

## Sponsorship and CSR in Hungarian handball

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### Introduction

Several companies nowadays know that they can have a competitive advantage over others if they can manage their marketing mix effectively to satisfy their customers. As a marketing tool, sponsorship is often used to reach a wide audience on a global basis, to create awareness, or make a higher profit margin for the organization (Abiodun, 2011).

There are numerous financially supportive companies that have been established sponsorship with handball clubs in Europe, also in Hungary. Sponsoring levels vary in many ways and some of the Hungarian professional handball clubs are not only involved in an exchange whereby the sponsor invests in cash and/or in kind in a sponsored entity (sponsorship) (Plewa and Quester, 2011), but also in the corporate giving or philanthropy, - as a part of it - in corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Szabó, 2012). Philanthropy - as also the top of Carroll's Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid - can often be the most cost-effective way of corporations' competitive positioning, since it enables companies to use their resources and also the existing efforts and infrastructures of organizations to maximum advantage (Porter and Kramer, 2002).

Referring to Kotler and Lee (2007), corporate social responsibility is a commitment where companies operate voluntarily, freely chosen business practices for the community's well-being, and companies support it from their own resources. Corporate social responsibility aims to find the way how success of the company can be enhanced by social, ecological and corporate commitment. There is a growing evidence that consumers preferably patronize businesses that share their own values and ethics, furthermore, socially responsible corporate activities (cause-related promotions; advocacy advertising, alliances with non-profit organizations, socially responsible employment and manufacturing practices, corporate volunteerism in community activities) can enhance the reputation of the company and it can also depict an important source of competitive advantage (Menon and Kahn, 2003).

The aim of this research is to reach a general evaluation about the overall sponsoring situation and corporate social responsibility activities in Hungarian handball.

More specifically the purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of how companies use sponsorship - with explaining and describing the objectives of sponsorship and the reasons why companies decide to sponsor a handball club, also, to investigate the role and the way of corporate social responsibility-related activities in Hungarian handball.

### Methods

In order to gain our knowledge about sponsorship and corporate social responsibility of top division handball clubs and their sponsoring companies in Hungary, in-depths interviews as a qualitative perspective were conducted with club directors and with company managing directors about the last five years' handball seasons. The main sponsors of Hungarian handball

have been examined with content analysis in respect to the elements on websites of those sponsoring companies under consideration within the scope and fields of CSR.

### Results

Content analysis shows that nearly all of the businesses have corporate social responsibility related policies and website elements, although it is seen that corporate social responsibility reports do not exist in most of these organizations. The study also highlights the findings of handball sponsoring context by in-depth interviews with handball clubs and their main sponsors in order to gauge their views and conception of sponsoring and corporate social responsibility practices. Interview questions were based on the theory used in the project and the interviews provided information on the reasons why companies decide to go into sponsorship agreement and corporate social responsibility roles with a handball club.

Conduction of the interviews with managing directors will be completed in May, its analysis expected to be finished by June. Results of the complete research will be presented at the conference.

### References

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