

FROM THE ASHES TO THE RIGHT TRACK: HOW COMMITMENT AND LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMED CORITIBA FOOT BALL CLUB IN A RARE CASE OF SUCCESS IN THE BRAZILIAN SPORTS MANAGEMENT INDUSTRY

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to the elite level of Brazilian football. The case presents results of a non-structured observant participation, providing an overview of the work done by the main areas of the club, but focuses mainly on the strategies and activities realized by the Marketing and Commercial department, an area in which the author was directly involved during a two year period. It was this department that performed the crucial roles needed to rebuild the club's image and to bring back investors, as well as the fans. The case study concludes that despite the amateur structure and managerial practices that still remain in the Brazilian Football Industry, the successful come back of Coritiba FC demonstrates the possibilities to change this environment through professional management and commitment of all those involved within a football organization.

Abstract

In 2009, while celebrating its 100th anniversary, Coritiba Foot Ball Club, one of the most traditional Brazilian football clubs with an estimated fan base of 1 million supporters and 3 national championships, lived its saddest moment in history with a relegation to the second division of the Brazilian football. The relegation was followed by scenes of violence and destruction of its stadium carried out by some members of its organized group of supporters - that for many years had a strong influence in the club's managerial decisions - and were unhappy with the failure of the club in such an important year. The scenes watched at Couto Pereira stadium in December 6th 2009 resulted in the worst punishment a Brazilian football club has ever received in tribunals and overshadowed the championship of the most popular Brazilian football club, Flamengo, which in that afternoon – the last day of the football season in Brazil – won the National League after 17 years. The aim of this case study is to demonstrate how years of mismanagement, a deep-rooted characteristic of the Brazilian football industry led Coritiba FC to rock bottom and how the leadership and decisions made by the new chairman, Vilson Ribeiro de Andrade – a former CEO for HSBC in Latin America – alongside the commitment of all departments towards the new objectives and values of the organization were paramount in order to reconstruct the club. Coritiba FC started the year of 2010 financially broke, unable to use its own stadium and with a drop of 80% in the membership scheme, among other issues. Nevertheless, the organization managed to finish the season with the best sponsorship deals in the club's history, achieving a record number of memberships (from 2,500 in the beginning of the year to 16,000 by the end of the season) and winning the regional and the second division of the national league which brought the club back

