Event Marketing

The role of sponsorships on brand equity: a business perspective

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Acknowledgement
These ten weeks writing this thesis have been interesting and rewarding but also intense and challenging at times. We have acquired knowledge within the areas of sponsorships and event marketing which we believe will be useful in our future careers. We hope that our work will inspire future students, practitioners and researchers to further investigate and explore this area of study. We have also learned how to plan, structure and conduct a scientific study and how to write a thesis in an academic way. We would like to especially thank our supervisor Nidal Dwaikat, who has given us constructive feedback and guidance along the way. In addition we would like to thank the respondents Eva Öjert at Telia Company, Jörgen Ericsson at Handelsbanken and Björn Hägg at Polarbröd for their participation and time taken to answer our questions which provided us with the data needed for this thesis. Finally, we would like to thank our friends and families for their support and encouragement during this period.

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Frida Öjerbrant

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Abstract

Event marketing is a promotional tool which play an important role in the marketing strategy of many companies today. The overall purpose of this thesis is to provide a better understanding on how companies use event sponsorships in order to improve brand equity, through a descriptive and exploratory approach to the area of study. To reach the purpose of this study, research questions were formulated, focusing on the objectives of event sponsorships and how companies choose the right event to sponsor, in order to reach stated objectives and build brand equity. In order to answer the research questions, a literature review was conducted which provided the base for the frame of reference. The method used is a qualitative multiple-case study. The data were collected by interviews with representatives from three well-known companies, Telia Company, Handelsbanken and Polarbröd, which all use sponsorship as a promotional tool. The results of the study indicate that sponsorship objectives within the corporate/product- and marketing categories are most frequently used in the building of brand equity. The single most common objectives are brand awareness, enhanced brand image and public perception, improved customer relations and to reach target markets. It was found that it is important for companies to achieve an appropriate fit with a sponsored event. The choice of event is based on a number of criteria, of which the most important are typicality, relevancy, target market, image and complementary. Another finding was that companies today consider sponsorships as a long-term relationship and cooperation, not only a one-time event, as a tool for building brand equity.
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1. Introduction

In this chapter, the thesis topic Event Marketing is presented, starting off with a background providing an introduction to the area of interest and a discussion of various aspects within the area. The problem discussion continues with a more in-depth literature review of some important elements presented in the background. The overall research purpose and research questions are thereafter presented, followed by an overview of how the rest of the thesis is organised.

1.1 Background

The use of event marketing strategy emerged in the 1980s when marketers had to face a prevailing change in the marketing environment and customer behaviour. Companies had to seek alternative methods for communicating their brand. (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006) Challenges when using traditional media include clutter, fragmentation and costs (Sneath, Finney & Close, 2005). More and more marketers and advertisers began to show interest in alternative communication platforms in order to influence customers and increase the brand impact (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013).

Event marketing offers a new approach to brand communication (Tafesse, 2016). The basic idea is to spread a company’s marketing message by involving customers in active experiences (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006). Shimp (1993, p. 8) defines event marketing as “the practice of promoting the interests of an organisation and its brands by associating the organisation with a specific activity”. Event marketing can be described as a pull strategy, where the customers are pulled to the event, instead of pushing the event on the customers (Wohlfeil & Whelan, 2006). During events, the participants are often active by exercising sports or being creative in other ways (Drengner, Gaus & Jahn, 2007). The success of event marketing strategies is dependent on the voluntary participation of the customers. Because of the pull effect of this strategy, customers are usually motivated to participate in the activities because of their decision to attend the event. (Wohlfeil & Whelan, 2006)

By engaging with customers via event marketing, companies can now have the benefit of a face-to-face communication with their target market (Sneath et al., 2005). By doing so, event marketing has the benefit of overcoming challenges such as noise and other disturbances from other advertisements (Gupta, 2003). By using events to communicate a brand, companies create opportunities that contribute to building a strong brand image (Drengner et al., 2007).

According to Zarantonello & Schmitt (2013), several studies have been conducted on how event marketing can contribute to brand equity. Brand equity is the total value that arise to a product as an effect of a company’s investments in the marketing of a brand (Keegan & Green, 2015). One study shows that if companies can get customers to join different types of activities, the event attendance has a positive impact on brand equity. Event marketing has
been referred to as “experiential marketing” because of how direct contact at an event can also result in memorable brand experience. (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013) In order to maintain a brand relationship with customers, sharing of information has proven to be a valuable factor, and how customers experience the communicated brand is important for the marketing success (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006). A field study conducted by Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013) revealed that customers attending a sponsored event tend to get a positive experience of the brand at hand. However, it is important to carefully ensure that there is an appropriate fit between the event and the brand to make sure that eventual positive responses to the event are transferred to the brand (Martensen, Grønholdt, Bendtsen & Jensen, 2007).

Event marketing helps companies to achieve several other objectives, such as corporate objectives, marketing objectives, media objectives and personal objectives. It involves goals such as increasing public awareness, brand image, brand positioning and increasing sales. Event marketing as a communication tool is today a growing industry. Every year, $37 billion is spent on event marketing in the U.S. and the marketing method was predicted to increase by 7.8 percent in 2012, after increasing 3.6 percent in 2011. Despite the increasing attention event marketing has got recently, many companies debate on how the outcome of events should be measured. (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013)

Event marketing can be conducted at several different kinds of events, such as trade shows, pop-up brand stores, product launches, press conferences, competitions (Tafesse, 2016), street events, charity fundraisers, and sponsored events (Wood, 2009). Sponsorship of causes, arts events and sports is one area within event marketing that is becoming increasingly popular as a tool of market communication around the world (Humphreys, Cornwell, McAlister, Kelly, Quinn & Murray, 2010). According to Keegan and Green (2013), a sponsorship takes place when a company pays a fee to have the brand name associated with for example an athletic association, team or event. In 2010, the global spending on sponsorships reached the new record of $48.7 billion (McDonnell & Moir, 2013).

There are different kinds of sponsorships regarding events. One type is that a company pays a third part which is arranging an event in order to get exposure to the visitors of the event. Another kind is that the company itself hosts an event in order to promote the own brand or product. The later has become a popular trend within event marketing, especially within the sports area. (Zarantonello & Schmidt, 2013)

Many companies sponsor and create events where people are invited to physically participate to get an experience of the brand at hand. The fact that people voluntarily choose to interact with companies shows that this is an important strategy of reaching out to the customer. On the contrary, if the company had chosen to use traditional TV advertising to promote the same product, the customer is likely to switch to the next channel, not noticing the product at all. Event marketing offers companies the opportunity to interact the customer with the brand on a new level than before. (Whelan & Wohlfeil, 2006)
1.2 Problem Discussion

As discussed in the background above, the sponsoring of events plays an important role in the marketing strategy today. When a company plans a marketing strategy, it is important to consider the four P’s (product, price, place and promotion), which together form the marketing mix (Keegan & Green, 2015). Event marketing falls under the promotional P of the marketing mix (Jobber & Fahy, 2009), and sponsoring is a combination of the promotional “tools” sales promotion and public relations (PR). Event sponsoring often implies a large number of contact occasions with a large audience. It is a good opportunity for a company to perform sales promotion activities such as sampling. Sponsoring of events is also a good PR tool for a company since the company name and brand are often mentioned in several different contexts in addition to the actual event, for example talk shows and news reports. (Keegan & Green, 2013) Common examples of possible sponsorships are events or activities related to sports, art, entertainment or social causes. The majority of sponsored events occur in the sports area. Nowadays, sports marketing is being embraced by virtually every type of company and almost every sport receives support of some kind. (Keller, 2008)

When a company sponsors an event, it creates several opportunities both for the company and for their customers. An example of a customer benefit is the chance to experience a brand by trying products or services at the event. (Wood, 2009) An example of a company benefit is improved brand image, which has been an important concept in marketing for a long time (Keller, 2008). Keegan & Green (2015) define brand image as the sum of impressions of a brand as reflected by brand associations that customers hold in their memories. These associations are developed from several sources such as brand and product category experiences (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999).

Customers often associate events with particular meanings. These meanings are derived from the event’s characteristics and from customer’s previous experiences with the event. (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999) Sponsorships can lead to a transferred image from the event to the sponsor (Jalleh, Donovan, Giles-Corti & Holman, 2002). If the event has a strong image relatively to the sponsoring brand, the image transfer is most likely to go from event to brand than contrariwise (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). A positive image of an event will also most likely result in a positive image of the sponsoring company. This is similar to when a celebrity is used in an advertising campaign in the hope that the endorsement and popularity of the celebrity will be reflected upon the brand/product advertised. (Koo, Quarterman & Flynn, 2006)

An important prerequisite for transference of positive event image to the brand, is that customers experience an appropriate fit between the image of the sponsoring brand and the image of the particular event (Koo et al., 2006). A contributing factor to the success of a sponsorship is that customers have some basic knowledge about the sponsoring brand (brand prominence), and its product, since sponsorship messages cannot deliver detailed information about product and service attributes (Grohs, Wagner & Wsetecka, 2004).
Sneath et al. (2005) present the results of a study that show positive effects when companies introduce event marketing into the promotional mix, and letting customers experience their products. Customers who got to try and experience the products were more inclined to prefer and consider the sponsoring brand for future purchases (Sneath et al., 2005). In the same way, if there is an appropriate event-brand fit, customers are more likely to develop an increased brand recognition, and a more positive attitude against the sponsoring brand. This is true in many fields within the sponsoring area, for example when sponsoring an athlete or famous person. The dimensions of company image, brand attitude and recognition together play an important role in describing purchase intentions. For this reason, it is important for a potential sponsor to evaluate the image perception of an event, held by the target audience, before deciding to sponsor it. By doing so, companies are more likely to achieve brand positioning objectives when sponsoring events. (Koo et al., 2006)

Because of the great amount of money involved in sponsorships, it is important to choose the right event to sponsor to make sure that the outcome is as expected (Keller, 2008). The outcomes can be classified as either corporate- or customer-based. Return on investment is the main corporate outcome, and enhanced company or brand image and brand awareness are customer-based outcomes. If the customer-based outcomes are met, they will hopefully favour the accomplishment of the corporate-based outcomes as well, in the meaning that they may increase the chance of brand choice and improve customer loyalty. (Koo et al., 2006)

Previously, the main purpose of engaging in sponsoring of events was to get media coverage. However, the focus today has switched to other objectives. (Grohs et al., 2004) Current objectives are to increase brand awareness and to establish, strengthen or change brand attitude (Jalleh et al., 2002). The brand communication elements of brand awareness, brand attitude and brand image, contribute to brand equity (Faircloth, Capella & Alford, 2001).

Figure 1.1 summarises the factors discussed above, and explains how these factors impact the process of building brand equity when sponsoring an event.

![Figure 1.1: Factors impacting brand equity of a sponsoring brand](image)

Source: Adapted from Grohs et al. (2004, p. 131)
The factors in the left column in the figure above describe sponsored event-related factors which lead to, and affect the elements in the middle column. Brand image, brand attitude and brand awareness then affect the brand equity of the sponsoring brand.

1.3 Overall Purpose

The overall research purpose of this thesis is to provide a better understanding on how companies use sponsorship of events in order to improve brand equity. The research questions that will assist in achieving this are:

1. What are the objectives of event sponsorship that contribute to brand equity?
2. How do companies choose the right event in order to reach sponsorship objectives?

1.4 Overview of Entire Thesis

This thesis contains of six chapters, and an overview of how these are organised is presented below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Research Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Empirical Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Findings and Conclusions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.2: Overview of thesis
2. Literature Review

This chapter presents the main theoretical area in the thesis, the use of sponsorships within event marketing in order to build brand equity. The chapter includes a variety of studies connecting to the research purpose and questions. The most relevant studies and theories connecting to the area of study will be presented and discussed. These lay a foundation for the frame of reference in the thesis, which is presented in the end of the chapter.

2.1 Objectives of event sponsorship that contribute to brand equity

Tony Meenaghan can be described as a pioneer in the area of sponsorships, and is commonly referred to by many authors within the field (Jalleh et al., 2002, Pope, 1998, Grohs et al., 2004, Cornwell et al., 2001, Gwinner & Eaton, 1999, Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Meenaghan (1983) defines sponsorship objectives as goals that companies hope to achieve from a sponsorship. Several objectives have been mentioned by different authors and researchers in the literature, but overall enhancing company/brand awareness and image have traditionally been, and still are, the main objectives (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). A positive brand image and increased level of brand awareness are also important because these result in higher customer loyalty and likelihood of brand choice (Koo et al., 2006).

Setting and achieving sponsorship objectives are important because they can facilitate the process of measuring the effectiveness of a sponsorship (Sing & Bhatia, 2015). Meenaghan (1983) divided sponsorship objectives into six categories:

1. Broad corporate objectives
2. Product-related objectives
3. Sales objectives
4. Media objectives
5. Guest hospitality
6. Personal objectives

The classification of objectives is not always divided separately into the six categories above (Meenaghan, 1983). Companies design sponsorships to achieve both separate and integrated objectives (Dolphin, 2003) and a mix of several objectives is common when sponsoring events (Meenaghan, 1983). These objectives often have an impact on each other, for example the corporate image affects the product image while the corporate image is affected by guest hospitality. (Meenaghan, 1983)

Shank (1999) classifies sponsorship objectives as either direct or indirect. Direct sponsorship objectives focus on increasing sales and have a short-term effect on consumption behaviour. Indirect sponsorship objectives aim to create awareness and product image before purchase, in order to increase sales in the long run. He further states that seen from the sponsor’s perspective,
the main objectives of sponsorships are awareness, competition, reaching target markets, relationship marketing, image building and sales increase. (Shank, 1999)

While Meenaghan (1983) divides objectives into six categories and Shank (1999) into two, Pope (1998) states that sponsorship objectives can be classified into four categories. Pope (1998) divides objectives into corporate objectives (image based), marketing objectives (brand promotion, sales increase), media objectives (cost effectiveness, reaching target markets) and personal objectives (managment). A modification of Pope’s division is illustrated in Figure 2.1. These objectives, which all can contribute to building brand equity, will be discussed in the following sections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORPORATE/PRODUCT OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>MARKETING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>MEDIA OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>PERSONAL OBJECTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand awareness</td>
<td>Increased sales and market share</td>
<td>Media coverage</td>
<td>Management interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand image and public perception</td>
<td>Reach target markets</td>
<td>Avoid clutter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Improve customer relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve stakeholder relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.1: Objectives of Event Sponsorships**  
Source: Adapted from Pope (1998, p. 3)

### 2.1.1 Corporate/Product objectives

*Brand awareness*

Both Meenaghan (1983) and Shank (1999) argue that creating or increasing public awareness of a company and its products or services is one of the highest ranked factors among corporate objectives. Brand awareness is defined as to which extent the target market is aware of the brand’s existence (McDonnell & Moir, 2013). Dolphin (2003) agrees with previous researchers and states that awareness is still an important sponsorship objective. Some researchers claim that generating brand awareness comes naturally from a sponsorship and the increased company
exposure as a result of the sponsorship (Dolphin, 2003). However, Gwinner (1997) argues that, in order to achieve the objective of increased brand awareness, it is important to reach maximal exposure to as many people as possible.

**Brand image and public perception**
Brand awareness is connected to image and brand development (Pope, 1998) and a sponsorship of an event with a certain personality can assist a company to achieve a certain image. This can affect public perception of the company, its products or services. (Meenaghan, 1983) The capacity to alter public perception of brand image has been one of the most attractive characteristics of sponsorships since the 80s (Meenaghan, 1983). When a company gets involved in a sponsorship, it hopes that the link with the event creates positive feelings and attitudes towards the company (Abreu Novais & Arcodia, 2013).

**CSR**
In past decades, many large companies have started to use corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives in order to justify their existence and improve the overall corporate image. In some sectors, for example oil, banking, insurance, tobacco and alcohol, sponsorships have become a popular tool in order to divert negative publicity. For instance, certain oil companies have used sponsorships to indicate that they create a useful asset to the local community. (Meenaghan, 1983)

**Improve customer relations**
Sponsorship objectives related to customer relationships have received an increased interest lately (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Sponsorships are considered to be one of the best communication tools for building long-term relationships with customers (Sing & Bhatia, 2015). Customer related objectives involve creation, building and sustaining customer relationships as a form of customer consultation, and can be reached through brand experiences at events (Donlan & Crowther, 2014).

**Improve stakeholder relations**
Sponsorship involvement can build goodwill among influential individuals or groups in the business world. Companies may use the visibility gained from sponsorships in order to strengthen relationships with important stakeholders, which is especially common in the banking, insurance and finance sectors. Another benefit of sponsorship involvement is the ability to assist employee relations, which can be achieved by sponsoring events which the employees can identify with. The company image attained through a sponsorship, the particular sponsorship chosen and the way in which the sponsorship is chosen can also influence potential recruits. (Meenaghan, 1983)

**2.1.2 Marketing objectives**

**Increased sales and market share**
In the 80s, Meenaghan (1983) stated that few companies analyse the short term sales results of a sponsorship, while it is important to have in mind that all spending on marketing must
ultimately be viewed of its ability to contribute to overall corporate sales objectives. Companies in some industries, such as oil, banking, tobacco and drinks, were more inclined than others to set sponsorship objectives in terms of increased sales in order to improve market perception and long terms sales. (Meenaghan, 1983) Nowadays, increased sales and market share are some of the ultimate sponsorship objectives for almost every company (Greenhalgh & Greenwell, 2013). Sales objectives are especially important for companies within sport sponsorships (Greenhalgh & Greenwell, 2013), whose goal is to increase the sales of their products, for example during motor car racing and marathon running (Meenaghan, 1983).

Reach target markets
Sponsorships have been used as a strategic tool for many international organisations, since their wish to be understood by different audiences has increased (Dolphin, 2003). For a company to reach their target market, the right choice of sponsorship can provide great dividends. Many companies select either locally, regionally or internationally based sponsorships to identify with specific target markets. (Meenaghan, 1983)

2.1.3 Media objectives
In the late 1900s, the achievement of media coverage was seen as one of the most important objectives for companies using sponsorships (Grohs et al., 2004). This was important for companies in order to reach a cost-effective promotion. However, media coverage was only a smaller goal in the reach of achieving an end objective, such as desired sales figures. (Meenaghan, 1983) Nowadays, the achievement of media coverage is a less important objective because of the difficulty to measure customers’ attitudes or behaviours towards a certain brand (Grohs et al., 2004). The media coverage of a brand name can however assist in strengthening brand awareness (McDonnell & Moir, 2013). Dolphin (2003) argues therefore that sponsorships can help cutting through clutter which more traditional marketing tools fail to do when promoting a message.

2.1.4 Personal Objectives
The personal interests of a company’s director or chief decision maker can affect the type of sponsorship chosen. This motivation driver is more common than confessed, since it has the attributes of giving directors a chance to practice activities in their own interest. Sponsorships as a marketing communication tool have therefore the unique ability to deliver personal satisfaction. (Meenaghan, 1983)

Thus, as described above, sponsoring is preferable as a communication tool because of its ability to achieve objectives on behalf of a company (Meenaghan, 1991). When a company, through a sponsorship, aims to simultaneously achieve several objectives, it is important to classify these in terms of importance (Sing & Bhatia, 2015). Of the objectives mentioned above, increased brand awareness, brand attitude (Jalleh et al., 2004) and image, can be seen as most important since they altogether contribute to brand equity (Faircloth et al., 2001), which will be discussed in the next section.
2.1.5 Brand equity

As many academic and business writers argue, and what this thesis discusses, sponsorships have a central role in building equity for a brand (Cornwell et al., 2001, Dolphin, 2003, Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Keller (1993) defines brand equity as the effect of brand knowledge that plays a differential role when customers make purchase decisions. He further states that brand knowledge consists of customers’ brand awareness and associated image (Keller, 1993). The use of sponsorships as a brand equity-building strategy, may enhance the company’s image (Dolphin, 2003), as well as the brand personality, by the personal interactions with the sponsoring company’s products at an event (Honglei, Kyung Hoon, Yung Kyun, Sang Jin & Siqing, 2015).

Cornwell, Roy and Steinhard II (2001) divide brand equity elements into general elements and distinctive elements. Brand awareness, corporate image and brand image are essential factors in the building of general brand equity, whereas brand personality, differentiating the brand from competition, image of quality and brand loyalty contribute to distinctive elements. Results from a study conducted by the same authors show that sponsorships contribute more to general elements of brand equity than to distinctive elements. The study also indicates some support of the fact that longer sponsorship relationships create greater effects on brand equity. (Cornwell et al., 2001)

2.2 How to choose the right event in order to reach sponsorship objectives

To reach sponsorship objectives as stated above, it is important to choose an appropriate event to sponsor. An appropriate fit between the event and the brand may lead to a transfer of the event image to the image of the sponsoring brand, which can be a strategy for achieving the objective of improved brand image. (Grohs et al., 2004) By evaluating the image of an event before deciding to sponsor it, companies are more likely to reach their set objectives (Koo et al., 2006).

2.2.1. Traditional sponsoring vs sponsoring within event marketing

There is a difference between traditional sponsorships and sponsorships within event marketing. In addition to exposure at a certain event, which is the emphasis in traditional sponsoring, sponsoring within event marketing gives the sponsor the right of using the event in their other marketing efforts, outside of the event (Behrer & Larsson, 1998). A model describing traditional sponsoring and three different types of sponsorships within event marketing is presented in Figure 2.2 below.
As can be seen in the figure, the classification of a sponsorship depends on whether someone else’s or a self-owned arena is used, and additionally, if a new event is created or an already existing is chosen by the sponsoring company (Behrer & Larsson, 1998).

- In traditional sponsoring, a company sponsors an existing event at someone else’s arena and is often used within sports. The sponsor pays a fee to have their advertising shown in the arena during the event.
- In EM1, an existing event is brought to the own arena. An example is when shopping centres invite artists to perform in order to attract visitors. By using this type of sponsorship, the own arena can be profiled in a certain way.
- In EM2, a new event is created by the sponsoring company, and held in someone else’s arena. An example is when the objective of the sponsorship is to communicate and transfer a matching image between the arena and the sponsoring brand.
- In EM3, a new event is created and held in the own arena. This type is commonly used to attract and create relationships with customers, for example when a clothing store arranges a fashion show. (Behrer & Larsson, 1998)

### 2.2.2. Event types

In order to reach sponsorship objectives, it is important to consider which type of event to sponsor to ensure desired results (Keller, 2008). According to Goldblatt (2005), there are many different types of events to choose from, of which a selection is listed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Fairs and festivals** | • Often non-for-profit events  
• Celebrate causes such as religion or music  
• Offer a variety of experiences for participants  
• Good commercial opportunities for companies |
| **Hallmark events**  | • Mega events, such as the Olympic Games  
• Grown in size and popularity the last decades thanks to television and tourism |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expositions/trade shows</strong></td>
<td>• Private or public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunity for sellers to introduce their goods to buyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Effective way of achieving sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meetings and conferences</strong></td>
<td>• Can take different forms, such as corporate or association events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Usually take place during a couple of days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Educational seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Network opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retail events</strong></td>
<td>• Long-term integrated approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Combine an event with promotions, advertising and publicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build customer loyalty and increase sales by connecting a certain product with a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sport events</strong></td>
<td>• Chances for sponsors/marketers to promote their products in several ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pre- and postgame activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism</strong></td>
<td>• Aims to attract tourists to a location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Music festivals, fairs, arts- and craft shows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Goldblatt (2005, pp. 10-14)

Wood (2009) discusses additional types of events, to the ones mentioned by Goldblatt (2005). A selection of these are listed in the table below.

Table 2.2: Event types 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charity fundraisers</strong></td>
<td>• Link CSR to event marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product launches</strong></td>
<td>• Draw attention to a new product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Product sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Press conferences</strong></td>
<td>• Opportunity to communicate news about an organisation and its products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competitions/contests</strong></td>
<td>• Brand related events associated with some kind of competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Wood (2009, p. 249)

**2.2.3. Criteria for event choice**

An important criterion for event choice, in order to reach sponsorship objectives, such as improved image, is an appropriate fit between the event and the sponsor. This can be connected to the model of classical conditioning. This theory states that the conditioning is facilitated by a fit between the unconditioned and conditioned stimulus. In the case of sponsorships, the event can be seen as the unconditioned stimulus and the sponsoring brand as the conditioned stimulus. If there is a strong connection and an appropriate fit between these, there is a higher probability for image transfer from the event to the sponsor. This is supported by empirical results from several researchers, which in their studies have found evidence for this phenomenon. (Grohs et al., 2004)
In addition to image transfer, McDonnell and Moir (2014) mention several other possible benefits of an event-sponsor fit, such as more positive attitude towards the sponsor, improved effectiveness of sponsorships through a greater interest in the sponsor, increased purchase intentions and sales. Similar results were found in a study by Koo et al. (2006) which compare the cognitive and affective responses of the participants, and the effect these had on purchase intentions, depending on the perceived fit between an event and a sponsor. Participants with a higher perceived image fit had developed a more positive attitude and corporate image towards the sponsoring brand, than those that did not perceive the fit as high. The perceived fit also had significant impact on purchase intentions. (Koo et al., 2006) With this said, it is of great importance to target the right audience in order to maximise the perceived fit and thereby achieve an efficient and effective sponsorship. Eight important criteria which can be used by companies to examine a potential event-sponsor fit are presented below.

**Expectancy**
Expectancy considers if a company’s sponsorship of an event meets the customers’ expectations of the behaviour of the sponsor, in terms of similarity with the company’s previous sponsoring activities. It is for example not expected that McDonalds sponsor a prestigious golf competition, such as the Open Championship, even though the company is known to sponsor a variety of different events. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

**Relevancy**
Relevancy considers whether the sponsorship makes sense, in terms of some meaningful provision to the sponsoring brand. An example is that it makes sense for exclusive brands such as Rolex to sponsor the high-status Open Competition. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

**Target market**
It is preferable for companies to sponsor events with a target market that is likely to consume the companies’ products. This can be exemplified with the fact that the visitors at the Open Championship most likely do not prefer McDonalds when it comes to eating habits. The profile of the target audience of an event should therefore be carefully assessed by a potential sponsor. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

**Image**
Image is the picture of an event and a product held by the customer. McDonalds has an image of being a fast food giant, and the image of the prestigious Open Championship is more qualitative and implies associations with high-quality, history, tradition and skill. It is therefore a clash between the event and brand image which means that this is not an ideal event to sponsor for McDonalds. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

**Geography**
The same sponsoring message might not work the same way at different locations and might need some adaption to appeal to the local audience. It is also preferred to localise a sponsorship
strategically in order to appeal to local sentiments and not use the same standardised message nation-wide. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

*Typicality*
Typicality is the ability to match the attributes of the sponsor’s product to the characteristics of the event, so that the customers see the similarities between them. An example is that many football fans drink beer, which means there is a fit between a beer company and a football event. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

*Complementary*
This criterion considers the perceived fit between sponsors. The majority of the sponsoring companies of the Open Championship have complementary relationships, which means that they belong to different product categories, but have the same quality and image, which fit the image of the event. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

*Clash*
This criterion is the opposite of sponsor complementary, with sponsors belonging to the same product category. There is a main rule in sponsorship that there can only be one sponsor from a certain product category, to avoid a clash of messages. (McDonnell & Moir, 2013)

2.2.5. Gwinner’s image creation and transfer model

As stated by Keller (1993), brand awareness and brand image are the most important factors contributing to brand equity. One of the factors which is found as most important in affecting brand equity through sponsorships is improved brand image, which can be achieved by a transfer of image from event to brand (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Gwinner (1997) developed a model that explains this transfer, which is explained in the following sections.

The brand associations which make up brand image, need to be favourable, unique and strong in order for a brand to be successful (Keller, 1993). These associations are impacted of a variety of factors, but the most influential in sponsorship activities is the “association with other entities”. When a brand and an event becomes associated with each other, the event associations (enjoyable, relaxing, sophisticated, youthful etc.) are possible to be transferred to reflect the brand associations in the minds of the customers. (Keller, 1993) This may be a strategy to reach a certain brand image (Grohs et al., 2004).

People associate events with certain connotations and attitudes (Gwinner, 1997). Gwinner (1997) suggests these associations to be a result of the event type, characteristics and a number of individual customer based factors. These factors, which determine the image of the event and the following transfer of that image to the sponsor’s brand, are represented in the figure below, which purpose is to explain the impact of sponsorship activities on brand image (Gwinner, 1997).
As can be seen in the figure above, the factors determining the event image are event type, event characteristics and individual factors.

**Type of event**
In Gwinner’s model, event types are divided into five categories: sports, music, festival/fair, fine arts and professional meeting/trade shows. Event image can be impacted by event type in many different ways. An example of this is when a certain event type calls forth associations in the customers’ minds, which are based on customer attitudes, positive or negative, and have been developed by previous experiences at this type of event. These attitudes will impact the customer's image perception of all events within the specific event category. (Gwinner, 1997)

Additionally, an event’s image can be affected by descriptive perceptions made up by customers’ image associations representing the meaning of the event type for individual customers. Examples of such are: youthful, mature, adventurous, educational, social, traditional, high class, family/children oriented, athletic, artistic, political etc. (Gwinner, 1997)

Besides image associations and attitudes based on past experiences, new experiences often have a strong influence on perceived event image. Examples of such experiences are the participation or observation of activities at the event, and the interaction with staff and other participants. (Gwinner, 1997) In the case of experiential marketing, where the customers actively participate in the event in some form, it is important to set an appropriate level of challenge in the activities at the event to match the participants’ skills. This can be challenging for marketers because of diversity within the target market, and may lead to different event experiences among the participants. (Wood, 2009) The number and type of other participants are also factors influencing the event image. The experienced success of the event may be affected by the number of participants. A larger number of participants may indicate a greater success, or contrariwise, the event may be experienced as crowded. A certain event may attract an either
heterogeneous or homogenous crowd, and the demographic and psychographic attributes of the other participants also impact the event experience and the perceived event image. (Gwinner, 1997)

**Event characteristics**

There are five different event characteristics, which levels vary between events, that will have an impact on perceived event image. These characteristics are: event size (length of the event, physical space, amount of exposure in media and amount of performers), status of participants (amateur/professional), event history/tradition, event venue and promotional appearance. Large and long running events, with professionals in attractive venues, are often perceived as most qualitative, legitimate and attractive to attend. (Gwinner, 1997)

The perception of the promotional appearance of the sponsoring brand can vary widely. One possibility is that the sponsor is perceived as a benefactor, making an event possible with its funds. This is favourable for the sponsor in the meaning that it may generate goodwill towards the sponsoring brand and the customers may even feel obliged to reciprocate by buying the sponsor’s products. On the other hand, a promotional message may also be perceived negatively if the event has not been sponsored before, and now is seen as being exploited and commercialised by sponsors. How the promotional appearance is perceived affects the legitimacy and believability of the message and also the sponsoring brand. (Gwinner, 1997)

**Individual factors**

As previously discussed, event image is affected by several factors. How individuals interpret these factors can vary widely, and because of this, an event may have different images among individuals (Gwinner, 1997). In Gwinner’s model, three individual factors that may have an impact on event image are identified: the past history/experience with a particular event, the amount of image associations with an event and the strength of the differing images. (Gwinner, 1997) This is supported by Wood (2009), who argues that the marketing effectiveness of an event is dependent on individuals’ emotional responses, expectations and previous experiences. Therefore, the participants at an event may perceive the event differently depending on individual characteristics and previous experiences (Wood, 2009).

Individuals may have multiple images of an event, which can be relatively strong or weak. This may lead to several, possible conflicting, meanings of the event for the customer. If this is the case, a company deciding on which event to sponsor may experience problems, since it is not clear what the associated event image held by the target market actually looks like. (Gwinner, 1997) Because of this, sponsors should carefully analyse their target customers’ image perception of a specific event, so that the company can use sponsorship activities to achieve desired objectives (Koo et al., 2006).

**Moderating variables**

After having presented the factors that affect event image, it is important to mention some moderating variables which may affect the image transfer from event to sponsoring brand.
These variables are: degree of similarity, level of sponsorship, event frequency and product involvement. Degree of similarity between a brand/product and an event can be based on either functionality or image. Functional similarity is when a product is used during an event by the participants, and image similarity is when the brand image is related to the event image. A high degree of similarity, either functional or image based, facilitates the image transfer from event to brand, because it creates stronger associations and relationships between event and brand in the customer's mind. (Gwinner, 1997)

The level of sponsorship and event frequency are conceptualised as exposure to the sponsor’s message, and may also play an important role in the image transfer process. At a certain event, the amount of sponsors may range from one to hundreds. Several sponsors of an event decrease the possibility that customers relate a certain sponsoring brand with the event. The more exclusive or dominant a sponsor is, the higher the likelihood of creation of a strong link and meaning transfer between event and brand. The image transfer process is also impacted by event frequency, which can be either recurring or one-time based. When sponsoring a recurring event, the sponsor gets repeated exposure which is advantageous for strengthening the link between event and brand. (Gwinner, 1997) Lastly, the image transfer is affected by an additional factor: level of product involvement. Gwinner (1997) suggests that attitudes towards brands with low involvement products will be more strongly influenced by the event image than high involvement products.

In summary, there are several factors that play a role in building brand equity through a sponsorship. As previous sections have discussed, it is important for a company to set clear sponsorship objectives for the sponsorship to be successful. In this thesis, an adapted version of Pope’s division of objectives that contributes to brand equity is used. This consists of a division into the categories corporate/product-, marketing-, media- and personal related objectives. In order to reach set objectives, it is useful for companies to have knowledge about the criteria for choice of event. Factors such as what type of sponsorship a company gets involved in, the event type and possible transfer of image are all key elements of reaching sponsorship objectives and thereby building brand equity. The transfer of image from event to brand has shown to be an important factor that contributes to brand equity and Gwinner’s image transfer model was therefore a central part in the previous section.

2.3 Frame of reference

The main theoretical areas in this thesis have now been discussed by an analysis of theories and scientific studies related to how companies use sponsorship within event marketing in order to build brand equity. Based on the literature review, a frame of reference was created and worked as a guide for the data collection in order to answer the research questions. The most relevant theories and concepts connected to the research purpose and questions were chosen and variables connected to these studied. Table 2.3 below summarises and explains the variables used in the data collection. The purpose, definition and authors of each variable are also displayed in the table.
### Table 2.3: Variables used in data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of sponsorship</td>
<td>Use of own or others’ arena, new or existing event</td>
<td>Traditional sponsorships, EM1-EM3</td>
<td>Behrer &amp; Larsson (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image transfer</td>
<td>Aims to explain image transfer from event to sponsor</td>
<td>Event type, event characteristics, individual factors</td>
<td>Zarantonello &amp; Schmitt (2013), Gwinner (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event type</td>
<td>Impact event image, reach different objectives</td>
<td>Fairs/festivals, sports, trade shows, charities, fine arts, meetings/conferences etc.</td>
<td>Goldblatt (2005), Wood (2009), Gwinner (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event characteristics</td>
<td>Impact event image</td>
<td>Event size, professional status, event history, event venue, promotional appearance</td>
<td>Gwinner (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual factors</td>
<td>Impact event image</td>
<td>Event image as perceived by customers, past history with event</td>
<td>Wood (2009), Gwinner (1997)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data were collected on what role these variables have for companies which work on building brand equity through sponsorships. The theories presented have been analysed to see how suitable they were for this study. Even though Meenaghan is an old reference, his division of sponsorship objectives are well-established and since many current researchers still cite him, it is believed that his theories are valid even today. By using Meenaghan’s theories in combination with newer ones, the view of this study is hopefully broader.

The following graphical framework, Figure 2.4, summarises and further explains previously presented concepts and theories most related to the area of research, focusing on how companies can build brand equity through event sponsorship. By collecting data related to the concepts and theories described in the figure, this framework is believed to work as a guideline to answer the research questions of this thesis.
Figure 2.4: Frame of reference
3. Research Methodology

In this chapter, the chosen research methodology that was used to answer the research questions is presented. The information needed to answer the research questions contains of insight in how companies use event sponsorships in order to reach various objectives. This chapter contains the research purpose, research approach, research strategy, data collection, case selection, data analysis, validity and reliability.

3.1 Research Purpose

There are three possible purposes of research: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, which are often used in combination with each other. An exploratory approach is suitable when a study aims to seek new insights and find out what is happening. This approach is appropriate when a clearer understanding of a problem is desired. The objective of a descriptive study is to accurately describe situations, people or events. This is important because it is favourable to have a clear picture of the phenomena on which the data will be collected before the actual data collection. For this reason, a descriptive study can be seen as a means to an end since it is often used as a precursor to an exploratory or explanatory study. An explanatory piece of research is carried out by studying a problem or situation with the purpose of investigating and establishing relationships between variables. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007)

This thesis focuses primarily on an exploratory approach, since the overall purpose is to provide a better understanding on how companies use sponsorship of events in order to improve brand equity. This approach was considered suitable for this study since the main purpose of the method is to provide a general understanding of a problem (Saunders et al., 2007), which fit the purpose of this study. The study also contains elements of the descriptive approach, since previous research and theories were used to get a better understanding of the area of interest before conducting the study. The results were thereafter compared to previous research.

3.2 Research Approach

There are two types of research approaches: quantitative and qualitative. The chosen type affects the research strategy in order of providing a direction for the data collection. In quantitative research, the focus is on quantitatively collecting and analysing data. Within qualitative research, the emphasis is to put words on how individuals perceive and interpret their social reality. (Bryman & Bell, 2013) Due to the time limit and research purpose, it is believed that a qualitative study is more appropriate than a quantitative study. Because of this, a qualitative study was chosen for this thesis, since it would give a better understanding of the overall purpose, and thereby facilitated to answer the research questions.
3.3 Research Strategy

Since a qualitative study was conducted in this thesis, case studies of three companies were chosen to answer the research questions. The strategy of using case studies is appropriate in situations where questions such as “how” and “why” are being asked (Yin, 1994). This option was therefore chosen since we believed that case studies were appropriate for the study, to gain a better understanding of how companies use event sponsorships as a marketing strategy to reach set objectives.

According to Yin (1994) there are four research designs for case studies: single case designs with either single unit analysis (holistic) or multiple units of analysis (embedded), and multiple case design with either single unit or multiple units of analysis. The chosen type for this thesis is the multiple case design with multiple units of analysis, since three companies were studied and different types of events sponsored by each company were examined.

3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected by interviews with three companies that sponsor several events as a part of their marketing strategy. According to Yin (1994), interviews are a suitable tool when conducting case studies, which was what we aimed to do. There are several types of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured/in-depth interviews. In structured interviews, a questionnaire with standardised and pre-set questions is commonly used. This type of interview is often used to collect quantifiable data. Unstructured interviews are informal and therefore the opposite of structured interviews. In this type of interview, it is important to have a clear idea of which topic area to cover and explore, since no list of pre-set questions is being used. In between these two interview types, there are semi-structured interviews which are often used in qualitative research. As a guide for this kind of interview, a list of topic areas and questions to be covered is often used, called an interview guide. This provides the researcher the opportunity to add or exclude specific questions during the interview. (Saunders et al., 2007)

The interviews in this study followed a semi-structure, which was suitable due to the overall purpose of the thesis. People responsible for the sponsoring of events at each company were interviewed. The opportunity to adapt the questions as the interviews proceeded was advantageous to get an understanding as good as possible. It is also believed that the semi-structure interview, which provides the opportunity to ask additional questions depending on the interviewees’ answers, provided a more in-depth understanding of the area of study. Each interview included about 20 questions and the questions were designed based on the proposed framework. Each interview lasted for approximately 60 minutes. Due to the geographical distance between the interviewers and interviewees, and the availability of the interviewees, two of the interviews were conducted over telephone.
3.5 Case Selection

Based on the overall purpose of the thesis, we found it most relevant to interview company representatives to find out why they choose to sponsor specific events, in order to reach their objectives. These interviews provided useful insight in the companies’ strategies on how to reach objectives through event sponsorships. A selection of three large companies which are often seen as sponsors of various events were studied.

Telia Company is an international company within the telecommunications industry. The company is based in Sweden, but has operations in 16 countries. The company offers services and products within TV, broadband and telephone subscriptions to private as well as corporate customers. (Telia Company, n.d.) Telia is an active sponsor of several different types of events, and the sponsoring decisions are made centrally within the company. The interviewed company representative is Eva Öjert who is manager for brand and content and responsible for the company’s sponsoring strategy.

The second company chosen for the study is Handelsbanken, which is a full-service bank with operations in 25 countries. The bank’s home markets are Sweden, Great Britain, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands. (Handelsbanken, n.d.) Handelsbanken is, as well as Telia, often seen as a sponsor of various events, however the sponsoring decisions are made a bit differently. Due to the fact that the sponsoring at Handelsbanken is decentralised into the local markets, the chosen representative of the bank who was interviewed for this study is Jörgen Ericsson, bank director in Luleå.

The third company is Polarbröd, a family-owned company and the third largest bread producer in Sweden. Sweden is the company’s main target market, however, around 20 percent of the sales is exported to primarily Norway and France. (Polarbröd, n.d.) Polarbröd is a well-known company that uses sponsoring as a part of their marketing strategy. The chosen representative for the interview was the company’s sales manager, Björn Hägg.

These three companies were believed to be suitable representatives for this study, and chosen due to the fact that they are all international, active in different industries and the sponsoring decisions are made on different levels within the companies. Based on these differences, a better understanding of the research questions were facilitated, because of possible differences based on industry and/or level on which the sponsoring decision are made.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data were analysed by using the method most appropriate when analysing a case study, as stated by Yin (1994): relying on theoretical propositions. This method implies that the findings in the study were compared to the theory presented in the frame of reference (Yin, 1994), which also functioned as a guide when working with this study. There are numerous theories and previous studies to rely on, and this is why we chose this method for our data analysis.
According to Miles and Huberman (1994) there are three steps in the analysis of qualitative data. These steps are: data reduction, data display and drawing of conclusions. Firstly, the data reduction aims to summarise and simplify collected data and to facilitate a focus on the most relevant parts. Secondly, the reduced data have to be organised and assembled into some kind of display. This can take several forms such as: graphs, charts, matrices or tables. This method of data display will help the researcher to make comparisons, find patterns and relationships in the data. Additionally, in the last step, the drawing and confirming of conclusions are facilitated by a well-structured data display. (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

The data analysis of this thesis followed the three steps described above, since these are believed to provide a clear guideline on how to make sense of data. It assisted in making sure that only the most important data were used and facilitated the drawing of relevant conclusions and answering the research questions, in order to achieve the overall purpose of the study.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

According to Yin (1994), there are four tests commonly used to ensure that an empirical study meets quality standards. These are: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability and are described in the table below.

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

Source: Yin (1994, p. 33)

*Construct validity* considers to choose suitable measurements for the actual concepts in the study. This can be problematic due to the fact that subjective judgements often influence the operational set of measures used in the data collection. As shown in Table 3.1 above, three tactics are available to improve construct validity. Firstly, there is the tactic of using *multiple sources of evidence* during the data collection. Secondly, there is the tactic of *establishing a chain of evidence*, also used during the data collection, and thirdly, to have the draft of the *report review by key informants* during the composition phase. (Yin, 1994)
To improve the validity of the study, we have designed our interviews in an objective manner to avoid that our own opinions affect the interviewees and thereby the result. We have consulted with our supervisor of the thesis to make sure this criterion was met, before conducting the interviews. A chain of evidence is provided throughout the thesis, mainly by the theories presented in the conceptual framework and methodology chapter, to make sure that it is clear how the study was conducted step by step. The thesis has also been read and reviewed by our supervisor and fellow students several times throughout the process.

*Internal validity* considers to establish a causative relationship between different conditions. This test is only relevant for explanatory studies, and since our study had an exploratory and descriptive approach, this will not be further discussed. (Yin, 1994)

*External validity* considers to establish a field within which the results of the study can be generalised. In case studies, which rely on analytical generalisation, the researcher strives to generalise the results to a theory. A theory which a case study is based upon, can assist in finding other cases where the results from the case study can be generalised. In order to make a valid generalisation, the theory needs to be tested by replication of the results in at least another study of a similar case. (Yin, 1994) During the data analysis, the results found in the study were compared to both the theory presented in the literature review and frame of reference but also between the cases, to see how well these match.

*Reliability* considers to reduce the bias and errors in a study to make sure that the study can be replicated and generate the same results in the future. This means that if someone else would follow the exact same steps when doing the same case study, this researcher should reach the same results and conclusions. An important factor to make this possible is the urge to carefully document all steps taken in the case study procedure. This can be achieved by using a *case study protocol* and/or developing a *case study database*. (Yin, 1994)

The processes of data collection and analysis are described in detail in this thesis, primarily in the methodology chapter. The interview guide was carefully designed to ensure reliability, and can be found in the appendix. In the literature review and frame of reference it is stated which theories are emphasised and tested, and thereby the factors examined in order to answer the research questions. This facilitates the process if someone else wants to conduct the same study by the means that they can use the same conceptual measures and ask the same questions, and thereby get the same results.

The risk of bias is a problem when doing interviews. An example of this is that the voice and non-verbal cues of the interviewer may affect the interviewee’s answers. Another example is that the interviewer may interpret the answer incorrectly. (Saunders et al., 2007) There was also an increased risk for misinterpretations due to the fact that two interviews were conducted over the phone and not in person. However, according to Bryman and Bell (2013) there is an advantage with interviews which do not include a physical meeting. This is the likelihood of decreased interviewer effect, when the personal characteristics of the interviewer, such as non-
verbal communication and cues, influence the interviewee and answers given. (Bryman & Bell, 2013)

The fact that there are two authors of this thesis which together have designed the interview guide and conducted the interviews, increases objectivity and reduces the chance of bias, which leads to a higher reliability, compared to if it would have been only one author. The interviews contained several questions dealing with each topic to reduce the risk of misunderstandings. Additionally, the semi-structured form chosen for the interviews provided the authors with the chance to ask follow-up questions if something was unclear. The interviews were also audio-recorded so that the authors could go back and listen to the answers several times when needed. The interviews were carried out in Swedish since it is the native language of the interviewees, and this may have increased the risk of bias when translating the answers to English. However, due the authors’ high proficiency in both Swedish and English, the risk of translation errors was reduced.

One fact worth noticing is that non-standardised methods, such as qualitative interviews, not always are meant to be replicated since these are used to explore real situations at a certain point in time, which might change in the future. (Saunders et al., 2007) This is applicable on this thesis which focuses on case studies carried out on three specific companies. If another researcher would perform the same study on the same companies in the future, it is possible to get differing results since marketing objectives and strategies are dynamic and often change, and it is therefore not possible to ensure complete reliability.
4. Empirical data

In this chapter the empirical data obtained in the interviews used in the data collection are presented. The chapter is divided into three parts, each dealing with one company. Each part starts off with a brief presentation of the company followed by the collected data as obtained in the interviews.

4.1 Telia Company

Telia Company is one of the largest telecommunications companies in Sweden. The company was founded in 1853, known as the state-owned Televerket. The company changed its name to Telia in 1993 (PTS, n.d.) and in 2003 the company merged with the Finnish provider Sonera, creating TeliaSonera AB (TeliaSonera, n.d.). However, the company recently changed its name again, creating Telia Company. The company’s share is listed at Nasdaq Stockholm and Nasdaq Helsinki. Telia Company is today active in 16 countries, mainly in the Nordic and Baltic countries, and has a total of roughly 21,000 employees. In 2015, the net sales reached SEK 86,569 million. The company offers services for both corporate and private customers, within broadband, telephone and TV, and the purpose is to “bring the world closer on the customer’s terms”. (Telia Company, n.d.)

The respondent for Telia Company was Eva Öjert, who is director of brand and content and one of the responsible for the company’s sponsoring strategy. Eva has worked at the company for four years, of which two and a half years in her current position.

4.1.1 Data presentation

Types of events

Eva starts by stating that Telia does not consider their sponsoring engagement as sponsoring of specific events, but as strategic sponsorships, which is something beyond single events. With their sponsoring efforts, the company wants to build their brand and reach their target group on a deeper level than through other parts of the marketing mix. The company regards sponsorships as a long-term partnership reaching over three years. When Telia sponsors/cooperates with a specific event, it is often done with their technical solutions. The festival Way out West is an example of an event in need for a stable connection and a strong mobile network, which the company previously sponsored with their services in exchange for visibility at the festival. It is important for the company that its strategic sponsorships have a relevant and natural fit to the business and is perceived as natural by their customers. A good example of this is the sponsoring and cooperation with Friends, which is an organisation working against bullying and discrimination. Eva continues by saying that because Telia owns the telephone network in Sweden, taking a stand against online bullying is therefore strongly connected to the business. By using sponsoring in this way, instead of simply donating money, Eva states that the company can make a difference for real in society and for their customers. A red thread throughout the company’s sponsoring engagements today is to contribute with knowledge and services in addition to donating money.
Previously, Telia has been frequently involved in events such as fairs and festivals and within sports, but has recently withdrawn from these kinds of sponsorships, since they did not have a clear connection to the business. The company is today involved in a variety of trade shows, primarily focused at corporate customers. However, Telia considers this more as a cooperation where they attend the event to promote and inform about their services, than an actual sponsorship. Charity is a central part of the company’s current sponsoring strategy and an area the company will focus on in the future. Telia’s cooperation with Friends is a good example of a CSR engagement which also has a good fit with the business. Telia also sponsors Childhood Foundation, of which they also are a co-founder. The foundation works against child pornography, and Telia’s role in this sponsorship is to stop the proliferation of child pornography online - both by financial support and with their services.

Previously, Telia has sponsored several different events within the fine arts category, such as various film festivals. The focus on film had a connection to the business, since the company has a TV service with a movie rental function. The aim of these sponsorships was to improve relationships with target customers interested in movies. The company is today involved in events held at meetings and conferences, examples of such are Symposium Stockholm and Connect2Business, which are gatherings/conferences focusing on new innovations. Another example within this category is Almedalsveckan which Telia also sponsors. Product launch events are often held in Telia’s own stores, for example when a new iPhone is released. Telia was previously one of the main sponsors of the Swedish music competition Melodifestivalen. The company also sponsors international events, for example through the collaboration with Childhood Foundation.

Why these events are most important to the company
According to Eva, the company has withdrawn from the majority of events previously sponsored. The main focus today are Friends and Childhood within the charity/CSR area, and events focusing on innovation and new technology. The reason for focusing the sponsoring within these areas are that they are relevant to the company’s strategic target group. This is based on what is considered important by the target group, which is that Telia has a higher purpose than just profits. By collaborating with Friends and taking a stand against online bullying, Telia shows that they want to make a difference in society. By the sponsoring efforts within new innovation and technology, the company makes it possible for people to work and live in new ways which was not possible before, and it is therefore important to be seen in these contexts.

Type of sponsorship
Telia is active along all dimensions (own/someone else’s arena and existing/new event) when sponsoring events. An example of when the company arranges a new event at their own arena is the event Connect2Business. In some of the examples previously mentioned, the company sponsors existing events but set their own agenda and create the content around their own participation, and one example of this is their presence during Almedalsveckan. The key issue for the company is to be where the target group is.
**Sponsorship decision-making**

Since Telia is a part of a large corporate group, some sponsoring decisions are made on the highest level. However, sponsorship decisions concerning the Swedish market are made by the Swedish board of directors. The reason for this structure is that the company usually enters strategic sponsorships reaching over several years, instead of sponsoring single events. This requires large amounts of money and several parts of the organisation are involved.

**General objectives with the sponsoring strategy**

The main strategy for the company is to be relevant and reach the target group. With Telia’s sponsorship strategy, the company wants to have a deeper impact than other forms of marketing, for example a TV commercial. Telia is well-known on the Swedish market, but everyone does not love Telia. Eva says that they want to be loved by their customers and there are many ways to achieve this. One way is to take a stand against online bullying, and Telia is fully committed to do what it takes to make people like the company, not just know about it. This permeates all sponsorship decisions, in order to increase the brand preference.

**Event 1 - Friends**

Telia’s sponsorship of Friends consists of financial support, knowledge about how to digitise operations and Telia’s services. This collaboration is a good example of the company’s current sponsoring strategy. There are clear objectives with this sponsorship, for example educating a certain amount of parents in how to prevent bullying. By contributing with money and digitising, Telia helps Friends to develop tools for e-learning aimed at reaching more parents and schools. This sponsorship is a long-term cooperation, with several events occurring during this time period. In the latest campaign within the corporation with Friends, the company offers their customers to use social media without using their data, if the customers “promise to be nice”. An objective of this campaign is to reach a certain amount of people with this message.

**Corporate/Product related objectives**

Telia is a well-known brand in Sweden and therefore improved brand awareness is not an objective with this sponsorship. However, by engaging in this sponsorship, Telia wants to improve their image and as a result increase the preference for their brand. Because of this, CSR is the most important objective with the sponsorship. Telia makes a distinction between sponsorships and customer relation activities, and improved relationships with customers and other stakeholders are therefore not objectives with this sponsorship.

**Marketing objectives**

This sponsorship does not aim to increase product sales, but to increase the market share in the future. According to Eva, this will be attained automatically by an increased brand preference. However, this is more of a long-term objective, people might not choose Telia the day after an event, but this may impact future customers to think of Telia as a good company. The most important objective of the sponsorship is to reach the target group.
**Media objectives**

*Media coverage* is not an objective with the sponsorship itself which is considered as a long-term cooperation. However, the current campaign embedded within the cooperation with Friends has certain objectives considering media coverage regarding reach, how many that will be aware of the campaign, understand the message and know that Telia is the one sending out the message. *Avoiding clutter* is not a direct objective of this sponsorship.

**Reason for choosing this event to reach objectives**

According to Eva, Telia could take a stand against online bullying without sponsoring Friends, but with the risk that it would be perceived as “empty words”. By taking advantage of the knowledge and competency of Friends, Telia can achieve a deeper impact and make a long-term change in society in a much more effective way. In this strategic cooperation, the organisations can help each other to reach their objectives.

**Event 2 - Melodifestivalen**

This event is a completely different type of sponsorship which Telia has engaged in during many years. The sponsorship had a connection to the business due to the fact that people watch it on TV and use their phones to vote. Telia considered that they could make the event more fun with their services. However, by sponsoring this event, Telia did not contribute to a meaningful change or difference in society - which is their overall sponsoring objective. They neither saw any change in brand preference nor image liking in the long run, and these are the reasons why Telia does not sponsor this event anymore.

**Corporate/Product related objectives**

Increasing *brand awareness* was not an objective when Telia sponsored Melodifestivalen, since Telia was already well-known in Sweden. However, one goal was to increase the long-term *brand image* and preference. Improved *CSR* was not an objective with this sponsorship. *Improving customer relations* was a great part of the sponsorship, because as a sponsor, Telia got a number of tickets with the purpose of inviting customers to the event. *Improved relations with other stakeholders* than customers was not an objective with this sponsorship.

**Marketing objectives**

*Increased market share* was not an objective since it is a long-term goal not attainable from only one event. Telia had however a cooperation with Samsung during this event, with the objective of *increased sales of certain products*. *Reaching target groups* was one of the most important objectives with the sponsorship.

**Media objectives**

Melodifestivalen is much about exposure, and visibility and *media coverage* at the event was therefore an important objective for Telia. In Sweden, much attention is given to Melodifestivalen during a couple of weeks each year. Telia therefore wanted to be seen in this context and be associated with the event to reach certain media objectives, and as a way of *avoiding clutter*. 

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Reason for choosing this event to reach objectives
This event gets a lot of attention and high viewing rates, and sponsoring an event like this facilitates reaching out to a large part of the Swedish population. The size and reach of the event were the main factors contributing to Telia’s decision to sponsor it.

Fit between an event and the company brand
An appropriate fit is a very important criterion for Telia when making sponsorship decisions. The point with a strategic sponsorship is to strengthen each other, as in the collaboration with Friends. It is important to have a common view on important matters and a fit between the businesses is therefore important. Because of this, Telia would not sponsor an event associated with corruption, child labour, discrimination etc.

Importance of criteria for event choice (1 = not important, 5 = highly important)
Eva was asked about the importance of various criteria for achieving a fit between event and sponsor, event characteristics and individual factors when the company chooses which events to sponsor. The importance of each variable is presented in Table 4.1 below.

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<th>Criteria for event sponsor fit</th>
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Image transfer from event to brand
Telia considers this as the main purpose of their sponsoring. The company wants to take advantage of their partners’ goodwill and strong brands. This is the reason why Telia has become much more restrictive in their sponsoring operations and withdrawn from many sponsorships. A successful sponsorship will result in a transfer of image from event to brand and Telia must therefore be selective in their choice of strategic sponsorship partners.

To sum up the interview, Eva had the chance to add factors that she considers impact sponsoring’s role in building brand equity for Telia. She concluded that sponsoring is a part of
the marketing mix where the company has the opportunity to have a deeper impact and get associated with their partners and achieve meaningful objectives together. She also pointed out that Telia has made some significant changes in their sponsoring strategy over the past years. Previously, Telia was involved in several kinds of events with main objectives connected to media exposure and improving customer relations. Today, the focus is on making a difference, a high level of relevancy and a strong and natural connection to the business, products and services. In the sponsoring today, a matching vision with the partner is of great importance and this makes Telia more restrictive in what sponsorships to engage in. For Telia, events can be a part of a sponsorship but not just a one-time event. This is due to the fact that it takes a long time to make a difference, and sponsoring is therefore considered a long-term cooperation.

4.2 Handelsbanken

Handelsbanken was founded in 1871 and is today one of the largest banks in Sweden. The bank has 12,000 employees in 25 countries. The main markets for the operations are Sweden, Great Britain, Finland, Denmark, Norway and The Netherlands. Handelsbanken is a full-service bank targeting both private and corporate customers. The bank’s operations have a decentralised approach and a strong local presence due to a nation-wide branch network on the main markets. The 2015 net sales for the company group was SEK 40,300 million and for the Swedish market SEK 20,200 million. The share is listed at Nasdaq Stockholm. (Handelsbanken, 2016) Handelsbanken’s main objective is a higher profitability than the average of other comparable banks in the home markets, by having a higher customer satisfaction and lower costs than the competitors. (Handelsbanken, n.d.)

The respondent for Handelsbanken was Jörgen Ericsson, bank director at the Luleå office. Since the decision making at the bank is highly decentralised, so are the sponsoring decisions. These are made locally, and Jörgen is the one responsible for the bank’s sponsoring in Luleå. Jörgen has worked at Handelsbanken for 20 years and as bank director for seven years.

4.2.1. Data presentation

Types of events

In Luleå, Handelsbanken primarily sponsors sports and fine arts events. Handelsbanken also sponsors different types of fairs and festivals, for example Överkalix marknad, the annual light festival and the Mattei music festival in Luleå. Handelsbanken in Luleå sponsors various sport events, such as Luleå Hockey, Luleå Basket, IFK Luleå, Notas women’s soccer team and Luleå FC. The bank primarily sponsors the elite teams, but also youth and children sports teams. Handelsbanken also sponsors various trade shows, for example Nolia in Piteå and Fair Living in Luleå. The bank is a sponsor of a charity concert in Luleå, where the beneficiaries are the Swedish church, Save the Children and families and children living under difficult circumstances.

Within fine arts, Handelsbanken has sponsored Luleå Symfoniorkester since 40 years and in recent years, they have also sponsored events held by Norrbottensteatern. The bank sponsors
various types of societal and business events within the *meetings and conferences* category, for example Luleå Business Awards and has also previously sponsored the Venture Cup *competition* in Luleå. Handelsbanken sponsors *international events* and decisions regarding these are made locally on the specific market.

**Why these events are most important to the company**

Jörgen says that it is all about exposure; “if you are not seen - you do not exist”. When Jörgen makes a sponsoring decision, he considers two aspects: strengthening the brand and doing something fun with customers. For him, sponsoring involves more than just advertising. An example of this is at the Luleå Hockey arena where the bank has an own restaurant, Handelsbanken Bistro, to which they invite customers to promote business relationships. The fact that Handelsbanken is a large sponsor of Luleå Hockey and Luleå Basket is due to the fact that these events attract thousands of people, and thereby a broad market can be reached. Athletes are seen as role models for youths and therefore Handelsbanken wants to support the local teams. Regarding the sponsoring of the symphony orchestra, Jörgen says that a large focus is on attending the event together with important customers for exposure and relationship building.

**Type of sponsorship**

Handelsbanken as a sponsor is active along all dimensions. Luleå Basket and Luleå Business Awards are examples of traditional sponsorships. Handelsbanken Bistro is an example of when an existing event held at someone else’s arena is used, but the bank creates the content of their participation. Even though some events are held at the bank office, the majority of sponsored events are held at someone else’s arena.

**Sponsorship decision-making**

All sponsoring decisions are made locally by the 850 bank directors. This is due to the decentralised organisation and the fact that the company does not have any marketing or sales managers, and the bank director is therefore the one responsible for each local market. The sponsoring therefore varies between different local offices. Because of the local approach, the bank usually does not sponsor nation-wide events.

**General objectives with the sponsoring strategy**

Handelsbanken has no set sponsoring policy, every bank director is autonomous and free to make his/her own decisions. However, in Luleå the two most important general objectives are exposure to promote brand building and building customer relationships.

**Event 1 - Luleå Hockey**

Handelsbanken is one of the main sponsors of the club but also sponsors some of the games. The sponsorship is carried out by the restaurant at the arena, billboards and Handelsbanken’s logo on the players’ clothes. According to Jörgen, this sponsorship is about exposure and being different by doing something that nobody else does. Luleå Hockey is a strong brand and hockey is very popular and important in Luleå, and it is therefore important for Handelsbanken to be
seen in this context. This sponsorship is a long-term relationship that also attracts other sponsors to Luleå Hockey.

**Corporate/Product related objectives**

Increasing *brand awareness* is an important objective with this sponsorship. Previously, before the restaurant, the bank had a loge at the arena. However, Jörgen considered it to be better with a restaurant to stand out from the other sponsors and thereby improve brand awareness. According to Jörgen, it is good to stand out as a sponsor and to do nice things. By doing so, the bank will hopefully be perceived as the one that “keeps things going” and stands up for Luleå, which will impact the *brand image and public perception*. CSR is important to Handelsbanken, but not a primary objective with the sponsorship of Luleå Hockey. Jörgen states that Luleå Hockey makes Luleå a better place. The team brings joy and stands for positive things which make them role models for youths and the bank therefore wants to support the team. By bringing important customers to the games, Handelsbanken wish to *improve customer relationships* which is one of the main objectives of the sponsorship. By this sponsorship, Handelsbanken also wants to build and *improve relationships with other stakeholders*, such as partners and potential future customers in addition to existing customers.

**Marketing objectives**

*Increased sales and market share* are objectives with the sponsorship, however they are not specified and measured in absolute numbers. *Reaching targets groups* is another important objective with the sponsorship. Each game attracts thousands of people and the fact that games are played throughout the country gives Handelsbanken a national reach. In the sense of building the brand, the broad target market is most important, but in building customer relations, the bank is more selective and focuses on the most profitable customers.

**Media objectives**

*Media coverage* is an objective with the sponsorship of Luleå Hockey. Handelsbanken wants to gain attention from the target groups by photos in media of players wearing the company’s logo, but also in news updates regarding the sponsorship. Handelsbanken has no traditional advertising, they work exclusively with relationship based selling and therefore *avoiding clutter* is not an objective with this sponsorship.

**Reason for choosing this event to reach objectives**

Hockey is very popular in Luleå and Luleå Hockey is a strong brand, Jörgen therefore argues that it is not wise to stand outside of this. The relations between Handelsbanken and Luleå Hockey can be characterised by a good partnership and the club appreciates Handelsbanken’s commitments. The two main reasons for engaging in this sponsorship are exposure and doing something fun with customers.

**Event 2 - Luleå Symfoniorkester**

In this sponsorship, Handelsbanken sponsors concerts and events held by the symphony orchestra, and in return they get their logo in the program guide.
Corporate/Product related objectives

Improved brand awareness is an important objective with the sponsorship since a large number of people attend the concerts, and Handelsbanken can thereby build their brand. In this context, it is important to been seen with the right people. Improved brand image/public perception is also an objective with this sponsorship. This orchestra makes Luleå a better place, and therefore Handelsbanken considers this sponsorship as a long-term partnership that will improve the brand image. It is also important for Handelsbanken to sponsor fine arts and cultural events since these enrich the city. Improving the company’s CSR efforts is not a direct objective of this sponsorship. Improved customer relationships is an objective with this sponsorship since customers are invited to attend the concerts together with Handelsbanken. In addition to customers, Handelsbanken also wants to improve relations with partners and potential customers.

Marketing objectives

Increased sales and market share are not direct objectives with this sponsorship. To reach target groups is a long-term objective but not specified or measured in numbers for this sponsorship.

Media objectives

Media coverage is not an objective with this sponsorship. The same approach as in the sponsorship of Luleå Hockey can be applied on this sponsorship, and avoiding clutter is neither a direct objective for this sponsorship.

Reason for choosing this event to reach objectives

The main reasons for engaging in this sponsorship are the same as for Luleå Hockey, exposure and building the brand in addition to doing something fun with customers. As mentioned, this is a long-term sponsorship and cooperation which attracts many people and thereby provides a great exposure of the brand. Jörgen claims that the symphony orchestra is a high quality non-for profit organisation that he wants to support and help to develop their offer.

Fit between an event and company brand

Jörgen states that most sponsorships would be a good fit with Handelsbanken. However, it is very important for the bank to partner with good and reasonable organisations and they would not cooperate with unfair organisations.

Importance of criteria for event choice (1 = not important, 5 = highly important)

Jörgen was asked about the importance of various criteria for achieving a fit between event and sponsor, event characteristics and individual factors when he chooses which events to sponsor. The importance of each variable is presented in Table 4.2.
Table 4.2: Criteria for event choice 2

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<th>Criteria for event sponsor fit</th>
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**Image transfer from event to brand**

The image transfer is important and according to Jörgen, Handelsbanken takes this into consideration when deciding on which events to sponsor and which partnerships to engage in. Overall, there is much joy associated with the events the company sponsors and Jörgen hopes that this will be reflected and transferred to Handelsbanken’s brand.

**4.3. Polarbröd**

Polarbröd is a family owned company founded in 1879. The company employs approximately 400 people and in 2015 the company had a turnover of SEK 791 million. Polarbröd is the third largest bread producer in Sweden with the purpose of creating opportunities to eat well and healthy. The Swedish market is most important and accounts for 70 percent of the company’s sales. The largest export markets are Norway and France. (Polarbröd, n.d.) Polarbröd is part of the company group Polinova, and the share is not listed on the stock exchange. (Alla Bolag, 2016) The respondent at Polarbröd was the sales manager Björn Hägg, who has worked in the position and at the company for seven years.

**4.3.1. Data presentation**

**Types of events**

At Polarbröd, sponsoring is divided into two categories: overall brand-related sponsorships and “bygdemedel” which mainly consists of sponsoring with the company’s products. The second category is mostly focused on the local markets in Älvsbyn, Bredbyn och Umeå.

Previously, Polarbröd was involved in sponsorships of *fairs and festivals* but due to a low return on investment, Polarbröd does not support these types of events today. Polarbröd sponsors various types of *sport* events and this is carried out within both categories of sponsoring. One
sponsorship within sports is Luleå Hockey, which is a long-term investment focusing on creating relationships with important customers at the Swedish market. The company also sponsors Modo Hockey, and both hockey sponsorships aim to getting exposure of the brand in TV but also to promote the employees’ interests. Another sport event sponsored by the company is the youth soccer cup Piteå Summer Games (PSG) and this sponsorship is carried out with the company’s products. Polarbröd also sponsors skiing competitions such as Alpina Polarcupen and the hiking event Fjällräven Classic. Polarbröd used to sponsor trade shows, such as Nolia in Piteå, but the company has withdrawn from these kind of events in recent years, since it caused problems with resellers which could not be compensated with short-term sales at the events. Polarbröd is engaged in many types of charities, but does not sponsor specific events within this category.

Polarbröd donates funds to local fine arts and culture events in Norrbotten via a foundation owned by the company group owners. Sustainability is very important for the company which often is engaged in international meetings and conferences focusing on environmental issues. At these events, the company wants to strengthen their brand and often sponsors with their products. To been seen in these contexts has a positive impact on the relationships with resellers by showing a common interest in sustainability. An example of such an event is Almedalsveckan where Polarbröd is one of the sponsors. Polarbröd also sponsors product launches in terms of sampling of their products, but to a limited extent. The last three to five years Polarbröd has been sponsoring an event outside of Sweden, the telecasted competition 71° Nord in Norway, which is currently the largest sponsorship for Polarbröd. In the competition, the participants hike from one part of Norway to the other, and the competition shares Polarbröd’s values of an active and healthy lifestyle.

**Why these events are most important to the company**
The purposes of the sponsorship of 71° Nord are to increase sales on the Norwegian market and above all, building a strong brand in Norway. The show takes place in the right context, reaches a broad audience and has many viewers. In addition to brand exposure, the competitors also eat the company’s bread during the entire journey. By investing in this sponsorship, Polarbröd has managed to get better placements of their products in Norwegian stores, and the sponsorship has resulted in a growth in sales in Norway. In Sweden, the sport sponsorships are based on a local presence and tradition. They are related to the brand but also to make the company’s employees feel proud. Polarbröd wants to be seen in the right contexts, where youths are active, and provide them with the opportunity to get to know and like Polarbröd.

**Type of sponsorship**
Polarbröd does not have a general strategy regarding what type of sponsorship to engage in today. A majority of the current sponsorships take place within the traditional sponsoring category, and examples of such are 71° Nord and Piteå Summer Games. However, the company is currently undertaking changes in their sponsoring strategies and policies. According to Björn, Polarbröd is likely to move towards new arena/own event in the future, when the sponsoring is going to be used more as a strategic tool than before.
Sponsorship decision-making
Historically, one single person was responsible for all sponsorship decisions. However, as mentioned, the company is currently undergoing a change in the sponsoring strategy to reach a more efficient decision-making. Brand-related sponsorship decisions are made centrally by the marketing director together with a PR-agency. Regarding sponsoring with bygdemedel, every bakery has a person in charge of an annual budget allocated to local investments.

General objectives with the sponsoring strategy
There are two general objectives with the company’s sponsoring strategy: to strengthen the brand in terms of increased brand awareness and to increase the sales.

Event 1 - 71° Nord
The sponsorship of 71° Nord is unique for Polarbröd and includes many activities, such as sales, marketing and in-store activities. Sales promotion investments such as a TV-commercials and in-store campaigns are carried out to increase sales and reach target groups such as families with children, and convey the message that the company’s products are healthy.

Corporate/Product related objectives
Some of the most important objectives with this sponsorship are increased *brand awareness* and *brand image/public perception* in Norway. CSR issues is not an objective with this sponsorship. Another important objective with the sponsorship is *improved customer relations*, and the sponsorship has facilitated the selling of the products in Norway. On the contrary, *improving relationships with other stakeholders* is not an objective regarding this sponsorship.

Marketing objectives
*Increased sales and market share* as well as *reaching target groups* are all objectives with this sponsorship.

Media objectives
To gain *media coverage* and exposure of the company’s brand are two of the main objectives with this sponsorship. *Avoiding clutter* is not an objective with this sponsorship.

Reason for choosing this event to reach objectives
This event is in line with what Polarbröd wishes to accomplish, which is to be present in contexts where people are active. The company wants to encourage people to an active lifestyle and eat healthy products produced by Polarbröd.

Event 2 - Piteå Summer Games
Piteå Summer Games is a context where Polarbröd wants to be seen and associated with. At the event, youths exercise sports and the company sponsors with their bread. Getting youths to try the products is an effective way of exposing the brand.
Corporate/Product related objectives
Polarbröd wants to increase *brand awareness* by putting up advertising posters at the arenas. Many international youths, primarily from Finland and Norway, are gathered and getting them to try the bread increases brand awareness even outside of Sweden. Improved *brand image/public perception* is not a primary objective for this sponsorship. The company wants to support youth sports in the region by their presence in this context, which in the long run can have an effect on the brand image. *CSR efforts* is not an objective for this sponsorship and neither are *improved customer relationships*. However, the company wishes to *improve relationships with other stakeholders* such as local entrepreneurs who have children participating in the event, and appreciate that Polarbröd is present and represents the region in an international context.

Marketing objectives
*To increase sales and market share* are not direct objectives with the sponsorship, however Polarbröd considers them as long-term objectives since their future customers are attending the event. This will hopefully result in a long-term increase in sales. *To reach target groups*, primarily families with children, which have a high presence at this event, is an objective of this sponsorship.

Media objectives
*Media coverage and avoiding clutter* are not objectives, however seen as a positive bonus.

Reason for choosing this event to reach objectives
The main purposes with this sponsorship are to have a local presence in a context where young people play sports and to reach the target group consisting of families with children. These are both achieved by the sponsorship of Piteå Summer Games.

Fit between an event and company brand
An appropriate fit is very important for Polarbröd. Previously, the company had no selection criteria at all when choosing what event to sponsor and sponsored all types of event. However, there has been a large change in the company’s sponsoring strategy, and today it is important that all sponsorships contribute to reaching the company’s long-term objectives of increased sales and brand awareness. The ongoing changes in the sponsoring strategy will implicate a much more strategic approach than before and Polarbröd has become more selective in their sponsoring.

Importance of criteria for event choice (1 = not important, 5 = highly important)
Björn was asked about the importance of various criteria for achieving a fit between event and sponsor, event characteristics and individual factors when Polarbröd chooses which events to sponsor. The importance of each variable is presented in Table 4.3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for event sponsor fit</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectancy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevancy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target market</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typicality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clash</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event characteristics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event size</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional status</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event history</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event venue</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual factors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event image as perceived by customers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past history with event</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Image transfer from event to brand**

Polarbröd takes the image transfer from event to brand into consideration when sponsoring events. Examples are the ski competition in Gällivare and Fjällräven Classic, which bring forth positive associations among the participants. The participants appreciate being served a sandwich in the pauses and this creates a positive image of Polarbröd. The company listens to feedback from the staff and the participants at the events, and thereafter decides whether to continue to sponsor the events in order to gain a positive impact on the company’s image.

To conclude the interview, Björn once again states that Polarbröd will work more strategically with sponsorships in the future in line with the company’s total marketing investments. He states that Polarbröd will focus more on long-term strategic investments focusing on brand, sales and improved customer relations.
5. Data Analysis

This chapter includes a reduction and analysis of the empirical data presented in the previous chapter. A within-case analysis of each company is conducted to make the reduction of the collected data and to compare the data with the theories presented in the frame of reference. A cross-case analysis is thereafter done in order to compare the results from the three companies, and this is presented in the second step in the data analysis: data display.

In this chapter, data are analysed by using the most appropriate method when analysing a case study: relying on theoretical propositions (Yin, 1994). Using this method, the results from the interviews are compared to the theory presented in the frame of reference.

As stated by Miles and Huberman (1994) there are three steps in the analysis of qualitative data: data reduction, data display and drawing of conclusions. The data analysis of this thesis follows these three steps, which assist in making sure that only the most important data are used. Data reduction aims to summarise and simplify collected data and to facilitate a focus on the most relevant parts (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is done by only including the variables from the frame of reference, and excluding additional data, in the three within-case analyses. Data display aims to organise the reduced data into some kind of display, such as graphs, charts, matrices or tables (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For this purpose, tables are used. The drawing and confirming of conclusions are facilitated by a well-structured data display. (Miles & Huberman, 1994) This last step in the process is presented in chapter six.

5.1. Within-case analysis

5.1.1 Case 1: Telia Company

Meenaghan (1983), Pope (1998) and Shank (1999) all discuss sponsorship objectives, which each of them groups into a number of categories. In the frame of reference for this thesis a mix of these categories is presented, and the objectives of event sponsorship are divided into corporate/product-, marketing- and media related objectives. An overall sponsoring objective for Telia is to reach their target group, which is a common marketing objective as discussed by Dolphin (2003) and Meenaghan (1983). Another main objective is to achieve a higher purpose than just profits: to make an important change in society, which goes in line with the corporate/product related objective of increasing CSR, as discussed by Meenaghan (1983). The company also wishes to increase the brand preference. To reach these objectives, the company has become more selective in their choice of events, and has withdrawn from a majority of previous sponsorships.

As stated by several authors, among others Gwinner (1997), Goldblatt (2005) and Wood (2009), there are numerous types of events to sponsor, such as fairs/festivals, sports, music, trade shows, charities, fine arts and meetings/conferences. The most important types of events used by Telia in their current sponsorship strategy are charities, meetings and conferences and product
launches. The type of sponsorship can be measured along two dimensions as stated by Behrer and Larsson (1998), use of own/someone else’s arena and new/existing event, and is thereby categorised into four types of sponsorship (traditional sponsorship, EM1, EM2 and EM3). Telia is active along all dimensions and thereby all categories.

Telia was asked about their specific objectives for two separate events in order to explore which events are chosen to reach certain objectives. In their strategic sponsorship of Friends, the main corporate/product objectives were improved brand image, which in theory is emphasised by Pope (1998) and Meenaghan (1983), and CSR, also mentioned by Meenaghan (1983). The most important marketing objective is to reach the target group which is in accordance with the theory presented by Dolphin (2003) and Meenaghan (1983).

The second event discussed is Melodifestivalen, which Telia previously sponsored for several years. The most important objectives within the corporate/product category were increased brand image (Pope, 1998, Meenaghan, 1983) and improving customer relations, which also is a sponsorship objective frequently discussed by several authors (Donlan & Crowther, 2014, Sing & Bhatia, 2015). Increased product sales and reaching target groups are marketing objectives mentioned in sponsorship theory (Dolphin, 2003, Meenaghan, 1983) and these were also objectives for Telia with this sponsorship. Media coverage and avoiding clutter were both important objectives for this sponsorship, which are objectives also mentioned by several authors, such as Dolphin (2003) and Grohs et al. (2004).

According to Grohs et al. (2004), McDonnell and Moir (2013) and Keller (2008), it is important to achieve an appropriate fit between event and brand. Eva states that this is very important for Telia when making sponsorship decisions. There are eight criteria (expectancy, relevancy, target market, geography, typicality, complementary, clash and image) that impact the fit between event and sponsor (McDonnell & Moir, 2013), and Eva was asked how important these are to Telia when choosing an event to sponsor. She argues that all criteria but expectancy and geography are highly important for Telia in their choice of event.

Gwinner (1997) states that there are five event characteristics impacting event image (event size, professional status, event history, event venue and promotional appearance). Out of these, the only one highly important to Telia in their event choice is promotional appearance. Wood (2009) and Gwinner (1997) discuss individual factors impacting event image (event image as perceived by customers and past history with event), of which the first is very important for Telia when considering to enter a sponsorship.

As stated by Gwinner (1997) and Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013), there is a possible transfer of image from event to brand. Eva was asked if this is important for Telia, and she states that it is highly important and the main purpose of their sponsoring strategy.
5.1.2 Case 2: Handelsbanken

One of the main objectives of the sponsorship of events for Handelsbanken in Luleå is exposure to promote brand building. This can be related to both brand awareness, as mentioned by Meenaghan (1893) and Shank (1999), and brand image/public perception, as discussed by Pope (1998) and Meenaghan (1983). The second main objective is to improve customer relationships, which importance has been emphasised by several authors, such as Donlan and Crowther (2014) and Sing and Bhatia (2015). In order to reach these objectives, Handelsbanken primarily focuses on sponsorship of events related to sports and fine arts, which are in accordance with the event types as categorised by Gwinner (1997). Other events sponsored by the company are fairs/festivals, trade shows, charities, meetings and conferences. Considering type of sponsorship, as discussed by Behrer and Larsson (1998), Handelsbanken is active in all categories, however, the majority of the events are held at someone else’s arena.

Just as in the interview with Telia, Handelsbanken was asked about two specific event sponsorships and their objectives related to each of these. The sponsorship of Luleå Hockey aims to reach the corporate/product objectives of increased/improved brand awareness, brand image and public perception, in addition to improved relationships with customers and other stakeholders. The marketing objectives are to reach target groups, increase sales and market share. Media coverage is the main media objective. As previously mentioned, these are all sponsorship objectives mentioned in theory.

The second event sponsorship discussed in the interview is Luleå Symfoniorkester and their concerts. The main objectives of this sponsorship are improved brand awareness, brand image/public perception and improved relations with customers and other stakeholders. These are all objectives within the corporate/product category.

Regarding the importance of a fit between event and brand as discussed by Grohs et al. (2004), McDonnell and Moir (2013) and Keller (2008), Jörgen says that most sponsorships would be a good fit with Handelsbanken’s brand. However, they would not engage in a partnership with an unfair organisation, which could have a negative impact on the brand image. Regarding the importance of the eight criteria impacting event sponsor fit, as theorised by McDonnell and Moir (2013), in the event choice for Handelsbanken, all but clash are considered important. The five event characteristics, as previously mentioned, are all considered important for Jörgen when he decides on which events Handelsbanken sponsors. Out of the individual factors, event image as perceived by customers is most important in the event choice.

Regarding the possible image transfer from event to brand as discussed by Gwinner (1997) and Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013), Jörgen says that this is important to take into consideration when deciding which event to sponsor, since he wants positive feelings towards the sponsored event to be transferred to Handelsbanken’s brand.
5.1.3. Case 3: Polarbröd

Polarbröd has two general objectives with their sponsoring strategy: strengthen the brand in terms of increased brand awareness and to increase sales, which both are objectives mentioned in theory by Meenaghan (1983), Shank (1999) and Dolphin (2003). To reach these objectives, the company mostly engages in sponsorships within the sports area. The frequent use of sport sponsorships in order to reach sales objectives is consistent with findings by Greenhalgh and Greenwell (2013). In addition to sport events, the company sponsors some events within fine arts, meetings and conferences and some product launches. The largest single sponsorship in recent years is the sponsoring of a telecasted competition in Norway. As well as Telia, Polarbröd is today more selective in their sponsoring, and the types of events mentioned above are the most important to the company that wants to be seen in the right contexts and build a strong brand. Polarbröd has no general strategy considering which type of sponsorship to engage in, according to the model by Behrer and Larsson (1998), but a majority of the current sponsorships can be considered as traditional sponsorships.

In the same way as in the other two interviews, Polarbröd was asked about their objectives for two specific events. The first event is the Norwegian competition 71° Nord, and when the objectives for this event were discussed, these were consistent with the ones mentioned in theory. The most important corporate/product objectives are increased brand awareness, brand image/public perception and improved customer relations. Marketing objectives are central in this sponsorship and increased sales, market share and to reach target groups are all important. In addition to this, media coverage to get exposure of the brand is an important media objective.

The second event discussed by Björn, is the youth soccer cup Piteå Summer Games. Corporate/Product objectives with this sponsorship are increased brand awareness and improved relationships with stakeholders. To reach the target group is the main marketing objective with this sponsorship.

Björn states that the fit between event and brand, as emphasised by Grohs et al. (2004), McDonnell and Moir (2013) and Keller (2008), is very important to Polarbröd. Previously, the company had no set criteria when making sponsorship decisions, but this has changed in recent years. When asked about the importance of the eight criteria used to achieve an event sponsor fit, as described by McDonnell and Moir (2013), Björn states that all of these are important, however expectancy less important. This statement supports the theory that these criteria are used in sponsorship decisions.

Out of the five event characteristics as mentioned by Gwinner (1997), professional status and promotional appearance are the most important for Polarbröd in their choice of events. Regarding the importance of the individual factors discussed by Wood (2009) and Gwinner (1997), past history with event is more important than event image as perceived by customers when making sponsorship decisions.
Gwinner (1997) and Zarantonello and Schmitt (2013) discuss the possible image transfer from event to brand as a result of a sponsorship. This is something that Polarbröd takes into consideration and the company therefore prefers to engage in sponsorships with positive associations which can be transferred to the brand.

5.2. Cross-case analysis

Table 5.1 summarises the companies’ overall sponsorship objectives.

Table 5.1: Overall objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall objectives</th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>Handelsbanken</th>
<th>Polarbröd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reach target groups, CSR, increase brand preference</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand awareness, brand image/public perception and improve customer relationships</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand awareness, increased sales</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 5.1 above, the overall sponsorship objectives differ between the three companies studied, however they all focus on objectives within the corporate/product category which also in theory are considered as the most important (Donlan & Crowther, 2014). Table 5.2 describes event types sponsored by each company.

Table 5.2: Event types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event types</th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>Handelsbanken</th>
<th>Polarbröd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairs/festivals</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade shows</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine arts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings/conferences</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product launches</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International events</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(+) YES, (-) NO

Table 5.2 illustrates similarities and differences in which types of events the companies sponsor. As shown in the table, the main similarity is that all three companies sponsor events within the meetings/conferences category. There is a large variation between the companies in terms of how many event types they sponsor, with Telia being to most selective in opposite to Handelsbanken. Polarbröd is currently changing their sponsorship strategy towards being more selective, which can be compared to Telia’s sponsoring strategy. This may indicate a trend within the use of sponsorships. Table 5.3 shows the companies use of different types of sponsorships, as described in the theory by Behrer and Larsson (1998).

Table 5.3: Type of sponsorship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of sponsorship</th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>Handelsbanken</th>
<th>Polarbröd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional sponsorship</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM1, existing event/own arena</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM2, new event/someone else’s arena</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EM3, new event/own arena</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(+) YES, (-) NO
As displayed in Table 5.3, two out of the three companies in this study are active within all categories and do not have any set strategy on which type to use. However, Polarbröd is primarily using traditional sponsorships. Table 5.4 below provides a summary of the objectives for each event and company.

### Table 5.4: Event specific objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsorship objectives</th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>Handelsbanken</th>
<th>Polarbröd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Melodi-festivalen</td>
<td>Luleå Hockey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate/product objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand awareness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand image/public perception</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve customer relations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve stakeholder relations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased sales</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market share</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach target markets</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media coverage</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid clutter</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table above, the single most common objectives for event sponsorships are brand awareness, brand image/public perception, to improve customer relations and reach target markets, based on at least four (+). Telia is the only one that does not focus on increased brand awareness, since Eva states that Telia already is a well-known brand in Sweden. The two least common objectives are CSR and to avoid clutter, each of which was an objective for only one single event. Telia is the only one focusing on CSR objectives in their sponsoring efforts. Overall, the objectives within the corporate/product- and marketing categories are most frequently used, in comparison with media objectives which are not as important. Types of objectives vary widely between types of events, even within the same company. The most important objective category differs between the companies. Telia and Polarbröd focus mostly on marketing objectives while Handelsbanken focuses more on corporate/product objectives.

The fit between event and sponsor’s brand is considered important by all three companies. They all agree on the importance of cooperating with fair organisations that have values in line with their own. The importance of the criteria used when choosing an event to sponsor for each company is presented in Table 5.5 below.
Table 5.5: Comparison of event choice criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>Handelsbanken</th>
<th>Polarbröd</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectancy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevancy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target market</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typicality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clash</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>101</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale 1-5, (1) not important, (5) highly important

Based on the total score, the overall most important criteria for the three companies are relevancy, target market, typicality, complementary and image. This is based on a rating of 13 or higher, which is above the mean (12.6). The less important criteria are expectancy, geography and clash, which were rated below the mean. Handelsbanken and Polarbröd rated more criteria higher and considered these to have a greater importance than Telia. The importance of the event characteristics when choosing an event to sponsor are displayed in Table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6: Comparison of event characteristics in the event choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>Handelsbanken</th>
<th>Polarbröd</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event size</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional status</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event history</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event venue</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional appearance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale 1-5, (1) not important, (5) highly important

Based on the total score, the overall most important event characteristic is promotional appearance while the others are not considered as important. When comparing the three companies, Handelsbanken stands out, and considers these characteristics as more important when choosing events to sponsor than the other two companies. The importance of individual factors in the event choice are presented in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7: Comparison of individual factors in the event choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telia</th>
<th>Handelsbanken</th>
<th>Polarbröd</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event image as perceived by customers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past history with event</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale 1-5, (1) not important, (5) highly important
Regarding the importance of the individual specific variables as mentioned in the table above, event image as perceived by customers was considered as more important than past history with event. No major differences between the companies appeared.

The possible image transfer from event to brand is considered by all the companies when engaging in sponsoring of events and partnerships. All three companies wish to achieve an image transfer which will have a positive impact on their brands.

As previously discussed, event sponsorship can be used as a communication tool to build brand equity. Clear sponsorship objectives are required and the choice of event is important in order to achieve objectives and build brand equity. This process is illustrated in Figure 2.4: Frame of reference. Telia has in recent years changed their sponsoring strategy and focuses today on making a difference on a deeper level in society. Telia engages in sponsorships with a high level of relevancy and a strong and natural connection to the business, products and services, which is believed to have a greater impact on the brand equity. As well as Telia, Polarbröd is currently under-taking a change in their sponsoring strategy towards a more strategic approach in line with their total marketing investment, focusing on brand, sales and improved customer relations. This will hopefully have a greater impact the company’s total brand equity. All three companies value long-term sponsorship relations and sponsoring of reoccurring events as an important component in the building of brand equity.
6. Findings and Conclusions

In this chapter, the findings and conclusions of the study based on theory and empirical data are presented in order to answer the research questions. The chapter concludes with limitations for the study, implications for theory and management and suggestions for future research in the field.

6.1 RQ1: What are the objectives of event sponsorship that contribute to brand equity?

The findings in this study indicate that the main sponsorship objectives correspond with those mentioned in theory: brand awareness, brand image/public perception, to improve customer relations and reach target markets. Companies focus less on achieving objectives related to CSR and avoiding clutter. However, this may vary between companies in different industries and between different types of events. Overall, objectives within the corporate/product- and marketing categories are most frequently used, in contrast to media objectives which are not considered as important. The data collected in this study focus on events within charities, competitions, sports and fine arts, and the most common objectives for each event type are presented below.

The results of this study indicate that companies sponsoring charity events wish to improve their overall brand image, which is often done by engaging in CSR work. Improved brand image will result in increased brand preference, which makes CSR the most important objective for companies that sponsor charity events. Companies consider their CSR engagement to increase customers’ brand preference, which in the long run will increase the market share. Reaching target groups was also shown to be an important objective for this kind of sponsorship.

Regarding objectives related to sponsorship of competitions, the study indicates that sponsorship objectives differ depending on the company. For instance, well-known companies and less well-known companies may have different sponsorship objectives with the same type of event. The results from this study show that large, already well-known companies do not need to achieve the objective of brand awareness. Instead, they focus on objectives related to brand image, customer relations and target markets. Smaller companies that may not be as well-known, or are entering a new market, want to increase their brand awareness. In general, media coverage, increased sales and market share, reaching target groups and to improve customer relations are most important for companies sponsoring competitions.

Sport events are one of the most common event types to sponsor, which is supported by the findings in this study. The empirical data suggest that many of the companies engaged in sport sponsorships mostly focus on increasing brand awareness, brand image/public perception, improving relationships with customers and stakeholders, increasing sales and market share, reaching target groups and media coverage. Companies prefer sponsoring sporting events...
because this gives the opportunity to reach out to a broad audience and is considered to be a good context to be seen in.

The data suggest that the main objectives for companies sponsoring fine art events are within the corporate/product category. These are improved brand awareness, brand image and public perception and to improve relationships with customer and other stakeholders. Companies consider sponsorships of fine art events as a way of contributing to joy and culture in society.

This study indicates that companies use sponsorship of events as a tool for building brand equity. The following section summarises the conclusions regarding the objectives for event sponsorships that contribute to brand equity.

- Objectives within the corporate/product- and marketing categories are most frequently used in the building of brand equity.
- The single most common sponsorship objectives are brand awareness, brand image/public perception, to improve customer relations and reach target markets.
- Different companies may have different types of objectives, although they sponsor the same type of event.
- CSR and reaching target groups are the most important objectives for companies sponsoring charity events.
- Companies sponsoring competitions set objectives related to brand awareness, brand image, customer relations, reaching target markets, media coverage, increased sales and market share.
- Companies engaged in sport sponsorships focus on objectives of increased brand awareness, brand image/public perception, to improve relationships with customers and stakeholders, increased sales and market share, to reach target groups and media coverage.
- The main objectives for companies sponsoring fine art events are improved brand awareness, brand image/public perception and to improve relationships with customers and other stakeholders.

6.2 RQ2: How do companies choose the right event in order to reach sponsorship objectives?

There are four different kinds of sponsorships that a company may engage in. The findings in this study indicate that companies do not have any general strategy for which of these to use, but are often active in all sponsorship categories. However, even though the main category currently used is traditional sponsorships, there is a trend towards other types of sponsorships as well. This is due to an ongoing change in attitude regarding how to work with sponsorships as a strategic marketing tool. In the empirical data, a fifth type of event marketing sponsorship emerged, where companies make use of an existing event at someone else’s arena, but create the agenda and content of their own participation.
As concluded in the section dealing with RQ1, there are many types of events to sponsor in order to reach certain objectives. The results of this study implicate that different event types are sponsored to reach different objectives. The study also shows that the amount of event types sponsored by different companies differ greatly. A trend in the empirical data indicates that companies are becoming more selective in their sponsoring today than previously. It can be concluded that companies nowadays prefer to engage in long-term sponsorship relationships, instead of sponsoring several one-time events. These facts lead to a focus on a smaller amount of events, preferably on a recurring basis. The most common event types sponsored by the companies examined in this study are meetings/conferences followed by sports, charities, fine arts, product launches and competitions. All of the companies involved in this study also engage in sponsorship of international events.

The importance of an appropriate fit between sponsored event and company brand as emphasised in theory, was highly supported by the empirical data, and is considered very important by companies. Concerning the criteria for evaluating an event in terms of fit with the sponsor’s brand before engaging in a sponsorship, some criteria, such as typicality, relevancy, target market, image and complementary, got an overall higher rating than clash, geography and expectancy. These can therefore be seen as the most important to consider when deciding on which event to sponsor. Some differences were found in the empirical data regarding the criteria, which consist of to what extent companies make use of the criteria in their event choice. Two out of three companies got an overall rating significantly higher than the third, which may indicate that these two companies use more criteria in their event choice. This may be influenced by type and amount of events sponsored, but also size of the company, industry and company level on which sponsorship decisions are made.

Event characteristics are, as emphasised in theory, important to consider when making sponsorship decisions. The findings in this study show that some event characteristics are considered more important than others when evaluating events to sponsor, and the most important is promotional appearance. In the analysis of the empirical data some differences emerged, which indicates that some companies consider event characteristics as more important than others when making sponsorship decisions. This can be connected to the stated objectives of each sponsorship, for example the objective of increased brand awareness and media exposure may require certain event characteristics which are not as important for achieving other objectives, focusing on for example CSR efforts.

Regarding individual specific factors as discussed in theory, no differences between companies were discovered in the empirical data. Event image as perceived by customers is considered more important than customers’ past history with an event. Overall, in the choice of which event to sponsor, event characteristics and individual specific factors are of the same importance. However, compared to the criteria used to evaluate the fit between event and sponsor, these are not as important for companies when making a decision on whether to sponsor a specific event.
The importance of considering the transfer of event image to the brand is supported by the empirical data. Companies consider this carefully before engaging in sponsorship of events and partnerships in accordance with theory. Companies often regard this image transfer as an objective with the sponsorship, and therefore carefully evaluate and select events to sponsor in order for the sponsorship to be successful. As a result, a positive impact on the company brand can be achieved in terms of image transfer from the event.

In order to reach sponsorship objectives, and thereby build brand equity, the choice of event has shown to be of great importance. The following section summarises the conclusions regarding how companies choose the right event in order to reach sponsorship objectives.

- There are no general strategy in which type of sponsorship to engage in, and most companies are active in several types of sponsorships.
- Different types of events are chosen based on which objectives companies want to achieve.
- Amount of events sponsored by companies differs, there is however a trend towards greater selectivity in event sponsorships.
- Companies consider sponsorships as a long-term cooperation, not only a one-time event, as a tool for building brand equity.
- The most common event types are meetings/conferences, sports, charities, fine arts, product launches and competitions.
- It is considered highly important to achieve a fit between event and sponsoring brand.
- The most important criteria when choosing which events to sponsor are typicality, relevancy, target market, image and complementary.
- The most important event characteristic in the event choice is promotional appearance, and the most important individual factor is the event image as perceived by customers.
- Image transfer from event to brand is seen as important and is often an objective with a sponsorship.

6.3 Limitations

A limitation of the study is that, due the time limit, only one company from each industry was studied. Based on this, some differences between industries emerged. However, if more companies from each industry had been analysed, the results may have differed. Another research approach that could have been used is a quantitative study with a survey questionnaire. This method could have provided data from more companies and the results may then have differed. However, due to time limitation, this alternative was not appropriate for the study.

6.4 Implications for theory

The research purpose of this thesis has been to describe and explore the area of research in order to achieve the overall purpose: to provide a better understanding on how companies use sponsorship of events in order to improve brand equity. This has been done by initially taking
a descriptive approach by reviewing previous research and theories to gain a better understanding for the area of study. Based on this, the research questions focusing on event sponsorship objectives and how companies choose the right event to sponsor, were formulated before conducting the study. Thereafter, to gain a general understanding of the research problem, a more exploratory approach was taken when collecting the empirical data through interviews. The results from the three companies were then compared to each other and to previous research, to describe event sponsorship’s role in building brand equity for companies. Lastly, conclusions were drawn based on the results of the study. This thesis has thereby provided a framework that summarises the variables which can be used by companies when sponsoring events in order to build brand equity.

An implication for theory is the blurred lines between different types of sponsorships and the emergence of a fifth category, when a company make use of an already existing event at someone else’s arena, but create the content and agenda of the own participation. Additional objectives which were not discussed in theory, such as brand preference and to be seen in the right context, were mentioned by the companies. This implies a need for more research within the area of currently used sponsorship objectives. As stated in theory, it is the long-term relationships that contribute to enhancing the brand image and the building of brand equity. This study has discovered a trend among companies to engage in long-term sponsorship partnerships with organisations, during which several events can take place, instead of as previously sponsoring several single events. This indicates that researchers should investigate this trend further to get a better understanding of how sponsorships can be used to build brand equity.

6.5 Implications for management

This study contributes some important implications for practitioners and management that are using sponsoring of events as a tool to build brand equity. Firstly, clear objectives for a sponsorship must be stated and secondly, based on these, an appropriate event must be chosen. When choosing an event, it is of great importance that there is an appropriate fit between the event and the sponsoring brand, and there are several criteria which can be used to achieve this. The most frequently used criteria as shown by the empirical results in this study are typicality, relevancy, target market, image and complementary. Criteria regarding event characteristics and individual factors can be used as well, but the importance of these are highly dependent on type of company, industry and event for the specific sponsorship. When sponsoring an event, managers also need to be aware of the possible image transfer from event to brand and therefore choose events accordingly to the brand image they wish to achieve. Lastly, the findings in this study suggest that a long-term approach is suitable in sponsoring strategies since this is believed to have greater impact on brand equity.
6.6 Suggestions for future research

The area of research, sponsorship within event marketing, has been studied for a long time by many researchers. However, the majority of studies are fairly old and new studies within the area refers to previous research. These theories are still valid but new research about the role of sponsorships used in the building of brand equity today would facilitate the understanding of how companies work strategically with these matters as a part of their marketing strategy. Some suggestions on studies within this area are provided in the following section.

- Conduct a study on several companies within the same industry to discover patterns in the use of event sponsorship in order to build brand equity.
- Compare industries with each other in order to discover similarities and differences in how event sponsorships are used to build brand equity.
- A trend in how companies use event sponsorships emerged in the empirical data. It is suggested to make a longitudinal study of a number of companies to get a more clear overview of this trend, and if there are any differences between industries.
- This study is conducted from a business perspective, and it would be interesting if a study was conducted to show customers’ view on how event sponsorships influence brand equity.
- Compare countries and cultures to explore if there are any differences in the effectiveness of event sponsorships in the building of brand equity.
References

Books and articles


Internet


APPENDIX A: Interview guide

Date: Time: Place:

- Present ourselves and the purpose of the interview
- Ask if it is ok to audio record the interview

General information
Company:
Name of interviewee:
Position within the company:
Years of experience in position:
Total length of employment:

General questions
1. What type of event do the company sponsor? Why are these events most important to you?
   - Fairs/Festivals
   - Sports
   - Trade shows
   - Charities
   - Fine arts
   - Meetings/Conferences
   - Product launches
   - Competition/Contests

2. What type of sponsorship do the company usually use? Traditional sponsorship vs. Event marketing sponsorship? (show figure)

3. Are the sponsoring decisions made centrally or locally within the company?

4. Since the company is international, do you also sponsor events outside of Sweden?

5. Do you have any general objectives with your sponsoring strategy? If yes, which?

Specific questions for each event
Event 1
6. Do you have any specific corporate/product related objectives?
   - Brand awareness
   - Brand image and public perception
7. Do you have any specific marketing objectives?
   - Increased sales/market share
   - Reach target groups

8. Do you have any media objectives?
   - Media coverage
   - Avoid clutter

9. Why did you choose this specific event in order to reach your sponsorship objectives?

Event 2

10. Do you have any specific corporate/product related objectives?
    - Brand awareness
    - Brand image and public perception
    - CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)
    - Improve customer relationships
    - Improve stakeholder relationships

11. Do you have any specific marketing objectives?
    - Increased sales
    - Reach target groups

12. Do you have any media objectives?
    - Media coverage
    - Avoid clutter

13. Why did you choose this specific event in order to reach your sponsorship objectives?

This next part of the interview focuses on how to choose the right event in order to reach the objectives.

14. How important is the fit between an event and your company brand?

15. To what extent are these criteria important when choosing an event to sponsor on a scale from 1-5? (1= not important, 5 highly important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectancy</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevancy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typicality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Image</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are a few factors that impact the image of an event, we would therefore like to know how important these are for you in your choice of event.

16. What importance do event characteristics have on the choice?

| Event size | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Professional status |  |  |  |  |  |
| Event history |  |  |  |  |  |
| Event venue |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promotional appearance |  |  |  |  |  |

17. What importance do individual factors have on the choice?

| Event image as perceived by customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Past history with event |  |  |  |  |  |

19. Do you consider the image transfer from event to brand when sponsoring event?

20. All these factors impact brand equity and to conclude the interview, we would like to ask if there is anything you would like to add regarding the sponsoring role of building and strengthening your brand equity?
APPENDIX B: Intervjuguide

Datum: Tid: Plats:

- Presentation av oss själva och syftet med intervjun
- Fråga om det är ok att spela in intervjun

Generell information
Företag:
Namn på den intervjuade:
Position inom företaget:
Tid inom nuvarande position:
Längd på anställning:

Generella frågor

1. Vilken typ av evenemang sponsrar företaget? Varför just denna typ/mix av evenemang?
   - Marknader/Festivaler
   - Sport
   - Mässor
   - Välgörenhet
   - Konst/Kultur
   - Möten/Konferenser
   - Produktlanseringar
   - Tävlingar

2. Vilken typ av sponsorskap använder sig företaget av? Traditionellt sponsorskap vs. Sponsorskap inom evenemang (EM)?

3. På vilken nivå inom företaget tas sponsringsbeslut, centralt eller lokalt? Varför?
4. Eftersom företaget är aktivt på marknader utanför Sverige, sponsras även internationella evenemang? Om ja - Exempel? Om nej - Varför inte?

5. Har företaget några allmänna/övergripande mål med sin sponsringsstrategi? Om ja, vilka?

**Specifika frågor för varje evenemang**

**Evenemang 1**

6. Hade företaget några specifika företags-/produkts-relaterade mål med detta evenemang?
   - Ökad varumärkeskännedom
   - Förbättrad/förändrad varumärkes image och allmänhetens uppfattning
   - CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)
   - Förbättrade kundrelationer
   - Förbättrade relationer med intressenter

7. Hade företaget några specifika marknadsföringsmål med detta evenemang?
   - Ökad försäljning/marknadsandel
   - Nå målgrupper

8. Hade företaget några specifika mediala mål med detta evenemang?
   - Omnämning i media
   - Undvika brus i kommunikation med kunder

9. Varför valde företaget att sponsra just detta evenemang för att uppnå uppsatta mål?

**Evenemang 2**

10. Hade företaget några specifika företags-/produkts-relaterade mål med detta evenemang?
    - Ökad varumärkeskännedom
    - Förbättrad/förändrad varumärkes image och allmänhetens uppfattning
    - CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)
    - Förbättrade kundrelationer
    - Förbättrade relationer med intressenter

11. Hade företaget några specifika marknadsföringsmål med detta evenemang?
    - Ökad försäljning/marknadsandel
    - Nå målgrupper

12. Hade företaget några specifika mediala mål med detta evenemang?
    - Omnämning i media
    - Undvika brus i kommunikation med kunder
13. Varför valde företaget att sponsra just detta evenemang för att uppnå uppsatta mål?

Nästa del av intervjun fokuserar på hur företag väljer rätt evenemang att sponsra för att uppnå uppsatta mål.


15. På en skala från 1-5, hur viktiga är följande kriterier när företaget väljer vilka evenemang att sponsra? (1=inte viktigt, 5=mycket viktigt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kriterium</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kundernas förväntan</td>
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<td>Relevans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Målgrupp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geografi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matchning mellan produkt och evenemang</td>
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<tr>
<td>Komplementära sponsorer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produktkonflikt mellan sponsorer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Image</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

16. På en skala från 1-5, hur viktiga är följande evenemangsegenskaper när företaget väljer vilka evenemang att sponsra?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evenemangsegenskaper</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evenemangsstorlek</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professionell status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evenemangshistorik</td>
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<td>Evenemangsplats</td>
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<td>PR-upplevelse</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

17. På en skala från 1-5, hur viktiga är följande individspecifika faktorer när företaget väljer vilka evenemang att sponsra?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faktorer</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kundens upplevda evenemangimage</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Besökarnas tidigare erfarenheter av ett evenemang</td>
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18. Tar företaget hänsyn till eventuell överföring av image från evenemang till varumärke vid sponsring av evenemang? Hur?

19. Alla dessa faktorer påverkar företagets totala varumärkeskapital och avslutningsvis vill vi fråga dig om det är någonting som du vill tillägga gällande er sponsrings roll i byggandet och stärkandet av ert **varumärkeskapital**?