Can a team be given wings?

Hungarian ice hockey as a potential sponsorship platform for Red Bull

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Introduction

The phenomenon of sports sponsorship has been gaining ground at marketing departments throughout the world's companies, starting from SME's to large multinational corporations but sponsorships had existed 590 BC when successful competitors got rewarded by the Greek state at the Olympic Games (Smith, G. 2004). Sponsorships have since developed and had become a significant industry. Global sponsorship has been steadily growing over the past decade. Companies globally spent 62.7 billion US dollars as sponsorship only in 2017 which is an increase of over 4% form 2016 (IEG, 2018).

Motivation of the study

As a student-athlete, I have attended a number of sporting events and have been fortunate enough to not only be around professional sports organizations but to be a part of one. Since I started playing this sport a lot has changed, and this is due to the money invested in it. Sponsors about a decade ago started investing in the hope of getting a return on their investment back in the near future. By now this sport has emerged to be one of the six sports benefiting from a corporate taxing system where profitable companies have the option to financially support sports organization while in exchange tax incentives are given (NAV, 2017). It is important to note that these monetary benefits that sports organizations get are strictly regulated and can only be used for developmental purposes for youth sports and facility developments. As a result, a new generation of quality hockey players has grown up making the sport more competitive at the international level. Since this growth has just peeked in recent years, there is not enough research on the topic. I aim to gain an understanding of the value of ice hockey sponsorship in Hungary.
Purpose

This bachelors thesis intends to investigate sports sponsorship by looking at existing and possible costumers attitude toward ice hockey and Red Bull. The aim is to examine whether it would be a beneficial business decision for the company to enter a sponsorship contract in Hungary in ice hockey. To achieve this, I have looked at multiple factors that influence fan attitude toward the sponsor and compared the results of different sports to ice hockey. These are highlighted in the Theoretical chapter and the Results chapter.

The growth of this industry has been researched in past years, but there is a gap that needs to be filled. Most studies have focused on sports sponsorships on a universal scale. Meenaghan (2001), a notable figure in the research of sponsorships, has stated a need for more in-depth focus on a specific area instead of only looking at the big picture. In the light of this idea and other restrictions, the thesis was given boundaries.

Scope of the study

Due to the length of this thesis, there had to be a focus on a single sponsor, and it is perspective on sports sponsorships. As mentioned, the company chosen was Red Bull. To further narrow down the topic a single sport had to be chosen. This sport is ice hockey due to my connection to it and the dynamic growth of the Erste League, over the past years.

The Erste League, formerly known as Mol League, is a Hungarian based ice hockey championship with 11 teams competing from three countries, Hungary, Romania, and Austria. The organization has been growing the past years, both in viewership and in the quality of ice hockey. While in the last 11 years the three highest ranked teams have left the league, to compete in championships that are considered better, the growth remarks the promising future of Hungarian ice hockey. Total game attendance has grown from 54 581 over the course of eight seasons to above 100 000. While there is only an
increase of 6% of average attendance, because of the number of games, this digit has been steadily growing (Jégkorongblog, 2018).

Outline

This thesis consists of six significant chapters which is then broken down into multiple sections. The first chapter explains where sports sponsorship can be located in the marketing mix and discusses the objectives of it. It also defines it and explains the categories which are essential since the thesis will only cover team sports sponsorships. The last part then discusses the possible drawbacks. Chapter 2 then continues with the hypothesis. Chapter 3 reviews the methodological approach is taken and reviews both the qualitative and quantitative research done in this study. The fourth Chapter then analyzes the practical problem and evaluates the responses from the research. Following this, the last chapter concludes the findings and limitations and area for future research.
Theoretical Background

Companies often choose sponsorships because of its ability to influence brand switching (Meenaghan, 2001) and also the ability to create first-time purchases (Walliser, 2003). It has also been proven that sponsorships can improve brand awareness (Levin, Joiner & Cameron, 2001). Companies that have been able to build awareness but are aiming to turn it into higher sales can also choose sponsorship as a tool of marketing with the aim of building a better brand image (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999) or better brand loyalty (Levin, Beasley, & Gamble, 2004).

Besides being profitable for most companies to enter sports sponsorship, it provides an opportunity to sports organizations, and are according to Walraven (2013) is a major pillar for growth and professionalism in the world of global entertainment business of sports. Sports sponsorship account to 68-80% of global sponsorship revenue (Kelly et al., 2016).

Defining Sponsorship

The foundation of sponsorship is compliance between two parties known as the sponsored property or sponsee and the sponsor (Walraven, 2013). Meenaghan (1983, p. 9): described it as "....sponsorship can be regarded as the provision of assistance either financial or in-kind to an activity by a commercial organization for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives". Such an agreement cannot be mentioned without laying down the basics of the exchange theory, which includes two majors tenets (Crompton, 2004). According to the first tenet, the two parties have many assets to exchange but the ones exchanged must be equally valuable to both side of the agreement. (Kim, Long & James, 2011). These assets may include building a better brand image, or better brand loyalty or even a rise in sales for the sponsor. In exchange, the sponsored organization usually is rewarded with cash, publicity or any other support that might benefit the sports entity (Koronios et al., 2016). The second tenet states that the partnership will be evaluated by what the two parties are willing to give up in
exchange for what they are receiving for it (Crompton, 2004). Such agreements are regarded as a type of marketing tool (Rosenberger & Márkova, 2013)

**Sponsorship in the marketing mix**

When a company is looking for a way to expand, the marketing strategy and the four P's are important to consider. The four P's consist of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, which make up the marketing mix (Keegan & Green, 2015). According to Broderick & Pickton (2001) promotion can be divided into four groups; advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and personal selling. While sponsorship has been put under Public relations (Randall, 2001), De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh (2007) has added it to the communication mix as a separate, own element. This is shown in the table below.

![Marketing mix diagram](image)

**Difference between sponsorships and advertising**

It can be argued that since both sponsorships and advertising were created to increase sales, they are mostly the same (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). According to Marshall and Cook (1992), these two communication mix tools should not be categorized in the same class. The main difference between them is that at a sponsorship "both message and medium are inextricably linked" (Meenaghan, 1996, p. 104). In other words, this means that at an advertisement a company can better manage a message than at a sponsorship (De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh (2007). This risk is often accepted by firms, due to a goodwill factor that sponsorships carry (McDonald, 1991), as the public understand and associate sponsorship with the benefits that it causes to the sponsored entity. (Meenaghan, 2001).
Sponsorship Categories

As mentioned earlier sponsorship can be used as a marketing tool. According to Geldard and Sinclair (2002), there are three categories for sponsorship. These categories are Marketing, Corporate and Philanthropic. They are shown below in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing sponsorship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association usually with a series of events or an organization such as a sports entity, a sports league or a festival.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate sponsorship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An agreement that sponsors a single event, for example, an art event. Corporations get a return on their investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philanthropic sponsorship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either financial or any other type of support to an event or an organization that does not cause financial benefits for the company but is often used as an act of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</td>
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Objectives of a Sponsorship

All companies choose sponsorships to reach their objectives. These objectives can be successfully met and turned into benefits due to the ability of sponsorship to deliver a message to a targeted and broad audience. But it is essential that the benefits received must be in line with the companies objectives; thus objectives may vary. The objectives of sponsorship contracts has been argued by multiple authors such as Meenaghan (1983), Dolphin (2003) and Pelsmacker et al. (2010) and multiple others, yet we can say that there is still no consensus on a single list which may be due to the differences between companies (McCook, Turco, & Riley, 1997). Andreff and Szymanski (2006) suggested that all sponsorship may either be marketing or corporate sponsorships.
Meenaghan (1983) suggested that there are six objectives of sponsorships.

1. Broad corporate objectives
2. Product-related objectives
3. Sales objectives
4. Media objectives
5. Guest hospitality
6. Personal objectives

This categorizing outlines the significant objectives but often the categories overlap, for example reaching product-related objective will ultimately result in the reaching of broad corporate objectives (Jadelind & Öjerbrant, 2016). This has led to a list shortened to four objectives, created by Dolphin (2003). He suggests that the four objectives are: 1. Enhancing corporate image, 2. Increasing awareness of the brand, 3. Stimulating sales and 4. Leveraging Corporate reputation. This list gives a clear view of what companies are expecting to achieve with sponsorships.

Another approach to setting objectives is to look at the marketing objectives instead of the corporate objectives. Pelsmacker et al. (2010) have highlighted the three major pillars of sponsorship marketing goals. The first one is awareness building, which includes increasing the awareness of new and existing products. The second is improving brand image. By this companies aim to reconstruct their image by sponsoring events that shine a good light on their corporations. The last pillar is increasing market share. As found in a survey (Erdogan and Kitchen 1998), these objectives are not measurable on the short run, since no difference can be seen in sales on the short run between a company that sponsors an event or a team and one that does not.

Lastly, objectives can be put in three different categories which were highlighted by Nufer and Bühler (2010), but it is questionable whether it is indispensable to do such categorizing since all objectives contribute to reaching commercial goals (Rosenberger and Marková, 2013). The first category of Objectives are the Corporate objectives. This
includes subcategories such as building better public awareness, corporate image as well as having a better community involvement. Government relations and employee relations are also a part of such goals. The second category is the marketing Objectives. According to these objectives the company wants to build better business relations, and it wants to increase sales while positioning the brand. The third and last category of objectives are the media objectives. According to it, companies aim to generate visibility as well as publicity while avoiding clutter (Nufer and Bühler, 2010).

**Internal Objectives and Benefits**

When mentioning the objectives of a sponsorship done by a company often the internal objectives and benefits are not dealt with such depth as external objectives (Cunningham, Cornwell, & Coote, 2009). It has been found that many times a sponsorship is created only because of the management interest in a given sport (Sleight, 1989), but it has been shown that it is also an excellent tool for companies to motivate employees (Kourovskaia & Meenaghan, 2013). This is called internal marketing, and it can be used to enhance employee productivity (Chelladurai, 2006). Chelladurai highlights that for a long time companies only focused on marketing towards future costumers and have not utilized its ability to stimulate workers. An example would be Red Bull giving tickets to their employees to the Red Bull Air Race (Szőke, 2018). An event as mentioned can affect the motivation of employees who are the most valuable resources of a company (Pichot, Tribou & O'Reilly, 2008).

Another internal benefit of sponsorship is the ability of it to deliver a message of what the real values of the company are. (Mitchell, 2002). If a firm aims to be successful it has to, first, sell itself to its employees (Mitchell, 2002).

**Platforms**

Objectives mentioned above can be reached through 7 different types of platforms (Irwin et al. 2003). For this thesis, the most critical factor is Team sponsorships. This
includes the sponsoring of a sports organization or a single team. As all other platforms, it can be done on three different levels. (Grey and Skildum-Reid 2008). The highest level of this would be a principal sponsor, who would act as a name giving sponsor often, and in cases could be a sole sponsor. The second level is a primary sponsor, which is then followed by a lower level sponsor.

Team Sponsorships can be broken down into five sub-categories (Bello, 2016) Shown in Table 2.

Other types of Sponsorship

Another platform to reach to sports audience is the financing of a governing body. Such sponsorship is also common since it reaches a larger audience than of a single team. The major drawback of it to companies is the investment needed since only large corporations can provide financing of such magnitude. An example of this would be the Barclays Premier League the English soccer league or the Erste league, which is the Hungarian based ice hockey league.

Athlete Sponsorship is also often chosen by marketing departments but is mostly used in individual sports. Media Channel, Facility and Sport-specific sponsorship are also a
way to promote a company. Event Sponsorship is one of the major platforms in which companies sponsor events such as the World Cup or the Super Bowl.

**Factors influencing the efficiency of a sponsorship**

**Congruence**

Multiple factors influence the efficiency of a sponsorship. One of these factors is congruence which has been gaining growing attention over the past decade (Kim et al., 2015). Other factors will also be discussed later in this chapter. Congruence, also known as perceived fit shows the fit between the sponsor and the sponsee. (Walraven, 2013). Multiple authors have researched the perceived fit in the past decade (Fleck & Quester, 2007, Walraven, 2013). Researchers have tied perceived fit together with the balance theory (Heider, 1958). The balance theory suggests that the message the sponsor tries to communicate towards its potential costumers can be easily dismissed if the information is not in line with, in the case of team sponsorship, the sports entity. (Cornwell, Weeks & Roy, 2005). This means that even if a potential customer has a bad attitude toward a brand, his/her view can be changed if the message is delivered through a platform that he sympathizes with. Thus a sponsorship allows firms to reach costumers that otherwise might not sympathize with the company, and change its views. Speed & Thompson (2000) suggested a better fit between the two parties will lead to a an enchantments of brand attitude an credibility (Grohs, 2016).

**Sponsor recognition/ awareness**

Reaching people and getting them familiar with a brands name and its identity is one of the ultimate goals of a sponsorship. Brand awareness describes the proportion of people who have heard or know about a given brand (Hair and Bush, 2009). Building brand awareness is the only way for potential costumers to research a company further. (Koronios, 2016). According to Graillot (1998), sponsor recognition is the only way to differentiate a company from competitors. Moreover sponsor recognition is a prerequisite to sponsorship effectiveness (Rifon et al., 2004) as well as a positive
behavior towards a brand that sponsors a sports entity (Speed and Thompson, 2000). If all the factors mentioned are met then customers will buy goods of a company (Madrigal, 2001), which is the ultimate goal of firms.

**Intention to purchase**

Purchase intention represents the intention of a fan, buying one or more products of the sponsor. (Spears and Singh, 2004). It can also be viewed as the connection between attitude and behavior (Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008). Purchase intentions are at a later stage of fan behavior towards the sponsor, since awareness has to be built, which will then translate into an intention to purchase, which will result in the actual purchase (Kim et al., 2011). Thus purchase intention can be a great indicator of fans attitude towards a company (Howard and Crompton, 2005). This is the reason why this indicator has been used to measure the efficacy of a sponsorship (Madrigal, 2011). One of the factors that have a significant effect on intention to purchase is the perceived fit of a sponsor to a sponsee. (Koo et al., 2006). With all this, it is understandable why companies are so careful to pick the right team to sponsor since by picking the right team they will be able to communicate their message to the right audience, which will translate in purchases as an end product.

**Team Achievement**

Another factor that determines the efficiency of a sponsorship is team achievement. (Koronios et al., 2015). It is defined as the results achieved by a team relative to those who compete against it (Wakefield and Bennett, 2010). Yet a different definition looks at the fans experience with the result of the team supported, if a team achieves the expectation of a fan, not necessarily a win or lose situation, team achievement will be a positive (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Fans supporting a winning team have a better association with its sponsors, (Boen et al., 2002), as an outcome, sponsors try to support team there are predestined to win (Wakefield and Bennett, 2010). On the other hand when a team is underachieving fans try to distance themselves to conserve their dignity.
since individuals prefer to connect themselves to winning teams (Wakefield and Bennett, 2010). From this, it is easily understandable why Lings and Owen (2007) proposed that team achievement is the most critical factor of the sponsorship.

**Drawbacks**

Like all other types of advertising, sponsorships have drawbacks that firms have to assess before investing in it. According to Rosenberger & Marková (2013), such marketing offers limited space for companies to deliver an exact message, due to the size of the platform for advertisement at sports teams. Besides, sponsorships are working better when the duration is longer, meaning that sponsoring a team for a short amount of time can have a negative image on the brands' image (McAlister et al., 2012).

**Clutter**

It is agreed that exposure of sponsors results in a better cognitive and affective processing of sponsorships. (Olson & Thjømøe, 2003). Due to this and the success of sponsorships, more and more firms decide to commit to it. This results in the presence of many sponsors which can make it more difficult for the fans to memorize even a single sponsor. (Cornwell et al., 2000). Sponsorship clutter has been noted as one of the significant drawbacks by Walraven (2013), who suggests that sports entities that are popular among sponsorship tend to have different levels of sponsorship, which affects the exclusivity of a sponsorship. Such levels are mentioned earlier. According to Wakefield et al. (2007), the higher level the sponsorship is, the more it can achieve a higher awareness. Contrarily if the audience can see more advertisements, the less advertising effectiveness can be reached (Danaher et al., 2008).
Ambush marketing

Ambush marketing can be a cheap yet effective way for companies to gain the attention of potential costumers. It became a hazard to sponsors (Meenaghan, 1996). Ambush marketing is a practice where companies try to get associated with a team or a sponsor without actually sponsoring them. An example of ambush marketing was done by Beats electronics which is now a division of Apple. During the London 2012, Olympic Games Beats employees distributed Beats by Dre headphones many athletes for free. Many athletes wore the headphones when entering the competition, which provided valuable airtime to the company, without having to pay enormous fees for an official sponsorship while Panasonic paid for the title of being an official sponsor. Such ambush marketing strategies raise ethical and legal questions (Meenaghan, 1996).
Hypotheses

My research aims at investigating if it is remunerative for Red Bull to sponsor a professional ice hockey team in Hungary. To examine this, boundaries, as mentioned in the Introduction has been set. I intend to explore the Hungarian sports sponsorship market through ice hockey which is one of the highlighted sports and has been gaining growing attention. To asses this I will look at multiple factors that influence the successfulness of a sponsorship.

H1.
One's capability to identify a brand under dissimilar circumstances is one of the most critical aspects of building awareness with sports sponsorships (Biscaia et al., 2013). One of the main factors that influence awareness is exposure (Wakefield et al., 2007), meaning that the more the audience is exposed, the more likely it is that the sponsor-sponsee link will be encoded in their memory. (Johar et al., 2006). Repeated exposure also stimulate favorable response (Herrmann, Walliser, & Kacha, 2011). Because of this, I hypothesize that there is a positive relationship between supporting ice hockey and the purchase intention of a sponsors product. By this, I assume that Hungarian ice hockey fans are more inclined to try a sponsors product than supporters of other sports.

H2.
Furthermore, I hypothesize that a Red Bull sponsorship towards ice hockey would be beneficial since ice hockey fans see congruence between the two organizations. This is based on the assumption that sponsors that can identify with the sponsored entity are more efficient in their sponsorships (Speed & Thompson, 2000). Identifying better can be achieved by having a similarity between the sponsor and sponsee (King & Madrigal, 2018), which will result in a more effective relationship that is caused by better sponsor recognition and recall (Cornwell et al., 2006) better image transfer (Kwon, Ratneshwar & Kim, 2016) and better image (Grohs, 2016). As a conclusion, I assume that ice hockey fans see the congruity of the two organizations.
H3.

It has also been shown that the success of a team has a significant effect on an individual's purchase intentions (Lings & Owen, 2007). Since sports allow for a precise determination on winners and losers (Dalakas, Madrigal & Anderson, 2004), those who support an unsuccessful team might distance themselves from the organization to protect their self-image. On the other hand, Cialdini et al., (1976), a famous psychologist has shown that the enhancement of self-image can be achieved by identifying with a successful team, this association is called basking-in-reflected-glory (BIRG). Because of this, I assume that sponsoring Hungarian ice hockey would be beneficial for Red Bull since I hypothesize that the considered achievement of Hungarian ice hockey among the general public is positive. Thus the relationship between the two will translate in higher purchase intentions.
Methodological Background

This chapter of the thesis will focus on the methodological approach I chose to investigate further and to get a better understanding of my topic and will be followed by the analysis.

My research aims to get a better understanding of the Hungarian sponsorship market and assess whether the brand equity of Red Bull would increase if they decided to sponsor a professional ice hockey team in Hungary.

The thesis mainly focuses on primary research which is also backed by secondary research in the form of an extensive conceptual framework which is highlighted in the previous chapter.

Approach

It is indispensable to understand the data collection methods when starting research. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), there are two main data collection methods which are qualitative research and quantitative research. To ensure that I gain the broadest possible understanding of my topic I chose to use both methods. The interview was conducted to evaluate whether it is in line for Red Bull to sponsor ice hockey and to understand how sponsorships are done. On the other hand, the questionnaire was designed to understand how people view ice hockey and how it would work as a sponsorship platform.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research is suggested to be done when investigating topics or subjects that are relatively new and there is a lack of knowledge of the given subject. Since sports sponsorship is Hungary has just started to grow in the recent decade, there is still a lot to learn about it. Besides this, Meenaghan (1999), who is one of the most acknowledged sport sponsorship experts also suggest using qualitative data when researching sports sponsorship. Due to the nature of the topic, using primary data was essential, since I
intended to examine the possibility of a sponsorship from both angles, the sponsor and the sponsee. Secondary data, which according to the definition is a type of data that has been already collected by others (Chisnall 1997), was also gathered which is talked about in the previous chapter.

**Interview**

One of the most popular ways to qualitative gather data is conducting an Interview. A set of guideline questions were prepared previous to the interview to ensure that all materials that have to be explored are covered, but the interview was a semi-constructed one, so the questions prepared were not asked in order, and some questions were added that seemed appropriate. The interview lasted approximately 35 minutes and was useful to gain an understanding of how Red Bull Hungary Ltd. operates, competes with competitors and how it chooses to sponsor athletes and sports globally and locally. The interviewee was Álmos Szőke who has been the Managing Director of Red Bull Hungary Ltd. since 2015. Upon my request, he immediately answered and was very helpful and cooperative. Besides his position in Red Bull, he is also currently the president of the Erste League, which as mentioned earlier is the Hungarian based ice hockey championship. I chose him since I believe he is competent in answering questions that cover the operations of the company and are relevant in my research as well as he has the insight to how ice hockey is being sponsored.

**Quantitative research**

Quantitative research is used to create data that can be expressed in the form of numbers or percentages. To create such data, the research asks narrow questions that can be interpreted and then generalized to the general population (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Once this is done findings can be put into graphs or charts (Bryman and Bell, 2007). To gather information that can be translated in such a way, this research uses a questionnaire which is sent out to the general population.
**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire designed aims to complex yet easy for participants to complete. Sent out through Google Forms the respondents answered voluntary, but some limitations will be discussed later in this chapter. The survey was shared on social media, so it was only accessible through the internet. All the participants stayed anonymous throughout the data collection, and there were no conditions to participate. The questionnaire was only available in Hungarian and consisted of four sections. These four main sections were: Demographics (1), Purchase Intentions (2), Fan satisfaction (3) and fit of the sponsor (Red Bull) and sponsee (Hungarian ice hockey) (4). These sections were covered through 24 questions. Answers were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

**Demographics**

After agreeing to the statement of consent (Appendix A), the respondents answered to 9 fundamental question of which the first five gave an insight on the gender, age, residency, education, and income. Except for the last question all answers were required to fill. The following three questions were related to sport consuming habits and asked participants whether they follow any sports and if so which, as well as how often and their participational attitude in the light of their teams' success. As mentioned earlier participation was voluntary, and it was anonymous so no answers can be traced back to respondents. These questions were necessary to identify and categorize fans according demographical data. (Appendix B).

**Purchase intention**

Given that one of the objectives of sports sponsorship is creating sales, respondents were asked to answer five questions regarding decisions when purchasing a product. This part is especially important in my second hypothesis in which I examine the relationship between the accomplishment of Hungarian ice hockey and fans purchase intention. Besides four multiple choice question which focused on costumers energy
drink buying behavior and its relation to their supported team, a five-point Likert scale was used to establish how much a sponsorship influences their decision when purchasing a product. The scale ranged from one = “Not at all”, to five = “Completely” (Appendix C). Starting from this section, all questions were required to be filled.

**Fan satisfaction**

Five five-point Likert scale questions were asked in this sections which were aimed at inspecting costumers opinion towards Hungarian ice hockey as a whole and Hungarian ice hockey clubs (Appendix D). Club satisfaction was measured in respect of the respondents choice of team, which optimally meant that these were their most followed and favorite teams. The questions were formed to map out the attitude of participants toward ice hockey in two ways. The first was instead an objective way which was then followed by asking the participants opinion on the achievements. After both questions were covered in respect of Hungarian hockey and club teams, the ability to follow the favorite team was asked. As highlighted in the theoretical research, this is important to build awareness. The questions asked were as follows:

1. How do you see the performance of Hungarian ice hockey clubs in the past years?
2. How satisfied are you with the results?
3. How do you see the performance of the Hungarian ice hockey National team in the past years?
4. How satisfied are you with the results?
5. How satisfied are you with the following opportunities of your favorite team?

**Sponsor - sponsee fit**

To evaluate the participant's attitude toward the fit between Red Bull and ice hockey, a questionnaire from Speed & Thompson's (2000), was adopted. Since this questionnaire is originally in English and my questions were aimed at people living in Hungary, it was
translated and simplified from a seven to a five-point Likert scale, so it is in line with the form of the previous questions. The scale ranged from "I do not agree" to "I agree," five meaning that the respondent agrees with the statement. (Appendix E)

The following sentences were stated:

1. There is a logical relationship between Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey.
2. The image of Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey is similar.
3. Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey are congruent.
4. Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey share similar values.
5. It would make sense to me if Red Bull sponsored Hungarian ice hockey.
Results

This chapter of the thesis will focus on the practical interpretation of the data that has been collected from the above-mentioned methods and will transcribe it to the case of a Red Bull sponsorship in the case of a professional ice hockey team in Hungary. To put this data into context, it is essential to get a slim understanding of the Red Bull brand, company and their sponsorships in Hungary. To do so, I will mostly use the information gathered from the interview. Following this, the findings of the questionnaire will be interpreted and compared to the hypothesis.

Red Bull

Red Bull GmbH was found in 1981 by Dietrich Mateschitz, an Austrian entrepreneur. The company has started by making energy drink and have been doing the same ever since while expanding into different market segments of the industry. In the past approximately 40 years, the enterprise has built an empire which sold 6.3 billion cans of Red Bull only in 2017 (Red Bull, 2017). This is especially notable taking into consideration that the energy drink industry was created with the foundation of Red Bull.

Besides having its product on the shelves of 171 countries, Red Bull has earned great attention by marketing. Unlike most companies, Red Bull does not advertise directly to customers. Instead, it tries to communicate the values of the company through events and sports. In the beginning, the firm mostly focused on sponsoring extreme sports, but by now various art events and sports teams benefit from the sponsorships. (Szőke, 2018)

The past 10-15 years Red Bull has started investing in team sports. However, these sponsorships are again different from what most companies choose. Instead of buying jersey ads or creating event sponsorship the company purchases the entire sports organization. This allows them to avoid some of the drawbacks associated with
sponsorships, such as clutter or ambush marketing. Besides having two Formula 1 team, the firm has heavily invested in soccer. FC Red Bull Salzburg, the New York Red Bulls, Red Bull Brasil and Red Bull Leipzig are teams that have achieved success the past years while FC Liefering is development team and a feeder club to the organizations mentioned earlier. According to Álmos Szőke (2018), the process of selection of teams is somewhat unconventional. The company chooses teams that are competing in lower level leagues and thus are cheaper and aims to make them successful as fast as possible.

Red Bull Leipzig best explains this trend. When the owner, Dietrich Mateschitz, bought the team he declared that the newly purchased fifth-tier club aims to play in the Champions League. This goal was achieved in the 2017-18 season when the team finished as the runner-up of the Bundesliga, earning a spot in the Champions League. (Szőke, 2018)

Besides soccer Red Bull also sponsors two Ice Hockey teams. One of the teams that started wearing Red Bull as its name was the Salzburg based, Red Bull Salzburg. This team competes in the Austrian ice hockey league, the EBEL. In the hope of gaining more media attention, the company was looking to relocate the team to the highest ranked German division. This is because the German league, the DEL, is considered to be ranked among the best in Europe. As my interviewee mentioned, this move did not happen since one of the limitations set up by the league was that a non-German team could not win the championship (Szőke, 2018). This restriction has led to Red Bull purchasing Eishockeyclub München in 2004. The team was renamed EHC Red Bull München. Since the energy drink giant became the primary sponsor of the teams, Munich won 3 championship titles, while Salzburg has conquered the Austrian championship six times. (Erste Bank Liga, 2018)

While Red Bull is present at many sports teams and also sponsors 47 athletes in neighboring Austria, in Hungary, only four athletes are currently backed by the corporation. Sponsored athletes include Panka Gyarmati (Snowboarding), Péter Besenyei (Red Bull Air Race), Szebaszián Szoláth (Wakeboarding) and Sándor Tótka
(Kayaking) (Red Bull, 2018). Since Red Bull positions itself in the "superpremium" category, all athletes selected are expected to be successful (Szőke, 2018).

From the facts mentioned above, it can be concluded, that having an ice hockey team would not fall out of line of Red Bulls current sponsorship approach. Although budget figures are not public in professional hockey, unlike soccer, it can be said with absolute certainty that the acquisition and sponsoring of a Hungarian ice hockey team that currently plays in the Erste League, would be significantly cheaper than any of the current sponsorships that Red Bull is involved in on the team level. For the same reason estimating an exact return would also be impossible, but as my interviewee, Álmos Szőke said the goal with such a team sponsorships is not a direct monetary return. The aim is to gain as much media coverage as possible, which will increase brand awareness and brand image at the same time. As it was mentioned, ice hockey has been gaining ground not only among those who follow it closely but among the general population as well. This provides media coverage that Red Bull is aiming to harvest as the outcome of a sponsorship.

**Results of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire part of my research concluded with 431 responses, with participants ranging from 18 years old to 78 years and an average age of 38.6 years and a standard deviation of 12.11. Three responses had to be deleted due to minor age and one because of mistyping. 71.7% (309 individuals) of participants were women, and 28.3% (122 individuals) were men. Over half (54.8%) of the people who answered live in the capital city, 35.1% live in cities while the rest of the respondents (10.2%) live in towns or smaller. 244 people (56.6%) of those who participated have Bachelors or Masters education. Another 55 people (12.8%) are currently enrolled at a university while 51 individuals (11.8%) have finished high school. 48 people (11.1%) have secondary school certifications while the remaining 7.7% have different types of education or does not have any. Most respondents (33.3%) of the questionnaire have an income between 250,000 and 500,000 Hungarian Forints. 123 participants earn between 150,000 and
250,000 Hungarian Forints, while 24.3% takes home, less than 150,000 HUF a month. On the other end of the spectrum, 24 individuals (5.7%) earn more than 750,000 HUF, while the remaining 7.6% make between 500,000 and 750,000 HUF.

More importantly, the majority of respondents (368 people) follow sports on a regular basis. This is crucial for my study since I try to investigate how sponsorships affect fans. Following this, questions asked participants about their sport consuming habits. Since the questionnaire was mostly aimed at groups that follow ice hockey, not surprisingly 64.7% claimed that they follow this sport on the regular bases. Looking at the entire sample, 20% never visits the games of their favorite team, and another 34.8% only visits occasionally. (Appendix, Table 1.) Of the remaining 45.6%, 16% visits their favorite teams game almost always. Interestingly yet the majority (331 people), is not influenced by the success of their supported teams regarding visiting the teams game more or less frequently. The same tendency can be seen among those who visit their teams on the regular bases and among those who only support a team but do not visit games. Women and Man are almost identically influenced in their visiting habits.

The questionnaire has shown that of those men who follow their team, only about 30% is influenced by the result while this number was 23% among women (Appendix, Table 2.). This shows that there is not a big difference among genders in this area. When comparing the same answers among those who follow ice hockey and does who follow other sports we could see a difference 0.5%. To conclude it can be said that fans that follow ice hockey are influenced the same way by their supported teams’ success as of other sports.
Half of the sample stated that they never drink energy drinks of any kind. (Appendix, Table 3.) The other half that does drink energy drinks showed a tendency that Hungarian customers tend to choose the energy drink they buy based on the taste. Over 50% said that their primary selection criteria is taste while only 16% said it was the price. 8.4% said that they choose a particular energy drink based on the companies existing sponsorships. (Appendix, Table 4.) Although this number is small compared to price and taste preference, it is important to note that this question asked about the primary selection criteria, meaning that a sponsorship might be the second criteria if the first does not determine the pick. Energy drink company sponsorships are present on a small scale in Hungary with only a handful of them. Another factor that can influence this relatively small number is the fact that the biggest energy drink manufacturer, Hell energy chose to sponsor sports with its soft drink product line up, XIXO. Since XIXO appears as an independent company at sports sponsorship, consumers might not associate it with Hell. This can distort the answers received.

This trend can also be seen when participants were asked about how much it influences them at purchase that a company sponsors a product. 64% (276 people) of respondents said that a sponsorship would not influence their choice, while only 60 people said that it has a somewhat strong influence. (Appendix, Table 5) When examining whether there is a difference in the purchase decision because of the sponsor, the sample was divided into those that follow ice hockey and those that follow other sports. Among the 217 respondents who marked ice hockey as a sport that they follow 61.75% said that there is a correlation between the sponsor and purchase intention, while this data at those who follow other sports was 59.35%. On the other end of the spectrum, the values respectively are 5.07% and 5.81%. The most significant difference among the answers is at those who "Neutral," but again, the difference is only 4.90%. These differences indicate that there is no real difference between the two categories of fans, the differences might only reflect a difference in the sample.
Hypothesis 1

I hypothesize that there is a positive relationship between supporting ice hockey and the purchase intention of a sponsors product

Respondents were categorized the same way as at the question above, to participants that follow ice hockey and to those who follow other sports. Most of those who were classified to the second group, follow Soccer (19.5%), Handball (15.1%), Waterpolo (11.6%), and other sports (27.4%). To summarize 279 (64.7%) people follow ice hockey and 152 (35.3%) follow other sports.

Overall results show that over half (57.1%) of the participants have tried a product because of the companies' appearance around sports. When splitting this data, a difference can be seen between the two categories. As shown on Chart 2. 31.6% of fans that follow "other" sports have tried a product because the sponsor appeared around his/her favorite team, while this number was significantly higher, 49.1%, among those who follow ice hockey (Chart 3.)

As Biscaia et al., (2013) suggest exposure strongly influences sponsorship awareness. When assessing the results to hypothesis 1, it is important to note that in most instances
an ice hockey season consists of more games than other sports. Since the questionnaire was sent out in Hungary, I assume that most respondents live in Hungary. To compare the game numbers of the most followed sports in the sample, I have looked at the highest ranked league in Hungary for Soccer, Handball, Basketball, and Waterpolo. The Erste League 2018/2019 season is scheduled to have 40 games per team in the regular season (Erste Liga, 2018). The OTP Bank league, which is the first division Hungarian soccer league has 33 games (MLSZ, 2018), while in Handballs’ K&H League teams play 26 games (Keziszovetseg, 2018). Similarly, the National Championship 1/A in Basketball has 26 games while in Waterpolo teams play 14 games as part of the regular season (Waterpolo Hungary, 2018). Some teams from the sports mentioned above play more games, as part of cup challenges that could be either national or international, but regular season games were taken into account since these games are guaranteed for all. As it can be seen ice hockey has the most games of those sports that respondents claimed to follow.

As a conclusion, it can be said that hypothesis 1 is accepted since there is a difference in trying a sponsors product between fans of ice hockey and fans of other sports. In other words, Hungarian ice hockey fans tend to try a product that they have seen around their favorite teams. Although this might be the effect of more exposure than at other sports, the nature of ice hockey provides this opportunity.

**Hypothesis 2.**

I hypothesize that a Red Bull sponsorship towards ice hockey would be beneficial since fans see a congruence between the two organizations.

To investigate this hypotheses participants were given five statements which they had to evaluate, based on their opinion. The first statement said stated that there is a logical relationship between Red Bull and ice hockey. The average response to this statement gave an average of 2.68. Since an average of three would mean that the respondents neither agree or disagree, this result indicates that the general population does not
recognize a logical relationship. To further investigate, what affects this response the sample was divided into three categories according to their energy drink consumption habits. Examining the data this way gave the insight to see whether those who buy Red Bull on regular bases and thus are more familiar with the brand have a different view on this connection. The outcome proved that those who consume Red Bull see a better connection between the two organization. Interestingly yet those who only consume the energy drink occasionally scored the highest with an average score of 2.85 points. The difference between frequent consumers and those who never drink Red Bull was 0.17 points higher for the first category.

The second pronouncement claimed that the image of Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey is similar. Among the five questions, this statement had the lowest agreement rate, with only 2.59 points. Again, these answers show that the respondents do not see a clear image similarity between the two entities. These results were further analyzed by looking at the consuming regularity of respondents, as it was in the first statement. But this case there was a visible relationship between consuming habits and a higher score. The findings displayed that frequent users of Red Bull scored significantly higher (2.81 points) than those who don't drink this type of beverage.

Besides measuring congruence indirectly, participants were asked directly whether they see congruity between the firm and ice hockey. The 431 respondents answers gave an average of 3 points. Answers at this question had differences among consuming habits. Those who never drink scored 2.46 points, occasional users scored 3 points while frequent users 3.23 points. It can be concluded that those that are more familiar with the brand see similar values between Red Bull and ice hockey in Hungary.

The last statement scored the highest among the five questions (3.69 points). Those that consume Red Bull occasionally or frequently scored higher in this category than non-consumers.

To test the hypothesis, the sample was divided into four quartiles. The boundaries were set at 0 to 6 points, 7 to 12 points,13 to 18 points, and 19 to 25 points. The upper limit
for these boundaries was set at 6.25, 12.5, 18.75 and 25 points respectively. Item numbers are shown in Table 2. below.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boundary</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>19-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper limit</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item number</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>8.58%</td>
<td>21.35%</td>
<td>47.10%</td>
<td>22.97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answers had a standard deviation of 3.35. Only 8.58% (37 responses) claimed over the course of the five questions that investigated congruence between Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey, that they did not see a coherence between the two organizations. Of all answers, 22.97% see a strong relation and the remaining 47.10% identify some congruence.

Taking all data into consideration, hypothesis 2. can be accepted, meaning that fans see congruence between their Hungarian ice hockey and Red Bull. This indicated that if Red Bull decides to sponsor ice hockey, there would be no need to communicate the congruence in order to be more successful, since the desired congruity is already identified by people.

Hypothesis 3.

I hypothesize that the considered achievement of Hungarian ice hockey among the general public is positive

Hypothesis 3. was examined by asking participants five questions about their views on the achievements of Hungarian ice hockey. The first four questions were split into pairs of two. The first one investigated the participants view on their favorite clubs achievement while the second pair of questions asked about the national team. The last question of this section investigated whether fans are satisfied with the ability to follow their favorite teams.
Among the average of answers to the first four question, it can be seen that respondents see the achievements of the national team (3.90 points) and their favorite club team (3.91 points) the same way. Answers regarding fan satisfaction of the results achieved were lower, with the national team having an average score of 3.78 points and club teams having 3.77 points. From this, it can be concluded that ice hockey supporters do not see a difference between the two teams in regards of achievements. As mentioned earlier, the last question measured fan satisfaction, but at this time thru a different perspective. Amidst the five averages, this category was found to be the lowest with a mean score of 3.60 points. This can be attributed to the fact that ice hockey has only been gaining popularity in the past decade. This deficiency, on the other hand, is an excellent opportunity for a sponsor that is considering to invest in a sponsorship. If the sponsor can give full coverage of their supported team, the relationship will have a competitive advantage. A sponsor like Red Bull would be able to provide such financial and technical background.

To evaluate this section as a whole, the same analysis technique was used as in hypothesis 2. The aggregate points of the answers were looked at, to come to a conclusion. The results are shown in Table 3. below.

**Table 3.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boundary</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>19-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper limit</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>1.62%</td>
<td>39.68%</td>
<td>58.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The distribution of the answers shows that out of the 431 respondents only three see the Hungarian ice hockey achievements as unsuccessful and only seven respondents are somewhat satisfied. 97.68% of respondents are convinced with the results achieved in the past years, and furthermore, 58% believe that Hungarian ice hockey has achieved close to its maximum potential.
With taking into account the distribution of the answers, it clearly can be said that hypothesis 3. can be accepted since followers of ice hockey see their sport achieving their expectations. As mentioned, fans identify better with successful teams. Since followers of the sport already view the accomplishments successful, Red Bull would already join a community that is satisfied with the results, and would not have to do a complete rebuild to make it perceived as successful.

All three hypotheses has been accepted and proved that ice hockey in Hungary would deliver the sponsorship message well, and provide the sponsor adequate opportunities to gain media exposure and thus make the investment logical from companies point of view.
Conclusion

This study aimed to research if the sponsorship of ice hockey in Hungary is worth for an energy drink company like Red Bull. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter of this thesis work, there are multiple platforms that sponsors can choose (Irwin et al. 2003), and different objectives that can be achieved. For a sponsorship to work at its best ability, there are also multiple factors that have to be taken into consideration. One of this is exposure. Hypothesis 1 suggested that there is a positive relationship between supporting ice hockey and the purchase intention of a product. This hypothesis has been accepted since there was visible evidence of ice hockey fans trying the sponsors' product more often. As the findings show, this tendency is a result of higher exposure of the sponsorship since ice hockey has more games than the sports it was compared to. The second factor as, Mazodier & Quester,(2014) suggested is congruence. Hypothesis 2. suggested that there is a congruence between Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey. The results proved this statements since the majority of respondents agreed with the five statements that tested this claim. A third factor is team achievement. Hypothesis 3 researched whether ice hockey in Hungary is considered to be a successful sport. Findings show that people see and appreciate the achievements. Because of this, hypothesis 3. was also accepted.

Managerial Implications

The main question of this thesis was if ice hockey is a suitable transmitter of sponsorships. Since all three hypothesis was accepted, it can be concluded that it is. Red Bull Hungary would benefit from sponsoring a Hungarian team. Managers should take advantage of this capability of this sport, since it provides advantages, and also fulfill the number one priority objective of Red Bull, which is gaining media coverage. The internal benefits, such as employee motivation and identification is also something that managers have to consider.
Since professional ice hockey teams in Hungary tend to be strongly attached to youth development, the sponsorship could also be used as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) action.

**Future research**

This study looked at sonships from a broad view. It is recommended that future research focus on industry differences. The evaluation of what makes a sponsorship successful for different corporations would be suitable.

While this research looked at why a sponsorship can be successful from a sponsors view, future research can focus on two different perspectives. One is the effect of different sponsorships on the sponsored sports organization and the second is the effect on customers. These perspectives are also equally important since a sponsorship can only be done with the participation of all three.

**Limitations**

A potential limitation to my research is that only one interview was conducted. To gain a better understanding of the topic, it would be beneficial to listen to more experts in the area. While the interview was questioning an individual at the top of the corporate hierarchy, it would be constructive to understand the views of employees in different departments, such as marketing. Besides discussing the topic with professionals, it would also be advantageous to expand the topic to the costumer's view as well. To do so, in-depth interviews could be used. Such type of qualitative research would broaden the topic, but could better understand and determine purchasing behavior and attitude towards a sponsoring firm.

To summarize I believe that the addition of multiple interviews would deepen the understanding of why and how firms choose to sponsor sports, and how consumers view this.
The questionnaire aimed to grasp how fans identify with ice hockey and how the sport determines their purchase intentions. While the participants' game visiting habits were measured, in future research, it would be beneficial to ask respondents to answer how many games they attend numerically. As advertisements, sponsorship works better if fans are exposed to it more. By asking about approximate game visits per year, differences among sports can be identified better.

Another vulnerability of the questionnaire lays in the questions about the participant's favorite sports team. Since the survey did not specify that the answers given had to be in the light of Hungarian professional sports teams, respondents that follow a foreign team may have answered. This might misrepresent the sample since it is highly unlikely that a Hungarian citizen visits his/her favorite team's game. This might especially be the case since Major sports in the United States, such as Football, Basketball, Baseball or Ice Hockey are more advanced in sports advertising and sponsorships.
References


Annual Euromed Academy of Business Conference: “Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Value Chain In A Dynamic Environment”, Verona, Italy.


Appendices

Appendix A
Statement of Consent

Dear Participant!

My name is Attila Kovács, and I study Business and Management in English at Corvinus University. I am hoping to graduate this semester. My thesis explores the relationship between Hungarian ice hockey and Red Bull. To participate in this survey, it is required that you are at least 18 years old.

The questionnaire consists of 5 sections and takes about 5 minutes to answer. It is important that there are no “good” or “wrong” answers, so please don’t think about it too much and try to answer as honestly as possible.

The survey is fully anonymous, and I have no way to give feedback, since there is no personal identification data required. All data you have provided will be handled as confidential.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact me!
Attila Kovács
attilakovaks@gmail.com
Thank you for participating and helping my study!
Appendix B.

Demographics

Gender?
   Male
   Female

Age?
   Please write it down numerically

Type of Residence?
   Capital city
   County capital
   City
   Town or smaller

Highest education?
   8 grades or less
   Secondary school
   High school
   Currently on-going higher level education
   University
   BA/BSc diploma
   MA/MSc diploma
   other

Monthly income? (Hungarian Forints)
   0-150.000
   150.000-250.000
   250.000-500.000
   500.000-750.000
   750.000+
Is there any sport that you follow on the regular bases?
   yes/ no
Which sport do you follow?
   Soccer
   Ice Hockey
   Handball
   Basketball
   Waterpolo
   Other
   Neither
Do you visit your favorite teams game?
   Always/ Almost always
   Often
   Occasionally
   Never
Do you visit your teams game if they are expected to win?
   Yes
   No
Appendix C.
Purchase Intention

How often do you consume energy drinks?
   Often
   Occasionally
   Never

What determines that you buy a specific energy drink?
   Price
   Taste
   Tradition
   Local brand
   Known worldwide
   Marketing
   It supports your favorite team
   Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
   Other

When shopping, how much does the fact that a company sponsors your favorite team influences your purchase decision?

Have you tried any product because it sponsors your favorite team?
   Yes
   No

Would you rather purchase the product of a winning team?
   Yes
   No
Appendix D.

Fan Satisfaction

How do you see the performance of Hungarian ice hockey clubs in the past years?

![Performance Rating](image)

How satisfied are you with the results?

![Satisfaction Rating](image)

How do you see the performance of the Hungarian ice hockey National team in the past years?

![Performance Rating](image)

How satisfied are you with the results?

![Satisfaction Rating](image)

How satisfied are you with the following opportunities of your favorite team?

![Satisfaction Rating](image)
Appendix E.

The relationship between Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey.

There is a logical relationship between Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey.

The image of Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey is similar.

Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey are congruent.

Red Bull and Hungarian ice hockey share similar values.

It would make sense to me if Red Bull would sponsor Hungarian ice hockey.
Interview Extract

Interviewer: How do sponsorships work at company?
Álmos Szőke: Initially Red Bull started by sponsoring individual athletes. The first sponsee was Gerhard Berger but in past 10-15 Red Bull started sponsoring teams as well. When the company is present at team sports we are not only talking about a simple sponsorship, rather acquisition of the entire sports organization. An example of this is Red Bull Leizig. This team was bought as a 4.tier soccer club, and the goal was to qualify to the Champions League within 5 years. So in the case of team sports it is a full acquisition as we can see at Red Bull Munich, Red Bull Brasil, the New York Red Bulls.

Interviewer: What is the goal with these team?
ÁSZ: As you can see, all teams wearing the Red Bull logo are expected to win. If you think about any of them you would probably rank them among the top of their competition. The same goal was set with Red Bull Salzburg, which was meant to compete in the German Ice Hockey League (DEL), but due to regulations made by the league that said that only a german team can become champion, Munich was acquired. The reason behind this is that the German market is much bigger then the Austrian. All these team are created so that Red Bull can appear in the media. Such appearances are helmets, banners, or a can in the hand.

Interviewer: What values to do you look for at selection?
ÁSZ: Credibility is the most important. All athletes have to be among the best of their category or sport. The athletes that the local subsidiary recommend are examined by the company and undergo a testing that determines whether they are suitable to be sponsored. These athletes are called “local heroes”.

Interviewer: What is your take on sponsoring of the Erste league rather than a single team?
ÁSZ: These two sponsorship aim for different goals. In the case of a league sponsorship, commercial goals would be set primarily. In terms of real examples, this make our company’s product exclusive. While on the other hand a team sponsorship is done so
our company would gain media coverage. Obviously both are aimed to improve brand image, but as I mentioned the goals are completely different.
Table 1.

How often do you visit your favorite teams game?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.

Women influenced by results

- No: 23%
- Yes: 77%

Men influenced by results

- No: 30%
- Yes: 70%
Table 3.

How often do you drink energy drinks?

- Often: 52%
- Occasionally: 37%
- Never: 11%

Table 4.

What does your purchase decision of energy drink mostly depend on?

- Price: 51%
- Tradition: 16%
- Taste: 16%
- Sponsorship: 9%
- Other: 8%

Table 5.

How much does a sponsorship influence your purchase decisions?

- 300
- 225
- 150
- 75
- 0

1 2 3 4 5