

# UBIQUITY OF SPONSORS IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FANS

*Frank Pons, Faculté des Sciences de l'Administration, Laval University, 2425 de la Terrasse, Québec, Québec, Canada, G1V 0A6, 418-656-2131, [frank.pons@fsa.ulaval.ca](mailto:frank.pons@fsa.ulaval.ca)*  
*Marilyn Giroux, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, New Zealand [marilyn.giroux@aut.ac.nz](mailto:marilyn.giroux@aut.ac.nz)*

## ABSTRACT

Sponsorship has been playing a major role in the marketing mix of diverse companies over the years. In the past decades, this important form of promotions gained a lot of popularity from researchers and managers around the world. Indeed, the amount of money invested in the sponsorship has seen a steady growth year after year. In 2013, the worldwide estimated sponsorship spending represented more than \$53.1 billion, with an increase of 3.9 percent compared to 2012 (International Events Group, 2014). In recent years, the growth in sponsoring has been prompted by an increased number of companies joining the playing field, but more strikingly, by several brands that decided to build an aggressive sponsorship program to conquer consumers and to increase their spending. For instance, Red Bull is now omnipresent in a variety of sports and cultural events internationally. Their sponsorship activities range from a variety of sports like mountain biking, BMX and Formula 1 Racing to diverse sport teams and specific athletes. This wide coverage across a multitude of sports and entertainment businesses positions companies like Red Bull as key players on the sponsoring market and often as a reference in the consumers' mind.

In the academic literature, the majority of the research has been done on single sponsorship studies. Interestingly enough, despite the growing presence and spending of several companies across a variety of events, the omnipresence of sponsors has rarely been investigated. This is especially critical in a research context where the fit between a brand and a sponsee is often cited as a key success factor and may not always be a result of this ubiquity of sponsorship. For instance, one can wonder if this ubiquity of a sponsor can hinder or improve sponsorship objectives for this given company. Consequently, in this research, the gap in the academic literature on the impact of the ubiquity of sponsors on consumers' responses is investigated.

Using a survey approach, data were collected before a professional soccer game in France in order to test the effects of sponsor ubiquity. The team main sponsor is also a major sponsor of several other teams and sporting events in the same geographic area.

Results suggest that the perceived ubiquity has a positive impact on (a) the favorable attitude toward the sponsor, (b) the global evaluation of the sponsorship, and (c) the perceived congruence between the sponsor and the sponsee. However, results also suggest that several variables (sports and non-sports related) may alter and moderate this positive effect.

In conclusion, this research shows that the omnipresence of a sponsor in a category can be highly beneficial for the sponsor itself but only under specific circumstances. The results contribute to the literature by investigating the impact of the perceived ubiquity on diverse consumers' responses. This research brings a better understanding of the impact of multiple sponsorships for a specific sponsor and looks like a promising avenue for future research to help managers build their marketing strategies.

**References** available upon request from Frank Pons, [frank.pons@fsa.ulaval.ca](mailto:frank.pons@fsa.ulaval.ca)