

EXPLORING THE MARKETING IMPLICATIONS OF SPORT MEGA EVENTS IN SUPPORTING THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPORT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Janita Van Wick, University of Pretoria, South Africa, jvanwyk@sport.up.ac.za

Neels Van Heerden, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Anneliese Goslin, University of Pretoria, South Africa

INTRODUCTION

The accelerated growth of the global sport industry over the past two decades is evident. In addition to increases in participation figures, live and television spectatorship have also recorded marked increases. Increased media exposure in sport resulted in an influx of external funds to support, amongst other issues, the sustainable development of the particular sport. Bohlmann (2006:1) states, "The global media explosion during this period (since the 1980's) has had a considerable effect on the income generated by this industry (sport), as television networks continue to pay increasing amounts of money for the rights to broadcast these events." This injection of funds offers a country the opportunity to achieve more successful sporting endeavours (development and performance), in support Andreff (2001:251) comments: "... developing countries are plagued with a shortage of physical education and sport for all programmes, a lack of financing for sport, few facilities and little equipment, ..., and no capacity to host mega events." He adds that: "... estimation shows that the probability for a country to win medals at the Olympics increases with GDP per capita and population."

The aim is thus to create efforts that will ensure increased income in sport, and hosting a sport mega event has been indicated to achieve just this (Baade & Matheson, 2004). The potential positive results of a sport mega event include economic growth such as increased revenue, enhanced job opportunities, growth in tourism; and social impacts such as a better image of the country, growth in sport performance, and sustainable sport development (Jones, 2001; Bohlmann, 2006). These impacts in turn could enhance the total contribution of the sport industry to the country's GDP. In South Africa this currently amounts to close to 2.1%. A ripple effect is generated here which involves a re-investment of finances by government and the private sector into sport. In 2004 the South African Minister of Finances, Trevor Manuel, with regards to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, stated: "... we will budget for a modest contribution by the fiscus to the infrastructure costs associated with this huge international event." The subsequent upgrading of infrastructure again creates the opportunity for sport development and participation which closes the circle into enhanced performance on the global sport stage.

Whilst the global sport industry is mushrooming, sport federations are experiencing marketing and management challenges, particularly in the field of hosting mega events. This tendency is particularly evident in a South African sport developing context where the country competes for hosting mega events against countries with substantially more developed sport infrastructure. South Africa is currently in the midst of preparations for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and naturally focus is being placed on the potential positive impacts. However, an analysis of the sustained sport development legacy of past sport mega events hosted in South Africa, raised concern. South African rugby has experienced a few disappointing years after the World Cup was hosted and won here in 1995. Morgan (2004) reports: "Much like 2002, 2003 will go down in the history books as a poor year for South African rugby." This remark resulted due to worse than expected performances in the 2003 Rugby World Cup, while the 1999 performance was also not satisfactory. The same tendency was found in South African soccer. After hosting and winning the African Cup of Nations in 1996, the national football (soccer) team slipped down the world rankings every two years resulting in not even qualifying for the 2006 Soccer World Cup. The South African national cricket team showed a marked improvement in performance during the first half of 2007 and they are currently in the semi-final stage of the 2007 Cricket World Cup, while in 2003 when also hosting the event, they could not even reach the super six stage of the tournament.

Evaluating the post-mega event performances of South African teams in the country's three most popular participation and spectator sports (rugby, soccer, cricket), seems to indicate a relapse in performance despite the traditional pre-event claims of positive impacts, especially that of sustainable development made in bid documents. It therefore becomes essential that focused and structured attempts are made to ensure that sport mega events and specifically the 2010 FIFA World Cup (the sport code itself) are managed and marketed in such a way as to generate marketing effects which will enable a positive legacy in terms of sustainable growth, development of the sport, and better performance results emanating from the event.

The aim of this doctoral study currently being undertaken is therefore to develop a holistic sport marketing management model or framework and to include in this the essential components to improve the marketing results of, or marketing impacts created for a sporting code such as soccer, through hosting a global mega sport event such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This could then create a leverage or added-value effect on sport development efforts of the particular sport.

METHODS

The study is done from a qualitative perspective and uses a two phased research design. In phase one sport marketing models utilised by organising committees in selected past mega events are discussed and analysed to identify success factors. An attempt is made to relate the existence of key performance indicators to the event's demonstrated success. A questionnaire is used as research instrument to obtain the required information from organising committees or management teams of mega events in a national and international context. Phase two aims to develop a questionnaire or sample marketing management model/framework through the use of the Delphi technique which will then be tested with scholarly sport event management and/or marketing experts selected on the basis of their published work in scholarly journals, as well as on event management practitioners/organisers involved in 6 sports included on the basis of the highest actual spectator attendance and television audience figures. Both these groups of respondents will be probed to generate insight into how traditional sport marketing and event management views can be expanded to also include the mentioned marketing management impacts.

EXPECTED RESULTS

It is expected that through this study essential marketing management principles will be brought to the surface to be incorporated into a holistic framework for hosting sport mega events. Such a framework will then expand the current body of knowledge in this area and provide valuable information on how to enable a positive legacy in terms of sustainable growth and development resulting from this sport mega event. The ultimate aim and prospective results are thus for sporting codes who wish to host, or participate in the bidding process to host any sport mega event, to utilise this framework and to achieve improved sustainable growth and development in the sport.

CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

Traditional views on the established impacts for hosting a sport mega event is well-known and researched, but the idea is that hosting such an event should internationally, but specifically in South Africa, hold the benefits to transform the sport itself. But not solely so, it also needs to address social and development needs and create and increase the penetration of the sport code into non-traditional fan and sponsorship markets.

REFERENCES

Andreff, W. (2001) The Correlation between Economic Underdevelopment and Sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 1: 251-279.

- Baade, R.A. & Matheson, V.A. (2004) The Quest for the Cup: Assessing the Economic Impact of the World Cup. *Regional Studies*, 38(4): 343-354.
- Bohlmann, H.R. (2006) Predicting the Economic Impact of the 2010 FIFA World Cup on South Africa. Department of Economics Working Paper Series – University of Pretoria.
- Jones, C. (2001) Mega-events and Host-region Impacts: Determining the True Worth of the 1999 Rugby World Cup. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 3: 241-251.
- Morgan, B. (2004) South African Rugby in 2003. SouthAfrica.info. www.southafrica.info/ess_info/sa_glance/sports/features/sa_rugby_2003.htm. Retrieved 17/04/2007.