis. This thesis will use a single-case embedded design since it will be surrounding one specific event. The designs of this thesis will be embedded since it will conduct analysis on multiple units. By having this design a certain event’s potential impact on sponsoring brands’ images can be investigated. (ibid) Since this thesis now focuses on conducting a single case embedded design, the way data will be collected will be presented in the following section.

3.4 Data Collection
When conducting a case study there exist many different ways to collect data namely, documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and
physical artifacts (Yin, 2009). This thesis will use interviews to collect data since the purpose of this thesis is to gain a deeper insight into the research area. Yin (2009) also regards interviews as one of the forms of data collection that is most suitable to use for a case study, which becomes a motivation to the choice made.

### 3.4.1 Qualitative Interview

There exist different types of qualitative interviews suitable for a case study (Yin, 2009). According to Bryman and Bell (2003) there exist two major types of interviews, namely unstructured and semi-structured interviews. During an unstructured interview only a few questions are asked which are open ended and the respondent is expected to answer freely. In a semi-structured interview, a number of topics exist that the interview want to cover and it is common that these are stated in an interview guide to help the interview process to be somewhat structured. The respondent however has much space to reply in the way he or she wants. It is also possible to ask questions that are not in the interview guide and the questions actually on the guide do not necessary need to be asked in a specific order. (Bryman and Bell, 2003) This thesis will use semi-structured interviews since it aims to cover some specific topics. Also an interview guide has been made to facilitate the process of making sure these topics are going to be covered in interviews. This interview guides is available as an appendix A for English interview guide and appendix B for Swedish translation. The interviews will be conducted by one interviewer and to facilitate the process of making sure that the data does not get distorted or forgotten, the interviews will be recorded. The respondents were aware of that they were being recorded and had no objections to that fact, which did not make the recording and registration of data an issue. Since the data collection now has been motivated and described, the sample selection for this thesis will now be presented in the following section.

### 3.5 Sample Selection

In this thesis the sample selection will be made due to limitations stated in chapter one. This thesis aims to look from the sponsoring companies’ point of view to understand how the use of event sponsorship can contribute to building brand image. Therefore the sample chosen to collect data from needs to be an organization that uses sponsorship of events. Since this thesis investigate event marketing, the need of an event to focus the thesis on is essential to find. I will frame my sample selection to events having sponsors and to companies that used event sponsorship. There exist a number of events that uses sponsors and fits the sample and I made
the choice of using the event Haglöfs Night Trail Run because I think it is an interesting event which I also have a personal interest in. The data will be collected though two qualitative interviews with two different companies that sponsor this event.

The first company is Haglöfs who are the main sponsor of the night trail run. They are interesting to talk to since they use event sponsorship a lot in their company. Haglöfs is the largest supplier of outdoor equipment in Scandinavia and are found on both the European market as well as Japan.\(^1\) The interview with Haglöfs will be made with the Marketing Coordinator at Haglöfs Scandinavia AB, Carl Hård af Segerstad since he is the person responsible for event sponsorship in the organization and very much engaged in the event in question.

The other interview is will be made with a company named Addnature, who is a lower level sponsor of the event. Addnature is a retail store for outdoor equipment active both online as well as physical stores in Stockholm, Sweden.\(^2\) I will interview Calle Ringborg who is the event manager for Addnature.

I chose to interview these people since they were in responsibility for their respective companies’ use of event sponsorship. By choosing to interview two different companies who engage in different level of sponsorship to the event, I expect to get a complete overview on how those two works with event sponsorships and can also see if there exist any differences depending on level of sponsorship. This sample selection aims to give an overview of the potential contribution event sponsorship can have to brand image. The sample selection has now been motivated and discussed, the following section will present the methodology for analysis of data.

### 3.6 Analysis of Data

The analysis of data aims to generate answers to previous stated research question and to achieve the purpose of this thesis. This is often difficult since the researcher do not always have a clear view on how this analysis should be conducted. (Yin, 1994) Yin further argues that it is important to have a general analytic strategy since it will facilitate the analysis and make sure the right technique is used. There exist two general strategies on how the collected data can be analyzed, relying on theoretical data or developing a case description.

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\(^2\) [http://www.addnature.com/about.aspx](http://www.addnature.com/about.aspx)
3.6.1 Relying on Theoretical Propositions

This thesis will rely on theoretical propositions which mean comparing the findings of the collected data to the theories used in the frame of reference in this thesis. This strategy is the most preferable one and helps to both focus on certain data and ignore other data not necessary. This way of analyzing data helps to answer question of a “how” or “what” nature and is of good use to organize the study and define alternative explanations to examine. By using a within case analysis the collected data and the theory in the conceptual framework will be compared with each other within the case. (Yin, 1994)

3.6.2 Three Flows of Activity

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) qualitative data analysis consists of “three concurrent flows of activity” (p.10), namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction entails that data is narrowed down and organized so the final conclusions can be made. Data display means that the data should be further organized in order to facilitate the drawing of conclusions. Conclusion drawing and verification is where the data actually get a meaning and finding patterns among the data. (ibid) Since the process on how the data will be analyzed now has been discussed and motivate, the quality standards for this study will be presented in the next section.

3.7 Quality Standards: Validity and Reliability

To establish the quality standards of the case study research there exist four relevant tests that can be used to verify the standards. These tests are the following: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. The table below shows which case study tactics are suitable for each test and a phase of research in which the tactics occurs.
Table 2: Case study tactics for four design tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Case study tactics</th>
<th>Phase of research in which tactic occurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Construct validity | ➢ Use multiple sources of evidence  
➢ Establish chain of evidence  
➢ Have key information review draft case study report | Data collection  
Data collection  
Composition |
| Internal validity | • Do pattern-matching  
• Do explanation-building  
• Do time-series analysis | Data analysis  
Data analysis  
Data analysis |
| External validity | • Use replication logic in multiple-case studies | Research design |
| Reliability      | • Use case study protocol  
• Develop case study data base | Data collection  
Data collection |

Source: Yin (1994, p. 33)

3.7.1 Construct Validity

Construct validity entails identifying correct operational measures for the theory being studied. In this test there are three different tactics to increase the construct validity as seen in the previous table. (Yin, 1994) For this case study interviews will be made to collect data and a total of two interviews will be conducted. To establish the chain of evidence this thesis will be referencing to sources of the evidence throughout the whole report. The draft of this thesis has been reviewed by both supervisors as well as fellow students along the process and the interview guide, available as an appendix, will also be approved by my supervisor.

The choice of respondents to this case study will be made in order to find suitable people to interviews to get good answers to my questions. The people with whom I will conduct interviews with are well addressed in the matter of event sponsorship and their respective company’s use of sponsorships to event. I chose to interview these people because of their knowledge and because they responsibility for event sponsorship within their companies. Due to the geographical distance the interviews will be made over the phone. Both interviews will be been recorded in order to double check the answers afterwards and to limit the risk of interpreting the answers the wrong way. The interviews will be conducted in Swedish since the respondents had Swedish as a mother tongue. Afterwards the interviews will be translated into to English. This becomes a risk when the translating might include potential translating errors but serves as a benefit as the respondents might not have been able to answer as freely if the interviews had been in English. The interview guide, available as an appendix, was also
been translated. Although it was first written in English, translated to Swedish and then translated to English again to eliminate potential translating errors. Furthermore, the author is fluent in both English and Swedish which will prevent bias in the translation.

3.7.2 Internal Validity
Internal validity will not been further explained as this is concerned merely to explanatory case studies. (Yin, 1994)

3.7.3 External Validity
To increase the external validity Yin (1994) state that the use of replication logic in multiple case studies is essential. External validity will not be focused on since this thesis is a case study. External validity tests if the results of a research are possible to be generalized outside of the imminent case. Furthermore, it is crucial to separate statistical generalization and analytical generalization. The analytical generalization is used to make a generalization of results to wider theory, while statistical generalization regards a whole population which is more appropriate for surveys. (ibid)

3.7.4 Reliability
The test of reliability entails the fact that a case study can be repeated and generate the same result the second time. This means that the same case is carried out by another researcher who follows the exact procedure as this thesis, the conclusion will end up the same. To increase the reliability of a case study tactics suggested are the use of case study protocol or the development of case study data base. (Yin, 1994) In this thesis the procedure of research will been thoroughly explained and also the existence of the interview guide which is available as an appendix, shows how the data collection will be made. Also the conceptualization and frame of reference shows clearly which factors that will be evaluated and investigated to answer the research question. Worth to mention is that there always is a potential danger for bias when conducting interviews, both from the researcher personal bias as well as from the respondents. In order to deal with the potential bias, the values and attitudes of both the author of this thesis as well as the respondents should and could be questioned.
4. Empirical Data

In this chapter the empirical data will be presented. The data was collected by individual interviews with the organizations Haglöfs and Addnature. This chapter will start by introduce the case and present each organization and the empirical data connected to each company.

4.1 Case Presentation

Haglöfs Night Trail Run is an entire new event which is held in the outside of Stockholm. It is a cross country running competition that takes place at night and the contestants run with a head lamp following reflexes that mark where the track goes. Haglöfs Night Trail Run is made by a cooperation together with the well known orienteering competition 10-mila. It is an event that takes place at the same arena as Night Trail Run and is ongoing from Saturday to Sunday. Haglöfs Night Trail Run starts between the men and women’s competition and at 10-mila where thousands of people attend from both Sweden and the rest of the world, which makes it a rather big event.

4.2 Haglöfs

Haglöfs is a company selling quality outdoor equipment and are a Swedish based company. The company was founded in 1914 in Sweden as a small company and has now grown to be the largest supplier in Scandinavia, employing in the year of 2011, 155 people. They are targeting “people who invest in an active outdoor life” and are now present in the markets in Europe, Asia, North America as well as Australia and New Zealand. Their products consist of three different areas, footwear, clothing and hardware and their net sales were in the year of 2011 SEK 626.1 million. At the company I have conducted an interview with the Marketing Coordinator at Haglöfs Scandinavia AB, Carl Hård af Segerstad. Haglöfs sponsor many events both globally as well as locally. Global events are Haglöfs Arctic Weekend, Scandinavian Big Mountain Championships and Haglöfs Åre Extreme Challenge. Local events they sponsor are the Strathpuffer, Haglöfs Highlander Mountain Marathon and Haglöfs Open 5. They also sponsor the event this case is focusing on, Haglöfs Night Trail Run. (ibid)

4.2.1 Empirical Data
In the following sections the empirical data retrieved from the interview with Haglöfs will be presented. The data collected for the research question of this thesis will be structured by the different factors in the interview guide which is available as an appendix, namely event image, influential variables, image transfer, brand image and most vital variable to consider.

4.2.1.1 Event Image
Haglöfs thoughts concerning the different variables that might impact the event’s image will be presented below.

Purpose with Sponsoring
According to Carl Hård af Segerstad the purpose of sponsoring Night Trail Run was to facilitate the launching of a new outdoor product line. They chose to sponsor this event because it had the people attending that Haglöfs considered as their target market. The sponsoring became a trustworthy way to communicate their products. The timing was good for the event so it became a natural step to take. They considered the event to have all the components they looked for, a big established arena (10-mila), a lot of people attending, a concept with speakers, TV production, big screens and everything in a good environment.

Event Type
Haglöfs sponsor a lot of different events but Segerstad claims that they want to sponsor events that fit their brand and where they can act in a trustworthy way. The event type needs to be relevant to the target group and it should entail some type of challenge and something special. The event they sponsor should entail an adventure and something that get the participants excited. The events should also be a little bit of fun and have some kind of unique element. Haglöfs also have most activities in Sweden and Scandinavia but they are trying to get them to grow internationally as well. Segerstad states that they are of course sponsoring events in other countries as well.

Event Size
Regarding how the size of an event might impact the events image Segerstad states that at Haglöfs they do not really care about the size. He further argues that no matter the size, an event can become successful. It all comes down to what the objective of the sponsorship is and how an organization wants to reach that objective. He claims that a small event has the opportunity of becoming rather personal and jovial. While as if the event is huge, the
communication of logo and similar exposure becomes more important because in that case exposure is the only possible way of communicating with the people attending the event.

**Professional Status**

When it comes to what impact the professional status of the participants’ might have to an events image, Segerstad further argues that it has an impact. He states that it is fun and adds an extra dimension to the event if “ordinary” people get to meet and compete with someone in an entirely different level and act among elite athletes.

**Event History**

The event’s history’s impact on event image Segerstad claims that this event is totally new and has therefore no past history that might impact the image.

**Event venue**

Concerning what impact the venue of where the event takes place might have Segerstad states that he does not think it matter. An event can become successful no matter where it takes place, provided it is conducted the right way. He also states later on that the venue of course is interesting to consider, although he does not think it really has an impact on image.

**Promotional Appearance**

Regarding promotional appearance Haglöfs work with public relations as one channel both before during and after the event takes place. Segerstad suggests that while they at Haglöfs have commercial interest in the sponsorship but that it is as well of an informative feature. He states that there exists a double interest, people have a need for good products and Haglöfs have a need to tell those people that Haglöfs have those products.

**Behavior of Company’s Representatives**

The impact that the sponsoring organization representatives’ behavior at the event might have is to be considered really important according to Segerstad. It is all about “living the brand” and depending on if the representatives are just merely standing on the side of the race it will signal something totally different than if they actually are participating in the event. Segerstad argues that they have noticed that all the different ways that they at Haglöfs can show what they represent will be reflected in everything they do.
**Haglöfs Night Trail Run’s Image**

Segerstad thinks of Haglöfs Night Trail Run as exciting. For the people who participate in 10-mila it might be perceived as simple and easy, compared 5 to 18 kilometers running, but for the people participating in Night Trail Run who are maybe running in darkness for the first time he think it is perceived as exciting and eye opening.

**4.2.1.2 Influential Variables**

Haglöfs opinions concerning what impact the influential variables might have on the company’s image will be presented below.

**Degree of Similarity**

Regarding the degree of similarity Segerstad claims that they want to meet people on their level and it is all about meeting and finding the right target group. They want to sponsor events that fit their brand so that it seems trustworthy and relevant. They have a kind of rule of thumb that the people who work at Haglöfs should want to participate in the events that they sponsor and by that make sure it is relevant.

**Level of Sponsorship**

Concerning level of sponsorship Haglöfs are active on some different levels but most of the times position themselves on a rather high level. Segerstad states that they does not always have a need to be exclusive but they strive to claim ownership of the events they choose to sponsor in order to not just buy exposure of their logo but to also activate the people attending the event.

**Event Frequency**

Segerstad states that concerning event frequency that they think it is exciting to build long term and that they need to make some evaluations before taking a decision on whether to make Night Trail Run an recurring event. Haglöfs measure the effect that the sponsorship has generated by conducting follow up of press, writing in media. They also have direct contact with the people attending the event and they can also measure the sales on place as well.

**Product Involvement**

Haglöfs have a great deal of product involvement in Night Trail Run. They have set up a tent where they together with the organization Addnatre are selling their products. This is made in order to generate a high involvement according to Segerstad.
4.2.1.3 Image Transfer
Concerning if the sponsorship will have an impact on Haglöfs own image Segerstad implies that he thinks it will have an impact and that one objective they have when choosing to sponsor an event is to build brand image. He claims the fit between Night Trail Run’s image and Haglöfs image is great.

4.2.1.4 Most Vital Variable to Consider
Regarding what of the different factors discussed with Segerstad that has the strongest impact on brand image he states that it is the trustworthiness and fit. Haglöfs are guided by their core values to a wide extent and they strive to live the values in meaning and action in a trustworthy way which is made by sponsoring events that are relevant and have a strong similarity between event and sponsoring company.

4.3 Addnature
Addnature is a retail store, that both exist online as well as an actual shop for outdoor and sporting products which focuses on climbing, skiing, mountaineering, rafting, cycling, surfing, running etc. Their stores are located in Stockholm and in the last few years the company has grown a lot. Addnature focus on the modern outdoor life and employed in the year of 2012, 59 people and have a turnover of SEK 131 832 000. At Addnature I have been interviewing Calle Ringborg who is a part of the marketing team and is responsible for events and fairs for Addnature.

4.3.1 Empirical Data RQ
In the following sections the empirical data collected from Addnature will be presented. The data collected for the research question of this thesis will be structured by the different factors in the interview guide which is available as an appendix, namely event image, influential variables, image transfer, brand image and most important variable to consider.

4.3.1.1 Event Image
Addnature’s thoughts concerning the different variables that might impact the event’s image will be presented below.

Purpose with Sponsoring
According to Ringborg the purpose of sponsoring Night Trail Run was to act as a retail partner for Haglöfs products and be seen by the participants at the event. Addnature believe

http://www.addnature.com/about.aspx
that their customers like when the people of Addnature are active at event that they sponsor. Addnature did not search for this event to sponsor, they were asked by Haglöfs to cooperate with them as a retail partner for Haglöfs products.

**Event Type**
Addnature sponsor a lot of different events but Ringborg states that they want to stay within their industry when sponsoring events. They want to be associated with a modern outdoor life and in order to do so they sponsor events linked to their interests as climbing, mountaineering, multi sports and trail running for example. He further argues that they are very thorough at Addnature when they choose what events they want to sponsor, since they are trying to always keep to their core image. Example of events they sponsor except for Night Trail Run is Åre Extreme Challenge, and Ö till Ö which can be translated to island to island. Island to island is a swim/run competition which takes place in the archipelago of Stockholm.

**Event Size**
Concerning how the size of the event might impact the events image Ringborg states that at Addnature they sponsor both big and small event. He mention an example of the differences between small and large events, claiming that a small event as island to island which takes place in the middle of the archipelago with not so many participants it is important to work in order to gain a high media involvement to have an impact on image. While as in the case for Night Trail Run which is arranged in cooperation with 10-mila and therefore are guaranteed a surrounding of thousands of people at the arena it becomes harder to reach each attendee. He claims that a small competition can actually be more visible than a very large one in some cases and therefore affect image as well.

**Professional Status**
Regarding if the professional status of the participants has an impact on the event’s image Ringborg argues that he thinks it might have a very large impact on image. He gives an example of if having the elite cross country skier, Marcus Hellner participating in a competition it would generate and attract a lot of more media, than if there are amateurs attending the event. He further explains that Addnature sponsor events for both amateurs as well as for professional athletes.
**Event History**

Concerning if the history of Night Trail Run might have an impact on the events image Ringborg believe in some way it has. He states that since Addnature ended up in this project by coincidence he can’t really talk about the history’s impact. Since this event is a brand new event there also does not exist any history to consider. Although, Ringborg makes an observation that is worth mentioning. He states that competitions as such are growing fast as and the trend of night trail running is increasing as well. This indicates a bright future for Haglöfs Night Trail Run because of the increasing demand for competitions.

**Event venue**

The venue of where the event takes place is to be considered as something that has a very great impact on image according to Ringborg. He states that it partly depends on the location and that the location is something that can attract an audience and people to attend an event. He further argues that you can either choose the venue based on attraction of the place or based on the customers that an organization wants to reach. An example he gives is that he thinks that Kebnekaise Arctic Run would attract a lot more people than Sälen Arctic Run would because of the venue. Another example is that Addnature often sponsor event based in Stockholm since it is where they are based and most customers are. He sees it as an opportunity to then start sponsoring events at new places like Gothenburg.

**Promotional Appearance**

Regarding the promotional appearances Ringborg states that they have one full time person who work only with PR. Addnature try to sponsor events close to their core image which implies that they not only have an commercial interest of their sponsorship but also a genuine interests for the events that they choose to sponsor. Ringborg explains how they work with PR in connection to the events they sponsor. They try to attend most events they sponsor and film the events in order to upload on YouTube, Facebook and to their blog as a way to be seen.

**Behavior of Company's Representatives**

Concerning however the sponsoring organizations representatives’ behavior at the event might impact the image Ringborg agrees that it is important. He states that Addnature look at the event they sponsor as a contact area where they aim to meet the end customers. Therefore it is crucial that the representatives at place make a good impression. He further argues that the representatives need to contribute with something by being at the event and that it often occurs that they get to know the participants at the competition.
**Haglöfs Night Trail Run’s Image**

Ringborg can’t define Haglöfs Night Trail Run’s image.

### 4.3.1.2 Influential variables

Addnature’s opinions concerning what impact the influential variables might have on the company’s image will be presented below.

**Degree of Similarity**

Regarding the degree of similarity between the event’s image and Addnature’s image he states that he thinks it is a great match of images. He supports his opinion by arguing that Night Trail Run and Addnature definitely have the same customers.

**Level of Sponsorship**

As for which levels of sponsorship Addnature are conducting Ringborg explains that it is very much depending on what type of event it is. He also explains that they often attend an event in the shape of a retail partner and that was the case with Haglöfs Night Trail Run. Sometimes Addnature attend as a high level sponsor and sometimes on a low level. But according to Ringborg they tend to not act in the shape of main sponsor since it often costs a lot of money.

**Event Frequency**

Ringborg further states that if Haglöfs Night Trail Run would become a reoccurring event Addnature would be interested of keep on sponsoring the event. Though, it all comes down to a lot of things during the process.

**Product Involvement**

Addnature acted as a retail partner at Haglöfs Night Trail Run but ended up partly taking care of all the bookings and managing some marketing through using their newsletter that goes out to many people in Sweden as a marketing channel. The retail partnership entailed having a tent where they sold products. Therefore they kept a kind of high level of service involvement in the case of Haglöfs Night Trail Run.

### 4.3.1.3 Image Transfer

Regarding if Haglöfs Night Trail Run’s image might transfer to Addnature’s image Ringborg was positive. He argued that they absolutely meet new customers at the event who will perceive Addnature’s image based on Haglöfs Night Trail Run as event. He states that the main objective with sponsoring this event was to be seen by people and show that Addnature
is active outdoors. He explains that at Addnature they believe that customers enjoy when they as an organization are active at the event that they sponsor.

4.3.1.4 Most Vital Variable to Consider
Concerning which factors that was previous which mentioned might be the most important one to build brand image, Ringborg explains that he believe that it is to find an event that goes in line with the target image a company has of their operations. He gives an example of that if you want your brand to be perceived as hard and tough then you should sponsor such events. To simply choose the events based on what target image you want to have.
5. Data analysis

In this chapter the collected data will be analyzed by using the strategy of relying on theoretical propositions. This strategy entails a comparison between the theories previously mentioned in the conceptual framework and the collected empirical data. This chapter will conduct a within case analysis in order to find patterns between the collected data and the theories to in the next chapter enable conclusion drawing. These patterns will be presented in a table showing if the data supports theory or not and if there is any difference between the respondents. The conclusions will be presented in chapter six.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) as mentioned in the methodology chapter, the three flows of activity will be used when analyzing the collected empirical data. The two flows, reduction and data display, will be used in this chapter. Data reduction will be used by choosing the most relevant data that has a connection to the conceptual framework. Data display will be conducted by presenting the data in a table that shows found patterns. The last flow, conclusion drawing and verification will be used in the last chapter of this thesis.

5.1 Can Event Sponsorships Contribute to Building Brand Image?
The research question for this thesis is based on theory from Gwinner (1997) and Behrer and Larsson (1998). Theory from those two authors together, form the frame of reference stated in chapter two. The variables from the framework that this thesis has conducted research on, are presented below as well as a comparison between the empirical data and theory.
Table 3: Event sponsorships impact on brand image

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different factors impact on image</th>
<th>Haglöfs</th>
<th>Addnature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event Type</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Event size</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional status</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Event history</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Event venue</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promotional appearance</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior of company’s representatives</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Influencial variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Degree of similarity</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Level of sponsorship</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Event Frequency</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Product involvement</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Image transfer</strong></td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Definitions of symbols:*
+ Data supports theory
- Data do not support theory
/ Data partly supports theory

*Source:* Author’s own construction

5.1.1 Event Type

Gwinner’s (1997) theory concerning the variable *event type* was supported by the empirical data. Both of the interviewed companies agreed that they considered it important to choose to sponsor events that are relevant to their own target image and line of business. The data agrees with theory that the type of event has an impact on sponsorship and something both companies consider a lot before starting sponsoring an event. It becomes clear that respondents try to sponsor events that entail some type of challenge in order to fit their core images and attract the right target audience. One aspect that was not stated in theory, but that came up during the data collection, was that it is considered important that the type of event
chosen to sponsor should entail some kind of unique element and challenge for the participants. Overall, Gwinner’s (1997) theory of event type was supported by the data.

5.1.2 Event Characteristics
The event characteristics are divided into five different variables that according to Gwinner’s (1997) theory might impact an event’s image. An analysis concerning if the different characteristics are supported by the empirical data will be presented below.

5.1.2.1 Event Size
Gwinner’s (1997) theory, concerning event size was not supported by the empirical data. Both the respondents explain just the opposite to Gwinner’s (1997) theory. They argue that the size will not matter to what image an event will have. The respondents agree with each other that both large and small events have the same opportunity to impact the event’s image. On the contrary from theory, they states that it all comes down to how the event is conducted in other ways and with the right actions, a small event can have the same image as a larger one. Overall, the Gwinner’s (1997) theory is not supported by the data.

5.1.2.2 Professional Status
Professional status is another variable that Gwinner (1997) states might have an impact on what the event’s image will look like. This theory is highly supported by the empirical data. As the theory discusses, both the respondents agree with that depending on what status the attendees at an event has, the image will differ. They further argue, as theory suggests, that a higher status on the attendees will attract a lot more media exposure which will influence what image the event will have. Also the data suggests one aspect that was not mentioned in theory, that in the case of Haglöfs Night Trail Run and similar competitions, having an elite athlete at an event for amateur athletes will add something extra to the event and will influence the image as well. Overall, Gwinner’s (1997) theory concerning professional status is supported by the data.

5.1.2.3 Event History
Concerning Gwinner’s (1997) theory about that the history of an event, data only support that theory to some extent. Theory states that the history of an event will impact what image that event will have but the empirical data does not agree. The respondents argue that since the specific event that this thesis focuses on, does not have any previous history, it cannot therefore affect the image. But generally speaking one of the respondents partly agrees, supporting theory to some extent.
5.1.2.4 Event Venue
Gwinner (1997) states that the venue of the event will impact what image people will perceive concerning the event. The empirical data both supports and contradicts theory. One out of two respondents disagrees with theory, stating that the venue does not matter to image, provided that it is conducted the right way concerning other variables, the same image can be achieved. The other respondent supported theory, arguing that the venue is important to attract people. Another main suggestion is that the right venue facilitates the process of getting people to attend the event which will affect the event’s image.

5.1.2.5 Promotional Appearance
Promotional appearance has according to Gwinner’s (1997) theory an impact on an event’s image. The empirical data supports this theory. Theory states that depending on appearance the event can be perceived as commercial or as connected to corporate social responsibility. As the theory discusses, the respondents states that they actively work with public relations in order to make their sponsoring perceived in a trustworthy way. The data also states that the companies have commercial interest, but that it exist an interest from their target audience as well. Therefore, the data suggest that it is important to consider the promotional appearance in order to communicate a trustworthy sponsorship.

5.1.3 Behavior of Company’s Representatives
The empirical data supports Behrer and Larsson (1998) theory concerning that the behavior of company’s representatives will impact the event’s image. The data states that the representatives’ behaviors are important because it will signal a feeling and perception of the event, which will influence its image. As theory discuss, a great behavior from representatives will help communicate the message of the event. Data supports that by stating that the event is a contact area in which they aim to make an impression and create relationships in order to communicate what they as sponsors, as well as the event, represents.

5.1.4 Influential Variables
Gwinner (1997) suggest in his theory that there are certain variables that might moderate the image transfer from event to sponsoring brand. In this thesis as mentioned before, the moderating impact will not be analyzed and the variables will therefore instead be referred to as influential variables. The variables will be analyzed on whether the organizations think the influential variables have an impact on the sponsoring brand’s image.
5.1.4.1 Degree of Similarity

The empirical data supports Gwinner’s (1997) theory concerning the degree of similarity. Both the respondents are considering this variable as having a great influence on the brand’s image. The data suggest that it is important that the event fits the sponsoring organizations’ brand in order to look trustworthy and also fit the core image of the sponsors. Theory states that the degree of similarity is important since it facilitates for the attendees to find the link between sponsoring brand and event. The data supports this theory by stating that having a high degree of similarity will contribute for the sponsors to find the right target audience and at the same time be perceived as trustworthy.

5.1.4.2 Level of Sponsorship

As for the level of sponsorship the collected empirical data partly supports Gwinner’s (1997) theory. Both of the respondents consider this variable to maybe have an influence on image. They both argue that are active on different levels depending on the event, but the difference between the two is that one of the respondents aim to sponsor in a higher level while as the other consider it to be too costly to act as main sponsor. As theory discusses, the respondent who often acted on a higher level motivated their choice by stating that they wanted to have a high degree of ownership in the event’s they sponsored. The data suggest that a higher level of sponsorship generates an increases power of the event and its course. Although the respondents are also sponsors in the lower level as well and therefore merely part agreed with theory.

5.1.4.3 Event Frequency

The empirical data supports Gwinner’s (1997) theory concerning the variable event frequency. As theory discusses, both of the respondents stated that they consider it as important to always build long term concerning image building and that it is considered as positive to have reoccurring events.

5.1.4.4 Product involvement

Gwinner (1997) suggests in his theory that product involvement will affect brand image. This theory is supported by the empirical data collected in this study. As theory discusses concerning product involvement, both the respondents’ state that they try to have a high level of involvement to be able to show what they represents and offers. Overall, Gwinner’s theory concerning product involvement is supports by the data.
5.1.5 Image Transfer

Gwinner (1997) explain in his model how the event’s image transfer to the sponsoring company’s image and the collected empirical data supports that theory. When conducting interviews with the respondents, they both agree that they think the event’s image will transfer over to their organization’s image. One of the respondents stated that it is one of their objectives when they sponsor events, to actually build brand image. They further argued that the image transfer from event to sponsoring brand’s image occurs due to the fact that the new customers they meet at the event will perceive their image based on the memory of the event’s image.

5.2 Comparison Analysis

In this following section the collected data from the two companies will be compared to each other in order to find differences between the two. The different way organizations perceive variables to have different influence to build brand image will be shown by conducting this comparison. The model below will display which variables they considered in different ways.

Table 4: Comparison analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Event venue</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions of symbols:
+ Data supports theory
- Data do not support theory
/ Data partly supports theory

Source: Author’s own construction

Concerning the variables belonging to event characteristics two differences was found. Regarding the differences in how the respondents agreed with theory was related to the variable event history and event venue. The variable event history did not differ fundamentally between the two. Both argued that in the case of this specific event, history would not have an impact. The difference was found in the fact that Addnature partly agreed with theory concerning events in general while Haglöfs thought it to not have any impact at all.
The opinions concerning the variable, *event venue*, did however differ a lot between both the respondents. Haglöfs considered it to not influence image at all while Addnature had the opposite opinion. Worth to mention is that Haglöfs often acts on a higher level of sponsorship compared to Addnature who regards a high level of sponsorship as too costly. This indicates that Haglöfs who often, because of their level of sponsorship, usually have a higher degree of ownership as well as power concerning the event and how it is conducted. Addnature on the other hand does not have the same power to influence how the event is conducted if they act on a lower level of sponsorship. This implies that the more ownership a company has the less importance the venue has since the sponsor can make sure that the event generates the target image in other ways.
6. Findings and Conclusion

In this chapter the findings and conclusion of this thesis will be presented to answer to the research question stated in chapter one namely, how event sponsorships can contribute to building brand image. At the end of this chapter the implications of further theory, practitioners and research will be presented as well as the limitations of this thesis.

6.1 How Can Event Sponsorship Contribute to Building Brand Image?

The research made in this thesis shows that event sponsorship can be used by organizations as a tool to build brand image. The use of event sponsorship is considered by both the respondents as well as by theory to be very helpful when building brand image. The events are considered a meeting place where the sponsoring companies have the ability to meet and influence what image their current as well as potential customers have regarding their image. This is a fact that organizations take advantage of and seize as an opportunity. If the event in question is carried out in a successful way it will create positive feelings towards the sponsoring organization. However, I discovered in this thesis that how the organizations consider different factors and variables possible influence on image differs.

6.1.1 Event Type

The types of event an organization choose to sponsor play a crucial role in what image the event will have and therefore, in the end, what image the organization will have. Depending on if organizations sponsor an event that lies within their type of core image or not will signal if the sponsorship is trustworthy and relevant. The empirical data from this study shows that organizations consider the type of events they want to sponsor a lot and try to keep it relevant to their type of business which is also supported by theory presented in the literature review. The type of event will send a signal to people about what the sponsoring company stands for and therefore in the end will have an effect on brand image.

6.1.2 Event Characteristics

The findings for each variable under event characteristic will be presented below in the following order: event size, professional status, event history event venue and promotional appearance.
6.1.2.1 Event Size
The size an event has is not considered as something that might influence the event’s image according to the findings in this study. The findings show that both the respondents consider seize as not having any impact on the event’s image. Findings are that companies consider an event’s image to be successful no matter the size of the event and that other variables are important instead.

6.1.2.2 Professional Status
My study shows that professional status is a really important factor to building brand image. The presence of elite athletes at Haglöfs Night Trail Run will attract media to a higher extent and add extra value to the event itself. Customers will therefore develop positive feelings towards the competition when something extra in the form of a celebrity athlete attends the event and participate in the run. These positive feelings are considered to have a direct effect on image when the majority of people attending the event are not elite athletes. The higher level of media will also help to spread the image of the event contributing to the sponsoring organization’s image.

6.1.2.3 Event History
The history of the event cannot be considered as something that might have a significant influence on image. The empirical data suggest that since the event is totally new there is no history to consider and therefore it will not influence the image. Although generally speaking, one sample partly agreed with theory, that it might have an influence on image, but not for the surroundings of this case.

6.1.2.4 Event Venue
This study shows that regarding if the venue of where the event takes place has an influence on event image differs between organizations and their view on event sponsorship. While one organization considers it to have a great influence, one totally disagrees. It does not have any big influence since it all depends on how the event is conducted in other ways. The study shows that it can have a great influence if used the right way but at the same time it is not crucial for the building of an event’s image.
6.1.2.5 Promotional Appearance

The promotional appearance of the event is found in this thesis to be an important factor in building brand image. Promotional appearances are used to gain PR and attention to the event and the image it signals. It is often used as a commercial tool which aims to increase sales but will also have an influence on image when people perceive the brand image based on the event as well.

6.1.3 Behavior of Company's Representatives

This study shows that the behavior of sponsoring company’s representatives is fundamental for image building. There is a definite connection between behavior and image. The impression the representatives make on the people attending the event will have a direct influence on the perceptions attendees will generate concerning the sponsoring organization. Active participations of representatives signals trustworthiness and create a unity between organization and attendees. This unity will influence the image connected to the sponsoring brand.

6.1.4 Influential Variables

The findings concerning the influential variables will be presented below in the following order: degree of similarity, level of sponsorship, event frequency and product involvement.

6.1.4.1 Degree of Similarity

The degree of similarity is found in this study to influence the image extremely much and something organizations consider as one of the most important factors to consider when choosing what events to sponsor. If the image are similar between event and organization it will generate the right target group and therefore make sure that the event is attended by current and hopefully future possible customers. It signals relevance and the right associations of the sponsoring brand. It is important to keep the sponsorship within an organizations core values and image to make sure the brand image does not get harmed instead of building, which sometimes becomes the case.

6.1.4.2 Level of Sponsorship

This study shows that the level of sponsorship might partly be influencing image. The empirical data somewhat supports theory in this case and indicates that image more depends on execution of the event than the actual level it is active on. Although a high level of sponsorship generates a higher ownership and possible increased control, it will also be
dependent on how that sponsorship is executed. The high level by itself is not considered as having a direct influence on image.

6.1.4.3 Event Frequency
The findings of my research have shown that the event frequency has an influence on image. It is important to think long term when it comes to event sponsorship and the empirical data supports that it is hard to build short term surrounding image.

6.1.4.4 Product Involvement
Product involvement is found in this thesis to be something organizations work with at the event and something that has an influence on image. By involving products and /or services at the event organizations can easily show what they are offering and give the customer a picture of what they represents which will affect the perceptions of image.

6.1.5 Image Transfer
The theory that exists on image transfer from event to sponsoring organization is found to be accurate by the research conducted in this thesis. It is often one of many objectives that companies have when they start to sponsor an event. The most important variable to consider when conducting an event is according to the empirical data, the degree of similarity between event and sponsoring company and to make sure that the event is relevant to the target image an organization wish to have in the end.

6.2 Conclusions
Based on the previous mentioned findings above this thesis has reached the following conclusions regarding the research question:

- Event sponsorship can contribute to building brand image.
- The type of event an organization chooses to sponsor has to be in congruence with the image, products or services they offer.
- The different characteristics of an event will have an influence on the event’s image although they are considered to be of difference importance among companies:
  - The size of the sponsored event might contribute to some extent to building brand image. Although no matter the size an event can have an influence on image provided that it has been conducted the right way concerning other variables.
The professional status of the participant at the event will have a high influence on image.

The history of an event will not likely have an influence on image.

The influence on image can differ depending on the venue of where the event takes place.

Promotional appearance will have a strong influence on image. No matter if it is perceived as commercial or corporate social responsibility related organizations will benefit from the sponsoring.

In order to show the attendees at an event what the sponsoring organization represents and make a good impression, the behavior of the sponsoring organization’s representatives becomes really important and will have a great influence on image.

The influential variables will have an influence on the image that will transfer from event to sponsoring organization:

- It is greatly important to have a high degree of similarity between sponsoring organizations image, products or services to influence image.
- The level of sponsorship participating in might have an influence on image.
- It is vital to build long term in order to influence image and therefore the event frequency is important to consider on how to conduct event sponsorship.
- To make an impression and influence the perception of image that exists, it is essential to involve products or services from the sponsoring organization.

The event’s image will transfer over to the sponsoring organization’s image provided that the sponsor is visible enough in some type of way.

The most important variable to have an influence on brand image is the degree of similarity and type of event.

The results from this study can also be applicable to work on international level. One of the respondents uses event sponsorship internationally. The person interviewed was the marketing coordinator for the whole of Scandinavia, not just Sweden.

Also the results suggest, although not mentioned in theory that organizations want consider it important to sponsor events which have some type of a special feature, adding something extra to the experience and that stands out from other events.

As the conclusions of this study now have been stated, the implications for theory will be presented in the following section.
6.2 Implications for Theory

The purpose of this thesis has been to gain a deeper understanding on how the use of event marketing, with focus on sponsored event, can build brand image. This has been made by answering the research question posed in the beginning of this thesis, how event sponsorships can contribute to building brand image. The thesis was both of exploratory purpose since it aimed to find a deeper understanding but it also had a descriptive approach since it described the previous theory within the topic and empirical data. The research question has been answered by first reviewing and exploring literature regarding theory, then collecting empirical data in the form of interviews to describe the question and lastly conclusion has been drawn to explain the answer of the research question. I have found in the process of this thesis that there exist a need for further research in the topic of event sponsorship. The world is vastly changing which creates a need for more research within the area regarding the influence event sponsorship has on image. As the implications of theory now have been discussed and stated, the following section will present the implications for practitioners.

6.2.1 Implication of Frame of Reference

When conducting this study it was made clear during the process that the variables that the frame of reference implies will have an impact on event and brand image was not in congruence with reality. This study shows that some variables could be removed from the model in order to make it more suitable and an additional variable could be added. The variables that could be considered to be removed is event size and event history. A variable that might could be considered added to the model is special feature. These mentioned variables will be further discussed in the next sections.

6.2.1.1 Event size

The study found the theory concerning the variable event size to not reflect reality. The study’s result implies that this variable has no influence on image and that companies consider it to not be of importance for building image. Therefore it is a suggestion, that in order to improve the model for this thesis, to remove the mentioned variable from the model.

6.2.1.2 Event History

An implication concerning the theory’s variable event history used in the model of frame of reference was found by the results and study. It became obvious during the interviews that
that since Haglöfs Night Trail Run does not have any previous history it became impossible for the respondents to give a clear statement concerning the impact it might have. The data collected and the conclusion made concerning this variable is therefore to be considered as not reflecting reality and not suitable to use in this case. It is therefore suggested that in the case of conducting a study surrounding an entire new event, this variable should be excluded from the model.

6.2.1.3 Special Feature
In the research of this study findings was made that implied that an additional variable, that theory did not mention, was considered important in event sponsorship. This variable is special feature which entails that organizations want to sponsor events that have some type of special feature that makes the event stand out. The study shows that this variable is important in order to create the right image and could contribute to image as well. Therefore, to improve the model used in this thesis, it is suggested that this variable is added to the model.

The above mentioned variables and their differences compared to theory used in this thesis are the contributions to theory that this thesis results in. Both some reductions, as well as some extensions to the frame of reference are suggested.

6.3 Implications for Practitioners
My research has found some findings regarding event sponsorship that managers of companies engaging in event sponsorship can consider as suggestions.

Event sponsorship can help contribute to building a brand’s image. Companies should be aware of the fact that the sponsored event’s image will transfer to the sponsoring company’s brand image which can be both good and bad. It is considered crucial to obtain a high degree of similarity when it comes to what event an organization should sponsor. There has to be a similarity in image, products or services in order for a successful image transfer to occur. Also if wanting to change a brand’s image, companies can sponsor event’s which has the desired target image and thereby transfer that image to their brand. It is also important to consider the level of sponsorship since the findings suggests that a high level of sponsorship entails higher ownership and power concerning an event. This high ownership and power can make the variables that affect the event’s image, the image transfer and in the end the brand image less important since the sponsoring organization have more control over the event.
To effectively influence a brand’s image companies should be very thorough when planning what event to sponsor and the different parts of the event as for example characteristics, product involvement and future of the event. To build long term is also absolutely vital to gain a sustainable stronger brand image as a result of the sponsorship. Also, the above mentioned implications are to be considered applicable to use when engaging in event sponsorship internationally as well. One of the respondents in this thesis engage in event sponsorship internationally as well as nationally and therefore the results of this thesis implies that managers also can consider the results and implications to use on an international level. Since the implications for practitioners now have been discussed and stated, the limitations for this study will now be presented in the following section.

6.4 Limitations

To conduct this research some limitations occurred along the process. Due to the time limit set for this thesis data was only collected concerning one specific event and collected from only two respondents. Another limitation is that the study is only conducted in Sweden concerning a local event. Also the fact that this thesis only have one author will limit the study since discussions and analyzes has been conducted by only one person.

6.5 Implications for Future Research

There exists a lack of research of the area of event sponsorship when it comes to how it might affect brand image and the research that do exist is fairly old and outdated. I would like to suggest some areas that could be considered for future research.

- A study similar to this, but concerning other cases, as international events or international sponsors.
- In the area of sponsored events it would be interesting to study the actual influence that sponsorship has on image, from the attendees’ point of view instead of sponsors’ point of view.
- A study concerning if the influence event sponsorship has on sponsoring brand’s image differs between the type of events for example sports, arts etcetera.
- Compare the influence event sponsorship has on sponsoring brand’s image between Swedish as well as foreign attendees in the case of both national and international brands.
- Future research on how companies actually measure the influence that event sponsorship has on brand image and comparing it internationally.
➢ A study regarding the influence that event sponsorship has on brand image compared to other promotional tools such as advertisement, sales promotion, personal selling and PR.

➢ Research about how sponsorship of online event can contribute to brand image on an international level.
References

Books & Articles


**Methodology References**


**Other References**


**Internet Sources**


Addnature’s webpage (2013). Retrieved 2013-05-22 from:

[http://www.addnature.com/about.aspx](http://www.addnature.com/about.aspx)
Appendix A: Interview guide

Date:  
Time:  
Place:  

**Introduction:**

Present myself

Purpose of the interview

Confidentiality

Does the respondent have any questions before we start the interview?

**General Information**

Name of company:

Number of employees:

Field of business:

Name of respondent:

Position of respondent:

Education:

**Event Image**

- What is your purpose of sponsoring this event?
- What type of event do you sponsor?
- What impact do you think the size of this event has on its image?
- What impact do you believe the professional status of this event has on its image?
- What is the history of this event and impact on the event’s image?
- What impact do you think the venue of this event has on its image?
- What objectives do you have regarding the promotional appearance of this event?
- What impact do you believe sponsoring organizations representatives’ behavior at this event has on the perceived image of the event?
- What image do you consider this event has?
Influential Variables

- Do you think the image of your brand matches the image of this event?
- What are you ideas regarding the level of sponsorship you pursue in this event? 
  \(\text{Level of sponsorship = main sponsor, sub sponsor, exclusive sponsor etc.}\)
- What are your thoughts regarding the frequency of this event?
- What level of product involvement do you have at this event?

Image Transfer

- Do you think the image of the event will affect the image of your company’s brand?

Brand Image

- Describe the brand image of your company?
- Why did you choose to sponsor this specific event?

End Question

- What of the different factors discussed in this interview do you believe is the most vital to improve the brand image for your company when using sponsorship of event?
Appendix B: Intervju guide

Datum: Tid: Plats:

**Introduktion:**
Presentera mig och syftet med intervjun

Har respondenten några frågor innan vi börjar intervjun?

**Generell information**
Namn på företag:

Antal anställda:

Namn på respondent:

Respondentens anställning på företaget:

**Event Image**
- Vad är Haglöfs syfte med att sponsra detta event?
- Vilken typ av event sponsrar Haglöfs?
- Vilken inverkan tror du storleken på det här eventet har för eventets image?
- Vilken inverkan tror du den professionella statusen på detta event har för dess image?
- Vad är historien för detta event och hur tror ni att det påverkar eventets image?
- Vilken inverkan på eventets image tror du att platsen (för eventet) har?
- Vilka mål har ni när det gäller PR anseende kring det här eventen?
- Vilken inverkan tror du att de sponsrade organisationernas representanterns beteende har för eventets image?
- Vilken image skulle du säga att det Haglöfs Night Trail Run har?

**Inflytelserika variabler för**
- Tycker du att Haglöfs image matchar det här events image?
- Hur tänker ni på Haglöfs kring hur ofta det här eventet äger/ska äga rum?
- Vilken nivå på produkt involvering har Haglöfs under det här eventet?
Image överföring

- Tror du att imagen som Haglös Night Trail Run har kommer att påverka Haglöfs image?

Varumärkesimage

- Beskriv Haglöfs image?
- Varför valde ni att sponsra detta specifika event?

Slutfråga

- Vilka olika faktorer av de vi diskuterat tidigare under intervjun tror du är de viktigaste för att förbättra ert varumärkes image vid användandet av sponsrade event?