

Module 1. The Sport Events Brand Ecosystem

Introduction to the Course

This course is designed to provide you with a profound understanding of the dynamic world of sport events brand management and marketing. Throughout this journey, we will explore key modules that form the foundation of successful sports brand management. In the module *The Sports Brand Ecosystem*, we will work out on understanding the complexities of the interconnected relationships that contribute to the strength and recognition of sport events brands. Next, in *Creating Brand Equity for Sport Events*, we will explore the marketing and brand management strategies and techniques employed to establish and enhance a powerful presence for sport events, leagues, and competitions. The module *Event Brand Communication* will guide us through the art of crafting effective communication strategies that resonate with both fans and stakeholders. Finally, we will explore the critical aspect of sponsorship and fan engagement, learning how to cultivate dedicated and enthusiastic synergies of sponsors with sports communities.

Module Introduction

This module will examine sport events, leagues, and competitions through the lens of brand management and their place in the sports brand ecosystem. The first section will introduce the main concepts of brand management in sport events, such as brands, brand positioning, brand awareness, brand image, brand personality, brand associations, brand equity, brand loyalty, co-branding, and brand extensions. As we bring this reading to a close, we will critically debate on the various approaches of the sport brand ecosystem, such as the house of brands and branded house, the brand architecture, and the event brand ecosystem. Both the benefits and the drawbacks of these models will be discussed.

Unit 1.1 Brand management for sport events, leagues, and competitions

Sport events as products or brands

How do we contrast an event brand and an event product? A product is anything we can offer to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a need



or want (Keller, 2019). A product may be a physical good like a tennis racquet, a service (e.g., stadium security), or a sport event/league/competition available for consumption. The sport events and competitions satisfy people's needs for entertainment and recreation. In this sense, sport events are competitors with other forms of leisure products and services, such as eating out, the cinema, watching films on Netflix or other platforms, etc. An event, as a product, serves a functional purpose. It addresses the fundamental needs and desires of consumers.

A brand can be seen as a product, but one that incorporates additional elements that set it apart from other products designed to satisfy the same need (Keller, 2019; Stavros and Smith, 2019). A brand—although it is still a product or service—combines all the benefits, products, services, information, and experiences, to fulfil customer needs and wants. Brands are the collection of all experiences and associations that consumers have with a product or service over time. Brands create emotional connections with consumers, differentiate products from competitors, and can lead to increased loyalty and sales (Kotler and Armstrong, 2016).

For example, the desire of an individual to participate and socialise in a running event can be fulfilled by various running event races (products) in the country of the individual. However, the need to run or watch the Authentic Athens Marathon or the London Marathon is the result of managing the running event as a brand.

Formula 1, for instance, is not just a car race and an entertainment product for their numerous followers. It is the result of the implementation of a brand strategy and a series of activities around the race which established Formula 1 as a strong brand in the sports industry, even for kids (Richards, 2022). These activities manage to connect positive and effective experiences and associations in the mind of the consumers. And it is not only about the marketing and communication activities; it is about every single activity and decision that could influence its brand.

For example, Formula 1 and Sky Group have teamed up to co-produce the first-ever F1 broadcast tailored for children during the Formula 1 Qatar Airways Hungarian Grand Prix in 2023. This special broadcast features a dedicated International Feed with custom graphics, sound effects, and unique elements, including 3D augmented graphics on specific camera angles, all designed to engage and captivate younger audiences in the UK and Germany (Formula 1, 2023).

South Florida Motorsports (SFM), the hosts of the Formula 1® Miami Grand Prix, scheduled a range of initiatives aimed at promoting youth education and fostering business growth in Miami Gardens. SFM has introduced the F1 in Schools programme at the Bunche Park



STEM Centre, part of the City of Miami Gardens, to encourage educational engagement (Formula 1, 2023).

Figure 1. F1 in Schools programme



Source: [untitled image of F1 in Schools programme], (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/3rgIOIi>.

What are the most important characteristics of a brand?

- **Brands are the collection of all experiences and associations that consumers have with a product or service over time.**
- **Brands create emotional connections with consumers.**
- **A brand combines all the benefits products, services, information and experiences, to fulfil customers needs and wants.**
- Brand is not a product, since it has different purposes and uses.

Strategic event brand management

The consensus is that the most asset for entities in the sports industry is their brand. This viewpoint is supported by numerous studies (Kunkel and Biscaia, 2020; Biscaia *et al.*, 2013; Kunkel *et al.*, 2014). This should make events and league competition managers consider seriously how they will manage and establish their events and competitions as strong brands within the sport, leisure, and entertainment brands ecosystem that they compete. Looking at the long-term sustainability and longevity of events, leagues, and competitions is crucial. Day-to-day activities must be assigned and developed within the context of strategic brand management and viewed through the lens of managing the events as brands.

Building a strong brand and brand management is not just a matter of communication (i.e., not only the packaging, branding communication, use of logos, graphic design, look and identity at the venues, etc.) (Keller, 2019), it is the whole process of strategic brand management, no matter if it takes place for a big and international club competition (such as the Olympic Games, Super Bowl, Cricket World Cup, Rugby World Cup) or for a small one (such as a domestic youth beach soccer tournament, a local marathon and half-marathon race, an amateur tennis tournament).

It starts from capturing the right idea for an event and goes further to segmenting accurately the potential customers, understanding the customer and social needs, designing the bidding strategy (if needed), conducting a reliable feasibility study, planning accurately and in detail all aspects of the event, making global co-branding partnerships, and building the legacy that an event leaves behind.

Everything we do for our events and competitions reflects on their brand. From fairly scheduling the match fixtures to facilitating the need of broadcasters and participants with the assistance of technology and special algorithm software, up to the way we train and dress our staff. From drafting or changing the governance rules and competition regulations up to using the appropriate software for ticketing services. From the safety, medical, and health care services up to the social responsibility, diversity, and sustainability programmes that we implement. For instance, many confederations leagues and governing bodies (NBA, Major League Baseball, International Tennis Federation, FIFA, UEFA, AFC, CONMEBOL, NASCAR-National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) work together with whistleblowing companies such as 'Sportradar' to protect the brand integrity of their competitions. They act proactively to protect the fame, image, reputation, and sustainability of their event brands through the protection from match fixing associations. Protecting an event, league, and the clubs from match fixing incidents is about protecting the whole league/event brand, its reputation, and integrity, which should be non-negotiable (Sportradar, n. d.).

Sport event brand positioning

Brand positioning is a central element of marketing strategy, encompassing the design of a brand's offer and image to occupy a distinct and valued place in the minds of target customers. It involves finding the appropriate location in consumers' minds, ensuring they perceive the product or service in the desired manner to maximise benefits for the company. Effective brand positioning clarifies the brand's uniqueness, similarities to competitors, and reasons why consumers should choose it. Achieving the right positioning necessitates understanding the target consumer, main competitors, and determining both points-of-difference (unique attributes or benefits strongly associated

with the brand) and points-of-parity (similarities with competitors' offerings). By carefully managing these associations, brands can carve out their unique place in the market and maintain competitiveness (Keller, 2019).

Why is brand positioning important?

- **It ensures that consumers perceive the product or service in the desired way to maximize the company's benefits.**
- **Clarifies the brand's uniqueness, similarities to competitors and reasons why consumers should choose it.**
- **It allows us to occupy a different and valued place in the minds of target customer.**
- Ensures an exponential increase in sales and consumption of the product.

Case study 1

The success story of the Premier League brand

The English Premier League (EPL) has firmly established itself as the top professional football league brand globally, excelling in both profitability and brand value. In 2022, the Premier League, which stands as the highest division football league in England, possessed a brand worth of 8.6 billion euros. In this context, a brand refers to the trademark and its related intellectual property (Statista, n. d.). The EPL also boasts the distinction of being the most-watched sports league globally, with broadcasts reaching 212 territories and an estimated 643 million homes, potentially reaching a TV audience of 4.7 billion people (British Council, n. d.).

The success of the EPL can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, the league has achieved remarkable global reach through strategic broadcasting deals. Additionally, its ability to attract top football talent from around the world has contributed to its appeal and competitiveness. The EPL has actively engaged with fans through social media and digital technologies, offering interactive experiences and exclusive content. Effective marketing and branding strategies have further solidified the league's strong and recognisable brand identity. Moreover, the EPL has secured lucrative sponsorship deals with major global brands, enhancing its financial strength and international status. The competitive nature of the league, with numerous teams vying for the title each season, has also been a driving force in keeping fans engaged. These combined factors have propelled the Premier League to become one of the most successful and renowned football league brands globally (Premier League, n. d.). What established the Premier League as a top global brand was not only the communication side of management. It was a combination of facilities, safety and security standards, governance, distribution of



revenues (special formula), competitive balance, long-term sustainability strategies, and players' development schemes (Elite Player Performance Plan [EPPP]).

The primary goal of the Premier League is to offer high-level football with competitive matches and world-class players, enabling clubs to achieve success in European competitions. The league's equitable distribution of revenues ensures tight and thrilling competitions. It features globally famous clubs and players, attracting worldwide viewership. The presence of international stars also elevates the performance of English talents, leading to a blend of home-grown and international players in the league (Premier League, n. d.).

Case study 2

The Wimbledon Championships brand positioning

The Wimbledon Championships, being the oldest tennis tournament, holds a distinguished, traditional, and elite brand position, making it widely regarded as the most prestigious in the world, with celebrities and even members of the Royal family attending to watch the players compete (BBC News, 2023). It stands out as the only major Grand Slam event still played on grass and the sole one that maintains a nighttime curfew. Since 1877, the tournament has been hosted at the All-England Club in Wimbledon, London, featuring outdoor grass courts, and, as of 2019, retractable roofs over the two main courts. The championship begins on the last Monday of June and concludes with the Ladies' and Gentlemen's Singles Finals, scheduled for the weekend at the end of the second week. Throughout the year, five major events are held, alongside additional junior and invitational competitions (BBC News, 2009).

The tournament upholds several traditional practices, including a strict all-white dress code for competitors and receiving royal patronage. A customary treat at the event is strawberries and cream. In contrast to other tournaments, Wimbledon keeps advertising minimal and discreet, featuring official suppliers like Slazenger and Rolex. The partnership with Slazenger is the world's longest running sporting sponsorship, providing balls for the tournament since 1902 (Rudnasky, 2013).

Figure 2. Wimbledon Men's Final



Source: Wimbledon, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3sP0mPi>.

Figure 3. Carlos Alcaraz, Gentlemen's Singles champion



Source: Wimbledon, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3sP0mPi>.

Figure 4. Carlos Alcaraz receives the trophy from The Princess of Wales



Source: Wimbledon, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3sP0mPi>.

Figure 5. Novak Djokovic



Source: Wimbledon, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3sP0mPi>.

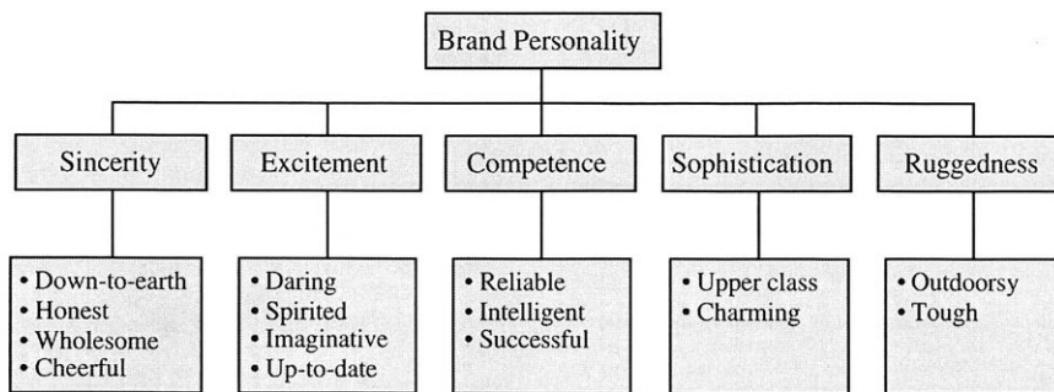
Sport event brand personality

Sport event brands have a brand personality. Brand personality is a grouping of human traits associated with a brand (Aaker, 1997). It is a theoretical model that identified five distinct dimensions of brand personality. The five dimensions are sophistication, excitement, competence, ruggedness, and sincerity. This implies that sport event consumers relate their own traits to those of a sport event brand, effectively integrating their personality with the events brand's identity. Through this association, the sport consumer (spectator or participant) attributes symbolic significance to the sport event brand, creating a psychological bond. As individuals align themselves with the brand, they form a strong emotional attachment, fostering a deeper connection and loyalty to the sport event brand.

Brand personality is a _____ associated with a brand.

Answer: grouping of human traits.

Figure 6. The brand personality model



Source: Aaker, 1997, p. 352.

These human-like characteristics play a vital role in how consumers establish a connection and form a bond with the brand (Guzman and Paswan, 2009), especially in contexts like sports events. Embracing a positive perception of the brand personality traits of sport events not only influences the way these events are promoted, but also shapes the overall marketing strategy. Moreover, this positive association indirectly contributes to the generation of new financial sources (Čáslavová and Petráčková, 2011).

The brand personality of sports events can be experienced in two ways: either as a spectator or as an active participant, such as in running events (Alexandris, 2016). It is essential to acknowledge that participatory sports events, like local running races, have distinctive characteristics compared to larger-scale events (Giampiccoli *et al.*, 2015) and professional leagues (Kang *et al.*, 2016). These unique attributes are associated with elements such as active participation involving individuals with various levels of training, strong connections with the local community, the tourism aspect, interaction with the event's location brand, and the presence of diverse motives for participation, particularly among serious leisure participants (Duan *et al.*, 2021).

In previous research, the brand personality of some specific events has been identified (Čáslavová and Petráčková, 2011). For instance, the FIFA World Cup brand was associated with characteristics like modern, exciting, spirited, successful, self-confident, and having a formidable team spirit. The Tour de France brand was perceived as hard-working, successful, and being male dominated. On the other hand, the Olympic Games were seen as exciting and unique. Given these findings, organisations can strategically highlight the positive characteristics already associated with their events, while also proactively developing new traits to further enhance the brand personality.

The importance of brand equity



Sport entities have consistently recognised the importance of investing in the added value and strength of their brands, which is commonly referred to as brand equity. This measurement considers consumer perceptions of the brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2019) as well as its performance in terms of sales or market share (Goldfarb *et al.*, 2009). Sport event brand equity is established gradually through a combination of factors, including the event's historical significance, reputation, organisational excellence, emotional bonds with fans, and the overall perception of the event's brand. In the next module, we will discuss the most important models and how to practically create customer-based brand equity for the sport events, which should be the ultimate target for the event managers.

Brand awareness

Effective brand management allows sport events, leagues, and competitions to differentiate themselves by establishing brand awareness, which involves the identification and recall of the brand name and brand image, which encompasses opinions and the personality associated with the brand (Shank and Lyberger, 2014). An unprompted event brand recall refers to the first brand within a category that comes to mind for our audience when asked (Attest, 2019).

Brand associations

Brand associations, which form cognitive networks influencing the overall brand image, are linked to consumer memory (Aaker, 1991). Brand equity is built through brand-building elements, marketing activities, and secondary associations conveyed to the brand (Kotler and Armstrong, 2016). For example, in the context of elite sport competitions and the UEFA Champions League, certain brand associations (attributes, benefits and attitudes) have been identified as contributing to the formation of brand equity. These associations encompass elite management, entertainment/excitement feelings, elite players and coaches, sportsmanship, feelings of escape, elite refereeing, corporate identity, logo, and anthem (Anagnostou and Tzetzis, 2021).

Sport events brand loyalty

Brand loyalty, demonstrated by favourable attitudes or repeat consumption, represents the desired outcome of the brand management process (Shank and Lyberger, 2014). Organising events and competitions successfully, no matter if it is a local running event (e.g., a marathon), a local council tournament (five-a-side football), a professional league championship (e.g., the Euroleague Basketball league), or a global mega event (e.g., the FIFA World Cup), is about building a strong event brand with added value (brand equity), which, in turn, creates brand loyalty towards the event by the customers (fans, sponsors, media broadcasters) (Gladen and Funk, 2001).

In league competitions, for example, event brand loyalty ensures a consistent and devoted following even during times when the customer's team performance may suffer or does not compete (Anagnostou and Tzetzis, 2021). Consumers who are deeply engaged and are loyal to a league are inclined to engage with the sport brand. For example, many fans watch the UEFA Champions League matches after their club has been eliminated or even if it does not compete at all. Brand loyalty contributes to a stable following of the events through broadcast and digital media. Furthermore, they are more likely to make additional merchandise purchases and hold more favourable opinions about sponsors associated with the sport brand (Filo *et al.*, 2010).

Brand loyalty can be behavioural (i.e., the extent to which a customer consistently engages in repeat purchases or patronage of a particular product, brand, or service over time) or attitudinal brand loyalty (the emotional and psychological attachment that customers have towards a particular brand). Attitudinal brand loyalty focuses on the positive feelings, attitudes, and beliefs that customers have about the brand. However, some fans may have attitudinal brand loyalty (e.g., for the NBA basketball league), expressing positive attitudes and emotional attachment to the brand, but they may not exhibit behavioural brand loyalty due to the games being broadcasted at extremely late hours in their country, impacted by the time difference zone.

Sport events co-branding

We stress the importance of sport event co-branding because organising an event is often a case of sport event co-branding. For example, the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, the London Marathon 2023, the UEFA Champions League Istanbul Final 2023, the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Co-branding refers to the process of combining two or more brands to create a composite brand or marketing them together (Helmig *et al.*, 2008).

In a co-branding relationship, there is typically a dominant parent brand and a secondary brand (Washburn *et al.*, 2000). The parent brand, in the context of mega sport events, is often represented by the sport governing body, and it plays a crucial role in determining the product category direction. The parent brand also 'owns' the fan base of the event, which they authorise the destination brand to access. The mission of the subordinate brand (destination) is to offer brand equity to the parent brand via strong and unique brand associations (Uggla, 2004). These brand associations should be secondary to those of the parent brand (Weszka, 2011).

Domestic and local communities perceive sport events co-branding as a valuable marketing tool that plays a significant role in shaping the destination's future success. By hosting these events, communities aim to increase awareness, enhance their image, and



attract tourism, leading to future inbound travel. Sport events can be integrated into a broader array of destination attractions, catering to both new and existing sport consumer markets. Even smaller local communities that may not be widely recognised as tourism destinations can experience both positive and negative impacts from hosting small or large-scale sport events that draw attendees and participants from regional, national, and international levels (Kaplanidou and Vogt, 2007).

Sport event brand extensions

As the result of enhanced brand equity, brand loyalty can give the opportunity for product extensions beyond the events' core offerings (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2019). Event and league organisers can explore new revenue streams by introducing products such as merchandise stores and restaurants. For example, the NBA's highly anticipated Toronto restaurant, Courtside Restaurant, has officially opened its doors for business. Situated on Toronto's waterfront, this venture marks the league's first venture into the hospitality industry. The Toronto launch is a strategic move, acting as a test run before the potential expansion of courtside restaurant locations worldwide. This venture aims to capitalise on the NBA's global popularity and attract enthusiasts from around the globe (Heindl, 2023).

Case study 3

The FIFA 2022™ Qatar World Cup brand: controversy, criticism, and organisational success

Controversy and criticism

The brand of the FIFA 2022 Qatar World Cup has been marked by controversy and criticism since Qatar was nominated as the host in 2010. Doubts about the integrity of the bidding process arose, and concerns were raised about human rights violations, particularly regarding migrant worker rights (BBC News, 2022). The country also faced issues related to women's rights, alcohol consumption, and the LGBTQ community, which gained significant attention in the Western media. FIFA's own corruption scandals further tarnished the event's brand. Some media outlets, experts, and human rights groups criticised Qatar's suitability as a host, citing concerns about limited football history, excessive costs, the extreme local climate, etc. Several countries, clubs, and players declared boycotts of the event, and former FIFA President Sepp Blatter acknowledged the mistake of giving Qatar hosting rights (BBC News, 2022). The FIFA brand suffered severe damage due to brand spill-over effects and corruption scandals associated with the Qatar bid, leading to the arrest and removal of FIFA members. The tournament was widely considered one of the most controversial FIFA World Cups in history, putting the FIFA World Cup brand at risk of further harm.



Playing performance

Nevertheless, Qatar 2022 broke all previous FIFA World Cup records for goal-scoring, surpassing the previous highest total of 171 goals set in both 1998 and 2014, solidifying its place as the highest-scoring World Cup in history: an exciting final extremely hard to forget with Argentina of Lionel Messi winning it versus France of Kylian Mbappé at the penalty shoot-out; Cristiano Ronaldo achieved an extraordinary milestone by becoming the first player to score in five FIFA World Cups, displaying his consistency and impact across multiple tournaments from 2006 to 2022. Meanwhile, Lionel Messi etched his name in history by becoming the first player to score in four consecutive knockout stage matches in a FIFA World Cup since the introduction of the round of 16 in the modern era, starting from Mexico '86. Their accomplishments added to the excitement and brand value of the tournament, making FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 a truly memorable event for football fans worldwide.

Organisational success

Furthermore, Qatar successfully organised the World Cup by undertaking a massive construction project to build stadiums and improve infrastructure. Despite facing challenges, the country delivered a remarkable tournament with well-prepared stadiums, efficient transportation, and quality hospitality services. The event was praised by fans and players (Euronews, 2023).

Stadia and services

Qatar invested heavily in upgrading its transportation infrastructure, completing a smooth metro system that began operation in May 2019. Public transport was made easily accessible and free for fans with a Hayya (accreditation) card during the tournament. The country also focused on enhancing its hospitality and leisure infrastructure, constructing several five-star hotels, and renovating existing ones to provide quality accommodation options for visitors. Restaurants and cafés were also improved to offer diverse dining experiences. Qatar also created tourist hotspots with beautiful art pieces, aiming to unite people through memorable experiences. The Lusail Iconic Stadium, seating 86,000 people, stood out as one of the world's most advanced arenas, attracting over 800,000 fans during its ten games. These infrastructure developments contributed to the success of the FIFA Qatar World Cup brand and Qatar's as a major player in international sports (Euronews, 2023).

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ showcased significant strides in inclusion and diversity. Stéphanie Frappart made history as the first woman to referee a match in FIFA World Cup history. She, alongside assistants Neuza Back and Karen Diaz, formed the groundbreaking female trio that officiated in the tournament (BBC, 2020).

Moreover, the event marked a notable step towards accessibility for all fans. For the first time, audio-descriptive commentary was offered globally through the internet, benefiting blind and partially sighted fans. The service was provided in both English and Arabic, ensuring a more inclusive experience for all spectators (FIFA, 2023).

Furthermore, three stadiums hosted sensory rooms catering to fans with sensory access requirements, further enhancing inclusivity and accommodating unique needs. Additionally, every match venue was constructed to adhere to rigid accessibility standards, including facilities such as accessible parking, seating, bathrooms, and concession stands (FIFA, 2023).

The FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ demonstrated a commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment, empowering more people to engage with and enjoy the beautiful game of football (FIFA, 2023).

Fan satisfaction and global reach

The tournament's captivating performance engaged an astonishing five billion people worldwide. Fans across various platforms and devices followed the tournament content, resulting in 93.6 million posts on social media, contributing to the record-breaking cumulative reach and 5.95 billion engagements (Euronews, 2023).

Inside the stadiums, 3.4 million spectators experienced the historic tournament, an increase from three million in 2018, reflecting the excitement and appeal of the event. The FIFA Fan Festival in Doha drew 1.85 million visitors who enjoyed an anthem, 'Tukoh Taka,' from the first-ever FIFA World Cup Official Soundtrack, generating 450 million views on YouTube (FIFA, 2023).

In a groundbreaking move, FIFA+ live-streamed the entire tournament in Brazil, partnering with popular YouTube streamer Casimiro and Brazilian legend Ronaldo, to create an innovative and engaging product that resonated with a new generation of fans. The success of the tournament was also evident in sponsorship, with all global and regional packages sold out. The thirty-two commercial affiliates activated more than six hundred special marketing programmes, further enhancing the global appeal of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 (FIFA, 2023).

Unit 1.2 The sport brands ecosystem

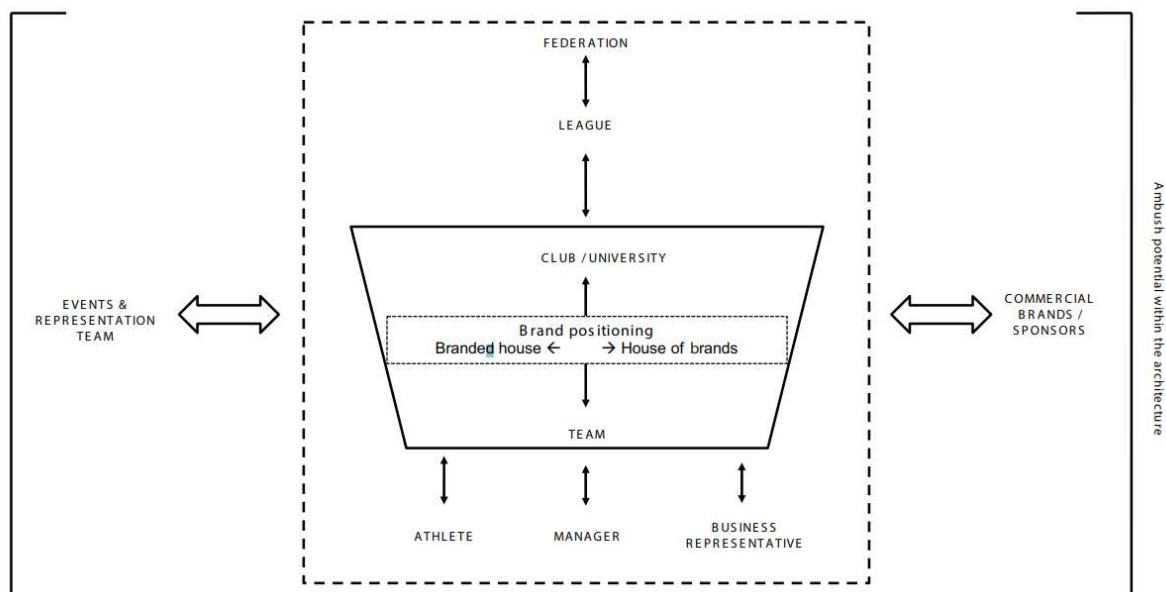
Sport events, leagues, and competitions are interconnected within the broader sports brand ecosystem, which includes events, teams, leagues, players, federations, and other sports organisations as brand members (Baker *et al.*, 2022; Kunkel and Biscaia, 2020; Kunkel *et al.*, 2014). In this system, multiple brands within the sports industry are linked to each other, either directly or indirectly. Brands associated with events and competitions (such as players, coaches, clubs, sponsors) interact with other brands in this network, where they compete and evolve.

The examination of relationships between multiple brands within the sport brand ecosystem is crucial because there is often an exchange of brand image within a brand portfolio. Sport brands can influence each other and evoke various responses from fans (Kunkel *et al.*, 2014). Understanding these interactions is vital for comprehending the dynamic nature of sports brands and their impact on the overall sports events industry.

For instance, elite European football clubs like Barcelona FC, Manchester City, Liverpool, Manchester United, and FC Bayern Munich compete in various events and competitions, each of one possessing its own distinct brand identity, such as domestic leagues and cups (e.g., Premier League, FA Cup, Carabao Cup), European international competitions (UEFA Champions League), FIFA competitions (e.g., FIFA Club World Cup), and other international friendly tournaments (e.g., the 2023 Soccer Champions Tour). Additionally, the clubs' coaches and players, such as Guardiola, Haaland, Lewandowski, Gundogan, etc., are autonomous brands themselves and interact with their club brands and the events' brands in which they compete.



Figure 7. Sport brand ecosystem network



Source: Kunkel and Biscaia, 2020, p. 7.

Brand architecture, brand portfolios, and brand relationship spectrum

Brand architecture is about how an organisation manages its portfolio of brands and how consumers perceive the relationships between these brands. Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000) developed the brand relationship spectrum to explore different brand architecture strategies. The brand relationship spectrum provides brand managers with valuable insights to proactively manage their brands and maintain a competitive edge in the ever-changing market landscape.

At one end of the spectrum is the 'branded house' strategy, where all brands within the organisation are promoted under a single master brand. At the other end is the 'house of brands' strategy, where the master brand and its sub-brands are not visibly linked. The two remaining strategies are differentiated by 'sub-brands' and 'endorsed brands.' In the 'sub-brand' strategy, brands are connected to a master brand that serves as the organisational framework. When the master brand is the primary driver, the sub-brand still plays a role in the consumer's purchase decision, but its function goes beyond being merely descriptive. In the 'endorsed brand' strategy, the sub-brand is endorsed by the master brand, with the sub-brand taking on the major driver role (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000).

For example, UEFA serves as the master brand for various national and club competitions, such as the EURO, Nations League, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League, UEFA Conference League, among others. These competitions are part of UEFA's brand architecture, each contributing to its overall brand identity and perception by football fans

and stakeholders (figures 8 and 9). Similarly, the Asian Football Confederation runs their distinct competition brand portfolio (figure 10).

Figure 8. The competitions brand portfolio of UEFA



Source: UEFA, (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/3raJGDo>.

Figure 9. Competition brands from in the competitions brand portfolio of UEFA



Source: UEFA, (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/3raJGDo>.

Figure 10. The competitions brand portfolio of Asian Football Confederation



Source: [untitled image of the competitions brand portfolio of Asian Football Confederation], (n. d.), <https://bit.ly/3Rpjv6k>.

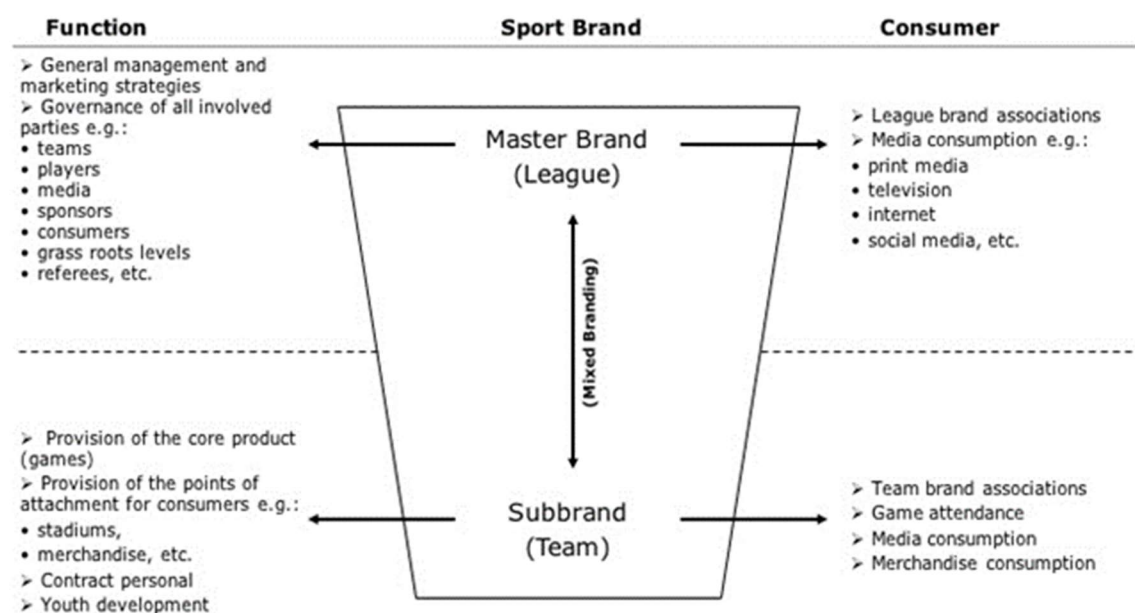
The sport brand architecture

The sport brand architecture model primarily examines the brand relationship between league competitions and their respective teams, where the league serves as the master brand, providing a platform for teams (sub-brands) to participate in the competition (Kunkel *et al.*, 2014; Kunkel *et al.*, 2017). This mixed-branding approach functions in two directions at both attitudinal and behavioural levels. Athlete-linked brand associations also impact on consumer evaluations of teams, sponsoring brands, and event brands, with athletes serving as core brand associations (Daniels *et al.*, 2019).

Spill-over effects

Spill-over effects commonly occur when two or more brands belong to the same brand portfolio (Cobbs *et al.*, 2015). For instance, in the context of FIFA and its diverse competitions forming their brand portfolio, spill-over effects can be observed between these competitions, where certain elements from one competition, such as the Men's World Cup, may transfer to another, like the Women's World Cup. Kunkel and Biscaia (2020) suggest that brands within the sport brand ecosystem influence each other, particularly when closely related. Consequently, positive attributes of one competition, such as the elite players and excitement associated with the FIFA Men's World Cup, could potentially influence how people perceive another intricately linked competition, like the FIFA Women's World Cup, and the excitement associated with it. However, it is important to notice that such spill-over effects can also extend to less favourable traits and associations of brands within the same portfolio, potentially transferring negative associations from one elite competition to another (Kunkel *et al.*, 2014).

Figure 11. The sport brand architecture model



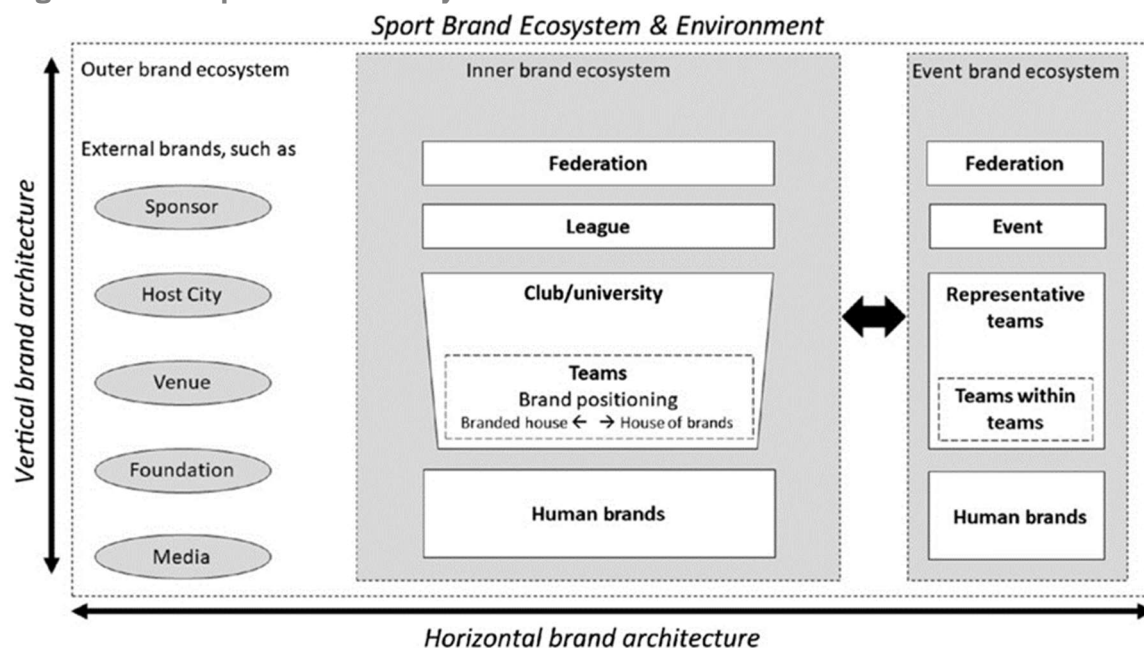
Source: Kunkel *et al.*, 2014, p. 51.

The event brand ecosystem

Baker *et al.* (2022) introduced an updated theoretical model of the 'sport brand ecosystem and environment', which includes both the inner brand ecosystem (vertical brand architecture of sport brands) and the event brand ecosystem (connected horizontally through interactions with inner brand ecosystem). The framework recognises the influence of the outer brand ecosystem, where external brands can temporarily enter the sport brand ecosystem horizontally. This dynamic model also accounts for the growing influence of individual athlete brands, empowered by mainstream and social media, to independently build and control their personal brands separate from their team, league, or federation affiliations (Kunkel and Biscaia, 2020). Within this modern sport brand ecosystem, league competitions, events, teams, athletes, and sponsors coexist and experience spillover effects, where the transfer of meaning in consumers' minds impacts on these brands.

A good example is that of the team sports and tournaments before and during the Olympic Games. The FIBA World Olympic Qualifying Tournament (FIBA World OQT), for example, previously known as the FIBA Pre-Olympic Basketball Tournament, serves as the final qualifying event for the Olympic Basketball Tournament. It includes the best non-champion teams from various FIBA World zones, who qualify to compete for the remaining berths in the Summer Olympic Games. The tournament provides a last chance for teams to secure a spot in the prestigious Olympic basketball competition, and we can see the interaction of various events and other brands (Olympic Games, FIBA World OQT, national teams' brands, and star players brands).

Figure 12. The sport brand ecosystem and environment model



Source: Baker *et al.*, 2022, p. 44.

Summary

This module examined the brand management concept in the context of sport events, leagues, and competitions. It starts by exploring the fundamental concepts of brand management, including brands, brand positioning, brand awareness, brand associations, brand equity, brand loyalty, co-branding, and brand extensions, all of which play crucial roles in shaping the perception and success of sports events brands.

As the module progresses, it critically examines critical approaches within the sport brand ecosystem. Two primary models under scrutiny are the house of brands and branded house. The house of brands approach involves distinct competition sub-brands operating independently, while the branded house approach centralises all competition brands under a master brand. Additionally, the brand architecture and the event brand ecosystem are explored in depth, providing valuable insights into how sports events are strategically managed from a branding perspective. Throughout the module, the advantages and disadvantages of each approach are thoroughly analysed to comprehend their implications on the overall brand ecosystem.

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