

## IMPLEMENTATION OF BRANDING STRATEGIES – PROFICIENT TACTICS FOR SURVIVAL? THE CASE OF LdB FC MALMÖ

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### Synopsis:

The aim is to illuminate and investigate strategic marketing and branding approaches whilst revising the club LdB FC Malmö. The club was formed after a sponsor investment where a new identity and name was implemented. The new identity stipulated the club to become a club directed towards women consumption and implementing female values. Having the outspoken target group, women aged 18-49, was however to be seen as being part of an identity construction. The communicated and displayed self-presentation was consequently more important for the club to display than to actually attract a targeted group to games.

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### AIM

Recent incentives by governing soccer bodies show that there is a clear indication that contemporary women's soccer is facing noteworthy and wide-ranging developmental processes at both national and international levels (UEFA, 2012; SvFF/EFD, 2012). The aim of this study is to illuminate and investigate strategic marketing and branding approaches whilst revising the club LdB FC Malmö, a Swedish soccer club which has had a rapidly growing and prodigious history in contemporary women's soccer in Sweden. LdB FC Malmö was initially part of the club Malmö FF, a prominent soccer brand in a Swedish context, but was omitted due to fiscal tensions which ultimately resulted in the women's club signing a sponsor contract with a corporate business named LdB, a beauty brand retailer. The sponsor contract would however only to become a reality if the club changed their name, logo and ultimately identity (Sydsvenskan, 2007).

### THEORY/LITERATURE REVIEW

As a theoretical guidance for the case of LdB FC Malmö notions of Brand Management are adopted for illuminating and scrutinizing LdB FC's strategic approach in attaining a successful position in a contemporary soccer setting. From a brand management vantage point, conceptions of identity, positioning and awareness are significant notions for trying to understand strategic operations in the set marketplace context (Kapferer, 2013). The case of LdB FC Malmö illuminates a disparity between what is seen as prominent brand strengthening measures and what an actual outcome of a potential success rate would be.

#### METHODOLOGY/RESEARCH DESIGN

The overall research design for this study is case study research where a mixed methods approach was addressed for answering the overall research aim. Empirical data for this study was therefore obtained in multiple ways. When using case study as a methodological viewpoint, one important factor is to depict a sufficient and comprehensive presentation of the case for understanding case specific contextual opportunities and limitations (Yin, 2014). The empirical data was acquired via interviews with individuals in decision making positions with a deep structural knowledge of LdB FC Malmö's organization, in-depth document analysis of local and national newspaper articles in Sweden together with marketing, strategic and assorted official documents which involved material related to LdB FC Malmö's organization. The last source of data came from a game-day questionnaire which was conducted in conjunction to one of LdB FC Malmö's home games. The data from the questionnaires (response rate 43 percent) answers to how LdB FC Malmö's marketing and branding approaches are viewed upon from a spectator/recipient perspective.

#### RESULTS/DISCUSSION

The new identity stipulated the club to become a club directed towards women consumption and implementing female values. The target group for LdB FC Malmö was aimed towards women aged 18-49 since these were believed to make the majority of consumption choices in their respective households. However, results from the research at hands illuminates that the targeted group only comprised roughly 20 percent of the total audience. Whilst the majority of the audience actually comprised of men, especially men aged 50 and over (roughly 38 percent). Having the outspoken target group, women aged 18-49, is then possibly only to be seen as being part of an identity construction. The communicated and displayed self-presentation is consequently more important for the club to display than to actually attract the targeted group to games. The example of target group together with other collected data depicts a result comprised of a heterogeneous structure. The club wanted to become their own entity, a women's soccer club, embracing and implementing female values but however ending up attracting an extensive male audience. LdB FC Malmö did manage to strengthen their position in a soccer performance setting with recurring championship titles but they nevertheless struggled with insolvency threats which ultimately ended up in a third reorganization which again included changing club name, logo and identity. Today the club is called FC Rosengård.

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