The Sport Sponsorship Process and Relationships

A Case Study of Sports Teams in Sweden

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Niklas Hansson

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Abstract

Title: The Sport Sponsorship Process and Relationships: A Case Study of Sports Teams in Sweden

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Keyword(s): Sponsorship, Sport sponsorship, Sponsorship fit, Sponsorship objectives, Sponsorship outcomes, Sponsorship approach

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe and explore how companies and sports teams decide to enter sponsorship agreements with each other. The purpose is also to explore the entire sponsorship process together with the specific relationships between sponsor/s and sponsee/s. This will be done in order to make a contribution to the research field of sponsorship in the context of sports teams.

Research Problem: How does the sponsorship process form and how do sponsors/sponsees work with their sponsorship relationships?

Method: The main methodological choice has been the abductive research method, where theories have been added and removed from the framework, in order to analyse data properly. A qualitative approach has been chosen and empirical data from eight organisations form two cases with three sponsors and one sponsee has been gathered. Primary data were collected from personal interviews and complemented with secondary data from websites and other material provided by the respondents.

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework consists of classic sponsorship theories, in order to form a solid theoretical base for the concept of sponsorship. These classics are presented together with more modern theories regarding sponsorship in connection to certain aspects of the process and relationships and thus making the theoretical framework current and up to date.

Conclusion: The process has been seen to take one out of two options, whereas a structured sponsorship process is one option and the other option is a rather unstructured sponsorship process. Sponsors and sponsees reported that they work increasingly with their networks and thus suggested that the network approach connected to sponsorship will grow more important in the upcoming years. Generally, it appears as if the main focus within sponsorship, in terms of fit, is how it works internally or within the agreement between sponsor and sponsee. Whether it signals something good or bad to the audience is therefore of no real interest or matter.
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1. Introduction

In chapter one, background information, purpose, and research question will be presented for this study. Delimitations will be outlined as well, in order to provide the reader with fundamental knowledge for the upcoming sections.

1.1 Problem Background

In the year 2015, we are fed with continuous news regarding sport stars, teams, and events. TV and traditional press are complemented with social media reports and live covers from various online broadcasters, which enable all people with an internet connection to obtain the latest updates. Covers are not all about on field activities, but off field as well. Sports teams such as Real Madrid and LA Lakers both have millions of fans on social media, which indicates a great interest in the teams and their activities. Athletes are also seen as representatives for their clubs and are promoted in commercials which demonstrate that sports today are more than just sports; they are rather businesses. Hence, corporations seek strategic opportunities to market their businesses and use sport as a channel to reach consumers (Farrelly & Quester, 2005).

In the latest decades the interest for sponsorship and the involvement of business in the sport industry has increased significantly (Morgan, Adair, Taylor, & Hermens, 2014). Sponsorship agreements have also been crowned as the fastest growing corporate marketing tool (Cunningham, Cornwell, & Coote, 2009). Money spent on sponsorship activities has increased from $13.4 billion in 1996 to $46.3 billion in 2010 worldwide (Mao & Zhang, 2013). Sports related sponsorship activities estimate 68% of all sponsorship activities (Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011), which signals the strong connection between sponsorship and sports. Frederick & Patil (2010) state the importance of sport sponsorship for corporations and sports teams and describe it as a business relationship to achieve commercial advantage. The significance of sponsorship has obtained such relevance that sport leagues, organisations, and teams would not operate at the same capacity without it (Morgan et al., 2014). Sports teams are lucrative partners for sponsorship agreements, since the already developed fan base is ideal for sponsors to achieve marketing objectives (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). The emotional connection sports enthusiasts have to sports teams therefore provides excellent opportunities for corporations to invest in emotionally engaged consumers (Madrigal, 2000).

Sponsorship has not always been prioritised as part of a marketing plan and sponsorship decisions were rarely based on actual strategic intent before its evolution (Walliser, 2003). Early research of sponsorship acknowledged that marketing campaigns involving sponsorship are something different than regular advertisement and need special treatment, both in theory and practice (Meenaghan, 1991). The development has made an integration of sponsorship activities in the overall marketing strategy fundamental to reach organisational objectives and desired outcomes (Farrelly, Quester, & Burton, 1997). However, previous studies do not elaborate explicitly on the conducting and implementation process of sponsorship agreements and how corporations should act (Gordon & Cheah, 2014).
Agreements between sponsor and sponsee are characterised by highly different objectives, which are determined by what the sponsor wants to achieve and future outcomes (Shilbury, Quick, & Westerbeek, 2003; Sephapo et al., 2014; Chebat & Daoud, 2003). Much of the general sponsorship literature emphasises the objectives in sponsorship agreements which, in extension, are connected to the prospects of certain outcomes. Generally, objectives differ between sponsee and sponsor; focus for sponsors lies upon raising awareness, improving brands, and targeting new market segments, whilst sponsees seek to obtain funds, resources, and services (Shilbury et al., 2003; Shank, 2005). The sponsorship process is therefore highly dynamic (Copeland, Frisby, and McCarville, 1996) and consists of many different elements.

The dynamic nature of sponsorship also includes what approach of sponsorship is the most beneficial (Meenaghan, 1983; Roos & Algottson, 1996; Carrillat & d’Astous, 2013). Official sponsorship is a way of creating a close connection between sponsor and sponsee (Cornwell, Pruitt, & Clark, 2005). Two other common forms are financial and in-kind sponsorship; financial sponsorship which refers to agreements where sponsors provide sport entities (sponsees) with financial measures and in-kind sponsorship, which means that sponsors provide the sponsee with products or services (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012). However, Poon and Prendergast (2006) emphasise that the fit between sponsor and sponsee is crucial to the effectiveness and possible positive outcomes of sponsorship. Other researchers claim that many objectives are irrelevant if companies choose the wrong sponsor, hence the fit between partners plays a significant part in sponsorship activities (Gordon & Cheah, 2014).

Congruence between sponsor and sponsee is of great importance in the sense of sponsorship outcomes (Speed & Thompson, 2000; Lee & Cho, 2009). However, as Speed and Thompson (2000) state; there is not a clear view on what the sponsorship fit includes, which makes it hard to control and succeed with. The congruence is discussed by Chien, Cornwell, and Pappu (2011) as well, who emphasise that such relationship is delicate and brands could be affected either positively or negatively, depending on the match between the parties. Thus, congruence in the sponsorship agreement extensively determines the consequences for both sponsor and sponsee (Woisetschläger & Michaelis, 2012). Researchers even suggest that the unclear fit should be kept at a certain, delicate level, in order to reach certain desirable outcomes, which often is connected to sponsorship (Javalgi, Traylor, Gross & Lampman, 1994; Henseler et al., 2011; Olson & Thjömöe, 2011).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Little previous research has focused on the how the dynamic process of sponsorship looks like in practice. Previous research has highlighted many aspects of sponsorship, whereas objectives and outcomes are two aspects connected to sponsorship in general (e.g. Shilbury et al., 2003; Shank, 2005). However, more focus has moved to the relationship fit and that it is essential to optimise success of sponsorship, whereas objectives and outcomes again are involved (Cunningham et al., 2009; Lee & Cho, 2009; Mao & Zhang, 2013; Morgan et al, 2014). The increased popularity of sponsorship activities is a consequence from higher media costs and the proven ability of sponsorship effectiveness, which on the other hand has been proven hard to
measure (Meenaghan, 1991; 2001). An important addition is that all companies do not have the same requisites to be successful in sponsorship marketing, much due to the ability to integrate sponsorship in the overall marketing strategy (Gordon & Cheah, 2014).

The sponsorship process has its roots from a managerial perspective, where objectives, organising, selecting, and controlling the outcomes are all performed by managers (Walliser, 2003). There have been attempts to generalise the implementation procedure of sponsorship, which have reached similar conclusions (e.g. Cornwell, 1995; Arthur, Scott, Woods & Booker, 1998; Shank, 2005). They all share the importance of determining objectives of sponsorship (Shilbury et al., 2003). Before deciding to enter a sponsorship relation, there are factors additional to the objectives which need to be considered, thus making managers’ motives for sponsorship decisions highly complex (Cornwell, Roy & Steinard, 2001).

Companies could engage in sponsorship by using different approaches. Official sponsorship is closely related to brand building and by sponsoring with financial means, organisations wish to improve their image. In-kind sponsorship is related to demonstration of products or services (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012). Moreover, researchers claim that there exists an ambiguity regarding the outcomes of the different approaches related to different sponsorship agreements (ibid.). A useful, however underrepresented approach is the network approach. In this approach, network relationships are in focus and could be benefitted from by companies (Cobbs, 2011; Olkkonen, 2001; Walliser, 2003).

Since there are objectives and approaches, there ought to be positive sought outcomes as well. These positive outcomes are yet to be determined as clear, since there are various suggested positive outcomes which could occur from sponsorship. Suggested positive outcomes involve increased sales, new distribution channels, and brand improvement (e.g. Meenaghan, 2001; Cornwell et al., 2005; Henseler et al., 2011). Since the brand is the most intangible of these terms, scholars have tried to make a comprehensible connection between sponsorship and brands; finding brand equity to be such link (Cornwell et al., 2001; Alexander, 2008; Henseler et al., 2011). Cornwell et al. (2001) find that sponsorship could affect brand equity positively and especially under active management. Despite the positive aspects from enforcing sports sponsorship agreements, scholars still do not consider it to be without risk and possible negative outcomes.

Cornwell et al. (2001) describe sponsorship as a long-term investment that seldom gives short-term results. Gwinner and Swanson (2003) establish sport sponsorship as an investment carrying high risk, much due to the fragmented consumer base. Bloxsome, Voges, and Pope (2011) further declare control issues as something negative, which is related to the lack of control over sporting results and individual behaviours and scandals. This could, in return, have bad effects on the sponsoring companies’ brands (Westberg, Stavros & Wilson, 2011). In order to prevent negativity and instead create positive and effective sponsorship management; Morgan et al. (2014) pinpoint the communication and relation between sponsor and sponsee as something important together with the significance of partner selection (Carrillat, Lafferty & Harris, 2005).
The relationship between sponsor and sponsee is important in sponsorship agreements and makes the fit between partners highly significant for positive consumer responses (Lee & Choo, 2009). Meenaghan, Mcloughling, and McCormack (2013) further state the fit between parties as noteworthy and declare the importance of strategic decision making to achieve credible brand building relationships. Although sponsorship activities worldwide are growing constantly, money wise, there exists an ambiguity regarding the efficacy of sponsorship, according to Dolphin (2003) and Gordon and Cheah (2014). The complexity of measuring the efficiency of sponsorship could explain this ambiguity and thereby connects to the complex fit between businesses (Renard & Sitz, 2011) as the fit between the two parties, Renard and Sitz (2011) state that the brand fit between sponsorship parties is most relevant. Speed and Thompson (2000) claim that the fit based on consumers’ preferences is the most important factor when evaluating sponsee opportunities. What creates a good fit, however, could depend upon many factors (ibid.). Some researchers claim that the inter-personal relationships between individuals create a good fit (Morgan et al., 2014), while others relate good fit to financial satisfaction (Farrelly & Quester, 2005). Other authors dismiss the relevance of a good fit. Cliffe and Motion (2005) argue that the relationship between sponsor and sponsee could be outweighed by other factors; thus scale down the importance of such fit.

1.2.1 Research Gap
Presented facts indicate that further knowledge regarding sport sponsorship is needed. This is not entirely due to absence of information and studies regarding the subject, but due to ambiguity connected to it. Moreover, an in-depth analysis and qualitative work of both sponsor and sponsee will further develop knowledge regarding the highly dynamic sponsorship process (Morgan et al., 2014). The imbalance between qualitative and quantitative data has been detected by the authors of this thesis, who have not found a paper with a focus on managers’ perceptions regarding sponsorship relationships and the sponsorship process. Henseler et al. (2011) claim that more academic research is needed regarding sponsorship management and only refer to their own work and the one presented by Cornwell et al. (2001) with focus on managers’ perceptions in relation to sponsorship. Sport sponsorship research therefore needs to focus on how sponsors and sponsees work with their sponsorship portfolios (Chien et al., 2011).

Extended research regarding objectives, outcomes, and processes for organisational relationships is requested (Farrelly, Quester, & Burton, 2006; Cliffe & Motion, 2005). Scholars seem to agree upon the significance of a good fit between sponsorship partners, but not what makes it a good fit. Olkkonen (2001) therefore demands more research of how sponsorship relationships develop and significant content of such relationships. Furthermore, future research needs to highlight alternative conceptualisations of relationship fit (Chien et al., 2011). Morgan et al. (2014) refer to previous research as well, whereas they state that previous research within the field of sponsorship has been either anecdotal or theoretical. Lastly, the geographical factor; namely where research has been conducted, suggests that no or little research has been conducted in Sweden (Meenaghan, 2001), where the authors of this study are active. By looking at these requests for further research, this will be taken into consideration and lay the foundation for this study. The aims for this study will be to fill the research gap which exists in how companies work with the sponsorship process and relationships connected to it.
1.3 Research Question
By looking at the facts from the problem background, discussion, and research gap, the authors of this thesis have come up with the following research question:

How does the sponsorship process form and how do sponsors/sponsees work with the sponsorship relationships?

1.4 Purpose
The purpose of this study is to explore how companies and sports teams decide to enter sponsorship agreements with each other. The purpose is also to explore the entire sponsorship process together with the specific relationships between sponsor/s and sponsee/s, in order to expand the previous research in the field of sport sponsorship.

1.5 Delimitations
This study is intended to focus on sponsorship in the field of sports. Since sponsorship could be connected to more than sports teams, other aspects of it have been excluded, due to the high extent of sponsorship activities which are related to teams. Moreover, by choosing to focus on managers’ perception, the authors believe that most relevant information is generated and best analyses could be done, since managers show a high involvement in decision making regarding activities such as sponsorship. Furthermore, this thesis is delimited to a certain geographical region. However, the authors have no interest in statistically generalising the results from this study.

1.6 Key Concepts
relationship fit: The term relationship fit includes a wide variety of variables and no single definition has been established. Hence, there exists ambiguity regarding what constitutes a good fit between organisations in a sponsorship agreement (Chien et al., 2011; Morgan et al., 2014). The authors will therefore treat the term accordingly, and perceive it as a certain congruence between sport entity and sponsor. Also, in order to stay open to new perceptions and interpretations.

The sponsorship process: Managers’ control of the sponsorship process goes all the way from initiating objectives to evaluation of outcomes (Walliser, 2003). Moreover, managers also need to choose a sponsorship approach (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012; 2013). The sponsorship process will therefore, in this thesis, be viewed as a process including the following three main components: objectives, approach and outcomes.
1.7 The Continued Disposition of the Thesis

Figure 1. The continued disposition of the thesis

1. The Introduction provides the reader with background information to the research question and why the subject is important to study, with the help of other researchers. Furthermore, a purpose and research gap are presented in this section.

2. The Theoretical framework consists of a thorough explanation of the central concepts and how these will assist in the analysing procedure through an analytical model (Figure 2).

3. In the Methodology, the authors argue for the methodological choices which have been made throughout the thesis.

4. In the Empirical chapter, the data collected from respondents are compiled and presented.

5. The Analysis will follow the structure of the analytical model by using information from the Theoretical framework and Empirical data.

6. The Conclusion includes the answer(s) to the research question and gives suggestions for further research, limitations, and implications.
2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, other authors’ research is presented, which form the theoretical framework for the thesis.

In order to provide the readers with a comprehensible view of the theoretical framework and its components; the authors of this thesis have structured figure 2. The figure is created to describe the structure and content of the theoretical framework. As stated in the introduction, sponsorship could be viewed both generally and in terms of specific relationships which are usually unique. The aim with the theoretical framework is to provide the reader with information on how the sponsorship process forms and to create a better understanding of the relationship between sponsor and sponsee; deeper information about this process is essential. Moreover, there are some general parts of sponsorship that will be explained first in this chapter. The general parts of sponsorship are pointed out to be the concept of sponsorship and the process, including objectives, approach, and outcomes (as showed in figure 2). The relationship or the “fit” has gained increased attention among scholars and since it affects sponsorship to some extent, it has its own section. Another aspect of sponsorship and sponsorship fit, which will be taken into consideration throughout this thesis, is the duration of the relationship. This is pointed out as an important factor by Cornwell et al. (2001), who claim that the length of a sponsorship agreement has positive impact on its effectiveness. All these parts will be treated and presented during this chapter, whereas sponsorship in general will be presented first and sponsorship related to specific relationships will be treated lastly.
2.1 Sponsorship- the Concept

The sponsorship marketing tool has existed in its present form since the late 60’s (Meenaghan, 1991). Sponsorship strategy has, since then, been used as a marketing channel ideal to reach a specific consumer segment. Meenaghan and Shipley (1999, p. 331) state: “Sponsorship is highly prized for its ability to achieve particular communications effects with selected audiences”. Assuming that sponsorship is managed in a strategic manner, corporations therefore possess great opportunities to affect their target consumers (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) present the fact that sponsorship, as a channel, fulfils the function of attracting and providing access to an audience, which is one of the reasons why it is considered a highly valued communication tool. The other crucial part of sponsorship, together with the medium, is the message (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). In opposite to advertising, where the message could be controlled, sponsorship comes with ready-made images of an event or team, thus making the message depend much on the event’s/team’s personality (ibid.). The challenge is therefore much more complex than simply selecting a sponsee to achieve advantages over competitors. Copeland et al. (1996, p. 32) describe it as follows: “Sport sponsorships represent exchange relationships between sport organizers, corporations, and other intermediaries”.

Walliser (2003) further acknowledges a problem when it comes to defining sponsorship, but suggests a definition according to sponsorship targets and thus making it situation based. Hence, the concept of sponsorship has, by authors, been defined in multiple ways, whereas definitions are dependent on companies’ sought outcomes from sponsorship deals. Thjömöe, Olson, and Brönn (2002) have constructed a dividing line between separate sponsorship aims. A company’s desire to support a good cause, without any personal publicity, is one of these aims; “Sponsorship is giving financial support to an individual, organization, or activity to support its good work without regard to whether or not we receive publicity” Another is: “Support for an organization, event or individual in order to get the firm’s or brand’s name in front of the public” (Thjömöe et al., 2002, p.7). Thus, company motives are a significant factor in order to define sponsorship activities and the reason why the authors of this thesis argue that a single definition of sponsorship may limit an abductive study approach. Further definitions of the marketing method are more angled towards company benefits. Mullin, Hardy & Sutton (2007, p. 315) claim that sponsorship is: “The acquisition of rights to affiliate or directly associate with a product or event for the purpose of deriving benefits related to that affiliation or association.”. Meenaghan and Shipley (1999, p. 329) who extensively contributed to the academic work in the sponsorship field further state: “in agreeing to sponsor a particular event or activity, is purchasing the rights to associate with the profile and image of the event and to exploit this association for commercial ends”.

2.1.2 The Duration of Sponsorship Agreements

The duration of sponsorship agreements has significant impact on positive responses from consumers, whereas long-term relationships between sponsor and sponsee have greater impact on the positive perceptions of the sponsor (Cornwell, et al., 2001). Contributing to the result are, similar to other marketing communication, repeated displays which enhance a sponsor’s
brand in the mind of the consumers. A long-term agreement also allows sponsorship partners to change and improve their collaboration (ibid.). Farrelly, Quester, and Greiser (2005) further claim that long-term investments in sponsorship agreements are beneficial and a good foundation for sponsorship success, which also requires that managers carefully select sponsored object (ibid.). Copeland et al. (1996) have measured the average length of sponsorship agreements where almost 50 % lasted for 3-5 years. Furthermore, 74 % of the respondents did not express any wishes of either lengthening or shortening sponsorship duration (ibid.).

2.2 Sponsorship Process

No matter which form of sponsorship a company chooses, it should always assess benefits and possibilities to gain advantages from such activities (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Dounis, 2008). As Shilbury et al. (2003) suggest, the creation of a win-win situation is simple as a concept, but since the sporting environment of today is so dynamic, it is not enough to create it and leave it at that. Instead, it is suggested that executives should meet rather regularly and have strategic meetings, in order to maximise the effectiveness of sponsorship (ibid.). By including sponsorship activities into the communication mix, companies could minimise the risk of unclear and inappropriate objectives, which could turn out to be extremely costly mistakes (Papadimitriou et al., 2008). In order to standardise the process of sponsorship, scholars have suggested step-lists regarding the process (e.g. Cornwell, 1995; Clark, 1996; Shilbury et al., 2003; Shank, 2005). These lists share similar layouts and steps, and from them, the authors have extracted the following list of steps:

1. Situational analysis
2. Decide and agree on objectives
3. Develop a strategy and approach
4. Implementation of sponsorship
5. Evaluation

The first step, analysis, means that an analysis of external factors, possible marketing activities, and suitable collaboration partners is carried out (Shilbury et al., 2003, Cornwell, 1995). However, this might not always be the case in reality. Practical evidence from the Olympics in Athens 2004 suggests that ethical pride and national pride were enough to enter an agreement without conducting any business analysis or investigation beforehand (Apostolopoulos & Papadimitriou, 2004). Step two, which is setting objectives, has great importance and the objectives need to be clear in order to prevent the risk of sponsorship failure (Shank, 2005; Gordon & Cheah, 2014). When objectives are decided upon, a strategy and approach need to be developed in order to decide on how the sponsorship will be carried out (Clark, 1996; Shilbury et al., 2003). After deciding on how the sponsorship activities should be carried out in terms of strategy and approach, they are implemented, which are step three and four (Cornwell, 1995; Shilbury et al., 2003). Lastly, an evaluation needs to be done, in order to see what the agreement has given in terms of outcomes. The evaluation could then be used to renegotiate
terms and objectives for the continuation of the sponsorship agreement (Shilbury et al., 2003; Shank, 2005).

Despite minor variations in sponsorship implementation suggestions; scholars appear to agree about the importance of integrating sponsorship in companies’ marketing and communication actions, in order to prevent costly mistakes (e.g. Shilbury et al., 2003; Shank, 2005; Papadimitriou et al., 2008). Shank (2005) lists the most common reasons for sponsorship failures, whereas lack of budget activation, measurable objectives, failure to excite the sales chain, and no communication of added values are some examples. The number of pitfalls connected to the implementation process, suggests that sponsorship implementation requires careful coordination and consideration (ibid.).

2.2.1 Sponsorship Objectives
Shank (2005) distinguishes between objectives of sponsorship agreements. Companies who want to generate short-term results through a fast change in consumption behaviour have direct sponsorship objectives. On the contrary, companies who desire to generate awareness and create an image of the business or product have indirect sponsorship objectives (ibid.). Since the sponsorship agreement is a dyadic relationship, Shilbury et al. (2003) acknowledge a difference in objectives between sponsor and sponsees, as presented in table 1. However, it is stressed that it should be in both parties’ interest to leverage from the sponsorship, since a sponsorship agreement supposedly creates win-win situations and thus being something which both should work for to achieve (ibid.). As a complement to table 1, Shank (2005) presents a table of important objectives as well, whereas increase sales and market share, increase target market and awareness, and enhance general public awareness are the top three sponsor objectives. Gordon and Cheah (2014) further argue that the most frequently used objectives are of both corporate and marketing character. Connected to it, enhancement of corporate image and an increase of brand awareness are considered the most common corporate sponsorship objectives.

Table 1. List of objectives based on the list from Shilbury et al. (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor objectives</th>
<th>Sponsee objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image creation or improvement</td>
<td>Obtaining funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and media relationship</td>
<td>Obtaining resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marketing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee and community relationship</td>
<td>Obtaining services</td>
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<tr>
<td>marketing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business development</td>
<td>Raising awareness</td>
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<td>Increasing sales</td>
<td>Brand positioning</td>
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<td>Brand positioning</td>
<td>Raising credibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising awareness</td>
<td>Image creation or improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeting new market segments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing new distribution channels</td>
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Since some of the objectives are not self-explanatory, brief descriptions of these will follow. The image creation or improvement is one of the most important ones in sponsorship (Shank, 2005). According to Shank (2005), there should be a fit between the two parties, in order to signal the right message and uniqueness of the brand/organisation. Business and media relationship marketing is the objective which refers to the concept where companies meet at a sports event and conduct business in connection to the event, which is both common and effective (Bennett, 2003). The objective of raising awareness through sponsorship is important in a short period of time and works better via sponsorship than it does via advertising (Shank, 2005). This objective has many different levels and could refer to raising awareness in a company’s name, product lines, or services (ibid.). The objective of philanthropy is something which is no longer of importance, since companies tend to see pure business related benefits from sponsorship (Copeland, et al., 1996). However, this is not always the case and Lamont and Dowell (2008) argue that this is still a common motive in regional contexts, thus justifying to include it in the list of objectives.

The importance of suggested objectives may be related to the size of the company. However, both small-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and large ones have displayed the usage of sponsorship (Arvidsson, 2006; Crader & Santomier, 2011; Webb & Carter, 2001; Lamont & Dowell, 2008). For example, SMEs tend to limit themselves to local sponsorship agreements to a greater extent than larger firms, which are not hindered by resource scarcity (Crader & Santomier, 2011; Sephapo et al., 2014). The size, logically, should be related to whether it is a local/regional company, thus making Lamont and Dowell’s (2008) philanthropic argument applicable to this argument as well.

2.2.2 Generic Approaches

Sponsorship in general could mean one thing, but there are different forms of sponsorship and thus different ways to implement it (e.g. Meenaghan, 1983; Roos & Algotsson, 1996; Carrillat & d’Astous, 2013). Two common forms of sponsorship are financial and in-kind sponsorship. Financial sponsorship often comes together with official sponsorship, which is a way of creating further, closer connection between sponsor and sponsee (Cornwell et al., 2005). Sponsors who are associated with their sponsees on a general level engage in official sponsorship, a relationship which often comes with financial assistance from the sponsor and creates an awareness for the sponsor (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012; 2013), although, financial sponsorship does not necessarily mean an official sponsorship status. Official sponsorship differs from other forms of sponsorship, in the sense that it almost exclusively involves usage and demonstration of products in return of sponsor recognition (Cornwell et al., 2005) and thus, it should not be considered a single standing sponsorship approach, but rather an add-on or enhancer of other approaches. In-kind sponsorship refers to the setup where the sponsor either provides with products or services (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012). Such sponsorship is, in contrast to financial sponsorship, mainly used to demonstrate the functionality of the product and thereby enabling assertion of brand legitimacy (Ibid.). Together with the two concepts as separate forms of sponsorships, they could be combined as well (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012). Examples of combinations are Adidas, who was the official sponsor of the world cup in 2006 and also
2.2.3 The Network Approach

Much sponsorship research has failed to acknowledge the impact of networking in the sponsoring decision (Cobbs, 2011). Cobbs (2011) means that it is rather the partners within a sponsoring network that creates a willingness to sponsor. Researchers have called it the network approach and state that it goes beyond the dyadic relationships and instead focuses on networks of relationships (Olkkonen, 2001; Walliser, 2003). In this approach, the value of a sponsorship network lies in its members, whereas new members increase the value of its network (Walliser, 2003). As Olkkonen states; in sponsorship arrangements, all parties could be active and therefore expect to benefit from the arrangement. This adds another dimension of complexity to sponsorship strategy (Walliser, 2003; Cobbs, 2011). The power within a sponsorship network is preserved through constantly introducing new partners, which Cobbs (2011) refers to as a network cycle. The administrative actor is always the sponsored sport entity, who is responsible to create an environment where sponsoring companies can create relationships (ibid.). Business to business (B2B) companies will benefit the most from using such marketing approach, according to Cobbs (2011).

2.2.4 Sponsorship Outcomes

Although there are objectives of sponsorship, Carrillat and d’Astous (2013) suggest that there is little empirical evidence of in-kind sponsorship and its actual outcomes, which makes it speculative to name outcomes. Donlan (2014) mentions that the effectiveness of sponsorship depends on many factors, whereas competitors’ activities are one, thus making it hard to isolate the outcomes of it. Difficulty in measurements of effectiveness could be connected to the fact that sponsorship effectiveness have relied heavily on memorisation as well, which could mean that stronger brands are easier to remember among consumers (Herrmann, Corneille, Derbaix, Kacha, & Walliser, 2014). Further reasoning regarding the memorisation problem is the fact that sponsorship is mainly a secondary activity of focus, since the audience focus on the sport activity, which makes it possible that brands with little recognition are overlooked to a larger extent (Herrmann et al., 2014). Gordon and Cheah (2014) claim that unclear objectives is one reason for sponsorship failure, which Shank (2005) agrees on and lists further reasons. Shank (2005) lists some reasons for why sponsorships fail, where these three are examples: due to the absence of long-term commitment (one year commitments seldom work), the sponsorship is not based on consumers but brand instead, and the lack of local extensions.

The positive outcomes from official sponsoring are suggested to be the transfer of image at brand and corporation level (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999), improved brand attitude (Lardinoit & Quester, 2001), and sponsor identification (Nicholls, Roslow, and Dublish, 1999). These outcomes are all mentioned in the list of objectives, presented by Shilbury et al. (2003), however, there they are not specifically connected to brand, but more as image and attitude in a general sense. An additional point regarding positive outcomes from official sponsorship is
that companies with smaller market shares seem to benefit to a greater extent than those with bigger market shares (Cornwell et al., 2005). To extend their arguments, Cornwell et al. (2005) suggest that sponsors with less dominant brands should obtain the largest financial returns from sponsorship agreements.

The suggested outcomes of sponsorship are mainly connected to association and awareness of brands (Donlan, 2014). This is not hard to understand, since many authors recognise the importance of brand and state that: “the concept of the brand lies in the heart of marketing theory and practice” (Pearson, 1996, p.6). This is possible, since the value of a brand is a combination of features (product attributes), benefits (needs and wants that the product fulfils) and values (differentiation from competitors) (Pearson, 1996). During the 1990’s a more strategic approach to branding was recognised and the term “brand equity” was established as something companies could control and manage by marketing methods (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Equity is an intangible resource, and a brand that has equity has the ability to influence and affect consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions (Yasin, Noor & Mohamad, 2012). The demand for organisation and control therefore emerged, as a result of brand effectiveness, contributing to the creation of individual dimensions of the term. As Herrmann et al. (2014) prove, prominent brands obtain greater memorisation among consumers than non-consumers in recognition. These findings also suggest that memorisation, among consumers and non-consumers, is greater if exposure is done in a “natural setting” (Herrmann et al., 2014). In addition to the presented outcomes connected to brand, Donlan (2014) suggests that sponsorship could help strengthening consumers’ perceived quality of a brand.

Donlan (2014) presents a theoretical conclusion, where sponsorship, if the duration of a sponsorship relation is long-term, should be considered a way of obtaining competitive advantage, due to the difficulty in imitating such pairing. Amis et al. (1999) investigate how companies achieve competitive advantage and what mistakes firms makes when failing to do so. Sponsorship advantages derive from increased customer value and brand equity, which is achieved through an image differentiation compared to competitors (ibid.). Moreover, a substantial factor in the differentiation process is how well a product/company is linked to the sponsored cause. According to Amis et al. (1999), the link is the main reason that sponsorship agreements fail, together with the duration of the agreement, which tend to affect consumer perception.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor outcomes</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved brand attitude</td>
<td>Lardinoit and Quester (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial returns</td>
<td>Cornwell et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand identification/ recognition</td>
<td>Herrmann et al. (2014); Nicholls, Roslow, and Dubish (1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of brand quality</td>
<td>Donlan (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive advantage</td>
<td>Amis et al. (1999); Donlan (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand equity</td>
<td>Amis et al. (1999)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. A summary of suggested sponsorship outcomes
As presented in a comprehensible form in table 2; the general outcomes of sponsorship are mainly connected to brand and the improvement of it through sponsorship. However, outcomes will be further discussed and presented under the relationship section, since many positive outcomes are dependent on a well-functioning relationship between sponsor and sponsee.

2.3 Sponsorship and Relationship

In order to predict sponsorship effect, many authors claim that the fit between sponsor and sponsee holds great importance, thus making every sponsorship agreement unique (e.g. Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Roy & Cornwell, 2003; Olson & Thjömöe, 2011). However, the context, sought effect of sponsorship, and type of fit could vary greatly (Olson, 2010). Since the focus of this thesis is upon sport sponsorship, the context is set within this category. However, fit and sought effect could still take different forms. In terms of fit, Olson and Thjömöe (2011) argue that the components of it are unclear and unspecified among scholars; making it important to highlight and describe as thorough as possible.

In an attempt to explain fit, Speed and Thompson (2000) argue that many aspects could be included in such a broad concept. In Speed and Thompson’s (2000) study, fit is defined in a general sense where respondents’ attitudes toward the pairing of sponsee and sponsor decided whether it was a good fit or not. Hence, the fit has its core in signalling a good match towards the audience (ibid.). Roy and Cornwell (1999) suggest that there is a greater fit and relationship between sponsor and sponsored event (sponsee) if there are tangible products associated with the sponsor’s brand. Olson and Thjömöe (2011) substantialise overall perceptions of fit further and explain that it is based on rational thoughts in following three dimensions: the degree that the sponsor’s products participate of the sponsored object, the match between sponsor’s target market and object’s audience, and attitude similarities.

Another way of looking at the fit between sponsor and sponsee could be functional characteristics or symbolic characteristics (Speed & Thompson, 2000). Farrelly and Quester (2005) suggest a model where the fit actually is called relationship quality and where trust, commitment, economic satisfaction, and non-economic satisfaction are the components of relationship quality. From their study, Farrelly and Quester (2005) conclude that the main focus for sport entities should be non-economic satisfaction, since economic satisfaction appears to stem from it.

Morgan et al. (2014) stress the importance of inter-personal relationship between sponsor and sponsee, where negotiations and discussions are helped by building great relations. By doing so, trust is built and therefore, inter-personal relationships are pinpointed as a cornerstone of effective management of sponsorship (ibid.). Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) propose a problem in sponsorship, which is that there is little communication between sponsor and sponsee; thus making it hard to build long-term relationships and create trust, which Farrelly and Quester (2005) suggest is a component of a relationship of high quality. In relation to long-term relationship, Cornwell et al. (2001) suggest that long-term sponsorship relations (duration of
more than five years) are perceived to contribute more in terms of brand equity elements, as well as financial success. The dilemma with communication is highlighted by Morgan et al. (2014) as well, who argue that poor communication is a common reason for strained sponsorship relationships, due to impaired flow of information. Morgan et al. (2014, p.275) present a quotation, which shows how essential inter-personal relationships and communication are for their respondents: “That is what drives sponsorships, the relationships you have with people, not with businesses”.

Roy and Cornwell (2004) argue that the sponsor needs high brand equity in order to signal congruence/fit between sponsor and sponsee. This argument is extended by Renard and Sitz (2011) who mean that even the sponsee needs to establish its brand in order to maximise the value of sponsorship and find an appropriate and fitting sponsor. By fit, Reinard and Sitz (2011) focus upon values and identities of brands, where these are essential cornerstones and should be assessed before deciding and validating an eventual sponsorship relation. Alexander (2008) argues that a high level of integration between sponsor and sponsee could be attained, when a sponsor’s brand has close association with sponsee’s experiential environment.

By having a good fit there are numbers of suggested positive outcomes which could come from it. Speed and Thompson (2000) suggest that sponsees should increase the possibility for sponsors to demonstrate their fit or sincerity, in order to obtain greater response and thus add value to the sponsorship. If the parties strive to achieve brand related value from the partnership, the relationship between the parties is of great importance (Renard & Sitz, 2011). Non-economic satisfaction should hold greatest value, if a long-term partnership is sought after by the sponsee, which has both financial and brand related advantages (Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Cornwell et al., 2001). If the parties included in the sponsorship relation cannot find a strategic fit; relevance will not be established and objectives will not be reached (Sephapo et al., 2014).

As well as suggested positive outcomes, there are suggested negative outcomes related to a bad fit. Fleck and Quester (2007) argue that a moderate fit has greater effectiveness than either high/good or low/bad fit. Such are the suggestions from Jagre, Watson, and Watson (2001) as well, where a moderate fit or even slight “unfit” could result in better recall and favourable attitudes among consumers than a good fit would. Although Fleck and Quester (2007) suggest a moderate level of fit, Becker- Olsen and Simmons (2002) suggest the opposite; a good fit increases the sponsor’s equity in form of attitudes and beliefs, whereas a bad fit depletes the equity.
The analytical model is structured in a way which highlights the main parts and sections from the theoretical framework and thus making it possible to connect theory with empirical data. First of all, there will be a distinction between general sponsorship and the specific relation to the particular sponsee in each case respectively. Since the focus of this thesis is the entire process of sponsorship, it will follow the order of objectives, approach, and outcomes, since this is a comprehensible way of displaying the stages of: before, during, and after a certain activity.

Objectives will be presented for both sponsors and sponsees, however, the theoretical framework suggests that sponsor objectives vary more than the ones for sponsees. Due to the fact that the number of suggested objectives is large and that they are somewhat similar, they will be categorised, which Shilbury et al. (2003) suggest. From the list of objectives, these three will be the categories: increasing sales, brand building, and philanthropic. The objectives will be followed by the sponsorship approach, whereas the ones presented in the framework will be used. The last part of the general sponsorship will be outcomes, where outcomes will be analysed from a general point of view, together with the duration of sponsorship. The outcomes will, just like the objectives, be divided into the same three main categories: increased sales, brand building, and philanthropy, since objectives and outcomes are supposed to be related in a sense where objectives are set to reach certain outcomes.

The next step of this model and the analysis will be the specific relationship sponsorship, where the sponsor’s agreement with a specific sponsee is presented and analysed. This section will follow the same chronological order, with the exception that duration is mentioned in the
beginning. Thereafter, specific objectives (if there are any for this specific agreement), approach, and outcomes will be presented and analysed.
3. Methodology

In this chapter, methodological choices will be presented regarding data collection, analysis, together with arguments for used methods and choices throughout this thesis.

3.1 Approach

Due to the nature of this thesis, the authors have chosen an abductive approach, which Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) describe as an interactive method. By choosing this approach, the authors have used a process where existing theories have been a platform, which has been complemented with empirical data. Adjustments in the theoretical framework have been done in accordance to empirical findings and by interpreting the empirical data, new theories have been added and irrelevant ones have been deleted from the framework. Two examples where theory have been deleted and added are sponsorship related to brand and network. The authors of this thesis discovered little focus related to brand from the empirical data and thereby chose to add factors such as the network approach instead, which was more firmly anchored in practice. This process is in accordance to the abductive approach (Jakobsson, 2011), as well as Alvesson and Sköldberg’s (2008) description of how both empirical and theoretical data are adjusted and improved during the writing process. The authors are aware of the fact that deduction and induction are considered more common approaches, however, neither one of these two ”pure” approaches are used to the extent which the authors feel that abduction is used. Further justification of this methodological choice comes from the fact that abduction contains fragments of both induction and deduction as well, although a large proportion of qualitative work is in fact abductive rather than one of the other two approaches (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

3.2 Research Method

The method used in this thesis is of qualitative form. This choice is justified by the complexity of the studied phenomenon; thus making a qualitative method appropriate (Jakobsson, 2011; Trost, 2005). Rather few objects have been studied and as much information as possible has been gathered; mainly in form of text rather than numbers, which legitimises this method (Jacobsen, 2002). One further aspect of the qualitative method which has been taken into consideration, is the purpose of gathering and presenting other people’s opinions, which Yin (2013) includes in the qualitative approach. Since the purpose of this thesis is to explore and widen the knowledge of sponsorship and its components; a question starting with ”how” was chosen. This type of question is suitable when the purpose is of such nature (Yin, 2014; Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

3.3. Data Collection

When data were collected, the authors needed a base to start from. This base has been the research problem and by starting from it, relevant academic work has been identified in order to create a general understanding of sponsorship. Thereafter, a process of narrowing the searches down has been done, in order to find specific literature with relevance to this particular thesis. Most of the literature (theory) has been written in English, whereby interviews have
been conducted in Swedish and later translated into English. The authors know that information could be lost in translation, however, caution has been taken in order to prevent such losses. Furthermore, the authors considered including Swedish quotations in the empirical chapter, but since all respondents have been given the chance to read and comment on their interviews, the choice was to translate the quotes as well.

3.3.1 Literature Study
In order to start broadly with sponsorship, general and broad terms such as “sponsorship”, “sport sponsorship”, and “sport marketing” were used in different databases. The databases most frequently used have been Google scholar, Emerald, and ABI inform. By reading articles found in this stage, more relevant articles and publications have been found and information has been gathered in order to build the theoretical framework. This way of narrowing the information search down, goes in line with the suggestion of finding relevant literature by Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008). More specific search terms which have been used are: “sponsorship and relations” and “sponsorship fit”.

The literature which has been chosen as the theoretical framework is a mix of old and new articles. Although new literature is preferable; the authors cannot diminish the importance of works by e.g. Meenaghan and Cornwell, which are up 30 years old. These articles, however, have been identified as classics (commonly used by other scholars) in terms of sponsorship and are therefore included. More contemporary work has been included in order to demonstrate the relevance and importance of sponsorship in recent times, as well as to provide more specific perspectives of sponsorship in relation to fit/relationship.

Moreover, the purpose of this study is to explore how companies and sports teams decide to enter sponsorship agreements with each other. The purpose is also to explore the entire sponsorship process together with the specific relationships between sponsor/-s and sponsee/-s. This in order to expand the previous research of sport sponsorship. The theoretical framework in this thesis is built mainly from literature with roots in the U.S and Australia. Walliser (2003) explicitly determines how sport sponsorship is perceived differently between countries. As a result, an implicit purpose is included in this thesis, since the authors have used a Swedish context and thus adding something new in terms of geographical location. By choosing Sweden, factors connected to relationships could be different compared to other continents, which then will add something new as well.

3.3.2 Empirical Data Collection
By conducting detailed and deep interviews, the authors have tried to capture perceptions and opinions of the respondents. Jacobsen (2002) means that this procedure is appropriate if the number of respondents is small and the amount of data is great, which Mik-Meyer (2011) agrees with and adds that understanding a complex phenomenon in a specific context is another factor which makes this procedure legitimate. Collected data are gathered via interviews; making them primary data, together with material from respondents and information from the organisations’
websites respectively. During the interviews, the authors have tried to catch nuances in the answers by observing the respondents as well.

The thesis is structured in the form of cases, which is a common form of structuring academic work (Backman, 2008; Yin, 2014). The low number of respondents, together with deep interviews justify such structure, according Justesen and Mik-Meyer (2011). Further justification for forming this thesis as case studies, comes from Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008), who suggest that the abductive approach is connected to case studies in reality. The fact that the authors choose to highlight sponsorship and all of its components as something complex which needs further exploration, is another argument for the use of case studies (Ejvegård, 2003; Yin, 2014). By choosing a reasonable number of cases, which is more than one but still treated individually; the authors seek to find distinct and measurable results, in accordance to suggestion by Eisenhart och Graebner (2007).

3.4 Empirical Study

The gathering of empirical data has been done via interviews with representatives from the chosen organisations, thus making up the primary data of this study. Since there is additional information to be found on the organisations’ websites, this information is used as complementary empirical data, which makes up the secondary data. As the perceptions and opinions of the representatives are of great importance in this study, the method of conducting interviews as information gathering is justifiable, according to Jacobsen (2002). Further justification for this method could be found, since Yin (2014) suggests that interviews are both common and good in empirical data gatherings. The interviews have been constructed in a semi-structured way, which means that questions have been prepared in a specific order, however slight adjustments have been made during the interviews with each respondent respectively (Justesen & Mik-Meyer, 2011). Since entirely “open” questions could result in too much and complex data (Jacobsen, 2002), the authors have chosen this semi-structured interview, in order to avert overload in data, which could have problematised the analysis.

3.4.1 Choice of Organisations

Both sponsors and sponsees have contributed to this study because the authors’ aim is to explore and create greater understanding of sponsorship. Since initial contact was made with appropriate sponsees (sport entities), the sponsors were chosen in relation to the sponsees. The contact of the sponsee was asked to recommend or provide contact information to people with sponsors if possible, before the authors contacted sponsors arbitrarily. In the case of HBK, both Anticimex and Beta were recommended by HBK, since the companies were expected to display positive attitude towards participation of this study. HFAB was chosen by the authors of this thesis. Furthermore, to provide a unitary second case, Drott was asked to provide contact information to sponsors and provided contact with Wohlns AB, which thereafter was contacted by the authors. Hence, ICA Maxi Flygstaden and O’Learys were chosen by the authors themselves.

The authors have not taken size, industry, or organisation type into consideration, since these
factors have not been widely emphasised in used literature. The absence of sponsor type focus in the literature has affected the choosing process of this study to such extent, that variations in organisation type, history, and size have been neglected entirely. In the choosing process, the main objective has been to find companies who work with sponsorship and who are willing to speak about it. The objective of willingness has been main focus, since the authors believe that more useful and truthful information could be obtained if the organisations are positive and open about the subject. However, looking at the different organisations in this study, they differ in many aspects, thus creating a better chance of finding differences and similarities between them (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

3.4.2 Choice of Respondents
The authors of this thesis have, in the selection process, considered certain requirements for selecting the most appropriate respondents. This is a procedure that is recommended by Jacobsen (2002) to make sure that the empirical information is of high quality. Therefore have respondents with knowledge about marketing activities been chosen from both sport entity and sponsor, due to their knowledge of the sponsorship process (Cornwell, et al., 2001). The authors are aware that managers often make the decisions regarding sponsorship and therefore, managers from all respondents have been asked to participate in the data gathering process. Respondents representing both sponsor and sponsee have been included to achieve a clearer view of the sponsorship process, with the purpose to find nuances in the data. In order to strengthen the validity and what is said regarding the relationship to each sponsee, three sponsors explained their perception of the relationship in each case. According to Jacobsen (2001), a crucial factor is that obtained data are satisfactory, which the authors have scrutinised during the writing process.

Table 3. Case study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Sport entity</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HBK</td>
<td>Per Johansson</td>
<td>Sales Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Bill Berg</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticimex</td>
<td>Calle Lindblom</td>
<td>Marketing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFAB</td>
<td>Ulf Nilsson</td>
<td>Business development &amp; com. manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Magnus Weberg</td>
<td>Marketing manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Case study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Sport entity</th>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drott</td>
<td>Lisa Fallhagen</td>
<td>Marketing Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ulf Månsson</td>
<td>Club Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’learys</td>
<td>Alexander Petersson</td>
<td>Restaurant Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wohlins AB</td>
<td>Roger Wohlin</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tomas Wohlin</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICA Maxi Flygstadens</td>
<td>Anette Bengtsson</td>
<td>Store Manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4.3 Interview
For the purpose of collecting as qualitative data as possible, visiting interviews have been used. Jacobsen (2002) argues that visiting, open interviews are an appropriate method to collect data with deeper information and to give an interpretation about a phenomenon, which moreover has been the authors’ intention. Therefore, a combination of a semi-structured and unstructured interview approach has been used, because certain categories together with a conversation of more open nature have characterised the process (ibid.). More general questions have been used for the introductory questions in order to make the respondent comfortable and relaxed. A procedure that is supported by Jacobsen (2002) and Trost (2005). Most of the respondents have been eager to share their identity and no anonymity has been needed, except for the sponsor Beta, where the respondent will be called “Berg”. The authors have not used a recorder during the interviews, which prevents respondents from feeling restricted during the conversation (ibid.). To secure the data from misinterpretation, each text has been sent to the respondents respectively, for credibility and ethical purposes. All interviews have been conducted at places which have been chosen by sponsors and sponsees. This was done to create an environment where the respondents feel secure and comfortable.

The interviews have been scheduled during office time, at a suggested time from the respondents, to prevent stressed answers. Each interview has been written down directly afterwards because the authors’ interpretations and perceptions of what has been said is clearest at this time (Ejvegård, 2003). Yin (2014) states that the time frame of interviews could vary greatly and depends on the complexity of information the authors are searching for. The interviews have proceeded for 30-60 minutes, which is an appropriate time frame according to Jacobsen (2002).

3.4.4 Data Analysis
The authors of this thesis have chosen to categorise data in order to highlight only relevant information through the analysis chapter. The categorisations are done in the same way throughout the empirical and analysis chapters to simplify for the readers. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) recommend such an approach, where only relevant data are selected and analysed. The categorisations have been made to enhance the understanding of the sponsorship process and the relationship between sponsor and sponsee. Furthermore, since the authors have used a case study approach, a within-case and a cross-case analysis have been used. Yin (2014) advocates such a procedure for case studies. Therefore, each sponsor has been handled individually, whereby information has been categorised. The within-case analysis is followed by a comparison where patterns and differences between sponsors and sponsees are upheld in the cross-case chapter. To follow the same structure and maintain focus on the sponsorship process and relationships, the same categorisation has been used here as well.

3.5 Credibility
The term credibility has, as Jacobsen (2002) suggests, been divided into two sub-categories of credibility: validity and reliability. These two terms will be described more thoroughly here after.
3.5.1 Validity
As data gathering and analyses have been conducted in accordance to the purpose of the study, parts of the validity concept have been fulfilled (Svenning, 1999; Yin, 2013). The gathering of data has been done from different sources, in order to strengthen the empirical data. By using different sources, the authors have managed to achieve what Yin (2014) calls data triangulation, which strengthens the validity of a study. Although different sources have been used, the authors are aware of their bias in this study, which is why feedback and opposition sessions have been used in order to assure a perspective which is as neutral and objective as possible.

With the objective to improve the internal validity; the authors have been as thorough as possible when interview questions have been written and interviews have been conducted, together with the connection between empirical and theoretical data, which are parts of the concept of internal validity (Svenning, 1999). As consideration has been taken to the external validity as well, the authors have tried to form a research question in an early phase, which Yin (2014) links to this concept. With an early research problem, the authors have tried to narrow the definitions used as much as possible, although this has been difficult due to the wideness of sponsorship and sponsorship related terms. By doing so, an attempt has been made to achieve conceptual validity, in the sense Graziano and Raulin (2004) present.

3.5.2 Reliability
As mentioned earlier, the authors of this thesis have had the objective to be as thorough and academically correct as possible, which is why notes and documentation have been carried out throughout the process of it. Everything from internet searches to interviews have been documented in some way, which is a way of preventing reliability problems in the sense described by Yin (2014). By documenting the process, it will be repeatable unless changes occur and this is a part of the reliability concept (Svenning, 1999). Precision and accuracy have been crucial in documentation as well as in the interview situations, in order to obtain repeatable results, in accordance with Jakobsson’s (2011) recommendations.

In the process of empirical data gathering, the authors have identified minor problems with questions which could be perceived as sensitive by the respondents. However, these problems have not been omnipresent and the authors believe that it is inevitable to ask sensitive questions in this type of study. The authors are well aware of the fact that certain information could have been restrained during the interview, which is the problem with subjective opinions. This is one of the reasons for complementary information from websites and publications, in order to reduce the effects of such eventual restraints.

3.6 Generalisability
Since the purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of sponsorship and its components; there is no desire or wish to make statistical generalisations. The number of interviews and respondents, together with the research question are both choices which help creating depth rather than width in the study, which is in line with the purpose. Few interviews
do not make statistical generalisations possible, however, analytical generalisations could be done (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhills, 2007). The desire with this study is to improve the understanding regarding sponsorship and in extension apply findings and results from it to other cases, which is well in line with the definition of analytical generalisation by Saunders et al. (2007).

3.7 Research Ethics
All respondents in this thesis have participated voluntarily, which is an important ethical aspect according to Bryman (2011). In order to create a more relaxed attitude and atmosphere in the interview situation, the respondents have been given the option to be anonymous, which is a suggestion by Jacobsen (2002). The option of anonymity covers both personal and organisational factors, which is an attempt of achieving a desired level of confidentiality, connected to the factor suggested by Bryman (2011). Lastly, the respondents have been given the chance to read and comment on the empirical data, since the authors of this thesis wish to present empirical data which are as close to the respondents’ opinions and thoughts as possible. This part is, together with the voluntary participation, connected to the approval requirement suggested by Bryman (2011).
4. Empirical Data

This chapter includes both primary data, which have been collected through interviews; together with secondary data from the organisations’ websites and information material handed out by the respondents. Names are real for all persons and organisations except for Beta and Berg, which are fictional due to anonymity reasons. This is further explained in the methodology chapter. The chapter will include two sponsees with three sponsors connected to them, where each sponsee with its sponsors will be treated as one case as the following models show:

4.1 Sponsee HBK

Halmstad Bollklubb (HBK) is a football club in the Swedish top-flight division, Allsvenskan. The club has a rich history and was established in 1914 and has won four national championships together with one domestic cup title. Per Johansson is a former player who currently works at HBK’s marketing division and has great insights in the club’s sponsorship work.

4.1.1 General Sponsorship

Johansson describes that sponsorship has seen some changes in recent years, which HBK has tried to adopt in its work with it. In its core, there is not much which has changed and the main focus is still to obtain financial means, but not in a sense where sponsorship is considered a gift anymore. Johansson also mentions that even though financial means is the main objective for HBK, there are a few sponsors with whom services are just traded between the club and the company. Although this solution could be useful in some particular cases, it is not really a desirable arrangement since invoices are sent between HBK and the company anyway and thus creates problems with the balance books. Currently, there are pure trade arrangements with a hotel and a radio station, since these services are needed frequently. However, the number of such agreements are kept to the minimum, since salaries are paid with money and not services, Johansson says.

As for the shift or change, Johansson explains that sponsorship has become highly competitive and as a sponsee, HBK needs to provide its sponsors with something more than just an
advertising sign at the arena. Although Johansson confesses that traditional sponsorship, whereas arena advertisement signs and shirt ads are the clearest examples, he says that this is the past which cannot be neglected, but neither should it have too much focus. Although, in its partner catalogue, HBK expresses that shirt advertisement is a way to obtain great exposure, as well as having one’s message or logo displayed at the arena. As Johansson explains; these traditional ways are still the most moneymaking sponsorship activities, but they do not require any real relationship between sponsor and sponsee and they are not very exciting. The fact that shirt advertisements usually are signed for three years means that HBK could set that work aside, since the other aspects of sponsorship are negotiated upon on an annual basis. Johansson believes that sponsorship deals could be easier to negotiate on longer terms than one year if/when HBK has established itself as club in the top-flight division again and perhaps as a top team and relates that to the club brand:

“A good brand gives you more and better chances when it comes to sponsorship.”
(Personal communication, 2015-04-27).

In connection to the negotiations, Johansson says that these are tough and nearly impossible with some companies and especially if they do not have a strong desire to achieve visibility or understand the value of sponsorship. HBK’s position in terms of economy and brand attractiveness makes it hard to reject any possible sponsors, even though you might want to at times, Johansson says. He also mentions that new sponsors are more difficult to attract, than to resign previous ones, due to the personal relationship which often improves over time. The personal contacts and improved relationships are favourable in terms of process time as well, as Johansson puts it:

“Existing and pleased sponsors are easier to finish the process with.”
(Personal communication, 2015-04-27).

The focus on personal relations and to adapt/customise sponsorship deals according to each and every company’s customer base is of great importance, according to Johansson. The improved customisation and caring for its sponsors has been a step towards the modern sponsorship, where win-win situations are created. This new and modern way of sponsorship, which Johansson says is the sponsorship activity HBK emphasises the most, is network related sponsorship. In the process of finding sponsors, the focus is kept to local companies, since these are easier to keep in contact with and also to invite for network activities.

HBK’s network includes nearly 200 companies who are automatically included in the network when their spending exceed a certain amount of money in other marketing/sponsoring products or activities. All members of the network are given the chance to meet with each other five-ten times a year; organised by HBK. These gatherings could be nearly anything and Johanson describes that fun activities, where people enjoy themselves, create new business relations and HBK becomes an intermediary creating business opportunities for the companies in the network. Johansson shows HBK’s partner catalogue, where he shows the list of activities and examples are: workout sessions followed by breakfast, ski relay followed by after-ski and
dining, and golf combined with dinner at the golf club. The activities are highly appreciated and they are always booked up. Even though there are no vacant places to participate in the activities as they are formed today; HBK’s main objective, in terms of network sponsorship, is still to attract more companies to its business network in the upcoming year. When asked if there is a limit on the number of companies which could be included in the network, Johansson says that there is no such thing at the moment, but that there could be if the number of companies exceed a plausible amount in the future.

4.1.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship - Beta
In its agreement with Beta, HBK buys product from Beta for a certain amount of money, in exchange for financial sponsorship. However, there is more to the relationship than that exchange. Johansson tells that he sits down with the local representative from Beta on a monthly basis, where the Beta representative (Berg) shares possible company sponsors for HBK and Johansson provides Berg with some of HBK’s sponsors, whom Berg could contact. This little extra arrangement is specific for Beta and is much due to the contact between Johansson and Berg, who have known each other for some time.

4.1.3 Specific Relationship Sponsorship - Anticimex
Its current agreement with Anticimex is much down to the person in charge there, Johansson says. Before the network, Anticimex used to sponsor in a way where the company bought some season tickets and attended the games and some additional financial means at times. However, when HBK introduced the network, Anticimex raised its financial sponsoring and has been a part of the network since. Johansson explains that the relationship with Lindblom at Anticimex is open and simple and that the current agreement between sponsor and sponsee has its main roots in the inter-personal relation.

4.1.4 Specific Relationship Sponsorship - HFAB
One of the longer serving sponsors, where Johansson believes that the chief of marketing, Magnus Weberg, has a significant role, since he has a background in sports. However, the lack of business focus, due to the fact that it is a public company, means that HBK needs a special approach to this relationship. HFAB might not really fit in well in the business network, according to Johansson and he continues by saying that HBK has another approach with HFAB, where social issues and social responsibility is of greater importance than with other sponsors.
4.2 Sponsor Beta
Beta is a national company with a turnover of approximately 1 billion SEK. It has nearly 40 offices spread out from the northern to the southern parts of Sweden. Bill Berg is the regional sales director for Beta.

4.2.1 General Sponsorship
Speaking generally about sponsorship, Berg takes a clear stand and suggests that sponsorship is something which is pure business today and phrases it:

“The modern way of looking at sponsorship is to sponsor with brain rather than heart”
(Personal communication, 2015-03-18).

He explains that the sport entity Beta chooses to sponsor is of little importance for the company, if there is profitability in it. Instead of sponsoring a favourite team or so, he means that the search for sponsorship networks is the thing that really matters. Looking at sponsorship in the traditional way of advertising signs and shirt ads are just to be considered bonus; nothing which is invested in, Berg says. The main objective of participating in sponsorship activities derives from a desire to increase revenue and profitability, hence the focus on finding sport entities with great network possibilities. When finding its sponsees, Beta tries to find the ones with great networks, which are usually top-flight teams. However, Berg explains that it could be profitable to look at minor league clubs as well, but for other reasons. The profit in minor sport entities instead lays in interesting persons connected to such clubs. As Berg tells it; perhaps there is a CEO involved in a club, due to whatever reasons and if Beta sponsors with an amount of money, which does not have to be as large as with the top-flight entities, personal connections and thereby greater business opportunities could appear. By the examples, it is clear that objectives are clear when it comes to Beta’s involvement in sponsorship deals; profit, in terms of business opportunities is a must. Berg also says that less significant sponsorship deals could mean to provide teams with equipment in various form and continues:

“Pure monetary sponsoring is a big no-no for minor sport entities, since it does not generate any actual profit.”(Personal communication, 2015-03-18).

Berg concludes the general sponsorship discussion and means that there is more to a sponsoring agreement than the type of network the sport entity possesses. Beta therefore has certain requirements and prioritises what values the sponsored organisation stands for and would not enter a sponsoring agreement with organisations that, according to Beta, have ethically wrong beliefs. Berg states that Beta does not want to support such organisations nor being associated with them.

4.2.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship
As Beta seeks to sponsor entities with networks, the main external marketing activity is to involve in sponsorship, where networking holds greatest importance. HBK fits those prerequisites and Berg tells that HBK’s network is both professional and profitable, thus being
an important source of business for Beta. Furthermore, HBK and the people in its marketing division are described as extremely professional and responsive to Beta and the other companies within the network. As Berg puts it, the size of the towns in Sweden compels companies to focus on acting local, since everybody knows everybody and business is more likely to be conducted with people whom one is acquainted with. Therefore, Beta always sends one or two representatives to the network get-togethers and Berg stresses the importance of sending the same representatives, in order to create closer business connections compared to if new representatives were to be sent each time. He also adds that the issue with a growing network, where the number of places to each network gathering is limited and means that it is nothing but a good thing, since it brings new business possibilities for Beta. Additionally he says that it forces the network members to be active and constantly on their toes, which is exactly what everyone wants, since it creates a business-minded atmosphere among the companies. When it comes to the activities, Berg has nothing but praise for HBK, who appears to plan and station them with a local perspective, thus creating a community with a local feeling.

In HBK’s network, Beta has found many new business partners and the sponsorship agreement is renegotiated annually. Berg explains that Beta’s objectives are clearly expressed and so are the expectations and objectives from HBK as well. Beta wants new business partners, which means that Beta suggests a number (usually 3-5) of companies which it wants to be set up with and HBK acts as an intermediary. In addition to it, Berg tells that he recommends HBK’s network to Beta’s customers and by doing so, a win-win situation and exchange of business opportunities is created. Moreover, there are the obvious demands for Beta to pay and participate in certain activities as well. By having these distinct objectives, evaluation and measuring outcomes are easily done, which then is taken into consideration for the next negotiation. Berg says that the amount of money which Beta has sponsored HBK with has varied from 60 000SEK to 100 000SEK and that the amount is directly connected to performances; just as other sales or marketing activities. The fluctuations in amounts and profit from sponsorship agreements also work as a legitimising reason for Beta to never sign sponsorship deals which stretch for more than one year at the time. In the relation with HBK, Berg describes that the relation between the two organisations is great and that they meet, in addition to the network get-togethers, once every other month over lunch.

As for the development in the relation between HBK and Beta; Berg tells that he could see an obvious shift in professionalism in how HBK works with it sponsors, thus improving the relationship and usage of sponsoring the entity. By this added professionalism and willingness to care for its sponsors; the relationship has definitely evolved into something better, since Beta has been given the evidence that HBK makes great effort to provide Beta with added value. By doing so, Berg tells that Beta is more inclined to put down the same effort to help HBK and in extension helping itself to greater business results.
4.3 Sponsor Anticimex

Anticimex is an international organisation active within the industry of pest-control, fire safety, and quality control of hygiene in restaurants and grocery stores. The company approximately employs 4000 people worldwide and is active in 14 countries.

4.3.1 General Sponsorship

Calle Lindblom, who is the marketing director of its department in Halmstad, has a clear view of what aims the company has with its marketing strategy. Although it is an international corporation, he claims that the local offices have the authority to decide their individual marketing agendas, which is the reason for the firm’s highly locally adapted strategy. Unhesitatingly, Lindblom explains the marketing objectives for the Halland (county) region. He emphasises that Anticimex has no brand building objectives whatsoever, since the brand is well-known and therefore he cannot see the use of advertising signs or posting logotypes on the HBK players’ shirts. Lindblom states that the issue with Anticimex is to promote the complete service package that the company offers, rather than the brand itself. In the complete package; hygiene and fire safety services are mentioned as the underdeveloped divisions, whereas pest-control is extremely strong already. Instead, Lindblom declares that Anticimex involves in sponsorship with pure business intentions and the main focus is to create new business opportunities in the B2B segment. That is why a new strategy has been to direct its sponsorship focus to sport entities, where such opportunities are more likely to come across. The strategy also means that Anticimex does not contact sport entities, but wait for offers and negotiate deals which are profitable for the company and not only the sport entity. As Lindblom explains, it is important with sports from a societal point of view, which is why Anticimex makes the exception to sponsor minor league entities if they give something in return; handing out flyers for example. Otherwise, sponsorship is something which is supposed to be profitable and Lindblom says the following:

“Nobody involves in sponsorship arrangements to be nice these days; those days are gone.”

(Personal communication, 2015-03-16).

4.3.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship

When asked about the magnitude of Anticimex’s sponsorship involvement, Lindblom says that it is little, although sponsorship carries approximately 1/3 of the marketing budget. Today, the main sponsorship arrangement is the one with HBK, where Anticimex has been a part of the sponsorship network for three years. To what extent the objectives have matched the outcomes is evaluated annually and a new decision is taken regarding the partners’ relationship the upcoming year. Although it is mentioned that objectives are compared to actual outcomes; no real measurement is done in order confirm the effects of sponsorship, but Lindblom assures that it could be done easily due to the clear objectives. When it comes to the number of meetings, the parties meet twice or three times before an agreement is reached. In these meetings, the parties’ objectives are discussed, because Anticimex demands a return on its investment to maintain its part in HBK’s network, which costs 60 000 SEK. This return is related to the company’s objective of creating more and new business opportunities and raise awareness of
Anticimex’s complete package. That is why HBK’s network for sponsors suits the objectives of Anticimex and Lindblom emphasises the importance of always having representatives whenever the network’s members are gathered. As it is explained, the constant presence at the network get-togethers creates business opportunities both directly with the businesses involved in the network, as well as indirectly via word-of-mouth marketing from the other companies’ representatives. Therefore, Lindblom feels rather certain that effectiveness of sponsorship in Anticimex’s case could be measured, due to the simplicity of looking at the number of deals between the network members and Anticimex.

Anticimex’s clear sponsorship agenda means that there are clear guidelines for when and whom to sponsor. When asked about the relationship and future of Anticimex and HBK, Lindblom tells that Anticimex’s involvement in the network is far from a certain thing. Due to a growing interest in the network, the number of companies has increased, which has both pros and cons. As explained; the original or early members of the network risk to be neglected, in HBK’s pursuit for new partners. Lindblom explains that these concerns have been presented to HBK, since he feels that the company wants to indulge in sponsorship activities as long as they are somewhat profitable. The problem with the get-togethers is that the number of slots is limited, thus meaning that no guarantee could be given for the members to be allowed or given the possibility to participate in them. The positive aspect of a growing network, which is mentioned, is the increased number of possible business partners for Anticimex. Lindblom expresses his thoughts regarding the involvement and sums it up by telling that the company’s sponsorship participation is evaluated annually and if he fails to find profit from it; there will be no further involvement.

In summary, Lindblom claims that sponsorship, as a marketing tool, has become extremely competitive and companies have well-developed strategies. Hence, objectives and outcomes are more clearly stated than ever before, which means a more business focused approach to sponsorship. When it comes to the relationship between HBK and Anticimex, it is described as a close relationship that has developed over time. However, the relationship is still fragile in the sense of bringing business to Anticimex and failing to do so would jeopardise it to such extent that Anticimex would not hesitate to find a replacement. To put it in Lindblom’s own words:

“Sponsorship should at least generate as much money or business as it costs, in order to be successful” (Personal communication, 2015-03-16).
4.4 Sponsor HFAB

HFAB is a public real estate concern, which has its core in Halmstad, Sweden. The interviewed people are Magnus Weberg and Ulf Nilsson, who are responsible for marketing; and business development and communication respectively.

4.4.1 General Sponsorship

Currently, the sponsorship makes up approximately 7% of the total marketing budget, although time spent on sponsorship is harder to put a number on. Nilsson explains that sponsorship agreements and situations differ to such an extent, that it is nearly impossible to approximate percentage of marketing activities spent on sponsorship. HFAB’s objectives are clearer though. Examples of objectives from sponsorship are to increase the company’s visibility among people, create added value to its tenants, grow the attractiveness for Halmstad as a resident town, and by sponsoring sport entities, youths and adolescents are involved in sound activities and therefore less likely to be involved in troublesome activities. HFAB’s strategy is based on long-term goals and, as stated above, much focus lies on the community and the company’s customers. By adding value to its residents; it could be events such as one which took place in connection to the European Championship in Women’s football, where HFAB organised a parade prior to the premiere game and considers it to be a great achievement connected to sponsorship. Otherwise, value-adding activities linked to sponsorship are tickets to home games at reduced price and the possibility to meet some of the players at various gatherings. Nilsson explains that the tickets to home games should not be free, but rather extremely reduced in price, since the price, even though it is negligently small, creates a commitment among the residents. As a result, it makes it easier for HFAB to evaluate and analyse the success of such activities.

In terms of selecting sponsees, HFAB has some principles, which exclude some sport entities. Nilsson explains that sports which could cause danger for the practitioners are excluded and Weberg adds that MMA is an example of one such sport. They also explain that no real definition of dangerous sports is done; but a societal view of what is considered dangerous might be closest to HFAB’s definition as well. As both Weberg and Nilsson say; they want to avoid discrepancy between the company’s core values and how the sport or club is looked upon by society. Moreover, a detailed contract containing information what is expected of each part is written and highly valued by HFAB. However, the company prefers to keep the specific details privately. Furthermore, HFAB focuses on teams and not individual athletes to sponsor and seeks to find a balance between women and men in terms of teams and sports to be involved in. The sponsorship is not exclusively focused upon sports either, thus meaning that there should be a balance between sports and culture as well as between women and men, according to Nilsson.

When asked about what signifies a successful sponsorship agreement or relation; the answer is that HFAB still awaits such sponsorship success. Although there are examples of successful activities, such as the parade, no real mega success seems to strike either Weberg’s or Nilsson’s mind. Instead they explain that for such success to occur, the deal should be dictated nearly
entirely by HFAB and its interests, which means societal benefits among other mentioned objectives. They stress the fact that every sponsorship agreement is a unique relationship which holds its specific objectives and terms, thus needing annual or semi-annual evaluations and negotiations regarding the extent of the specific deal. Weberg explains that the most common duration for a sponsorship deal for HFAB, is to sign a one- or two-year deal, since external factors could change much in terms of economy and situations for sport entities, hence the need for renegotiations between the two parties. The main concern for HFAB is to obtain some kind of return of its investment, which could be financial, but not necessarily so. Both Weberg and Nilsson stress the importance that the sponsored entity has common or at least non-contradictive core values to HFAB’s. HFAB also considers behaviour and how the sponsored organisation acts in its evaluation process. Nilsson continues and claims that mistreated finances and scandals are reasons to terminate a sponsoring relationship in the future.

4.4.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship

The specific relation with HBK has a long history, which Weberg does not know the exact duration of. One reason for the constant sponsorship of HBK is due to the exposure it has in media, which is much greater than other local sport entities. Like every other sponsorship deal HFAB is involved in; the deal with HBK has written objectives from both parties and the specific details from HFAB’s perspective are classified, although they are related to previously mentioned sponsorship objectives in general terms. The relationship between HFAB and HBK has not been noticeable improved over the years, according to Weberg. He means that the people who manage and are responsible for sponsorship come and go and by doing so, the overall relationship between the organisations has not necessarily benefited from the longevity of the relationship. It is said that HFAB meets with HBK a number of times each year, where some of these meetings are private, whilst others are during the network get-togethers. The network meetings though, have not been as good as HFAB desires, according to Nilsson; an opinion which Weberg shares. It is described that Nilsson went to one meeting and only had “hellos” and nothing more during the meeting; meaning that he has not gone to another meeting since.

“By not seeing or acknowledging me, HBK might have missed out on additional financial backing” (Personal communication, 2015-03-24).

Furthermore, both Weberg and Nilsson feel that HBK should work with its packaging of these network meetings and how to customise the experience for all individual sponsors. HFAB does not always have a representative at the meetings, even though the aim is to have so. Weberg and Nilsson continuously try to persuade the people from the board to attend at least one get-together, in order to have representatives with decision authority present. The wish from HFAB’s side is still for HBK to make some adjustment when it comes to the treatment of sponsors and packaging of the network’s positive sides, in order to improve the experience of it.

In summary, Weberg and Nilsson have some suggestions to HBK and how it works with its sponsors. Even though some suggestions for improvement are there, HFAB remains a sponsor
with objectives which should be reached in order to renegotiate contracts. However, the sponsorship agreement is considered a long-term relationship and HFAB does not bail from a relationship based on short-term down periods, such as an exodus from the top-flight division. Nilsson adds, in return HFAB expects HBK to show the same loyalty if the roles change.
4.5 Sponsee Drott

Drott is a Swedish handball club from Halmstad, established in 1936. In its nearly 80-year old history, it has won eleven national titles and played 24 domestic finals and two European finals. Lisa Fallhagen is the market assistant for Drott and has good knowledge regarding the sport entity’s marketing activities. The information regarding the specific relationships with the sponsors comes from the club director, Ulf Månsson.

4.5.1. General Sponsorship

Fallhagen starts with acknowledging a change in how Drott and companies work with sport sponsorship activities. Companies are more aware of what their motives are which puts higher demands on Drott’s work as a sponsee. Its primary objective as a sponsee concludes in improving Drott’s economic situation, either through strictly financial measures or an increased attendance rate. Furthermore, the strategy to achieve an improvement has been developed in line with what sponsors demand. Fallhagen means that business relationships with Drott are based on three motives: to be seen, help Drott’s organisation, or obtain something in return. However, Fallhagen stresses that everything regarding sponsorship relationships is about the creation of win-win situations.

Drott distinguishes between different levels of sponsors depending on the how much the sponsorship agreement is worth. Fallhagen expresses that the amount of money spent could differ extensively, but the mainstream sum is 25,000 SEK for a membership in King’s club. Moreover, the highly valued Gold sponsors contribute with six-digit amounts and the 1936-group consists of minor sponsors that often do not want much in return for their contribution. With the different available options, the sponsors’ motives in sponsorship strategies are highly different, where more of a network focus characterises the groups with a higher member entrance fee. However, sponsors are also interested in being seen at the arena and through shirt advertisement, which do not mean an automatic membership in any of Drott’s networks.

Although there are different ways of sponsoring Drott, Fallhagen says that the network King’s club is the flagship among sponsorship activities. She continues to tell that companies with hesitation regarding whether to sponsor or not, are told to join King’s club at least, since it provides them with great value. By gathering the network members, Drott provides the companies with an opportunity to meet and do business with each other on a number of occasions. Usually, the network meets on a match day where one company could present itself in front of the others, which often is followed by some kind of presentation (one recent presenter was Paolo Roberto, who was extremely popular among the network members). A two course meal follows at the arena restaurant, where the plan is to organise the companies with fixed seats, in order to optimise business opportunities. The last activity in an ordinary network gathering is usually to watch the handball game together. Except for “ordinary” network gatherings, there are other examples of activities such as trips to Germany, sauna sessions, and company visits of different kinds.

The change of focus; from traditional sponsorship (company logos and signs at the arena) to relationship and network focus where lucrative deals are sought after is really clear. Fallhagen
says that she has noticed this shift in the sponsorship approach, where marketing representatives are sharper and more business-minded. However, that does not mean that the relationships have suffered from the sharpness and Fallhagen says that:

“In my opinion, the relations have improved much during the past two-three years.” (Personal communication, 2015-04-13).

Furthermore, Fallhagen stresses that among Drott’s sponsors, there are many former players within the organisations, which means that they could be more helpful due to personal connections. This could take different forms, whereas providing Drott with facilities is one such example. As Fallhagen phrases it:

“We lower our costs through our sponsors” (Personal communication, 2015-04-13).

The relationships with former players and passionate sponsors have been a reason for Drott’s newest addition to its sponsor activities; O’Learys cup. It is an event where companies play each other during the 15-minutes’ intermission at Drott’s home games together with a bowling competition at O’Learys. Fallhagen says that the cup has been incredibly popular among the sponsors and that they are extremely keen on winning the cup. The entrance fee is 15 000 SEK and is the latest of Drott’s activities which brings added value to its sponsors.

Although Drott does not actively work as much with the traditional sponsorship anymore, it is still an important source of income for the club. However, there is little to do when it comes to the players’ shirts, since the Swedish Handball Association has the final say in where to place logos on the shirts, according to Fallhagen. She continues by saying that the turn-over of traditional sponsors is rather static, since the shirt sponsors are usually the same as previous year(s). This, however, is extremely time consuming and since new deals are renegotiated annually, the time just after the season finishes is hectic from a sponsorship perspective. Fallhagen also says that the current strategy is to maximise the amounts from each and every one of the sponsor, in order to secure more money with the same workload.

4.5.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship ICA Maxi Flygstaden

According to Drott, the relationship with Ica Maxi Flygstaden is characterised by situations where the organisations always try to create win/win situations. Hence, Drott needs to approach the company with agreements that benefit the club as well as corporation. Moreover, Drott is helped by Maxi who provides the club with products from the supermarket together with the fact that the company participates in O’Learys cup.

4.5.3 Specific Relationship Sponsorship O’Learys

According to Drott, the relationship with O’Learys is characterised by a strict business focus. Every penny spent needs to be returned to the company in form of different activities and agreements with O’Learys are dominated by return of investment, which also characterises the personal relationships.
4.5.4 Specific Relationship Sponsorship Wohlins AB

Wohlins AB has an owner that loves handball and the club HK Drott. This affects how the company is treated by Drott because the sponsor is valued higher than others. Moreover, the company also puts in much energy to support the development of Drott in every possible way, which explains the fact that the firm is highly valued by Drott. This puts Wohlins AB in a good situation where its demands on Drott are always accepted.
4.6. Sponsor O’Learys

O’Learys is a Swedish based restaurant chain with approximately 100 restaurants around the world. This interview was conducted at the Halmstad restaurant with the local restaurant director, Alexander Petersson. The Halmstad restaurant has an annual turnover of approximately 36 million SEK and 55 employees.

4.6.1. General Sponsorship

As Alexander explains it, O’Learys works with sponsorship and marketing from two perspective; the local and the central one. There is one budget for the local restaurant and one for the trademark O’Learys, which makes it necessary to adjust the local sponsorship activities to the overall sponsorship activities. Alexander exemplifies this with football, where O’Learys trademark is the main sponsor of the top-flight division in Sweden and thus making it less profitable with shirt advertisement from a local point of view. However, the local restaurant has its own budget of which a mentionable percentage is spent on marketing activities, where sponsorship holds an important part. The fact that the restaurant is fairly new (opened in 2014) plays a significant part to that, since Alexander explains that marketing activities are usually more intense during the initial state of an O’Learys restaurant. As sponsorship agreements go, O’Learys has different types of solutions and agreements in order to gain profitable results from them. Besides the financial sponsorship, it could mean that the restaurant sponsors with restaurant gift cards, free meals/lunches, or company nights/events at the restaurant in order to make people come to the restaurant. Alexander says:

“We do not involve in the old type of sponsorship and the focus on visibility is in the past.”

(Personal communication, 2015-04-23).

By that quote, he means that LED-signs and shirt advertisements are of no interest for O’Learys, since these activities belong to the old type of sponsorship. In the category of old type of sponsorship, he includes the typical scenario where a sport entity calls the restaurant and asks for money as well. Instead, the main orientation for O’Learys is to create win-win situations where the company makes actual, documented profit and not only visibility. The main objective with its sponsorship activities is to attract customers to the restaurant, rather than creating or improving the brand, Alexander explains. With our sponsorship, we try to work with discounts and similar things to the sponsored entities, so that no real money is spent and yet it generates income since the players and their friends/family come to the restaurant, Alexander explains. That is why a local sports club could be better than a major one as well, since one such agreement often includes many youth teams and thereby generates more paying restaurant guests. When it comes to the outcomes of sponsorship, Alexander stresses that these are secured before the agreement is finalised. As he explains it, a deal is something which should bring documented profit and due to the nature of its agreement, people will show up at the restaurant and spend a certain amount and regardless of whether they show up or not, they could be charged anyway in some cases. To help the evaluation process, there is colossal emphasis on statistical measurements in order to maintain professional results in its marketing activities.
4.6.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship

Due to the short history of O’Learys in Halmstad, the duration of the sponsorship with Drott is just approximately one year. In its sponsorship agreement with Drott, O’Learys provides the club with both financial means and services. The sponsorship agreement with Drott is a one-year contract and was one of the first sponsorship agreements which was sorted out. However, the early involvement with Drott does not mean that O’Learys holds an undemanding attitude in its relationship with the club. Alexander emphasises the fact that the agreement needs to be profitable and if it fails to be so, O’Learys would probably not sponsor the club anymore, especially since the home games are attended by a mere 1000 people. In connection to the low attendance figures at the home games, Alexander says:

“Drott is not a major brand and from our point of view, it might as well be a minor entity somewhere in the woods in terms of sponsorship” (Personal communication, 2015-04-30).

Although the relationship is rather new, O’Learys has its own cup, called O’Learys cup, together with Drott. Alexander says that there is a great buzz around the cup, which is supposed to attract people to Drott’s home games. As it includes twelve companies, who provide their employees with something extra, they win something from it, as well as Drott does. The win for O’Learys however, is the fact that there are four get-togethers in this cup, whereof two are held at the restaurant with a parallel bowling tournament to the handball cup. This helps the creation of buzz around O’Learys, as well as customer loyalty among the companies, since the obvious choice of sports bar would be O’Learys for these companies and their employees, according to Alexander. On top of the two bowling gatherings, there is a concluding get-together where O’Learys has secured twelve companies with at least 15 representatives from each company and thus assured to obtain return of investment. As Alexander explains it, it is not the cup which generates the income, but everything connected to it, but the outcomes are already secured when the agreement is agreed upon and everything on top of that is pure bonus.
4.7 Sponsor Ica Maxi Flygstaden

Ica Maxi Flygstaden has grown into one of Halmstad’s most popular supermarkets. The supermarket chain has 77 supermarkets in Sweden. The interview was conducted with the store manager Anette Bengtsson.

4.7.1 General Sponsorship

Bengtsson has good knowledge about the sponsoring activities Maxi Flygstaden is involved in. Sport sponsorship is conducted with a local perspective where minor sport clubs close by are supported together with a few elite clubs in Halmstad. She stresses the importance of supporting sport entities and believes that they make Halmstad a better community. However, Bengtsson points out that it is important to obtain something in return as well, which is a significant factor for sponsorship involvement. Bengtsson continues and claims that sponsorship activities are controlled from a local level where she makes the decisions regarding whom to sponsor. Furthermore, sponsorship could take many forms including: strictly monetary, product based, and also advertising signs at sport arenas. The product based activities are usually in form of some sort of products from the supermarket, whereas discounts for sponsees and mixed bags of goods are mentioned as examples.

Bengtsson claims that sponsorship activities hold a major part of Maxi’s marketing budget and mentions that she frequently receives requests from organisations looking for support. She explains that it is impossible for Maxi to help all organisations, since there is a fixed amount of money which should go into marketing and sponsorship activities. Furthermore, the sponsorship agreements are always short-term contracts and are revised annually, since things could change. However, the short-term contracts do not mean that Maxi terminates sponsorship deals easily, but rather that the deal should be based on the current situation, which is changing, according to Bengtsson. Among the changing things, Bengtsson mentions that new organisations could become interesting for one reason or another, as well as success or failure on and off the field could change the magnitude of sponsorship:

“If a team is in a top-flight division, it might become more expensive to sponsor it.”

(Personal communication, 2015-05-05).

As mentioned, Bengtsson stresses the importance to obtain something in return, which often consists of minor sport clubs hosting events or participating as “stars” at the supermarket. Moreover, Bengtsson wishes that parents and sports enthusiasts choose Maxi as their supermarket. By sponsoring larger sport entities, Bengtsson expresses a desire to be seen and creating awareness for the Halmstad residents. Although there is a desire to obtain something in return for sponsorship, Bengtsson does not have an evaluation format to determine sponsorship efficiency in terms of concrete numbers. Instead, there is great focus upon goodwill and to attract people to the store, together with improving the perceived quality of Halmstad as a community. When asked about whether each sponsee has its own type of relationship, she answers:
“There is no distinct difference between the sponsees; they are pretty much dealt with in the same way” (Personal communication, 2015-05-05).

4.7.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship

Ica Maxi Flygstaden has a sponsoring agreement with HK Drott since two-three years back. However, the organisations have worked together before, but the partnership was terminated due to collaboration issues derived from a discrepancy in values. Bengtsson continues by saying that these issues were dealt with and she speaks of the importance of the inter-personal relationship to the marketing department at Drott. Her argument is that it is the people within the organisations who are the messengers and representatives for the clubs and thus the ones who should mediate organisational values. They are the ones whom we try to reach agreements with as well, she countinues. She expresses trust between partners as a significant factor to enter an agreement. Moreover, Bengtsson explains that she has regular contact with Drott, due to Maxi’s presence at every game in Halmstad. The specific agreement with Drott includes products and advertisement signs at the arena, where bags of food are handed out to the first goal scorer in both teams, which is announced by the match speaker. When asked about Maxi’s involvement in Drott’s sponsorship network and regular gatherings for their members, Bengtsson acts unknowingly and says that Maxi most probably is not involved in it. Furthermore, the specific relationship with Drott is annually revised and one-year contracts are agreed upon. Just as with the other sponsees, Bengtsson stresses that the short-term contracts depend on various factors, where sport entities in higher divisions claim higher sponsorship fees and in return the club is more attractive for the audience. Hence, she expresses the importance of sports results for continued relationship under the same conditions.
4.8 Sponsor Wohlins AB
If you are looking for distribution or storage solutions for frozen consumer goods, Wohlins AB in Halmstad is an attractive partner. The company is a family-owned organisation with twelve employees. The interview was conducted with Roger Wohlin, manager and responsible for the sponsorship marketing.

4.8.1 General Sponsorship
Wohlin is responsible for all decisions regarding sponsorship and has good knowledge of the company’s strategy. Sport sponsorship is conducted with two sports clubs: one minor football club close by the organisation’s headquarter and an elite handball club in Halmstad. To the question why Wohlins AB engages in such agreements, the answer is partly a community focus as well as to support the handball club as a fan. Hence, Wohlin is an active supporter of Drott and therefore wants to contribute to the club’s finances. Moreover, the agreement with the minor football club is also based on a close personal relationship, which makes Wohlin willing to sponsor youth sports with a sign at the arena. During the interview, the CEO of the company, Tomas Wohlin (Roger Wohlin’s brother) enters the room. He adds:

“It is Roger’s intention to support the local sports associations”
(Personal communication, Tomas Wohlin, 2015-05-07).

Therefore, there is less focus on making profit through the sponsoring agreements and more focus upon community and development of personal relationships. Wohlin further stresses a cut back in sponsorship expenses in recent years. Wohlin continues by expressing that the target group of the company cannot be reached through sponsorship, hence explaining why the company neglects the opportunity to conduct business through the channel. To obtain something in return for its financial investment is therefore of minor importance for Wohlins AB and Wohlin explains that the company does not evaluate its sponsorship agreements. Moreover, sponsorship contracts are always conducted with a one-year duration, but there is no reason why, it has just always been done like this. Today, almost half of the marketing budget is designated to sponsorship agreement, where the major part goes to Drott. Moreover Wohlin describes a successful sponsorship relationship as follows:

“When both the sport club and we are successful.”
(Personal communication, Roger Wohlin, 2015-05-07).

4.8.2 Specific Relationship Sponsorship
Wohlin has a special relationship to HK Drott as a former player. Today, almost half of the marketing budget (120,000 SEK) goes into the sponsorship agreement with Drott. Moreover, as a major sponsor, Wohlin does not experience any difficulties in the demands he puts on Drott. Furthermore, even though an evaluation format is not used, Wohlin expects some kind of return on the company’s investment. He states that Drott is eager to obtain resources which gives him an opportunity to negotiate the terms. Under the current conditions, Wohlins AB has sponsored Drott for three years. Before that, the financial input was significantly lower. Today,
the company is a part of Drott’s network and acts as a game host for home matches. Wohlin claims that it adds awareness to be represented during the home games, but the network is less significant for the company. Although, he keeps attending the network gatherings; mostly because of interesting lectures and sometimes new connections to stakeholders from the bank. Moreover, he expresses that he is not interested in developing new business opportunities, and adds that the company’s target group does not exist within the network.

Moreover, Wohlin talks well about the relationship to the marketing department at Drott. He states that they are in contact at least three times a week. Furthermore, the close relationship has also developed into other mutual services where Wohlins AB has hired one of Drott’s players.

It is obvious that Wohlin’s relationship to HK Drott as a supporter and former player, together with connections to the board, have had an impact on Wohlins AB’s mind-set regarding sponsorship. The authors also detected some attitudinal differences between the respondent and his brother, Tomas Wohlin, who was not as supportive, expressing his feelings about the sponsorship:

“It has not given us anything what so ever” (Personal communication, Tomas Wohlin, 2015-05-07).

Even though Wohlin’s philanthropic motives have the upperhand, he still demands some kind of exchange of services from Drott, he says. However, Wohlins AB appears to be nowhere near to financially benefit from its investment.
5. Analysis

This chapter will start with within-case analyses, followed by a cross-case analysis. The tables included are there to provide the reader with a comprehensible overview of the empirical cases.

5.1 Within-case analysis

This section will treat each of the empirical cases individually and comparison between empirical findings and the theoretical data will be conducted.

5.1.1 Sponsee HBK

General sponsorship

In terms of general sponsorship, Johansson at HBK speaks of the sponsorship paradigm and identify a shift just as clearly as the interviewees from Beta and Anticimex do. Even though the traditional sponsorship activities, such as shirt advertisements and arena signs are the most profitable in terms of financial means, the focus of work lies on HBK’s network and the relationships within it.

Objectives

As HBK is a sponsee, there is a difference compared to the sponsors, since the objectives for sponsees vary less than for sponsors. In terms of Shilbury et al.’s (2003) proposed sponsee objectives, HBK strives to obtain funds, resources, and to a minor extent, services as well, through sponsorship agreements. Additionally, there is an obvious drive to improve its brand as well, which goes in line with Shilbury et al.’s (2003) suggestion of brand positioning and image creation/improvement. These objectives, however, are mainly strived for via performance on the pitch and long-term presence in the top-flight division. As said by Johansson at HBK:

“A good brand gives you more and better chances when it comes to sponsorship.”
(Personal communication, Johansson, 2015-04-27).

The quote suggests that brand is more of a prerequisite to be a successful sponsee in sponsorship, rather than an objective connected to it. This statement makes the brand related components of sponsee objectives from Shilbury et al. (2003) questionable, since they are considered to be pure enhancements of the possible sponsorship agreements.

Approach

Again, as HBK is a sponsee, there are few options for it, in terms of excluding possibilities of obtaining means in various forms. However, a clear preference in terms of the two generic approaches by Carrillat and d’Astous (2012) is displayed, namely the financial sponsorship. Even though, as Johansson describes it, the sponsee has some pure trade agreements, which should be interpreted as in-kind sponsorship (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012). These are not really favourable due to the economic situation for the club and the fact that players and staff are paid with money.
Except for the main focus of financial sponsorship, there is a distinct proneness towards the network approach, which Johansson describes as the modern way of conducting sponsorship. The way HBK works with its network members and constantly adding new ones, goes in line with Walliser’s (2003) suggestion that the value of a network lies in its members and that new ones increase it. Although there is great focus upon attracting new members to the network, Johansson emphasises the importance of keeping its current members:

“Existing and pleased sponsors are easier to finish the process with.”
(Personal communication, Johansson, 2015-04-27).

Together with this quote, Johansson’s statement regarding the importance of personal relationships and HBK as an intermediary are well in line with Cobbs’s (2011) theory. This connection is easily found, since the sport entity is supposed to be responsible for the creation of new relationships among the network members, which is the case for HBK.

Outcomes
As HBK enters its agreements as a sponsee, the outcomes are predetermined, since the sport entity is paid in advance in most cases. By doing so, HBK’s objectives in terms of obtaining funds are fulfilled.

Specific relationship sponsorship
In terms of relationships between HBK and its sponsors, there is a distinct desire to build and maintain such on a personal level. Adding to the fact that there is great focus upon keeping its members in the network, there are customised agreements with each and every one of the sponsors in this case. Much of the relationship orientation stays within the category of inter-personal relations, which Morgan et al. (2014) express the magnitude of. The problems connected to the lacking of well-established inter-personal relations, which Morgan et al. (2014) suggest are straining sponsorship relations, are agreed upon by Johansson.

When it comes to the relationships with the sponsors in this thesis, they are said to be good and improved over time, which conforms to the proposition from Cornwell et al. (2001). Common for these relationships, which are with Beta and Anticimex, is that the communication is said to be free-flowing and open. This could be seen as confirmation of the importance of communication between sponsee and sponsor, suggested by Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) and Farrelly and Quester (2005). The fact that both sponsor and sponsee claim that the relationship is good suggests that they consider it to be good, but both sponsors mention that the economic satisfaction is the only thing that really matters. This goes against Farrelly and Quester’s (2005) proposition that non-economic satisfaction should be the main focus. The third relationship, the one with HFAB, is said to be somewhat different compared to the others. There is no real description of it as a good and improving relationship, which could be derived from the low level of communication, which Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) present as a common problem in sponsorship. Farrelly and Quester (2005) mean that communication is a component of a high quality relationship and the fact that the specific relationship between HFAB and HBK appears to lack openness as the others have, could be an indicator that confirms this theory.
5.1.2 Sponsor Beta

General sponsorship
In the case of Beta, it is obvious that sponsorship is an activity which comes with a strictly professional approach. The quote from Berg suggests that there is little of altruistic and philanthropic motives and need for local involvement in Beta’s way of sponsoring:

“The modern way of looking at sponsorship is to sponsor with brain rather than heart” (Personal communication, Berg, 2015-03-18).

However, the fact that Berg mentions ethical values and that Beta neither wants to involve nor be associated with clubs with the wrong kind of beliefs or values, signals that some emphasis is put upon fit in terms of values. This focus touches upon shared values and identities of brands, which Renard and Sitz (2011) argue to be an important factor within the relationship fit. The entirely professional and brain over heart mind-set though, is nearly the extreme opposite to one of the suggested motives by Thjömöe et al. (2002), which says that the sponsor involves without the regard of receiving publicity or not. Instead, the way Beta involves in sponsorship is closer to the other motive for sponsorship by Thjömöe et al. (2002), which is connected to putting the firm’s name in front of the audience. However, none of the presented definitions of sponsorship fits perfectly to Berg’s description of how Beta works with sponsorship, since the actual publicity matters extremely little and instead it is the network behind the façade that matters.

In its sponsorship process, Beta displays what appears to be a perfect fit to the five-step list of the process and by expressing such clear objectives, the risk of costly mistakes should be considered minimised from that point of view (e.g. Clark, 1996; Shank, 2005; Papadimitriou et al., 2008).

Objectives
Regarding Beta’s objectives of its sponsorship in general; they are distinct to Berg, who points at creating new business opportunities and greater revenues. These two objectives are both included in Shilbury et al.’s (2003) common sponsor objectives, however, there are eight common objectives which are not touched upon; meaning that Beta’s sponsorship objectives could be considered rather narrow. The narrow objectives and distinct network focus help Beta avoiding efficacy problems related to outcomes, though, since they are mainly connected to on-site activities and therefore related to external factors and memorisation problems (Donlan, 2014; Herrmann et al., 2014). Overall, Beta displays obvious inclination to the objective category of increased sales.

Approach
The clear network focus in the case of Beta reaches further than the relationship with HBK and as Berg explains; the personal contacts in less significant sport entities could mean that sponsorship deals are made with them as well. The important thing though, is that Berg stresses that financial sponsoring, such as one of the two generic types proposed by Carrillat and
d’Astous (2012), is solely agreed upon with large clubs, which is stated by the following quote as well:

“Pure monetary sponsoring is a big no-no for minor sport entities, since it does not generate any actual profit.” (Personal communication, Berg, 2015-03-18).

The lack of financial involvement in minor sport entities does not tell the entire story and although it is described as a generic way to sponsor by Carrillat and d’Astous (2012). However, Beta instead has an obvious network approach, which fits well into Cobb’s (2011) argument; meaning that it is the partners within a network that creates willingness to sponsor. This approach is clear in its general work with sponsorship, as well as in the relation with HBK, which will be discussed further on.

Outcomes
In terms of general sponsorship, Berg only mentions the increase of sales as one of the outcomes connected to it, just as argued for by Cornwell et al. (2005). The fact that only one of the outcomes is mentioned could be derived from the main focus upon brand equity among scholars, (e.g. Herrmann et al., 2014; Nicholls, Roslow, & Dublish, 1999) which Beta focus little or nothing upon. To see sponsorship as a tool for competitive advantage is not spoken of by Beta either; meaning that that particular outcome suggested by Donlan (2014) is not in focus for Beta either.

Specific relationship sponsorship
The fit between Beta and HBK is not obvious to see in terms of tangible products, such as the fit suggested by Roy and Cornwell (1999), but rather in terms of objectives or other broad terms, such as the fit described by Speed and Thompson (2000). The specific sponsorship agreement and relation with HBK has been ongoing for a number of years, but as Berg described it; improvement in professionalism has been made during the latest couple of years. This points at the importance of the people within the organisation and the inter-personal relationship between sponsor and sponsee, which is described as a cornerstone of sponsorship management by Morgan et al. (2014). The frequency in which the two parties meet and communicate with each other suggests that the common problem regarding communication between sponsor and sponsee, discussed by Chadwick and Thwaites (2005), is avoided since Berg expresses that the relationship is good and has been ongoing for a substantial period of time. Beta’s strive for financial success and unwillingness to leave HBK, in the current situation, is something which proves that the relation seems to be working well and it goes in line with the suggestions from Cornwell et al. (2001) who mean that long-term relations are perceived as more financially successful than others. It should also be highlighted that Beta displays clear non-economic as well as economic satisfaction and trust in in its relationship with HBK. Since the core of this sponsorship relationship is said to be economic satisfaction, Farrelly and Quester’s (2005) argument on how non-economic satisfaction is derived from economic satisfaction is perfectly applicable.
When it comes to success, Beta appears to be involved in sponsorship agreements only if it is lucrative, whereas Cobb’s (2011) network approach describes the relation with HBK better than the generic sponsorship approaches. Although the arrangement has a financial design rather than the in-kind one, described by Carrillat and d’Astous (2012), the emphasis is still on the network part of it and the benefits are sought after within the network. However, it also suggests that HBK is considered a large club, since Beta sponsors financially. As Berg stresses the importance of having the same representatives present at the get-togethers and importance of personal contacts, the quote: “That is what drives sponsorships, the relationships you have with people, not with businesses.” (Morgan et al., 2014, p. 275) really fits that perspective, since Berg means that relations need to be built in order to create business. The fact that Beta appears to enjoy great success in its sponsorship relationship with HBK suggests that the importance of matching brands, which Renard and Sitz (2011) argue, has little importance in this particular case.

Interestingly enough, there is little focus on the relationship in connection to the customers of the sponsor, since the company does not want to associate with ethically bad entities. Instead, the main importance lies at the internal fit and how the organisations work well with each other. Among the scholars who highlight the importance of fit (e.g. Roy & Cornwell, 2004; Renard & Sitz, 2011; Speed & Thompson, 2000), there is a great focus on the effect it has on consumer/customer views on the sponsor and this is not applicable at Beta, where the external focus appears to be of minor importance. Berg does not mention anything about HBK’s values or brand, but only sports in general, which is said to be important on a societal level and something Beta wishes to support if there is something in it for the company. Based on the case of Beta, there is no real evidence that a good fit needs to be worked with in order to reach sponsorship objectives, as said by Shank (2005). Neither does it prove to hold any importance in terms of signalling a good fit to a third, external part, since the company succeeds in finding new customers and business partners among the network members.
5.1.3 Sponsor Anticimex

**General sponsorship**

Calle Lindblom at Anticimex presents a professional attitude towards sponsorship, with great focus on return of investments. The fact that sponsorship is locally decided, suggests that local offices may use different strategies in their sponsorship activities. In the case of the Halmstad office, Lindblom firmly says that each sponsorship agreement has its reason. This careful selection conforms the claim from Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) connecting careful sponsee selection as significant for advantage creating.

Regarding sponsorship process, most of the five-step list is applicable to Anticimex. In the analysing face, Lindblom has broad knowledge of why, how, and what the company wants to achieve; resulting in clearly stated objectives, as suggested by scholars (e.g. Gordon & Cheah, 2014; Shank, 2005; Cornwell, 1995) (step 1-3). The implementation and evaluation (step 4-5) are characterised by well based decisions. By doing so, it is evident that Anticimex evaluates its agreements annually, in order to improve or eliminate the bad functioning sponsorship relationships and thereby utilises these steps as suggested by Shank (2005) and Shilbury et al. (2003). The fact that Anticimex terminates bad sponsorship agreements could be exemplified with the statement from Lindblom:

> “Nobody involves in sponsorship arrangements to be nice these days; those days are gone.”  
* (Personal communication, Lindblom, 2015-03-16).

Moreover, Anticimex’s locally adapted strategy does not conform to the arguments from Crader and Santomier, (2011) and Sephapo et al. (2014), who say that sponsorship activities are formed by the size of the corporation. Since Anticimex, which is an internationally established corporation, shows resource scarcity to some extent and limits itself to local sponsorship partners, it does not display the resource density often found in large companies. However, the structure with a local sponsorship budget, means that the company could be looked upon as a local actor in that sense. Furthermore, Lindblom mentions that sport sponsorship also consists of minor sport clubs in order to contribute locally, which conform the philanthropic approach from Lamont & Dowel (2008). However, Lindblom stresses the fact that he keeps the financial perspective (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012) and desires a return from minor partners as well. By doing so, together with the fact that he states that no one does sponsorship to be “nice” these days, he dismisses a philanthropic approach to sponsorship and instead confirms the pure business focus to it, as presented by Copeland, et al. (1996).

**Objectives**

When it comes to Anticimex’s process of sponsorship today, it starts with objectives, which are clear to Lindblom. Since unclear objectives is a common reason for sponsorship failure (Gordon & Cheah, 2014), Anticimex has avoided one such pitfall. The main objectives are clearly new business possibilities and development of new segments, which are common objectives among sponsors (Shank, 2005). Although, the absence of brand related objectives, which are the most common objectives (Gordon & Cheah, 2014), suggests that Anticimex is not plainly ordinary...
in its sponsorship objectives. However Lindblom clearly focuses on raising awareness for the company’s less known services and totally dismisses brand related objectives further. An objective which Gordon and Cheah (2014) stress as one of the most frequently used. However, the desired change in long-term behaviour among the customers, whereas Anticimex desires to be a comprehensive business partner with its range of different services, could be connected to the indirect sponsorship objectives presented by Shank (2005). Although it is said to be one of the objectives, it is not presented as a main one by Lindblom. Moreover, Cornwell et al. (2001) determine brand building objectives as a long-term investment, which Lindblom also dismisses as a strategy. Instead Lindblom claims that Anticimex’s sponsorship activities need to be beneficial and generate some kind of profit as a short-term outcome. By looking at Anticimex’s objectives, the company could be categorised within the objective category of increasing sales. It could also raise questions regarding long-term objectives connected to sponsorship, which is said to be favourable by several scholars (e.g. Shank, 2005; Cornwell et al., 2001).

**Approach**

Related to the generic approaches of sponsorship, Anticimex has a strictly financial perspective without focus on public official partnership or in-kind relationship. This means that the company has no intention to be seen as a partner towards consumers or aid with products (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012; 2013). The narrow focus could be connected to the fact that the company neglects brand building objectives, which often come down to a visible partnership towards the target group (Shank, 2005). Lindblom develops the reasoning with a sponsorship strategy that is directed to maximise profitability from a B2B perspective. Lindblom’s business-minded attitude generates the following statement:

“Sponsorship should at least generate as much money or business as it costs, in order to be successful” (Personal communication, Lindblom, 2015-03-16).

**Outcomes**

Regarding outcomes, financial returns is the most significant factor for Anticimex (Table 2), and other factors do not impact the decision to a continued sponsor-sponsee relationship. In other words: Donlan’s (2014) suggestion where sponsorship outcomes regarding brand building and competitive advantage are firmly dismissed by Lindblom, whereas sponsorship as a tool for financial profit, proposed by Cornwell et al. (2001), is confirmed. Due to the short-term focus, relationships with sponsees are revised annually in order to secure a return on the investment. As a result, the efficacy of long-term partners (Cornwell et al., 2001) is not prioritised to achieve long-term outcomes in the case of Anticimex. The outcomes are not measured today, since it is not necessary, according to Lindblom. However, he stresses that the outcomes could be measured if any uncertainty regarding them would occur and thus, it could be said that Anticimex evaluates sponsorship and adjust deals as recommended by Shank (2005).
Specific relationship sponsorship

Anticimex’s local office in Halmstad has a sponsor relationship with HBK, which is Anticimex biggest investment in terms of sponsorship activities. To generate profitability through the agreement, Lindblom values HBK’s sponsorship network highly. This high valuation derives from the network, which provided financial returns in the excess of the invested 60,000 SEK entrance fee according to Lindblom and by doing so, an obvious and sought for win-win situation is created (Shilbury et al. 2003). As explained by Johansson at HBK, the network has increased the amount of which Anticimex sponsors with and thus showing support for the claims from Lindblom that objectives are purely business related. This is supported by Cobbs (2011) saying that sponsorship networks can create a desire to sponsor rather than the sponsee itself. Furthermore, the network approach is the most appropriate for B2B corporations (ibid.), which is what Anticimex is said to be by Lindblom.

Anticimex has been a part of HBK’s network for three years. HBK ought to have delivered network meetings of high quality, since the company remains a member of it. However, Anticimex is constantly looking for improvements to reassure that return on its investment are obtained. According to Olkkonen (2001), all partners should be active in order to benefit from the agreement and therefore supports the demands regarding the deliverance of well-organised network meetings. Cobbs (2011) further puts the responsibility on the sport entity to provide sponsors with return on their investments, which Lindblom thinks HBK attempts to, but it could be done better.

What makes the relationship fit between HBK and Anticimex valuable on an organisational level is not determined by the companies’ brands, that Roy and Cornwell (2004) highlight, nor products (Roy & Cornwell, 1999). Farrelly and Quester (2005), however, claim that relationship quality and fit can derive from trust, commitment, economic satisfaction, and non-economic satisfaction. Furthermore, such factors are applicable to describe the relationship between the partners, according to Lindblom, whereas economic satisfaction clearly determines the character of the relationship to HBK. Interestingly, Farrelly and Quester (2005) claim that non-economic factors should hold the greatest importance if a long-term relationship is sought after, but since Anticimex displays a clear short-term focus, the economic focus cannot really be connected to this claim. Moreover, trust is an important contributor to high quality relationships, which Lindblom declares as a significant factor in the relationship to HBK where discussions and negotiations are a natural part. As a result, the view on relationship fit based on inter-personal relation (Morgan et al., 2014) determines a good fit between HBK and Anticimex, since both parties of this dyadic relationship claim that it works well. This human based factor promotes for successful sponsorship agreements (Morgan et al., 2014; Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005).

Interestingly enough, there is no focus on the relationship in connection to the customers of the sponsor whatsoever, but rather entirely on the internal relationship between sponsor and sponsee. Among the scholars who highlight the importance of fit (e.g. Roy & Cornwell, 2004; Renard & Sitz, 2012; Speed & Thompson, 2000), there is a great focus on the effect it has on consumer/customer views on the sponsor, which appears to be totally neglected by Lindblom.
at Anticimex. Lindblom does not mention anything about HBK’s values or brand, but only sports in general, which is said to be important on a societal level and something which Anticimex wishes to support if there is something in it for the company. Based on the case of Anticimex, there is no real evidence that a good fit needs to be worked with in order to reach sponsorship objectives and neither does it prove to hold any importance in terms of signalling a good fit to a third, external part.
5.1.4 Sponsor HFAB

General Sponsorship
From the interview with HFAB, it is clear that the company has a clear strategy with its sponsorship work in general. Rules for whom to sponsor, when to sponsor, and how to sponsor are all mentioned. As a result, HFAB’s sponsorship process are easily connected to the suggestions from Papadimitriou et al. (2008) and Cornwell (1995), where analysis, implementation with strategic thinking, and evaluation are all part of it. In its choice of whom to sponsor, HFAB bears the fit in mind, since discrepancy wants to be avoided. Although the fit is not explicitly expressed, it instead depends on the public’s opinion, which makes the look upon fit as equal to the one presented by Speed and Thompson (2000). It also suggests that HFAB chooses its sponsees carefully, as recommended by Meenaghan and Shipley (1999). From the interview, it appears as if HFAB wants to avoid discrepancy in terms of fit because of what signals to their tenants. Since there are brand related objectives as well as non-economic ones, together with the focus on values and identities of a brand (in this case it is not the mere sport entity’s brand, but the sport’s brand), HFAB’s approach goes in line with suggestions from several scholars (e.g. Cornwell et al., 2001; Renard & Sitz, 2011), where signalling a fit to an external part holds importance.

Objectives
As well as the strategy, the objectives are clear, since it is said that HFAB works with sponsorship in order to obtain visibility, add value to its tenants, as well as to improve the brand of Halmstad and in extension attract more people to the town in which the company has its apartments and flats. The clear objectives are good, since the absence of clear objectives usually means that companies fail to benefit from sponsorship to the fullest (Gordon and Cheah, 2014). As for the objectives, they are equivalent to many of the proposed objectives from Shank (2005), since they could easily fit into the categories of “employee and community relationship marketing”, “image creation or improvement”, and “brand positioning”. The fact that Weberg and Nilsson mention objectives which hold adolescents from “bad activities”, could not be seen as anything related to business or brand really and in that sense it conforms to Lamont and Dowell’s (2008) argument that local companies still involve in sponsorship with philanthropic objectives. As well as confirming the argument from Lamont and Dowell (2008), the proposition regarding pure business objectives (Copeland et al., 1996) is dismissed by HFAB. Looking at HFAB’s objectives in general, the displayed objectives fit into the categories of philanthropic and brand building ones.

Approach
In its choice of approach, HFAB works with customised sponsorship and each sponsee has its unique agreement. However, financial sponsorship is mentioned as one approach, where in-kind was not touched upon by the interviewees and thus meaning that HFAB’s sponsorship approach has the clearest connection to the financial sponsorship, as suggested by Carrillat and d’Astous (2012). From the examples given by HFAB, it could be said that the company involves in official sponsorship as well, since tickets to games are nearly given away for free and parades
are organised and by doing so, a close link to the team or event is created (Cornwell et al., 2005).

**Outcomes**

Further in the process, HFAB evaluates results from sponsorship activities and as told by the interviewees; HFAB demands returns from its sponsorship, even though financial returns are not necessary. From this, it is obvious that HFAB utilises the fifth step from the sponsorship process list, which is evaluation (e.g. Cornwell, 1995; Shilbury et al., 2003). This is evident, not only in a sense where figures and statistics are analysed, but since HFAB usually writes one-year contracts and does not extend the sponsorship deal if no value is added to the sponsor. The importance of non-economic factors goes in line with the long-term thinking and the achieving of brand related outcomes (Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Cornwell et al., 2001). However, the evaluation of outcomes is not as easy for non-financial outcomes as it is for financial ones, but from the interview, HFAB displays outcomes in form of added value for customers, as well as brand recognition improvement connected to the Women’s football tournament. In that sense, HFAB mainly achieves brand related outcomes such as the ones presented by Donlan (2014), where awareness and association are two components. However, its outcomes are connectable to brand in the sense presented by Pearson (1996), since features, benefits, and values are all displayed in its sponsorship work.

**Specific Relationship Sponsorship**

The relationship between HFAB and HBK has a duration of many years according to Weberg and Nilsson, which puts it outside the common interval of 3-5 years (Copeland et al., 1996). It is not HFAB’s intention to bail in tough times and the company expects the same treatment from HBK, which signals sponsorship situation analysis based on long-term results and thus correspond to its own vision to use sponsorship as a long-term marketing tool. It also connects to non-economic factors’ focus with the long-term sponsorship thinking, as presented by Farrelly and Quester (2005) and Cornwell et al. (2001). In a sense, this strengthens the claim that HFAB analyses thoroughly as well as implements a real strategy for its sponsorship, in the sense which is suggested by Cornwell (1995) and Shilbury et al. (2003). Interestingly, sponsorship contracts usually are not signed for more than 1-2 years, which is a consequence from the turbulent environment sports entities face today, where HFAB puts great emphasis on the economic situation for an entity.

The relationship has not developed over the years, which long-term relationships often do (Farrelly et al., 2005), as a consequence from lack of inter-personal relationship between the partners. In terms of relationship fit, Olsen and Thjömöe’s (2011) three dimensions explain what is significant for HFAB and what makes a good match. Firstly, the sharing of the same target group and the degree to which the residents of Halmstad attend HBK’s matches. HFAB wants to make Halmstad a more attractive place to live in and therefore aims to sponsor HBK as an investment to its residents. As a result, local supporters determine the quality of the relationship between HFAB and HBK, which touches upon how the fit is determined by an external part, proposed by Speed and Thompson (2000). Secondly, attitude similarities are mentioned as an extremely important factor to engage in sponsorship, conforming to Renard
and Sitz (2011) argument for brands with shared values. Therefore, values that are somewhat equivalent, which also determines a good fit (Olsen & Thjömöe, 2011). HFAB has, in spite of a non-developing inter-personal relationship, continued to collaborate with HBK, contradictive to what is necessary in building long-term relationships (Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005).

Although there appears to be an interest in the creation of inter-personal relationship trust, HFAB displays little of it in its relationship with HBK. HFAB’s involvement and engagement in HBK’s network is described as low, since the people at the sponsor do not see the real importance of being present at those gatherings. The personal experience from those gatherings also explains why, since Nilsson did not feel appreciated and seen there, which the following quote is an apparent evidence of:

“By not seeing or acknowledging me, HBK might have missed out on additional financial backing” (Personal communication, Nilsson, 2015-03-24).

However, the absence from further participation suggests that improvement in inter-personal relations could be hard as well. This is an explanation to the lacking of improvement in the relationship between HBK and HFAB, in the sense which Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) and Morgan et al. (2014) describe. It also suggests that HFAB has no real interest in the network approach, which Cobbs (2011) and Olkkonen (2001) presents and argues is something useful in sponsorship implementation. Since HFAB has little B2B focus and greater B2C (business to consumer) focus, this goes in line with Cobbs’s (2011) reasoning, which says that B2B companies are likelier to benefit from the network approach.
5.1.5 Findings of Within-Case Analysis Case 1

Since the amount of data is large, table 5 comes with the main points from each of the three sponsors and the sponsee. The table is there to give a comprehensive view of case 1 and will be the subject for analysis in the cross-case analysis. The including of targeted customer and market together with type of company have been made since these are factors which could be of importance when cross-case analysis is made. Patterns connected to these factors have also been identified by the authors of this thesis. Moreover, the structure of the sponsorship process is added to give a summarised version of the respondents’ process. Here the authors made a distinction between unstructured and structured. A short description of each post is further provided with.

Table 5. A comprehensive view of the within-case analysis from case 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor/Name</th>
<th>HBK (sponsee)</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Anticimex</th>
<th>HFAB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective/s</td>
<td>Obtain funds</td>
<td>Increase sales</td>
<td>Increase sales</td>
<td>Philanthropic/brand building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Financial and network</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Network</td>
<td>Financial and official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome/s</td>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Increased sales</td>
<td>Increased sales</td>
<td>Brand related and other intangible outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of sponsorship process</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship focus</td>
<td>Inter-personal relations and economic satisfaction</td>
<td>Economic satisfaction</td>
<td>Economic satisfaction</td>
<td>Organisational values and commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted market and type of company</td>
<td>Local focus</td>
<td>National company but local, privately owned</td>
<td>International company but local, privately owned</td>
<td>Local company, state-owned company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The objectives have been described by each of the responding organisations and presented are the ones which have been the most prominent in each of the organisations. They have been categorised in the three categories mentioned in connection to the analytical model as well, in order to make it graspable and they refer to sponsorship objectives in general, as well as the ones connected to the specific relationship. In case one, the main focus has been pure monetary and business making objectives, whereas HBK is included with greatest emphasis on raising
financial funds. The approach factor includes the approaches which have been said to hold greatest importance in the organisation’s work with sponsorship and even though HBK is a sponsee, there was an explicit desire to obtain financial funds, which was mainly done through the network. The network approach is the most prominent among two out of three sponsors as well, thus making it the most commonly mentioned approach. It is also interesting, since HBK works most actively with its network and with its number of members, the sponsee has succeeded in selling this approach and create a desire for it among its sponsors. Outcomes are, again the main ones which have been mentioned by the respondents. The outcomes have been categorised as the objectives, in order to create unity and since outcomes are supposed to be derived from objectives. In connection to the objectives of increasing sales, the sales increasing outcomes are there as expected by the sponsors. For HFAB, where the objectives were brand related and philanthropic, there were brand related outcomes, as well as other ones which could not be fully explained by the respondents and here named as other non-tangible outcomes.

When it comes to the structure of the process the authors have, based on the process described by the respondents, interpreted a structured or unstructured process. The structured process is characterised by clear thoughts regarding objectives and the generated outcomes. All organisations applying a structured process display focus on increasing sales and a clear strategy of how to achieve their targets. Furthermore, the unstructured process is characterised by intangible objectives which are hard to measure. Hence, companies within this category display issues connected to actually measuring the effects of their sponsorship activities.

Relationship focus includes what has been said to hold greatest focus about the specific relationship to HBK from the sponsors and what HBK values and works with in terms of relationships with sponsors. HBK displays an inter-personal focus in terms of working with customised deals with its sponsors and creating close personal relations, as with Beta and Anticimex. However, the sponsee makes sure that the requests from the sponsors are satisfied and since Beta and Anticimex display prominent economic focus, HBK puts focus upon economic satisfaction as well. For HFAB, the customisation is there as well, but since the sponsor does not emphasise anything tangible in particular, there is nothing for the authors to see in terms of HBK adjusting its focus to HFAB.

The factor regarding targeted customer was included since the network approach has been claimed to work better for B2B companies and since the network approach holds great importance among respondents. This could further add depth to the cross-case analysis. Targeted market and type of company are included since SMEs often display resource scarcity (Crader & Santomier, 2011; Sephapo et al., 2014), which affects the sponsorship. The fact that state-owned companies do not need to show same profitability as privately owned ones made it interesting to include that factor. The two/three added factors appear to hold some importance in case one, since the sponsor who differs from the other two, targets another customer segment and is public-owned.

Another additional finding comes down to how the relationships were described. Based on the short descriptions from HBK about the relationships to each of the sponsors; it appears as if
there is a nearly spot-on view on where the parties have each other. To exemplify it; the sharing of contacts and adding values in terms of new business/sponsor contacts between HBK and Beta seems to be a key factor from both parties. Anticimex’s way of seeing the network as a crucial part of the sponsorship agreement, together with the fact that HFAB has special needs and demands, compared to the other network members, are both noticed and described as characteristics of these relationships by Johansson at HBK. In this rather unconventional sense, the fit between HBK and its sponsors is extremely good.
5.1.6 Sponsee HK Drott

General Sponsorship
HK Drott has experienced a shift in how aware sponsors are of their motives, which makes Drott obligated to adjust its sponsorship strategy to what sponsors demand. Drott acknowledges a change from traditional sponsorship (shirt advertisements) to more activity based strategies, whereas networks with different designs are combined with activities where sponsors could benefit financially from the agreement. These activities which could be wining and dining are similar to those described by Bennett (2003), connected to one of the common sponsor objectives suggested by Shilbury et al. (2003). Drott also distinguishes between three different types of sponsors that requires different treatment. First it is the sponsors that want to create awareness of their company or products, connected to brand, which is commonly linked to sponsorship (e.g. Gordon & Cheah, 2014; Shank, 2005). Secondly, there are organisations that want to support the sport entity without further business objectives, such as the philanthropic motive described by Lamont and Dowell (2008). The third category includes the companies who wish to obtain something in return, which is the most common objective according to Shank (2005). As a result, the sponsorship strategies have developed into a very dynamic marketing tool, which requires careful treatment from both sport entity and sponsor (Shilbury et al., 2003).

Objectives
The objectives presented by Drott are to obtain financial funding and facilities to host its network gatherings, together with the objective to increase the attendance rate, which in extension generates financial returns. This is related to the objectives stated by Shilbury et al. (2003) whereas the sponsee seeks to obtain funds, resources and services. The providing of facility spaces from sponsors, together with products are both examples of services and in a sense, the following quote from Fallhagen exemplifies that services are important for Drott as well:

“We lower our costs through our sponsors” (Personal communication, Fallhagen, 2015-04-13).

Moreover, an increase of the attendance rate will improve Drott’s image and brand, which also are mentioned as common objectives for sponsees (Shilbury et al., 2003).

Approach
As presented in the objective section, Drott works with different objectives, which means that different approaches are used by the club. Since there is a need for financial sponsorship, Drott utilises the financial sponsorship approach to obtain pure monetary funds, as presented by Carrillat and d’Astous (2012). The club also uses the in-kind sponsorship approach (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012) in terms of facility use from sponsors and products from Maxi as examples. Although these financial objectives appear to hold great importance, it appears to be self-solving in terms of advertisements on shirts and signs at the arena. The in-kind approach is claimed to be worked with more actively, but the approach which is worked with most actively...
is the network approach as presented by Cobbs (2011). The fact that Drott works with King’s club, which is its own network, as well as the O’Learys cup which activates a number of companies in relation to the club, signals the emphasis on the network approach. It goes in line with the fact that Fallhagen speaks about the importance of adding value to the companies and optimising business opportunities for its network members, which is done through network activities. The usage of the network approach conforms to Olkkonen’s (2001) reasoning that active members could benefit from an agreement with network focus and Cobbs’s (2011) claim that the sport entity is responsible for the creation of such business promoting environment. Since Fallhagen explains that the club usually recommends the network as the first choice in sponsorship, it shows that Drott puts most emphasise upon this approach. It also signals that the club wishes to add new members constantly, which Cobbs (2011) means is the power of the network; constant addition of new members.

Outcomes
In terms of outcomes, Drott obtains financial funds from its sponsors from the traditional sponsorship activities such as shirt advertisements and signs, but also from network members. Since this is an objective and Drott has the power to dictate terms to great extent, the outcomes are plainly a reflection of objectives. The objective of being able to host network gatherings in the sponsors’ facilities is achieved to some extent, but the club is still forced to host some of its gatherings at the arena, which is not optimal.

Specific Relationship Sponsorship
The greater relationship focus has paid off and long-term relationships have helped improving the collaboration between sponsor and sponsee. This confirms the suggestions from Cornwell et al. (2001), who say that the process and information flow become faster and more efficient with time. Fallhagen’s quote exemplifies the inter-personal improvement:

“In my opinion, the relations have improved much during the past two-three years.”
(Personal communication, Fallhagen, 2015-04-13).

Many of the sponsors have former players at relevant positions, which simplifies the relationships, according to Fallhagen. This also signals the importance of inter-personal relations, as claimed by Morgan et al. (2014). The relationships with Maxi and Wohlin's AB appear to be built on philanthropic motives as described from both parties in the agreements. The sponsors’ way of putting down great effort, with Drott trying to giving something in return to the sponsors, so that win-win situations could be created signals a good and durable sponsorship agreement (Shank, 2005). In its relations, Drott’s focus upon sponsors with their hearts at the club could mean that it is easier to create a sponsorship environment where non-economic factors are the ones with most focus and thus building relationships of high quality (Farrella & Quester, 2005).

The fact that Drott manages to attract people to its network gatherings and activities signals that these are chosen and formed in a way which is appreciated by its sponsors. By doing so, the sponsee boosts the image where non-economic factors are prioritised in sponsorship
relationships and by doing so, economic satisfaction should follow, since economic satisfaction appears to derive from non-economic satisfaction (Farrely & Quester, 2005). This should, in turn, lead to long-term partnerships with positive financial and brand related outcomes (Farrely & Quester, 2005; Cornwell et al., 2001), which in a sense appears to be the reality, since Fallhagen claims that most of Drott’s sponsors are returning ones. The most recent addition to attract sponsors is the cup which is hosted in collaboration with O’Learys. By letting the company host this cup, Drott provides the O’Learys with the possibility to signal its fit with the club and thus conforming to the suggestion from Speed and Thompson (2000), saying that the sponsee should do so.
5.1.7 Sponsor ICA Maxi Flygstaden

**General Sponsorship**

ICA Maxi Flygstaden’s sponsorship strategy is supposed to reach large target groups of consumers. Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) declare sponsorship marketing as an excellent approach to provide access and attracting an audience, which supports Maxi’s strategic intent. Maxi’s involvement in sponsorship is always based on short-term contracts, however, the organisation goes for long-term effects such as increased brand awareness, which Cornwell et al. (2001) suggest. Moreover, Maxi’s sponsorship involvement is controlled from the local store, which highly impacts the selection process of sponsors. As a result, there is a thought behind the sponsorship agreements that Maxi engages in, which is supported by Meenaghan and Shipley (1999), claiming carefully selecting sponsees as significant for advantage creating. Moreover, sponsees are often selected based on geographic location. Ica Maxi is a nationally established organisation with 77 supermarkets, however, sponsorship is controlled locally. Therefore a large organisation is adapting its strategy to local sports clubs; a strategy usually used for SMEs (Crader & Santomier, 2011; Sephapo et al., 2014).

Although there are explicit objectives in its agreement with elite clubs, Maxi lacks an evaluation strategy. This suggests that its strategic approach to sponsorship could be improved in order to obtain all the benefits, in line with Gordon and Cheah’s (2014) theory regarding clear objectives.

**Objectives**

Thjömöe et al. (2002) distinguish between three different sponsorship objectives whereas Maxi’s displays a combination of two. Maxi’s strategy is characterised by achieving awareness but also supporting a good cause. This could be compared to the following strategies: “Sponsorship is giving financial support to an individual, organization, or activity to support its good work without regard to whether or not we receive publicity” and “support for an organization, event or individual in order to get the firm’s or brand’s name in front of the public” (Thjömöe et al., 2002, p.7). Therefore both a goodwill and an awareness creating cause, with the intention of attracting customers, are used by the supermarket. This agrees with Shank’s (2005) definition of indirect sponsorship objectives, focusing on changed long-term behaviour. Moreover, Maxi’s philanthropic intentions are common for local agreements, where minor sport entities are sponsored (Lamont & Dowel, 2008), therefore fitting into the relationship Maxi has with smaller clubs. Further such strategies are dismissed by other authors that acknowledge a change into more business related objectives (Copeland et a., 1996), although not in the case of Maxi. While smaller agreements are dealt with, with minor interest, the objectives for the elite clubs are more explicit. However, the relationships are not differing greatly besides the explicitly expressed objectives, which Bengtsson states:

“There is no distinct difference between the sponsees; they are pretty much dealt with in the same way” (Personal communication, Bengtsson, 2015-05-05).
Approach
Sponsorship could take strict monetary form, as well as supporting sports clubs with products from the supermarket. This is supported by Chien et al. (2011) who claim that companies’ sponsorship portfolios have developed into a more complex design. Therefore, a combination of financial sponsorship and official sponsorship is applicable to Maxi’s sponsorship strategy (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012; 2013). This combination, which Maxi uses, ought to be common in sponsorship agreements (Cornwell et al., 2005). By sponsoring Drott with bags of goods from the supermarket, Maxi also engages in official sponsorship which, according to Cornwell et al. (2005), could be the demonstration of products. By sponsoring local minor sports clubs financially, Maxi targets consumers close to the supermarket. However, Maxi demands something in return, which could be the clubs hosting an event at the supermarket. By doing so, Maxi desires to create a close connection between the clubs and the supermarket on a general level, in line with Carrillat and d’Astous (2012) reasoning regarding official sponsorship. In general, the financial and official sponsorship are the most common approaches used by Maxi. However, there is an understanding of the need for adaption in terms of which level a sponsee is playing at and Bengtsson’s quote illuminates this:

“If a team is in a top-flight division, it might become more expensive to sponsor it.”
(Personal communication, Bengtsson, 2015-05-05).

Outcomes
Maxi’s sponsorship strategy is based on awareness creating and goodwill and no evaluation format is used. The lacking of both objectives and desired outcomes is the exact opposite of what Nickell et al. (2011) claim to be important in sponsorship work, but continuing involvement in Drott suggests that Maxi is satisfied anyway and puts a question mark to this claim. Companies focusing much on memorisation have a problem when it comes to measure outcomes from sponsorship activities (Herrmann et al., 2014). Such problems are experienced by Maxi, due to the organisation’s uncertainty regarding actual outcomes from sponsorship, which could be a reason why an evaluation format is not used.

Specific Relationship Sponsorship
Ica Maxi Flygstaden has sponsored Drott for two-three years. Before that, the contract was once terminated due to collaboration and trust issues, which explains that Maxi prioritises a good fit to some extent. Morgan et al. (2014) stress the importance of inter-personal relationships in order to achieve a good fit between organisations. Bengtsson also expresses that it is the representatives for the organisations that determine the quality of the interactions, which conforms the claim from Morgan et al. (2014). Moreover, the regular contact Maxi has with Drott could be the foundation of a high trust relationship, which is supported by Chadwick and Thwaites (2005) and Morgan et al. (2014), claiming that it is often the lack of regular contact that makes sponsorship fail.

Brand related congruence is also claimed as an important component in achieving a good fit (Reinard & Sitz, 2011; Alexander, 2008), which is not a priority for Maxi, nor a tangible product that is associable to the sponsors brand (Roy & Cornwell, 1999). In terms of signaling a good
fit externally, Maxi’s focus lies upon sport in general and that it is good on a societal level, but not to specific sport clubs. Instead, Maxi assumes that many of the participants from the sponsored event choose Maxi as their supermarket which, according to Olsen and Thjömőe (2011), could determine a good fit between sponsor and sponsee. However, the lack of a measurement tool in the evaluation process of Maxi’s objectives makes it difficult to determine if the organisation benefits from the relationship with Drott. Moreover, Maxi is not the first company that experience such difficulties, since this is a common problem (Copeland, et al., 1996).
5.1.8 Case O’Learys

General Sponsorship
As the sponsorship is two-sided for O’Learys, it is more complex than just locally or centrally decided and as Petersson explains it, there is much to bear in mind when it comes to strategic thinking. Since the sponsorship process in general is explained to be a part of the marketing and communication mix, O’Learys has minimised the risk of unclear objectives and thus prevent costly mistakes (Papadimitriou et al., 2008). At large, the process seems to be in line with the five-step list (e.g. Cornwell, 1995; Clark, 1996) and in the case of O’Learys, there is great emphasis upon the objective and the evaluation step.

Objectives
The clear objectives, which are stated to be a good thing, include one main thing: namely increased sales. In addition to increased sales, Petersson mentions visibility as well, which could be connected to raising awareness and thus meaning that O’Learys displays two of Shank’s (2005) suggested sponsor objectives. Nothing with philanthropic connection is mentioned by Petersson, which means that Lamont and Dowell’s (2008) argument for local contexts is not applicable here, while Copeland et al.’s (1996) argument for pure business minded acting within sponsorship is. At large, O’Learys should be categorised as a sponsor with the objective of increasing sales.

Approach
As mentioned by Petersson, O’Learys has a versatile sponsorship approach, where the official sponsorship approach could be seen together with Drott (in form of the cup) and with Allsvenskan. These close connections ought to be detected by consumers to such extent that the agreements should be labelled official sponsorship, as described by Cornwell et al. (2005) and Carrillat and d’Aoust (2012; 2013). Financial and in-kind sponsorship are used as well and the official sponsorship comes together with the financial, as described by described by Carrillat and Astous (2012; 2013). Although these two general approaches are used, Petersson describes that O’Learys strives to be ahead its time; meaning that LED-signs and shirt advertisements are of low priority, which is exemplified with the following statement:

“We do not involve in the old type of sponsorship and the focus on visibility is in the past.”
(Personal communication, Petersson, 2015-04-23).

Instead, the focus lies on attracting customers via sponsorship without spending any money. The way which O’Learys uses its sponsorship has similarities to the network approach, since the sponsees’ members and relatives receive discounts and thus choose O’Learys over other restaurants. It does not really match what Cobbs (2011) and Walliser (2001) argue for in terms of new members and how they add value and form a cycle. However, it does mean that if the sponsorship goes beyond the dyadic relationship between sponsor and sponsee, which Walliser (2001) and Olkkonen (2001) link to the network approach. Since Petersson explicitly speaks about how this approach creates nexuses of new and returning customers, in the segments of both B2C and B2B, it could be connected to the network approach. By being successful for
O’Learys, it suggests that B2C companies could benefit from this approach, which is more commonly linked to B2B companies (Cobbs, 2011).

Outcomes
As a part of the five-step list of the process (e.g. Shilbury et al., 2003; Shank, 2005), evaluation of a sponsorship agreement should be done. In the case of O’Learys, it starts even before the agreement is signed. As Petersson stresses the fact that desired outcomes, which often times are financially related, are secured before O’Learys enters a deal, the evaluation and measurement process should be considered to be well-developed. The fact that statistics on how much in-kind sponsorship generates, means that the problem of empirical evidence connected to in-kind sponsorship (Carrillat & D’Astous, 2013) is wrong in the case of O’Learys. Even though it is not mentioned by Petersson, it is clear that outcomes are related to brand as well, since he says that O’Learys becomes the natural choice for its sponsees. This makes it closely connected to sponsor identification, which Nicholls et al. (1999) claim to be an outcome of sponsorship. It could also be linked to brand equity in the sense that it does change the consumers’ buying behaviour, which is claimed by Yasin et al. (2012). The fact that it appears to have such effect on its consumers’ memorisation and willingness to choose the restaurant could also be that it is a natural brand in the sport setting, which Herrmann et al. (2014) claim to be a factor for it.

Specific Relationship Sponsorship
The relationship between O’Leartys and Drott is fairly new (approximately one year), which could be a reason for the indifferent perception of the sponsorship agreement, from Petersson’s point of view (Cornwell et al., 2001). The fit appears to hold little importance for Petersson and O’Learys in general, since the core argument is entirely business related. The following quote signals the indifferent attitude regarding Drott as an entity:

“Drott is not a major brand and from our point of view, it might as well be a minor entity somewhere in the woods in terms of sponsorship” (Personal communication, Petersson, 2015-04-30).

In terms of fit, neither the arguments from Morgan et al. (2014) regarding inter-personal communication, nor the brand related ones from Roy and Cornwell (2004) are touched upon by Petersson. As an external part, there is a fit between O’Learys and Drott as Olson and Thjömöe (2011) describe. This connection is done, since both organisations target people who are interested in sports. However, the fact that Petersson, who displays and explains so much about O’Learys sophisticated strategic plan in sponsorship, fails to address the importance of fit and yet enjoys success in its sponsorship activities, makes it questionable whether the fit as presented by Morgan et al. (2014) and Roy and Cornwell (2004) really holds any importance.

The objectives for the specific relationship with Drott are not differing from objectives with other entities majorly, thus making it fall into the category of increasing sales objective. The demands from O’Learys show that its sponsees are expendable and therefore pure business creators, which Copeland, et al. (1996) suggest. However, the local context in which O’Learys Halmstad operates in could, according to Lamont and Dowell (2008), mean that there are traces
of philanthropic motives as well, but this claim is not applicable in this case. There is no explicit interest in Drott’s network from Petersson, but the way he sees the business opportunities connected to the sponsee has apparent resemblance with the network approach presented by Olkkonen (2001) and Walliser (2001). Since the only explicit profit from the relationship with Drott comes from its other sponsors and then connected to O’Learys cup, the network approach and official sponsorship are to be considered the most prominent in O’Learys involvement with Drott. Although O’Learys is involved in B2B as well, it is not entirely the focus for the company. As a result, there is evidence that the network approach could be successful in the B2C segment as well, even though Cobbs (2011) suggests that B2B companies benefit most from it.

In the relationship between Drott and O’Learys, the outcomes determine whether a new agreement is agreed upon or not. Since a new deal has just been sorted out, where a certain amount is guaranteed, O’Learys is allegedly satisfied with the financial part of the relationship with Drott. Since this appears to be all that really matters, economic satisfaction is the only relevant component of those who Farrelly and Quester (2005) claim to be included in the sponsorship relationship. Petersson shows clear evidence of actual financial returns connected to sponsorship activities, hence proving that it is both measurable and effective. This stands contrary to the suggestions from Herrmann et al. (2014), who say that measurements of effectiveness mainly depends on customers, which is not the case here. Implicitly, Petersson’s claim regarding customer preferences tells that O’Learys brand has improved in Hamstad as well. The positive outcomes in terms of brand could be related to the fit between O’Learys and Drott, which ought to be good according to the definition of fit where the respondents’ attitudes toward the pairing (Speed & Thompson, 2000). Renard and Sitz (2011) point at the importance of fit if brand related outcomes are to be achieved, which has been done in the case of O’Learys, since it has become “the natural choice of restaurant” for its sponsees and people/companies close to it.
5.1.9 Sponsor Wohlins AB

**General Sponsorship**
The foundation of the sponsorship activities in Wohlins AB’s marketing portfolio is based on personal relationships to a great extent. The company is involved in sponsorship agreements in youth football and elite handball, whereas the sponsored clubs are Snöstorps/nyhem FF and HK Drott. Regarding different sponsorship aims, Wohlins AB is most concerned about supporting a good cause without any thought of corporative publicity, which characterises one general sponsorship strategy according to Thjömöe et al. (2002). Today, about half of the marketing budget is designated to sponsorship activities, which signals a high involvement. Looking at sponsorship as an exchange relationship (Copeland et al., 1996), is probably the most suitable argument for Wohlins AB that, through personal relationships and exchanges of services, find reasons to engage in sponsorship. Wohlins AB is a local organisation engaging in local sponsorship which, according to Crader and Santomier, (2011) and Sephapo et al. (2014), is common for SMEs. The following quote from the CEO of Wohlins AB sums it up in general:

“It is Roger’s intention to support the local sports associations”
*(Personal communication, Tomas Wohlin, 2015-05-07).*

**Objectives**
Wohlins AB’s sponsorship objectives refutes Copeland et al. (1996) suggestion that philanthropic sponsorship aims are outdated. Furthermore, Lamont and Dowell’s (2008) claim that such strategies, based on goodwill, are common in a local context, is easily applied to Wohlins AB. Moreover, Shank’s (2005) suggestion that sponsorship objectives are based on short or long-term focus is dismissed by Wohlins AB’s motives, which have no connection to a timeframe. In general, there are no clear objectives to make sponsorship profitable in the company’s current situation, thus making it likely to becoming costly mistakes (Papadimitriou et al., 2008). Looking at the common objectives, suggested by Shilbury et al. (2003), the most appropriate objectives to describe Wohlins AB’s strategy are employee and community relationship marketing, together with philanthropy. These main philanthropic and non-economic objectives are further highlighted by the quote from Wohlin regarding a successful sponsorship:

“When both the sport club and we are successful.” *(Personal communication, Roger Wohlin, 2015-05-07).*

The quote says nothing about the specific outcomes or economy related to the agreement, but rather that success is strived for and not only for the company, but as much for the sport entity. The indifference in terms of sponsorship objectives goes in line with one of the definitions presented by Thjömöe et al. (2002, p. 7) which is the following: “Sponsorship is giving financial support to an individual, organization, or activity to support its good work without regard to whether or not we receive publicity”. By displaying such non-business minded objectives, where the sports clubs should benefit from sponsorship; Wohlins AB’s objectives are placed under the category of philanthropy.
**Approach**

The sponsorship approach used by Wohlins AB is strictly financial. However, Wohlins AB’s philanthropic objectives makes it unnecessary to engage in official sponsorship because the company does not need an increased awareness, which often comes with official partnership (Carrillat & d’Astous, 2012; 2013). Furthermore, it is not unusual that the company acts as game host for Drott, which is a form of official partnership, due to its close connection between sponsor and sponsee (Cornwell et al., 2005). Moreover, the company declares sponsorship as irrelevant when it comes to attracting new customers which also strengthens the companies approach to only financially support local sport entities.

**Outcomes**

Wohlins AB’s outcomes from sponsorship involvement are not concrete, which should be related to the lack of concrete objectives (e.g. Papadimitriou et al., 2008; Gordon & Cheah, 2014). The company claims to be successful in increasing the brand awareness through the official partnership with Drott, which is a common outcome (Donlan, 2014), however, how much such awareness gives the company in practice is unclear. Moreover, the network approach, which is not a priority for Wohlins AB, has created one business opportunity and therefore increased the financial returns.

**Specific Relationship Sponsorship**

Wohlins AB’s personal interest in HK Drott creates a special link between the organisations. The organisations’ connection is therefore based on personal relationships, which constitute the relationship fit. Morgan et al. (2014) claim that relationship fit builds around inter-personal relationships, is highly based on trust and communication. It is obvious that the organisations have high trust for one another and communicate regularly, due to that, Wohlins AB never experienced any collaboration issues or felt neglected. Hence, a mutual trust is existing between Drott and Wohlins AB, which Farrelly and Quester (2005) claim determine a relationship of high quality. Furthermore, Wohlins AB’s clear philanthropic motives make other variables than inter-personal fit less important, which supports Olsen and Thjömöe’s (2011) opinion that relationship fit can take many forms. As a result, there are no demands for economic satisfaction, which is very important for a good fit according to Farrelly and Quester (2005) nor brand related factors (Reinard & Sitz, 2011; Alexander, 2008). The following quote from the company’s CEO signals what an objective, non-personal involved part of Wohlins AB, thinks about the agreement with Drott and really highlights the focus on inter-personal relations rather than other factors:

“*It has not given us anything whatsoever*”(Personal communication, Tomas Wohlin, 2015-05-07).

The company’s membership in HK Drott’s network suggests that a network approach is utilised by the company. Wohlin tries to regularly engage in the network gatherings, but not for reasons to make business. Instead it is the attractive lectures and eventual meetings with stakeholder that attracts the company. Cobbs (2011) proposes that networks are made to create an
environment where companies can do business with each other, which Wohlns AB is not interested. This could depend on that the value of the network lies in its members (Walliser, 2003) and there are currently no members attractive for Wohlns AB to do business with, according to Wohlin. Regarding Cobbs’s (2011) statement that the network approach is based by members providing value to sponsors, indicates that Wohlns AB’s sponsorship strategy is not characterised by such an approach.
5.1.10 Findings of Within-Case Analysis Case 2
Just as in case 1, case 2 needs to be concluded and summarised in form of a table which will be followed by a short description of the different factors connected to sponsors and sponsee.

Table 6. A comprehensive view of the within-case analysis from case 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor/Name</th>
<th>Drott (sponsee)</th>
<th>O’Learys</th>
<th>Wohlins AB</th>
<th>ICA Maxi Flygstaden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective/s</td>
<td>Obtaining funds</td>
<td>Increase sales and implicit brand objectives</td>
<td>Philanthropic</td>
<td>Philanthropic and brand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome/s</td>
<td>Funding and facilities</td>
<td>Increased sales and brand related</td>
<td>Brand related</td>
<td>Brand related and philanthropic outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of sponsorship process</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
<td>Unstructured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship focus</td>
<td>Inter-personal relations and economic satisfaction</td>
<td>Economic satisfaction</td>
<td>Inter-personal relations and personal interest</td>
<td>Inter-personal relations and organisational values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted market and type of company</td>
<td>Local focus</td>
<td>International company but semi-local, privately owned</td>
<td>Local company, privately owned</td>
<td>National company but local, privately owned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As well as in case one, the objectives have been categorised in the three categories mentioned in connection to the analytical model. In case two, the main focus has been philanthropic objectives for two sponsors. Drott’s objective is obtaining funds in all kinds of forms, while O’Learys is the organisation with an explicit desire to generate financial profit. Mentionable here is that there are three levels of clearness in objectives; O’Learys with extremely clear, Maxi with objectives which are somewhat clear, but rather vague, and Wohlins AB, whose objectives are described as peripheral from a business point of view. In case two, all respondents claim to use the financial approach, three use the in-kind and official sponsorship, and the network approach, which Drott focuses on, is only claimed to be used by O’Learys. Worth commenting upon is the fact that all sponsors could be considered official sponsors; O’Learys
with its widely appreciated cup, Maxi with its presence and goodie bags at each home game, and Wohlins AB with its constant presence at the home games and strong connection with players working there and personal involvement.

Outcomes are related to objectives for three of the four organisations, but for Wohlins AB, the outcomes differ from objectives. Since Wohlins AB involves in sponsorship mainly due to personal involvement and philanthropic reasons, the objectives are not really established and worked with and the outcomes are of low importance to the respondent. The other three organisations report outcomes which go in line with their objectives and approaches. In the specific case of O’Learys, it should be said that outcomes are predetermined, since the company does not agree upon terms where outcomes are somewhat insecure. With O’Learys, an additional outcome is reported as well, however implicitly in the form of the restaurant becoming the natural choice of restaurant and thus being brand related.

In terms of relationship focus, all sponsors but O’Learys have claimed to put much focus on inter-personal relations. The focus for O’Learys is pure economic satisfaction, which connects to the objective of increased sales and the early assured outcomes. Maxi and Wohlins AB, who claim philanthropic objectives are, beside the inter-personal relations, focusing on personal interest and organisational values. In terms of targeted customer, this seems to matter little in this case, since Maxi and Wohlins AB are rather similar in terms of objectives and relationship focus and yet they have different targeted customers. All sponsors are privately owned, but display different ways of working with sponsorship. However, the fact that O’Learys is an international company with just semi-local focus might hold importance in its way of neglecting the local connection to Drott, which is named as something important, by both Maxi and Wohlins AB.

The descriptions of the relationships were described in case 2 and findings from the analysis are related to these. Based on the short descriptions from Drott about the relationships to each of the sponsor; it appears as if the parties know each other well in terms of sponsorship standpoint. In the description from Drott, it is clear that the sponsee sees Maxi as a sponsor who wants to achieve win-win situations and works with it accordingly. With O’Learys, the sponsorship relationship is described to be purely business related and return on investments should always be delivered. Drott appears to recognise the passion in which Wohlins AB engages in its sponsorship with the club and values this authentic passion highly. The descriptions from the club show great similarity to the viewpoint from the sponsor, and in that sense, the fit between Drott and its sponsors is great.
5.2 Cross-Case Analysis

Objectives
The objectives of the included empirical sources differ extensively based on some aspects. However, it is possible to detect certain patterns among respondents as well. The authors identify clear patterns, in terms of objectives between the two sponsees, who explicitly want to obtain funds through sponsorship agreements. While Drott seeks all types of funds, HBK displays greater focus upon financial funds, which often comes together with new members through the network approach. The objectives of sponsors from case 1 have a pattern of increased sales (Anticimex & Beta), while case 2 sponsors philanthropically want to support the sport entity to a greater extent (Wohlns AB & ICA Maxi). Although it should be said that the objectives of increased sales and philanthropy are present in both cases. Moreover, brand building which many authors have stated as a common objective, is neglected by nearly all respondents in both cases; at least explicitly. Furthermore, the respondents who focused on improving brand related objectives (ICA Maxi, O'Learys & HFAB), were active at B2C markets, while all companies try to increase sales through sponsorship activities are present at B2B markets. Hence, building a strong brand through sponsorship seems to be more important for businesses reaching for a bigger target group, while B2B firms are eager to increase sales. Moreover, corporations with a philanthropic mind-set use a combination of goodwill and brand building in two cases (ICA Maxi & HFAB). This leaves Wohlns AB as the only respondent with a pure philanthropic motive with its roots in an emotional and inter-personal connection to the sponsee.

Approach
As spoken about by both sponsees, there has been a clear shift in the approach to sponsorship. Both sponsees share the essence in approach; obtaining financial means. Although Drott needs services in form of the in-kind approach, this is merely a way for the club to balance its costs in form of paying rents for facilities where network gatherings could be held and thus having a financial root. However, the network approach is the approach which is described to be worked most actively with by the sponsees. They both conclude that this is a way of creating desired win-win situations in a practical way and that it is needed in order to stay attractive for the sponsors. Both of the sponsees seem to emphasise the network equally much, however, their sponsors do not really express the same focus.

Looking at the sponsors connected to HBK, they all mention the network, whereof two are sponsors plainly due to the greatness and existence of it. The third sponsor, HFAB, means that it should be good to attend more network gatherings, but there is little interest among the people within the company and that they are not adapted to the sponsor’s business. Compared to Drott and its sponsors; a great difference in terms of how much focus the sponsors pay to the network is displayed. For the sponsors connected to Drott, none explicitly spoke much or expressed the greatness and importance of the network. O’Learys, with the most business-minded approach, displayed interest in the fact that some gatherings take place at its restaurant and thus securing a return on the sponsorship investment. The other two sponsors cared nothing about the network, in terms of business, which could be explained by the philanthropic objective.
Moreover, the representative from Maxi did not even seem to know about the network’s existence, which signals that Drott should work more with its network if the emphasis should be so heavily directed towards the network approach. Interestingly enough, it should be highlighted that the pure B2B company in the case of Drott had least business-minded intentions with its approach and extremely little interest in the network. In the contrary, O’Learys, as a main B2C business shows most inclination towards the network approach. However, the use of network approach is directed at the B2B segment and thus neutralises the B2C main focus from O’Learys.

The fact that Drott uses all three mentioned approaches could explain why the sponsors are not displaying the same focus on the network as in the case of HBK. In both cases, it is clear to see that sponsors use the same approaches as the sponsee, which means that the sponsors in the case of HBK utilise financial and network focus to the greatest extent. While the sponsors in the case of Drott utilise and speak about all three of the approaches (official being off the record here), with least focus on the network approach and greatest of the in-kind approach. The authors see a clear discrepancy here and believe that Drott, if the club wants to highlight its network greater, should use the in-kind approach in certain cases where services or facilities could be the only useful thing obtained, just as HBK does.

Outcomes
Both sponsees display outcomes connected to objectives, where funding comes first. Drott also presents outcomes in terms of facilities to host network gatherings to some extent. Another outcome is connected to the networks and the number of members. Drott has approximately 100 members in its network and HBK has approximately 200, a number which could be a decisive factor in sponsors choosing process, since sponsors such as Beta has expressed that the more members, the better it is. However, both sponsees have explained that the gatherings seldom have any vacant slots, which means that this could be worked with more in order to gather more companies which could conduct business with each other.

The sponsor outcomes vary more and they appear to be closely linked to objectives and approach. In the case of HBK, the two sponsors who had the objectives of increasing sales with network approach, the outcomes are said to be increased sales and new customers. The same results goes for O’Learys in the case of Drott, where the same outcomes are exhibited, together with an implicit positive brand outcome. These three are also the sponsors where the objectives have been the clearest and where evaluations are or could be made thoroughly. These are also the sponsors who have the same, low interest in the actual club they sponsors, but have expressed the pure business-minded intentions and structure in the sponsorship work. As far as customer segment goes, these three are all in the B2B segment, but O’Learys would arguably be deeper in the B2C segment. However, they are all privately owned and present either nationwide or worldwide, although with a local sponsorship budget.

The other three sponsors, who share similar objectives and to some extent approaches, are displaying somewhat similar outcomes as well. In the case of Drott, both sponsors report increased awareness without using any concrete evaluation tools, together with philanthropic
outcomes such as goodwill in terms of public perception. This is linkable to HFAB in the case of HBK, whose objectives were not entirely explicit and concrete, but had philanthropic and brand related fragments in them. The outcomes for HFAB are said to be brand related as well as some vague, non-concrete ones. This is similar to Maxi and Wohlins AB, who could not really show for any of the outcomes, but merely reported perceived outcomes without knowing. The three companies have different customer segments, with two B2C and one B2B company. They are all local companies in a sense, since Wohlins AB and HFAB are only present in Halmstad, but with Maxi being an independent store within a chain, it could arguably be considered a local actor as well. This is the only concrete similarity between the three sponsors, which could be an explanation for the use of sponsorship and it also conforms to the argument by Lamont and Dowell (2008) who claim that philanthropic use of sponsorship still exists among local actors.

Specific Sponsorship Relationships
All interviewed sponsors have expressed a connection to the sponsees based on regular communication and exchange of information. Both sponsees work hard to establish well-functioning relationships and to create an individually adjusted agreement for each sponsor. However, among the respondents, only two companies (Beta and HFAB) have spoken about the importance of fit based on external attitudes. This suggests that much of the signalling of fit in terms of organisational values, products, and brands is neglected, thus meaning that the significant interest in this part of sponsorship is overseen to a mentionable extent in these two cases. The subject of signalling a good fit has been touched upon by nearly all respondents, but only HFAB and Beta stressed that it actually matters to a mentionable extent before entering a sponsorship agreement. More specifically described, HFAB was the only sponsor where the fit was interesting and where a real attempt to define and describe what the organisation wanted to avoid in terms of sports and image. The other sponsors shared the view that it is good to sponsor a local sports team, but did not really spoke more about it more than that. The sponsees, however, described their situations as ones where pickiness is not an option. The representative from HBK explicitly said that the club could not really afford to pass an opportunity to sign a sponsor, while the representative at Drott spoke about the stress and pressure of renewing sponsorship agreements after the season; signalling a position where the club cannot set demands on who it should be sponsored by.

The majority of the sponsors in both cases expressed a significant interest in personal relationships to the sponsee rather than organisational congruence. Moreover, all respondents were in contact with the sponsee several times per week, which enhances the importance of collaboration and trust as variables for relationship fit. Although, the only organisations whereas inter-personal relationships explained fit were Wohlins AB and Maxi. While the representatives at Wohlins AB had an emotional connection to Drott, Maxi engages more in trust and collaboration. However, Anticimex, Beta, and O’Learys economic focus is often based on negotiations and how well their demands are approached by the sport entity. Hence, the inter-personal relationships cannot be neglected even if the economic satisfaction is prioritised as the crucial factor to determine relationship fit. In addition to the obvious factor of economic satisfaction, inter-personal relationships determine relationship fit from the sponsee’s
perspective. Thus, the authors noticed anything but a standardised procedure in the treatment process of sponsors. The sponsees instead showed a great interest in living up to the specific requirements and objectives of every sponsor. The inter-personal relationship was therefore, together with the economic focus, of huge significance for sponsees to establish a good fit between organisations. Relationship fit could therefore be improved and strategically managed from the sport entity.

Both cases have involved insights from both sponsor and sport entity. By considering both sides of a sponsorship agreement, the authors spotted interesting findings regarding how corporations work with relationship fit. The fact that the sport entity actually could create and manage fit is a dimension not mentioned in sponsorship research. The authors interpret that self-managing fit possibly creates a shared view of what each partner desires and therefore a consistent perception of one’s sponsorship partner. Hence, the authors suggest that relationship fit could be built around partners’ understanding of each other.
6. Conclusion and implications

In this chapter, the authors will present the conclusions from this study and connect them to the research question from the introduction chapter. This will be followed by implications, both theoretical and practical ones and suggestions for future research within the field.

6.1 Conclusion

The research question from introduction stands as follows:

*How does the sponsorship process form and how do sponsors/sponsees work with the sponsorship relationships?*

As has been the case for the entire thesis, the first part of the question refers to sponsorship in general, whilst the second part of the question refers to one specific relationship between sponsor and sponsee.

To answer the first part of the question, clear patterns have been detected among the respondents. The sponsorship process has been detected to be formed in one out of two options, whereas structured is the first and unstructured the second. From previous research, there have been claims that the sponsorship process has become more professional and structured while unstructured sponsorship work is avoided and philanthropic aims have grown extinct. These two different routes have shown different impact in terms of the three main parts of the process: objectives, approach, and outcomes. The sponsors displaying a structured process have presented clear and explicit objectives, approaches which have been chosen accordingly, and clear measurements of outcomes. Among the sponsors displaying an unstructured process, less or no clear objectives have been spoken of, various approaches used arbitrarily, and little reported interest in measuring the actual outcomes. A similarity between the structured and the unstructured process has been found as well. In both cases, the sponsorship contracts are signed on a one-year basis; suggesting that companies do not want to commit their long-term future to sponsees. This goes against much of the previous research; proposing that sponsorship should be regarded as a long-term strategic tool and be most efficient when used accordingly (e.g. Cornwell, et al., 2001; Farrelly et al., 2005).

The conclusions from the different processes are that those who have chosen the structured route are the ones presenting tangible, positive outcomes from the process. In contrary, those who display an unstructured process are struggling to pinpoint the effectiveness and tangible outcomes of sponsorship. In terms of tangibility, none of the structured sponsors have spoken about brand, which could be related to the measurement problem of such outcomes. However, two of the unstructured sponsors spoke little/implicitly about brand in connection to sponsorship; meaning that much of previous sponsorship research was inapplicable due to its strong link to branding. The ones utilising a structured process also appeared to focus more upon the business opportunities “behind the scenes” of sponsorship; namely networking opportunities, rather than the actual activity of sponsoring a sport entity. In a sense, the sponsorship in terms of displaying one’s sign or logo somewhere is a mere requirement to be involved in the “real business making activities”. This has also been noticed by the sponsees,
who reported that they work increasingly with their networks and thus suggesting that the network approach connected to sponsorship will grow more important in the upcoming years.

A finding which is not discussed extensively in theory is how different the process could be formed based on the target market. The authors detected patterns between the B2B and B2C markets (table 5-6), whereas B2B companies present patterns of a structured process with measurable targets to a greater extent than B2C companies. The explicit focus was to make profit and benefit from the agreement financially, at least for three out of four B2B companies (O’Learys included). In the contrary, patterns for studied B2C companies suggest the usage unstructured processes; characterised by intangible objectives and outcomes. Companies within this category displayed philanthropic mind-sets, but still had certain demands to obtain something in return. However, these demands seemed to have little importance, due to the absence of measurements and evaluations.

The second part of the question has involved the sponsees more and there are interesting results connected to how sponsors/sponsees work with sponsorship relationship. Since much of the previous research has emphasised the increasing importance of signalling a good (or bad) relationship fit between sponsee and sponsor towards an audience, one could think that this was discussed by the respondents in this thesis as well. However, respondents have spoken about the positive signals of sport sponsorship in general, but only two sponsors have attached mentionable interest to this aspect of the fit to the specific sponsor or specific entities in general. The two sponsors who have spoken of it as a mere requirement to avoid signalling a bad fit due to bad values and not in terms of good fit due to corresponding values, as mentioned by scholars.

Sponsors and sponsees highlight inter-personal relationships as something significant for how they work with sponsorship relationships. Hence, the relationships between people is treated as an excellent foundation for a good relationship fit. There are scholars who have emphasised this aspect of the fit (e.g. Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005; Morgan et al., 2014), but the extent it was focused upon by the respondents suggests that it is underrepresented in existing theory and a subject for future attention. Not only did the sponsors display this focus, but sponsees as well. Moreover, sponsees worked explicitly with establishment of inter-personal relationships, which gave the sport entities possibilities to improve and control the relationship fit. The inter-personal aspect aside; greatest focus was put upon economic satisfaction, which is the most common focus in table 5 and 6. However, this aspect is said to be the main focus for three sponsors and matter to the sponsees as well, whilst the inter-personal relationships have been touched upon by all respondents and thus seem to hold equally or greater importance at large. Generally, it appears as if emphasis, in terms of fit, lies upon how it works internally or within the sponsorship agreement, rather than what is signalled externally.

In summary, the process appears to be formed either by brain (structure) or heart (unstructured), whereas those who choose brain clearly express their process and those choosing heart still claim to have used brain in combination with heart. The structured process seems to generate greater economic satisfaction, which holds greatest importance, while the unstructured process rarely show measurable results. However, unstructured companies’ relationships are not, as
suggested by scholars, about signalling a good fit between two brands, but rather based on the functionality between people from the sponsor and sponsee.

6.2 Implications
The implications of this thesis are divided into theoretical and practical implications. The theoretical implications provide further guidance for the research field of sport sponsorship. The implications for managers engaging in sport sponsorship will be discussed in terms of practical implications.

6.2.1 Theoretical implications
The theoretical framework of this thesis is built according to the process of sponsorship and its relationships. The measurement issue regarding the outcomes of sponsorship has been discussed in literature (Renard & Sitz, 2011; Dolphin, 2003; Gordon & Cheah, 2014). The results of this study confirm the measurement problems, but mainly related to intangible outcomes such as aspects of brand and awareness. Such outcomes were also highly underrepresented to be considered the most important factor for sponsorship success (Reinard & Sitz, 2011).

The sport sponsorship research field seldom distinguishes between B2C and B2B as has been proposed in this thesis. The authors of this thesis discovered some differences in processes depending on the target group, which need to be highlighted further in the literature. Hence, this study questions a generalisation of the sponsorship process between such markets. Moreover, the underrepresentation of the network approach in theory suggested by Cobbs (2011) is confirmed in this thesis, as half of the respondents expressed a significant interest in the sport entities’ networks.

The ambiguity regarding relationship fit confirms the study of Olson and Thjömoe (2011), which discovered a discrepancy in how scholars treat the topic. However, this study confirms Morgan et al. (2014), Chadwick and Thwaites (2005), and Farrelly and Quester (2005) attempts to concretise fit in terms of inter-personal relationships. Thus, trust, communication, and collaboration could be a good foundation of successful sponsorship agreements and a good relationship fit. Moreover, this study further confirms the work of Farrelly and Quester (2005), which expresses the importance of economic satisfaction as relationship fit. The authors also propose further understanding regarding relationship fit by focusing on the shared view of each other’s involvement in sponsorship. This could be a new way of looking at the sponsorship fit, namely how well the shared view of the sponsorship relationship corresponds between sponsor and sponsee.

6.2.2 Practical implications
Managers are often responsible for sponsorship decisions (Cornwell et al., 2001), making many of the practical implications angled to a managerial perspective. The findings of this thesis promote implementation processes in managers’ work to implement and evaluate sponsorship agreements. Furthermore, managers benefit from establishment of well-functioning inter-
personal relationships to the sponsorship partner. Communication is also highlighted as a significant factor for sponsorship success, since regular communication contributes to trust and creation of a good relationship fit. Furthermore, clearly stated objectives based on sponsorship involvement increase agreements’ likeliness to stimulate a return on investment. The importance of target group and how the sponsorship process is formed is another managerial implication, since managers need to consider this in their sponsorship strategy. The impact of the target group has, in this study, been detected as relevant for the choice of objectives, approach, and desired outcomes. Moreover, advice for sponsees is to get to know the sponsors and try to find new ways to work together. The needs of the sponsors are the most important factors for sponsees to consider, in order to retain and succeed within an agreement. In general, the sponsees reported eagerness to get to know the sponsors on a personal level, which signals the importance of inter-personal relationships.

6.3 Future research and limitations
Future research needs to highlight B2B markets, much due to sport sponsorship’s connection to responses from individual consumers and supporters. This study is limited to Swedish sports clubs and organisations based in Halmstad. More research is required to highlight differences between countries or level of sports teams. As the present study concerns an elite football and handball club in Sweden, further studies should focus on lower level leagues. The sport sponsorship literature today is highly characterised by major events and sports teams with large amounts of money involved. This thesis adds a new dimension by focusing on smaller scale agreements compared to other countries. Hence, the results of this study need to be confirmed by researchers active in other countries, different levels of sport leagues, and quantitatively. Much previous research has highlighted the importance of long-term sponsorship agreements for improved inter-personal relationships. However, this study has shown different results, where all agreements are annually revised and where long-term relationships do not, or only marginally, seem to benefit organisations. Hence, the authors of this thesis demand more research regarding specific sponsorship relationships and their development over time.

Only one public company was included in this study (HFAB). Since HFAB showed special sponsorship attributes compared to privately owned companies, the authors suggest further comparison between public and privately owned sponsors and their engagement in sponsorship. Finally, more studies need to focus on the process between sponsor and sponsee, which according to this study is extremely dynamic. Hence, this thesis also showed a possibility for sponsees to strategically create a fit between organisations, which is a finding that needs to be tested further, theoretically and empirically. The term relationship fit is still considered as highly ambiguous from the findings of this study. The authors therefore recommend other researchers to further discuss the topic and both qualitatively and quantitatively investigate/measure the relationship fit. Furthermore, the authors of this thesis propose more research regarding both sponsor and sponsee perceptions, in order to highlight both sides of an agreement.
References


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Appendix 1 - Interview guide

1. How important is sponsorship, in relation to your marketing activities?
2. In general, how do you work with sponsorship? Where is the decision made?
3. What do you want to achieve with your sponsorship? What is a successful sponsorship relationship, according to you?
4. How do you choose a sponsor/sponsee?
5. What are the main/most important factors in the process of choosing a sponsor/sponsee?
6. What does your relationship look like with the specific sponsor/sponsee?
7. How often do you communicate?
8. How long have you been sponsoring/sponsored and has the relationship changed over time?
9. What are your objectives and outcomes in the specific sponsorship relationship?
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