

Sport Sponsorship Management: Practices in Objective Setting and Measurement



Adam Karg

Bowater School of Management and Marketing
Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia

The explosion of investment in global sport sponsorship has coincided with increased academic attention and challenged sponsors to address how to manage sponsorships more effectively. As such, an avenue of research investigating the accountability applied to corporate investment and the steps taken to assess the expenditure of sponsoring organisations has been highlighted. The aim of this exploratory research is to examine the sponsorship management practices of major Australian sponsors, focussing on objectives and effects targeted by major sponsors and the tools and processes used to measure return on objectives (ROO) and return on investment (ROI). Based on relevant sponsorship literature, a conceptual framework links sponsorship objectives, desired effects and the areas at which sponsorship can be measured. Qualitative case studies represent the research strategy with sample cases purposively chosen from lists of major sponsors of elite Australian sporting events and leagues. Following data collection, analysis will be conducted using within and cross case analysis, with preliminary findings indicating trends in objective setting practices and measurement techniques used among major sponsors, and the suggestion of an alternative framework under which to present sponsorship management.

INTRODUCTION

The first instances of sponsorship are evident in Roman gladiatorial contests (Head 1988; Meenaghan 1983) but it is over the past two decades that the growth of corporate sponsorship has been recognised commercially and academically (Howard and Crompton, 2004; Meenaghan 1991; 1983; O'Reilly, Nadeau, Seguin and Harrison, 2007) with the movement of sponsorship from philanthropy or donor recipient to a focus on partnership, value creation and return on investment well documented (Lund, 2006; Seguin 2005; Stotlar, 2004; Wilkinson, 1993). For the purpose of this dissertation, Meenaghan's (1991) definition will be applied which cites sponsorship as:

"an investment in cash or kind, in an activity, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity" (p.36).

Sponsorship has far outpaced investment growth in other forms of marketing communications vehicles (Crompton, 2004; Poon and Prendergast, 2006), and this is expected to continue as

sponsorship becomes more visible, accessible and popular as a communications medium (Meenaghan, 1999). Global sponsorship spend now exceeds A\$36 billion (IEG, 2003; 2005), with over A\$1.6 billion of this spend representing sport specific spend in Australia (s-Comm, 2006). This figure is the result of consistent levels of growth with exponential growth in sport sponsorship expected to continue for the coming decade (Kolah, 2005, IEG, 2003).

Throughout this period of growth, sophistication of management techniques has not increased in relative terms (Chadwick and Thwaites, 2005; Hoek, 1999; Seguin, 2005), meaning the industry requires more rigid and accountable management frameworks and techniques. Studies have suggested there is still a fundamental lack of understanding of the concept of sponsorship among practitioners (S-Comm, 2006), while marketers remain unsure of “how sponsorship works and how to properly measure its value” (Harvey, 2001, p. 59). This is supported by Cordeiro, Shah, Smart and Quah, 2005, who comment despite “inexorable growth in rights fees, investment in evaluation and the sophistication of associated methodology has not necessarily always kept pace” (p. 20). This has led to an avenue of research, inclusive of the current study, to investigate what level of accountability is applied to corporate investment and the steps taken to provide adequate measurement of this expenditure. In defining the issue and incorporating overall sponsorship management, Hoek (1999) suggests that “rather than dismiss the measurement of sponsorship as too difficult, it may be timely to consider if sponsorship can be managed in such a way that its measurement is more accessible” (p. 8).

This research aims to explore what objectives are set by major sponsoring organisations and how they are devised, with particular emphasis on if, and how they are structured to allow for measurement. The development of objectives and effects sought as they apply to the conceptual framework will be investigated, including probing for strategic objectives which fall outside traditional corporate and marketing objectives. The research will also seek to deduce how return on objectives and investment is measured including who has responsibility for it, specific tools and processes used and measurement outcomes. Finally, this research aims to contrast the practices applied to differing sponsored properties and discuss the impact of all findings on the overall sponsorship management framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will initially discuss the development of sponsorship management frameworks, concluding with the presentation of a cyclical model distinct from previously presented frameworks. It will then discuss the objective setting and measurement phases in greater detail, concluding with the research’s conceptual framework which demonstrates the various sponsorship objectives, the desired effects sought from the objectives, the aligned effects of sponsorship that can be measured and the tools used in doing so.

Sponsorship Management Frameworks

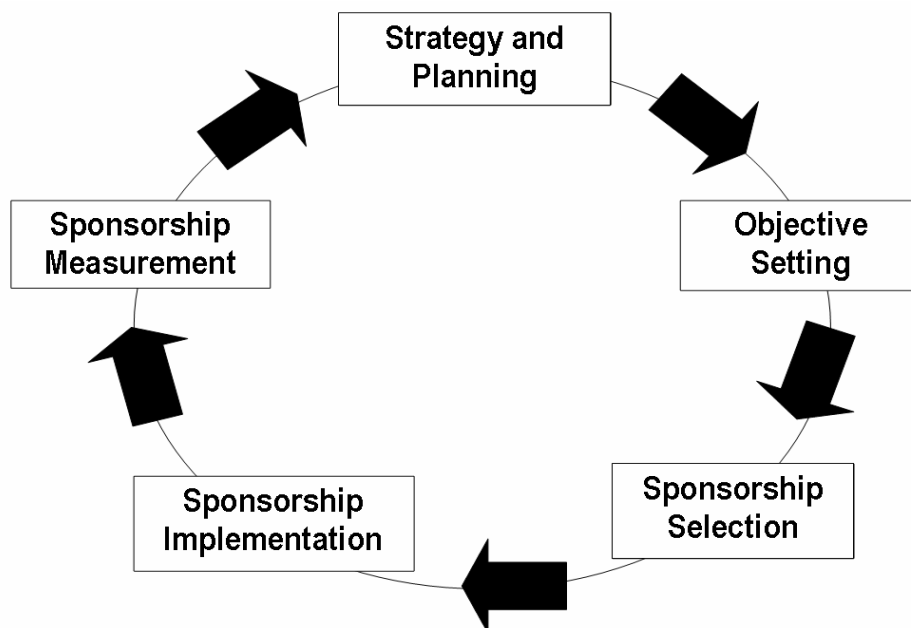
The need for more sophisticated sponsorship management has led to the development of frameworks for end to end or particular dimensions of sponsorship management. While some campaign that the rapid growth of sponsorship has not been paralleled by increased sophistication in management techniques (Chadwick and Thwaites, 2006; Hoek, 1999; Seguin, 2006), there is recent evidence of improving processes, driven by the “proliferation of expenditure” forcing companies to address how to more effectively manage sponsorships (Miles, 2000, Chadwick and Thwaites, 2004).

Frameworks promoted by various authors (Arthur et al, 1998; Chadwick and Thwaites, 2005; Corderio et al, 2005; Cornwell, 1995) have sought to collate key components of managing sponsorships, with these components remaining constant in both the areas defined and the order in which they appear. Elements of planning, strategy and objectives are common starting points in all suggested models, incorporating the link between corporate strategy and

sponsorship, target markets and motivations in sponsoring various properties. Literature based on evaluation of proposals, selection and decision making processes is well developed and defined as are variants of implementation which includes leveraging, integration across marketing operations or the broader business, and concepts such as ambush marketing. Evaluation or measurement is typically the final stage of the suggested processes.

Much of the literature relating to sponsorship is focussed on (one-off) event sponsorship and as such sponsorship models are often portrayed as linear, top to bottom or end to end structures. In recognising that a large amount of sponsorships are ongoing in terms of the relationships or the properties (i.e.; involved with teams, leagues, seasonal, annual or cyclical events), a structure is suggested in Figure 1 that shows a framework distinct from previous literature. The cyclical representation shows the ongoing, evolving, strategic nature of the discipline and serves to better demonstrate the interrelationship between the various key phases. This framework, while inclusive of the components of previous frameworks, is relevant to relationships of an ongoing nature, allowing periodic measurement and re-evaluation or re-setting of objectives. With each example of sponsorship vastly different from the next, a general level of flexibility not associated with end to end or linear model is provided.

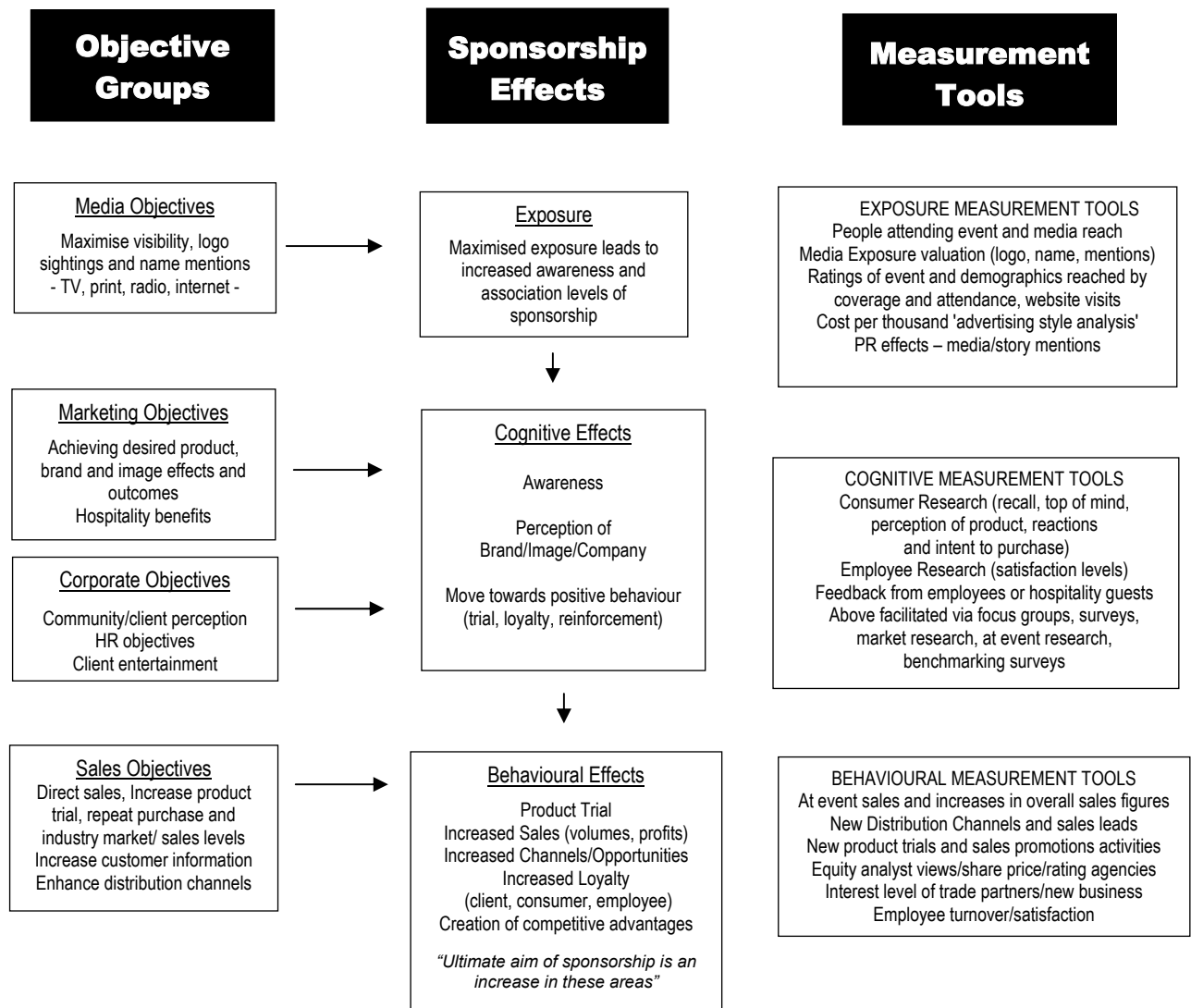
Figure 1: Proposed Cyclical Sponsorship Management Framework



Conceptual framework for the study - Objectives and Measurement

Key areas of the above framework were detailed to deduce a conceptual framework. The framework for the research utilises the previous knowledge to link various sponsorship objectives, aligned effects and relevant measurement tools, allowing for research questions to be identified. Figure 2 shows the differing groups of objectives promoting desired exposure, cognitive and behavioural effects. The effects are seen to flow from exposure to attention to cognition to the ultimately desired behavioural outcomes in an adaptation of the hierarchy of effects. The framework also provides areas at which measures of sponsorship can be implemented, culminating in a range of tools which are used to assess return on objectives (ROO) and return on investment (ROI). Each of the elements will be discussed in more detail.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for Current Study



Objectives and effects of sponsorship

"The evolution of sponsorship has necessitated corporations placing greater emphasis on the strategic market planning process thereby establishing strict sponsorship objectives from which to measure impact on business" (Irwin and Sutton, 1994, p. 93)

Marketing literature has paid considerable attention to objectives considered important when a company enters a sponsorship relationship (Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou, 2004). Empirically, it has been shown that objectives will be mixed and wide ranging (Gilbert, 1988; Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992; Thwaites and Carruthers, 1994), with multiple objectives a common feature of sponsorship (Meenaghan, 1983). This stems from different corporate goals and marketing strategies, different market shares, target markets and positioning (Cordeiro et al, 2005) and different stages of the product and/or service in its lifespan (Lough and Irwin, 2001). While the inclusion of media, marketing and sales aims have always prescribed an underlying focus on marketing goals, Chadwick and Thwaites (2004) note that the increasing development of sponsorship has seen it develop as a 'strategy vehicle' by which it can be applied to objectives grouped broadly as marketing communications objectives, relationship marketing objectives, network objectives and resource objectives. For the

purpose of this study, and to allow measurement tools to be specifically applied to groups of objectives, the four categories proposed by Cordeiro et al (2005) will be used. These are;

- Media Objectives
- Broad Corporate Objectives
- Marketing (Product/Brand) Objectives
- Sales Objectives

In highlighting the four types of objectives it is possible to link specific effects sought through the implementation of each group. Exposure is a “necessary precondition for a sponsorship association to exist” (Speed and Thompson, 2000) and media objectives are commonly aimed at gaining maximum exposure for the company and the sponsorship, providing the highest opportunities for the early cognitive effects of awareness and association. McDonald (1991) believes that “if the sponsorship is visible, it is bound to affect the image of the company”, while Roy and Cornwell, (1999) state that there is an assumption that brand and company awareness is built by sponsorship through exposure. Marketing and corporate objectives are primarily aimed at gaining advancements in image and awareness, strengthening brand loyalty, credibility or positioning at marketing level or image, goodwill, perception or relations at corporate level. Therefore the effects of cognitive outcomes are resultant from exposure and look to advance consumers toward positive perceptions and feelings about the company or brand. The hierarchy of effects suggest this awareness leads to purchase intention which is ultimately aimed at a result in sales or revenue (Tripodi 2001, Shrimp, 2000). Finally, sales objectives target direct sales or result in behaviours whose outcome is sales or revenue gains. In looking at on site sales, developing new sales channels, product trial or goals such increased market share, sales promotions or gaining new customers, these objectives are attempting to stimulate a behavioural response from a consumer or trade partner. The actual sales are often a result of exposure (media objectives) and cognitive progression (corporate and marketing objectives) created, and therefore a flow of effects can be determined within sponsorship objectives.

Sponsorship decision makers favoured media exposure as the optimum outcome a decade ago (Grohs, Wagner and Vsetecka, 2004), but now image and awareness (corporate or marketing goals) are the main effects sought. Studies have supported this in the UK (Thwaites, 1995), Canada, (Thwaites, Aguilar-Manjarrez and Kidd, 1997), Germany, (Hemanns, 2000; in Grohs et al, 2004) and Australia (S-Comm, 2006) due mainly to the effect of “media coverage on consumer behaviour (being) weak if at all measurable” (Grohs, 2004, p. 119). Now that sponsorship is an “economic tradition rather than a philanthropic gesture” (Meenaghan 1998), sales objectives and behavioural outcomes are increasingly being sought by sponsors (Hoek, 1999, Meenaghan, 1998). Crompton (2004) agrees that the emphasis on sponsorship benefits sought by companies has moved away from image and awareness to more behavioural oriented outcomes such as intent to purchase, product trial and sales.

“Marketing communications should be set in precise terms, budget levels should be established as a consequence of these objectives and the results should be evaluated in terms of the objectives laid down. The practical management of sponsorship...falls far short of this prescribed level of rigour in the setting of objectives and, by definition, in the formal approach to evaluation” – (Meenaghan, 1983, p. 47)

One of the common academic criticisms is companies’ lack of attention to properly setting objectives and a lack of strategic focus when doing so. Sponsorship “deserves proper set objectives and planning so that the unique values available from it can be understood” (McDonald, 1991, p. 37). It has been suggested that corporations are pragmatic with their approach (Chadwick and Thwaites, 2005) and that the lack of a strategic approach damages opportunities to gain competitive advantage through sponsorship (Fahy, Farrelly and Quester 2002). Good practice recommendations for setting objectives include; setting specific, quantifiable objectives, the use of consistent strategic and tactical approaches, setting

objectives that reflect broad marketing and marketing communications objectives, and formulating appropriate objectives to target markets (Arthur et al, 1998; Chadwick and Thwaites, 2005; Miles, 2000).

In linking objectives with measurement, Irwin and Asimakopoulos, (1992) propose objectives should facilitate the establishment of evaluation criteria for selection, but also assist post-event measurement. Other authors have agreed, suggesting that objectives be developed in a manner that allows for future evaluation (Meenaghan, 1983, Sleight, 1989; Thwaites and Carruthers, 1994). Javalgi, Traylor, Gross and Lampman, (1994) cite that “little information has been published about the relationship between goals and the results of sponsorship activities. A company’s objectives are often couched in broad terms but specific definitions of sponsorship goals have been lacking” (p. 24). Little is known about “how stated objectives are linked to achieve results in the context of sport sponsorship”, but, no matter what those objectives are, “a company should not consider a sponsorship unless they have specified the outcomes they hope to obtain from the agreement” (Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou, 2004).

Measuring the effects of sponsorship

“Many managers have relied on cognitive models when setting objectives and it is timely to re-consider whether this approach helps achieve the behavioural goals that are arguably the focus of all marketing activity.” (Hoek, 1999, p. 9)

Many authors (Cordeiro et al, 2005; Hansen and Scotwin, 1995; Meenaghan, 1991; Cornwell, 1995; Tripodi, Hiron, Bednall and Sutherland, 2003) have supported principle strands for where measurement can take place in the process, with the common areas being exposure, attention/cognition and behaviour.

The concept of measuring exposure created by sponsorship was borrowed from advertising and PR, developed in the 1980’s and 1990’s and remains central today (Cordeiro et al, 2005). Its pretence is the use of signage as a popular method by which sponsorships create visibility. The concept of its measurement is relevant due to constant and repetitive exposure to signage during an event to create awareness (O’Reilly et al, 2007), with its value often quantified by analysing mentions and appearances of a brand, product or company and calculating a rate to determine an amount. Limitations of this measure include the mediums heavy grounding in advertising concepts, application of abnormal ratings and discounts, the measurement being post hoc and the assumption that additional exposure will always add additional value to infinite levels (Speed and Thompson, 2000). The technique of measuring exposure is described as “most widespread because of its ease of use; however perhaps (it is the) least effective” (Arthur et al, 1998, p. 58). O’Reilly et al (2007) argue its measurement says nothing of the effect the media exposure has on consumers.

Originally based on traditional market research and basic awareness methods, techniques have evolved to allow analysis of message impacts and effects of sponsorship on brand and corporate awareness, customer affinity and image transfer (Cordeiro et al, p. 34). McDonald (1991) suggests the “most frequent method of assessing sponsorship effects on image is to track awareness, familiarity and favourability” (p. 33). Poon and Prendergast (2006) state it is difficult to study these effects without the use of a hierarchy, citing the appropriateness of Lavidge and Stiner’s (1961) work in creating the hierarchy of effects to map “generic dimensions of behaviour from a psychological standpoint”. Poon and Prendergast (2006) conclude the measurement or discussion of cognitive measurement operates under the premise that it “must have a mental impact before it affects behaviours” (p. 475). There have been numerous attempts to measure changes in awareness, attitudes, recognition, perception and related impacts such as intent to purchase. However, a major detriment of these studies is the lack of return on investment calculation as part of these studies, which could be a reason why there is little action from practitioners (O’Reilly, 2007). Cornwell (1995) adds that measures are not specifically designed for sponsorship and lack an understanding of the value provided

by the association. Arthur et al (1998) state various studies have been effective in proving sponsorship is effective in achieving awareness objectives but Quester (1997) is unconvinced on the overall effect, stating “the tenuous link to behaviour (outcomes) remains unclear” (p. 3). Hoek (1999) concludes that although most research has had reliance on a cognitive information processing perspective, successful measurement may be possible through “a behaviourist framework (that) places greater emphasis on outcomes and less on the processes thought to mediate these outcomes (p. 9)”.

Partly as a result of the limitations of cognitive and exposure based measurement, an emphasis on sponsorship benefits sought has moved away from image and awareness towards behavioural outcomes (Crompton, 2004). The “ultimate goal of companies total communications strategy is to enhance profitability by generating additional sales” (Crompton, 2004, p. 270). As such sales impact measurement as a traditional component of evaluating marketing related expenditure has been employed by a number of companies in a sponsorship context (Cordeiro et al, 2005). Cordeiro et al (2005) add that this level of measurement represents the “culmination of consumer’s progress through the hierarchy of effects” (p. 35). Without the incorporation of specific measures into sponsorship, “evaluation will remain limited to a bland investigation of awareness, attitudes and possibly preferences with no real understanding of the relationships between variables and consumer behaviour”. (Hoek, 1999, p. 8). Leverage and integration of sponsorship can create problems in identifying measurement areas and effects (Seguin, 2005), where it can be difficult to exclusively attribute (sales) increases to any marketing mix element specifically” (Irwin and Asimakopoulous, 1992). The variety of sponsorships produces unique interactions and possibilities and “the adoption of a behavioural framework cannot guarantee success, but can help minimise the possibility is simple a magnanimous but empty gesture” (Hoek, 1999, p. 9).

Measurement Tools

“The lack of appropriate measurement techniques for the effectiveness of sponsorships is at once the most widely debated and the most elusive aspect of the process” (Cornwell, 1995).

A range of objectives creates difficulties in measurement (Arthur et al, 1998). Many companies use only one of three measurement areas (Tripodi et al, 2003) and there are numerous calls for a broad framework that incorporates a broader focus across the three areas (Corderio et al, 2005). Some authors (Cordeiro et al, 2005, Meenaghan 1991) suggest a cost benefit analysis or a valuation of the full collation of the sponsorship rights package and benefits has emerged as a viable tool. This process includes measurement of the tangible assets (such as the cost of hospitality benefits, tickets, media valuation) and intangible assets and as well as the application of a weighing factor. Cordeiro et al (2005) state that this process allows companies to “get closer to an exhaustive appraisal of all the elements which contribute to sponsorship value” (p. 36). However, Miyazaki and Morgan (2001) suggest this can be complicated and ambiguous while limitations such as being reliant on media evaluations and application of weightings are apparent.

Calls are common from academics and practitioners to enhance publicly available and reliable methods for sponsorship evaluation (O'Reilly et al, 2007). Few methodologies have been tested empirically and as investment increases, managers will require more rigorous evaluation of sponsorship investments (Hoek, 1999). Markets are still waiting for more effective and efficient ways to research sponsorship effects, and this desire will grow as firms become more professional in their approaches (Thjomoe and Olson 2002, p. 14).

While the acknowledgement of a growing focus on measurement is evident, this “has not led to the emergence of a consistent, all-encompassing, multi purpose model for sponsorship evaluation despite there being a huge demand and a strong commercial case for one” (Cordeiro et al, 2005, p. 29). While much of the corporate reassessment of sponsorship has focussed on the measurement of sponsorship effectiveness and justifying return on investment

(Stotlar, 2004), there is “no standard practice for evaluating sponsor’s investments” (Komoroski and Biemond, 1996, p. 35). In setting a framework for measurement, research suggests some common concepts. Howard and Crompton (2004) suggest that measurement techniques should relate back to the original objective pursued at the outset. It is also viewed that as companies seek different objectives, different types of measures and designs will be required (Crompton, 2004) with Geldard and Sinclair, (2002) agreeing that each element should be measured in a different manner. Miles (2000) states the importance of benchmarking, which can be done across a number of areas. Image, sales and awareness levels can be collected and be recollected as pre-testing, periodic and post-testing takes place. According to the principles set forth in exchange theory, “in order to justify continued spending on sport sponsorships, corporations must ascertain if their benefits support their expenditures” (Stotlar, 2004, p. 63). As a guide, the third column of Figure 2 shows the identified tools that can be used to measure exposure, cognitive and behavioural outcomes.

Gaps in the Literature and Research Questions

Much research has been devoted to identifying and listing motivations for and objectives of sponsorship, but little has been developed to explain the structure, depth and specificity of these objectives. In addition, how objectives differ for companies sponsoring different properties or within differing industries also presents significant gaps. In regards to measurement, literature has progressed to explain various effects which can be measured; namely exposure, cognitive and behavioural, but a larger range or validated combination of suitable specific tools remains to be developed. This research does not aim to fill this gap, but rather provide a view of what major sponsors currently do in regards to measurement in the current market, and describe future needs of sponsorship practitioners to advance and assist this process. While published material indicates its importance, few researchers have focussed on the link between objectives and measurement and in turn the effect these components have on the rest of the management framework. Overall, with a lack of recent academic studies focussed on the Australian market, this study aims to discover key themes amongst this markets major players.

While a number of literature gaps exist, this exploratory study looks fundamentally at the following major research questions:

- 1) What objectives and effects are pursued by major sponsors of elite Australian sporting properties and how are these objectives set? (eg: are stated objectives specific or broad, SMART objectives, or set to allow for measurement?)
- 2) What tools and techniques are used to measure return on objectives and return on investment of sponsorship resources?

Minor questions for the research include:

- 3) Are there likely trends in the objectives pursued across properties (e.g.: leagues vs events) or across industries (eg; auto vs FMCG vs financial services sponsors)?
- 4) How does information gained from measurement influence and impact on the sponsorship management practices for companies? What additional information would aid the measurement process?
- 5) How suitable is the conceptual framework for the research as a mechanism to explain how practitioners believe sponsorship works?
- 6) Is an end to end or cyclical model of sponsorship management more application to overall sponsorship management?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A series of qualitative case studies of major Australian sponsors will be the research strategy study with data collected from qualitative interviews and collection of additional documentation from secondary sources. The data will be used to build examples of sport sponsorship management in Australia related to elite major sponsorships, with Eisenhardt's (1989) within and cross case analysis used to draw results and discussion.

Major sponsors of seven hallmark international sporting events and the countries seven leading domestic sporting leagues were invited to participate in the study. Major sponsors were defined as naming rights sponsors whose product or service is not associated with the sport or its commercial operations. Sponsorship or Marketing Managers of the selected companies who sponsored the fourteen events were contacted with a total of nine agreeing to participate in the research. Seven agreed to be the subject of face to face interviews, one was the subject of a telephone interview and the final respondent agreed to provide written responses due to time and location issues throughout the data collection period. Interviews were conducted in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, lasted for between 45 and 70 minutes and consisted of structured and semi structured phases of questions. The opening questions related to building a background of the companies sponsorship activities and key information before phases relating specifically to objectives and measurement techniques used in relation to the companies' main sponsorship. The final two phases of questioning stimulated discussion on the conceptual framework and overall sponsorship management models. The interviews were complemented by two short questionnaires to gain quantitative data to gauge the importance of different objective groups and measurement information. Collection templates and the writing of a memo immediately following the interview assisted with the collection.

To produce the case studies, interviews will be transcribed and additional documentation including internal policies, media releases and information that was collected during the meeting and through internet and company research. Following the completion of data collection, analysis will take place using Eisenhardt's (1989) within and cross case analysis. The first stage of the process, within case analysis, typically involves detailed write ups for each case and allows the researchers to "become intimately familiar with each case as a stand alone entity, and for unique patterns of each case to emerge before investigators push to generalize patterns across cases" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). This process will involve editing and analysis of the interview transcript as well as the contents of the collection template, memo and any additional documentation. Following the individual case summaries, cross case analysis takes place, which forces researchers to go beyond initial impressions, adding to likelihood of accurate and reliable data.

CONCLUSION

Preliminary Findings

At the time of writing, a third of the planned interviews had been completed with case studies developed based on the early interviews and collected data to date. At this stage preliminary key themes have emerged, but should be taken in the view that data collection remains incomplete at the time of writing and that implications of the research are yet to be defined.

- Objectives vary greatly, with evidence of them being driven by business and marketing strategies or market developments. Often the initial primary response was a marketing or corporate objective, but following probing, broader corporate and strategic objectives emerged, with behavioural effects (usually by way of sales increases) often concluded as the ultimate motivation for the sponsorship.
- Few companies have shown signs of setting measurable specific objective outcomes or KPI's to assist measurement.

- Many companies noted media exposure evaluation as an area where external spend was committed, but despite improvement in this service, all respondents continue to note the limitations of this form of measurement. Popular reports often quoted in the media were seen as carrying little legitimate value for practitioners within the industry. While sponsors regard the importance of media exposure as a valid measurable component of sponsorship, they do not base sponsorship success solely on this area.
- Some survey or cognitive tracking was used but implemented at the marketing level therefore providing feedback that was not sponsorship specific. There is evidence of internal sales figures being used as measures but limited commitment in identifying what has resulted directly from the sponsorship has been shown.
- Practitioners were able to identify areas where they would like measurement to become more accessible, usually aligned with measuring cognitive benefits and isolating behavioural effects.
- All respondents to date agreed that the cyclical model of sponsorship management was more relevant to their process of sponsorship management. Some practitioners noted that in the past or for one off events with a short lead time the end to end model could be applicable but that a more flexible model was now better suited to their operations. Continually noted has been comments that reflect and promote the idea of continual, ongoing adjustments of the sponsorships parameters including the reassigning of objectives during the sponsorship, and measurement and evaluation of certain elements that impact of leveraging and implementation.

Future Research

From this exploratory study, although broad in its coverage and still in its data collection stage; the following future research possibilities have arisen:

- Further investigation and validation of the cyclical framework of sponsorship management – including analysis of evidence of links between the components
- Industry specific cases studies which overview all aspects of management for competing firms given their place within an industry - e.g. replication of UK studies which have focussed on sponsoring organisations in financial services
- Research looking at a black box approach to sponsorship measurement – effectively in the form of a process model that enforces strict KPI's for objectives and links them directly to measurement – individual or industry case studies would need to be used to investigate possibilities and success of this process
- Further investigation of other elements of sponsorship management including; how valuation of sponsorship rights fees is calculated, use of external agencies and bodies in sponsorship management, role of the rights holder or organisation in supporting and assisting the sponsor and testing alignment of rights holder and sponsor goals and perceptions.

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