

Implementing the corporate social responsibility performance scorecard in professional football clubs

Authors: Dr Stefan Walzel & Dr Tim Breitbarth

Institution: German Sport University Cologne

E-mail: walzel@dshs-koeln.de /
tbreitbarth@bournemouth.ac.uk

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Aim of the abstract

Generally, the lack of strategy thinking along with weak performance measurement application is seen to hamper progress in sports management. This contribution focuses on corporate social responsibility (CSR) as an opportunity-driven concept in the context of European professional football clubs and their public/private partners.

The aim is, generally, to infuse conceptual knowledge and analytical findings as well as first-hand experience from implementing the CSR Performance Scorecard at a leading German football club. Especially, managers of clubs or associations are encouraged to see, plan and apply wide-ranging opportunities and measure organisational CSR performance according to their organisation's specific needs.

Practice description

This contribution describes the process of implementing the CSR Performance Scorecard at a leading professional German football club. It also shows how the concept is applied on the club level today, how positive side effects have been generated throughout the process and which barriers still exist in fully embracing modern CSR. The original CSR Performance Scorecard model that was developed based on wide-ranging research and in consultation with several leading European football clubs required alternation in order to satisfy the club's specific approach. The conceptual model considers economic, integrative-political and ethical-emotional dimensions that each include a limited number of organisational goals (according to established management practice with balanced scorecards). Debatably, the original model does not include an environmental dimension.

While the club is industry leader in CSR, throughout the process, which started in 2010, it became obvious that there is yet no 'organisational readiness' for a comprehensive strategic management system like the full CSR Performance Scorecard. Here the structure of the adapted scorecard after management and stakeholder consultation:

- Customers
 - Increase brand value
 - Bond fans
 - Bond strategic partners
- Society
 - Build up social capital

- Improve public relations
- Contribute to a healthy lifestyle
- Raise awareness

With the adapted scorecard at hands, a first round of evaluation was conducted throughout 2010/11. Results build the baseline for future measurements that are directly linked to CSR activities, hence monitoring the club's CSR progress and performance.

Context description, actors involved

In 2010 the club became interested in further developing the concept of the CSR Performance Scorecard in professional football, which was conceptualised for their CSR partner *Scort Foundation* by researchers from the *German Sports University Cologne Department for Sports Economics and Sports Management* (Breitbarth, Hovemann and Walzel, 2011).

Until today, the evolution of the concept includes research and consultation, amongst other, with *Liverpool FC*, *SV Werder Bremen*, *Bayer Leverkusen*, *FC Basel*, *UEFA*, *DFB* and several industry partners/sponsors of respective organisations.

The concept and the implementation process as been published, presented and discussed at various stages throughout its evolution - for example in a special, by-invitation-only workshop at the *2010 German Sport Economic Congress* in Cologne and the worlds largest CSR conference, the *4th International CSR-Conference* in Berlin. Several publications are available (e.g. Breitbarth, Hovemann and Walzel, 2011; Hovemann, Breitbarth and Walzel 2011; Kremer and Walzel, 2011)

Implications and learning

This contribution provides the case for a progressive, formalised approach to CSR in professional football. The club has been the first professional sports organisation, certainly in Germany, to start implementing the CSR Performance Scorecard in order to create additional organisational value.

Learnings and implications for managers of sports clubs and associations, industry partners of professional football clubs, sports management consultants and applied researchers lie conceptual knowledge, the analytical findings as well as first-hand experience provided. This includes:

- How CSR management enhances competitiveness
- How counting makes it visible, and counting makes it count
- How the CSR Performance Scorecard can be implemented
- How positive side efforts are generated and additional value is created
- How barriers to embrace CSR as a strategic management issue can be overcome

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