Communicating a Sport Sponsorship Profile Internally
A case study describing a company active in the general dealer industry

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ABSTRACT

Building a sport sponsorship profile is an important part in the marketing strategy today, as well as supporting the interest of a company by associating it with a specific activity, event, or sport team. The significance of internal communication of a company’s sport sponsorship profile has increased due to the fact that in a hierarchical organization, base-level employees can be seen as company ambassadors outwards, and their knowledge of a company sport sponsorship profile is for this reason of great importance. The purpose of this bachelor’s thesis was to gain a deeper understanding for how a company applies sport sponsorship to build a profile, with emphasis on how a company manages the internal communication of its profile. In order to reach the purpose, research questions focusing on how a company builds and communicates its sport sponsorship profile, and its employees’ involvement in building and implementing its sport sponsorship profile have been formulated. Based on the research questions, a literature review was conducted resulting in a conceptual framework, functioning as a foundation for the data collection of this thesis. In order to collect relevant data, a qualitative case study was applied, using interviews and documentation of one company in the general dealer industry in the county of Norrbotten. The general result of this study indicates that the investigated company is not aware of all the associations deriving from a sponsored event, activity, or sport team when building its profile. Its main objectives when utilizing sport sponsorship is to create goodwill, create good community relations, gain more customers, and to be seen as a healthy and sporty company. Furthermore, our study found that the internal communication in the investigated company is lacking and needs to be improved. The company’s base-level employees are its ambassadors and require more information of its company sport sponsorship profile in order to act in line with its company sport sponsorship profile.
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1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter an introduction of the topic of choice will be presented. Firstly, the background is presented, followed by the problem discussion addressing the chosen research field. Secondly, after the problem discussion the research purpose and research questions will be presented. Finally, a presentation of the thesis outline will follow.

1.1 Background

According to Jiffer and Roos (1999, p. 25), sponsorship is a business method for marketing and communication, with the purpose of contributing to a sponsor’s image and create brand awareness. In addition, sponsorship aims to create an advantage for all those involved, as well as increase the sponsor’s sales (ibid). Gwinner (1997) continues to define sponsorship as: “...the provision of assistance either financial or in-kind to an activity [e.g., sport, musical event, festival, fair, or within the broad definition of the Arts] by a commercial organization for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives.” Furthermore, Clark (1995, p. 3) argues that sponsorship can be seen as a commercial cooperation between equal and active partners that have entered the partnership voluntarily. The selling part, for example; an individual, team, group, organization or event within sports or culture etcetera, provides goodwill to the buyer for some kind of compensation. The buyer is then granted the right to a limited use of the goodwill; this in order to reach the buyers external and/or internal advertising, public relations (PR), and sales or information related goals (ibid).

Moreover, Clark (1995, p. 4) states that sponsorship can be seen as a method that is utilized within the field of PR, and advertising. Sponsorship generally has two main characteristics: firstly, association, where a sponsor projects the sponsored event, activity, and/or team’s image upon its own organization or product. Secondly, sponsorship can be utilized in several fields of marketing, for example internal marketing, publicity, and sales serving different purposes simultaneously (ibid).

Furthermore, Jobber (2004, p. 607) states that sponsorship today can be identified as: “…a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and an individual, event or organization which offers in return some rights and association that may be used for commercial advantage.” Baring this in mind, Jobber (2004, p. 608) continues to argue that companies should have a good knowledge of the objectives for applying sponsorship as a part of a promotional strategy. The five principal objectives of sponsorship are to: create entertainment opportunities, gain publicity, improve community relations, encourage favorable brand and company associations, and create promotional opportunities. The fourth sponsorship objective, encouraging favorable company and brand associations, is when sponsored activity and sponsor become involved in a relationship where a transaction of values from activity to sponsor takes place. Therefore, potential customers will associate activity and sponsor with one another if a sponsor’s logo, name and other company symbols are clearly visible throughout an event (Jobber, 2004, p. 610).

In addition, Jobber (2004, p. 607) states that companies today have a wide range of activities and entities to choose from when deciding upon a suitable choice for company sponsorship. These activities include teams, competitions, sports, individual personalities or events,
community activities, fairs, shows, and arts. The most popular sponsorship medium is sport sponsorship as it offers a company broad television press coverage, resulting in an increased visibility for a company and a brand. Moreover, sport sponsorship can also provide a company with the capacity to break down cultural barriers, the ability to serve specific niches, and catch the attention of a broader section of a community (ibid).

1.2 Problem Discussion

In marketing literature, sports sponsorship has been described as a strategic activity involving the allocation of limited resources with the purpose of achieving specific company objectives (Amis et al. 1999). Amis et al. (1999) continue to state that sport sponsorship can be applied to achieve a basis of competitive advantage, and should be considered as an important tool which can assist companies in gaining a competitive advantage. According to Gwinner (1997) companies enter into sponsorship to reach certain objectives, and the two most important objectives are defined as: increasing brand awareness; and to create, alter or reinforce a brand image. Additionally, Amis et al. (1999) argue that sport sponsorship has been identified as an effective tool for enhancing and changing a company’s brand image and reputation. However, in order for a company to maintain an achieved competitive advantage, a distinctive competence within the field of sport sponsorship needs to be developed within the organization (ibid).

Furthermore, Ewing (2007) states that even though corporate sport sponsorship appears to be a win-win situation for both sponsor and sponsored activity, there is also an element of risk involved when a brand, in one way or another, is associated with another company and/or sponsored event. Baring this in mind, Gwinner (1997) defines brand image as: “... perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory”, and suggests that uniqueness, strength, and favorability of the brand associations are vital if a brand is going to be successful. Brand associations can be developed from a number of different sources such as: informational sources (for example word of mouth), product use, and associations with other entities which are sources of particular significance for companies applying sponsorship as a part of a marketing strategy. In addition, Gwinner (1997) continues to argue that:”... when a brand becomes associated with an event, some of the associations linked with the event (e.g. youthful, relaxing, enjoyable, disappointing, sophisticated, elite, etc.) may become linked in memory with the brand”.

As previously mentioned, Jobber (2004, p. 609) states that fostering favorable brand and company associations is an objective for companies utilizing sponsorship. As a sponsor and a sponsored activity establish a relationship, a transfer of values from sponsored activity to sponsor will take place. The nature of values transferred from sponsored activity to sponsor varies with each sponsorship category. Jobber (2004, p. 609) identifies five general categories in which companies can apply sponsorship: sports, highbrow arts, mass arts, social causes and environmental programs; where a transfer of values can take place. When sponsoring within the sports category values such as: healthy, young, energetic, fast, vibrant, and masculine can, according to Jobber (2004, p. 609), be transferred on to a sponsor’s company and brand. Therefore, a sponsor will face the challenge of ensuring that its brand is clearly associated with the sponsored activity, and that values related to sport sponsorship are transferred on to its brand. This can be achieved by applying mainstream advertising and
support promotion (Jobber, 2004, p. 610). According to Grönkvist (1999, p. 29) there are both positive and negative aspects when applying sport sponsorship. This argument is supported by Ewing (2007) who addresses the issue of doping which is a problem in many sports. For example, in the cycling competition Tour de France it has resulted in sponsors withdrawing their financial support. However, it should be pointed out that sport sponsorship has an advantage against other promotional tools (for example newspaper and television advertisement, traffic and outdoor commercial) due to its marketing penetrating power and cost efficiency (ibid).

To ensure that company and brand image is associated with positive aspects of sport sponsorship, utilizing efficient communication is of great importance for a company’s success (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p.13). Communication is a driving force for some sponsors when distributing a message related to its sponsorship activities, which play a key involvement in a company’s communicational process. Furthermore, a company can utilize sponsorship in order to establish its strategic communicational platforms for both internal and external communication, as an organization cannot survive without the use of communication (Grönkvist, 1999, p. 19; Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p.13). In addition, Clark (1995, p. 3), argues that when a company combines involvement in sponsorship with traditional communication it has the purpose of gaining knowledge, creating attitudes, and maintaining and/or increasing market shares. Furthermore, combining sponsorship involvement with communication is a suitable method in order for a company to utilize individuals’ values, attitudes and believes and thereby gain “share of heart” (ibid).

According to Heide et al. (2005, pp. 72) organizational communication has traditionally been a case of an organization’s internal communication, as well as the external communication in the form of public relations. Internal and external communication has previously been viewed as independent of each other; however, nowadays scientists have reached the conclusion that the two forms of communication are actually mutually dependent of each other. Heide et al. (2005, p. 17) continue to argue that the use of communication is necessary when creating an organization, in order for it to continue to exist and develop. Furthermore, the use of communication is important when creating an understanding of and acceptance for the organization’s goals among the members of an organization; the reason for this is to put the organizational goals into action through using internal communication (ibid).

According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 79) the overall purpose with internal communication is to communicate organizational goals and to coordinate the different units, departments, and individuals in order to ensure that work, aimed at reaching organizational goals, is synchronized. One important part of strategic communication, also referred to as communication management, is the communication with co-workers. Internal communication is based on three communication methods: hierarchical communications, media communication, and informal communication referred to as “building blocks”. Together, these three blocks form an internal communication system where all parts are mutually dependent of each other. Furthermore, it is necessary that an organization’s communication management functions well in order for the organizational culture, image, norms, and core values to be successfully distributed and implemented among individuals in an organization (ibid).
1.3 Research Purpose & Research Questions

Based on the problem discussion above the purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding for how a company uses sport sponsorship to build a profile, with emphasis on how a company manages the internal communication of its profile. The overall purpose of this study will serve the purpose of answering the following outlined research questions:

**RQ1.** How can a company build a profile through applying sport sponsorship?

**RQ2.** How can a company communicate its sport sponsorship profile internally?

**RQ3.** How can employees be involved in building and implementing a sport sponsorship profile?

1.4 Thesis Outline

This bachelor’s thesis consists of six interrelated chapters. *Chapter one* provides a background of the field of sponsorship, focusing on sport sponsorship. Following the background is the problem discussion narrowing down to research purpose, and research questions. *Chapter two* will present previous studies within the field of sport sponsorship and internal communication, followed by a conceptual framework of the same studies. In *Chapter three* the methodology of the study will be presented, described and justified. *Chapter four* will include empirical data collected for the study, followed by *Chapter five* where the data will be analyzed. In *Chapter six*, conclusions will be drawn and implications will be stated resulting in fulfilling the research purpose in addition to answering the research questions.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter we will present theories and models related to the stated research purpose and research questions. In addition, we will also provide a conceptual framework based on the theories and models.

2.1 The Principle Objectives of Sponsorship

According to Jobber (2004, p. 608), a company needs to be aware of the reasons for investing money in a sponsorship program, as well as have a good knowledge of the five principal objectives of sponsorship. These principal objectives are: to gain publicity, create entertainment opportunities, foster favorable brand and company associations, improve community relations, and create promotional opportunities (ibid). Moreover, the five objectives of sponsorship will be explained in detail below.

2.1.1 Gaining Publicity

The first objective of sponsorship is to provide companies with opportunities to be seen in the news media and to gain publicity. Suitable platforms for global media coverage could be major events which are broadcasted worldwide, such as tennis, golf, and soccer tournaments. Furthermore, brand exposure to millions of people can be achieved through sponsorship of such events. Each event appeals to a different audience for example, golf tournaments have a more up market profile while events such as athletics championships appeals to a larger audience. Therefore, a company sponsoring for example golf tournaments will expose its brand name to a high-class segment of customers (Jobber, 2004, pp. 608).

Moreover, sponsorship can through publicity result in major shifts in brand name awareness for example: awareness among males could be significantly raised if a brand name is exposed during sports events, such as soccer or motor racing, where the majority of the audience consists of men. Sponsorship can also be applied when positioning a brand in a marketplace for example, by sponsorship of a soccer league, such as the English Premier League, a company can position itself as a sports brand and thereby target young and active males (ibid).

2.1.2 Creating Entertainment Opportunities

The second objective when applying sponsorship is to create entertainment opportunities in trade and for customers. Events that can be particularly effective to sponsor are sports events, the performing arts, and music. A company can apply sponsorship of concerts in different musical genres, such as classical, pop, and rock music which will enable a company to provide its retailers with entertainment opportunities for potential customers. A company can by sponsoring a sport event not only gain publicity, but also create an opportunity to entertain key customers at the event. Additionally, a company’s employees can also attend at sponsored events as a reward for their good work (Jobber, 2004, p. 609).
2.1.3 Fostering Favorable Brand and Company Associations
According to Jobber (2004, p. 609) the third objective when applying sponsorship is to create favorable associations for a brand and a company. Sponsorship of athletics could reinforce a sport brand’s market position and brand associations. However, it is also important to be consistent when positioning a brand for example, if a company positions its brand in an up market customer segment they need to reinforce that position by sponsorship of up market events such as golf tournaments. A company that aims to reinforce its brand’s associations with masculinity could choose to sponsor motor racing or television programs broadcasting sports events such as soccer or ice-hockey (ibid).

In sponsorship, a relationship is established between sponsored activity and sponsor. This will result in a transfer of values and brand associations from sponsored activity to sponsor. Therefore, an audience of an event learns to associate activity and sponsor with one another, as the company’s name, logo, and other company symbols will be visible during the event. An important challenge facing a company that applies sponsorship is to ensure that its presence during the sponsored activity is associated with the activity in a clear way. This will make it possible for a transaction of values from the sponsored activity on to a company brand; a possible solution to this challenge is to utilize mainstream advertising and support promotions (Jobber, 2004, p. 609).

Moreover, Jobber (2004, p. 609) states that values transferred from sponsored activities to sponsor vary with the nature of the sponsored activity. Firstly, companies applying sponsorship in the sports category can be associated with the following values; healthy, young, energetic, fast, vibrant, and masculine. Secondly, companies applying sponsorship within the highbrow arts category can be associated the following values; sophisticated, elite, discriminating, up market, serious, and pretentious. Thirdly, companies using sponsorship within the mass arts category can be associated with the following values; young, accessible, friendly, current, innovative, and commercial. Additionally, companies using sponsorship within the social cause category can be associated with the following values; admirable, concerned, caring, intelligent, and explosive. Lastly, companies applying within the environmental programs category can be associated with the following values; caring, concerned, and exploitive. The transfer of values from these categories can be used as a guideline for companies when deciding upon which sponsorship category a company should focus on, in order to achieve desired brand and image associations (ibid).

2.1.4 Improving Community Relations
Jobber (2004, p. 610) states that applying sponsorship of schools can improve a company’s community relations, and can foster a caring and socially responsible company reputation when for example, a company provides technological aids such as personal computers to a low cost or support local community programs. Furthermore, it has been found that the most common objective for applying sponsorship, for both consumer and industrial companies is to establish relations with their local community (ibid).

2.1.5 Creating Promotional Opportunities
According to Jobber (2004, p. 610) an important part of a company’s promotional strategy is to promote company brands, and sponsorship will provide a company with an ideal
opportunity to achieve this; for example, products caring a company’s logo and the name of the sponsored event, such as bags, hats, t-shirts, and pens can be sold to a target audience during a sponsored event. Another option is to hand out product samples that can be consumed by an audience during a sponsored event for example, beverages or snacks. Additionally, this will provide a potential customer with an opportunity to sample and try out the brand free of charge. Utilizing sponsorship can also enhance the effectiveness of other promotional tools; for example, direct marketing can be combined with sponsorship of an event in line with the material issued through direct marketing. It has been determined that the effectiveness of direct marketing increases when combined with sponsorship, as it reinforces the message distributed via direct marketing (ibid).

2.2 Brand Awareness and Brand Image

According to Gwinner (1997) two of important goals when utilizing sponsorship are: to establish, change or strengthen brand image; and increase brand awareness. Gwinner (1997) also defines brand image as: “...perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in memory”. A brand’s success depends on its uniqueness, favorability, and strength of the associations connected to a brand. These associations generates from a number of different sources, including informational sources (for example, packaging, word-of-mouth, and advertising), product use, and association with other units. An especially important part of sponsorship activity is the source of the associations with other units. During sponsorship activities the sponsoring brand will become connected to the sponsored event and thereby take on associations linked to the event for example, relaxing, enjoyable, sophisticated, disappointing, youthful, or elite. Therefore, the associations between sponsored event and sponsoring brand will affect a brand’s image held in memory among a target audience (ibid).

An event image is created from several different external and internal factors, which are illustrated in Figure 2.1 below; this image can vary with different consumer groups, and can be transferred on to a sponsored brand through associations with the sponsored event’s image (Gwinner, 1997).
2.2.1 Event Type
As seen in Figure 2.1 above a sponsorship event can according to Gwinner (1997) be divided into five categories: sports related, music related, festival/fair related, fine arts related (for example, ballet, art exhibits, and theatre etcetera), and professional meeting/trade show related. As previously mentioned the type of event will in a number of ways affect the image of the event. Firstly, it evokes image associations that the consumer will hold in memory, as a majority of individuals will develop positive or negative attitudes towards particular events through for example, word of mouth, and television etcetera. Moreover, how consumers perceive the image of a particular event will be created based on the same attitudes. However, consumers’ attitudes towards an event are one part of an event’s image, and solely represent a summary of their experiences. In general, this results in a tendency to react to an event in a congruently favorable or unfavorable manner. Therefore, evaluating attitudes towards an event is a task for companies to endure when deciding upon which event type to sponsor (ibid).

2.2.2 Event Image – Brand Image
According to Gwinner (1997) event image can be described as “…the meaning of the event for an individual, and can be characterized using descriptive labels that represent a summation of one’s perceptions”. These labels also referred to as image associations could include for example, high class, athletic, youthful, exclusive, adventurous, and artistic etcetera. Therefore, the concept of event image can be perceived as a collection of associations of an image transferring on to a company’s brand image. Additionally, indirect exposure and past experience in combination with new experiences will form an individual’s perception of event image. The most influential consumer perceptions of an event’s overall image are the most recent ones, which will be formed when consumers interact with other event participants/attendees, and event staff while engaged in or observing the activities. Gwinner (1997) argues that it is during these situations that an image can be modified and
new image associations can be added. Furthermore, when participating in an event individuals may view an event in the same way or different depending on the type of event, and consumers’ overall perceptions of en event image are influenced by their experiences and observations during an event, resulting in their perception of the brand image (ibid).

2.2.3 Moderating Variables between Event Image and Brand Image
Gwinner (1997) states that there are moderating variables that affects the strength of a transfer of values and attitudes between an event’s image, and the image of a sponsoring brand. The relationship between event image and brand image is based on the transfer of meaning between the two, and is influenced by the moderating variables: degree of similarity, level of sponsorship, event frequency, and product involvement (ibid).

Degree of Similarity
The first moderating variable affecting the image transfer process is the degree of similarity between a sponsor and a sponsored event. The first type of similarity is product similarity with an event, which can be either image or functional related. The second type of similarity is related to image, and occurs when event image is related to brand image (Gwinner, 1997).

Level of Sponsorship
According to Gwinner (1997) the level of sponsorship can moderate a transfer of image from an event to a sponsoring brand, as sponsorship arrangements can involve either a single sponsor or up to hundreds of sponsors in different event levels. When an event has two sponsors or more it will force each customer to recall and attend to additional information, which lessens a brand’s probability of being associated with an event. However, events that are sponsored by more than one brand enable different sponsorship levels, where sponsors can contribute with different amounts of money to an event. The level of brand exposure during an event depends on the level of sponsorship for example, a company active at a high level of sponsorship will therefore gain more brand exposure during an event, in comparison to a company active on a lower level of sponsorship. Baring this in mind, a dominant sponsorship position during an event will raise the likelihood of meaning transfer from event to sponsoring brand, by strengthening the link between brand and event (ibid).

Event Frequency and Product Involvement
Another factor that will affect an image transfer between event and brand is the frequency of an event. The frequency can range from either a one-off event to events occurring on a regular basis for example, annual events. A one-off event of a unique nature can attract a great deal of attention from the media; however, this will prevent the development of recurring image associations between sponsor and event. Therefore, choosing the alternative of sponsorship of an ongoing event will provide a sponsor with repeated brand exposure, and thereby establishing a firm link between brand and event (Gwinner, 1997).

Gwinner (1997) states that attitudes towards an event are components of an event’s image, and attitudes towards a brand are components of a brand’s image. The process of forming an attitude towards a brand and/or event is affected by the level of product involvement, which by Gwinner (1997) has been defined as: “… the level of personal relevance a product has to a consumer, resulting from the perceived level of risk associated with the product’s consumption or non-consumption”. Studies have shown that the degree of product
involvement in an event will decide what impact an event image will have on consumer attitudes for example; when a high involvement product is endorsed by sponsors with celebrity status the advertisement had no effect on consumers’ attitudes. However, when a low involvement product is endorsed by celebrity sponsors the advertisement played a significant involvement in creating attitudes towards the product (ibid).

2.3 Internal Communication

According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 79-80) internal communication is one of the most important parts of an organizations communication management, and without the use of internal communication it is not possible for an organization to exist and function. The general purpose of applying internal communication management is to communicate organizational goals, coordinate different units, departments, and individuals within an organization to synchronize the work towards achieving organizational goals (ibid). This argument is also supported by Hargie and Tourish, 1993; Manolias, 1983; and Waters, 1998. Furthermore, an organization’s internal communication consists of three “building blocks”: hierarchical communication, medium communication, and informal communication. These three “building blocks” form an organizations internal communication management and are mutually dependent of each other (Falkheimer and Heide 2007, pp. 79-80).

2.3.1 Hierarchical Communication

Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p.80) state that internal communication traditionally has relied on communication that is based on an organizations hierarchical structure, with the purpose of informing associates in different levels of the hierarchy. The flow of information within an organization is communicated from chief executives at top-level management of a hierarchy, down to associates and base-level employees at the base of the hierarchy and vice versa. The flow of information from top-level management to base-level employees within an organization should be monitored and maintained, in order to establish a secure manner of communication and communicate orders throughout an organization in a uniform way. Furthermore, a key element of this theory is that centralization is a law of nature; all impressions from the outside world should be coordinated by top-level management which can be seen as “the brains” of the organization. The outflow of ideas, aims, and goals are to be implemented throughout all levels of an organization, and always originates from top-level management (ibid).

In the past, hierarchical communication was a matter of distributing information from top-level management to base-level employees at the base of the hierarchy. This occurred without significant feedback from base-level employees to top-level management regarding the quality of the distributed information. Adopting this kind of one-way communication has proved to be successful in smaller organizations; however, in larger and more complex organizations it is less likely that this kind of one-way communication will function well in the long-run. In addition, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 81) argue that an organization with multiple levels of hierarchy, will face the challenge of managing the distribution of internal information in an efficient manner throughout all levels of an organization, in order for the right information to reach the right receiver. General drawbacks of managing internal communication in multiple levels of an organization are a slow distribution of information,
and an impending risk of the information distribution being stalled at one level of the hierarchy and thereby not reaching all levels of an organization (ibid).

Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 81) argue that organizational employees prefer to receive information from their nearest manager, instead of receiving information from the organization’s top-level management, for the reason that the employees perceive the information to be more trustworthy when coming from a manager active at the same hierarchical level. However, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 81) continue to state that one major complaint among an organization’s employees is a lack of communication from their managers. Baring this in mind, the efficiency of an organization’s internal communication is highly dependent on the managers’ competence and ability to forward information to the employees. To further add to the problem of lack of communication between managers and employees, organizations are lacking in informing their managers of their responsibility to manage the communication in an efficient and appropriate manner. Therefore, managers are several times not receiving appropriate training when it comes to managing organizational communication, in addition to an organization not being effective enough when measuring how well managers communicate information, as well as failing to reward managers that have performed well (ibid).

According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 82) managers also need to consider how to adapt a message in order to better facilitate the information for the receiver for example, an organizational employee. Middle-level managers are in some situations not able to forward the information to employees, as they are afraid to corrupt and/or change the meaning of the message. In addition, in numerous situations an organization’s top-level management communicates a message directly to base-level employees without involving middle-level management. This can affect the original purpose and context of the information, as top-level managers may utilize a communicated message in order to reach their own goals and objectives (ibid).

Moreover, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 82) argue that an important part of an organization’s formal communication is that top and middle-level managers are skilled communicators and involvement models. It is also important that top and middle-level managers actively participate in the internal communication between the different hierarchical levels of an organization. Therefore, it is suggested that managers applies “management by walking around”, which is when top-level managers are present at the work place and interacts with base-level employees, showing an interest in their work and striving to create and maintain a continuous dialog with base-level employees. Through applying “management by walking around” top-level managers create good presumptions for establishing a favorable communication climate, where information can flow in both directions of an organization’s hierarchical structure (ibid).

2.3.2 Medium Communication

According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 83), internal mediums for example e-mail, websites, newsletters, employee newsletters, and employee meetings are an important of a company’s communication system. Moreover, an improved control over timing and context of messages was made possible with the introduction of the previous mentioned mediums. Employee newsletters were introduced in order to satisfy company employees’ social needs.
for example, information about company festivities, soccer tournaments, rewards for services, and baby announcements. However, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 84) continue to argue that in previous newsletters employees experienced difficulties in finding information regarding an organization’s strategies, economy, products, news in the business, and competitors. The reason for this was the lack of a strategy for communication activities within a company, resulting in employee newsletters being dominated by less relevant information such as baby announcements and employees’ birthdays. Although there still exist employee newsletters which place primary focus on satisfying employees’ social needs, most of the modern and prominent employee newsletters primarily focus on distributing information connected to a company’s core activities (ibid).

Furthermore, e-mail has been seen as the most popular medium of Internal Communication Technology (ICT) due to its efficiency, independence of time and space in communication, and the informal type of communication which pervades the majority of the e-mail distributed internally in an organization. Even though e-mail is an appreciated ICT medium, the popularity has been shown to contribute to the abundance of information causing issues for today’s organizations. An abundance of information results in base-level employees spending more time on searching, reading, reviewing, sorting, erasing, and adjusting information. More time are therefore spent on processing information and less time on performing actual job tasks (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, pp. 84-85).

Utilizing a company intranet as a communication tool will improve the information accessibility; contribute to an increased organizational transparency, a more democratic organization, and improved learning within an organization. However, as it is both costly and time consuming to handle information in addition to executing job tasks, a company needs to consider how much resources it will devote in order to manage its internal information. It is an issue of deciding how much information that should be distributed to company employees, in order to ensure that the employees are well-informed and can perform well at their job without having to deal with all company information at once (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p. 85).

2.3.3 Informal Communication
According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 85), recent research has indicated that the informal organization and communication are vital in order for an organization to be successful. The informal communication is, without a doubt, the largest part of internal communication when it comes to volume of information distributed within an organization. The majority of an organization’s communication takes place between managers and coworkers, at department meetings, in corridors, company lunchrooms, and via e-mail (ibid).

Moreover, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 86) state that the main purpose of informal communication is to support the formal communication and fill communication gaps that could occur. In addition, informal communication makes it possible for interpretations and meaning creating processes, and thereby allowing employees to discuss issues connected to their organization. Informal networks exist in all organizations and cannot be created, initiated, or controlled by top-level management; informal communication between these informal networks is what creates an understanding of information among individuals in an organization. Research has also shown that organizational learning primarily occurs through
the use of informal communication. However, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 86) argue that top-level management groups rarely realize the importance of utilizing informal communication (ibid).

Furthermore, a common opinion in companies is that employees should not stand in corridors and communicate with other employees; instead they should be at their desk and complete their job tasks. This informal norm is what hinders informal communication in a company, and transfer it to other places such as correspondence via e-mail. However, informal communication is an important part of strategic communication. A well-informed communicator realizes the benefits and strengths of informal communication, and can based on that utilize it as an effective communication tool. The strength of informal communication is that it is cost effective, efficient, and perceived to be reliable as the information is distributed by people in the same informal network (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p. 86).

A possible way of utilizing informal communication is to invite informal leaders to attend at monthly meetings with company top-level management. The result is that all information brought up and discussed during meetings will be rapidly and more effectively distributed within an organization. When a message is distributed within an organization it will be adapted for the receiver, and companies need to be aware of the risk of misinterpretations and the message being biased. The further a message is distributed from its original source, the more the original message will be altered. Therefore, it is important for a company to support the use of informal networks as a communication medium, with information distribution in formal mediums such as a company intranet (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p. 87).

2.4 Employees as Ambassadors

Researchers have in recent years become more interested in organizational employees’ involvement in establishing, strengthening, and reproducing an organization’s brand and identity through their every day actions. Employees are without a doubt the most important messengers in a company, and can in optimal situations function as an organization’s ultimate ambassadors. In addition, the importance of “living the brand”, which is when base-level employees base their actions on organizational values, is an important insight that several organizations either ignore or have a lack of knowledge about. There has to be a strong link between an organization’s strategic visions, work, and communication; therefore, there is a need for a better communication awareness and competence among numerous top-level management groups. Through communication awareness and competence top-level management can realize the importance of communicating company information concerning values, goals, strategies, and brand to employees (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p. 90).

According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 90) organizations several times fail to see the importance of implementing new messages, norms, values, and thoughts among employees. One challenge facing today’s organizations is to facilitate employees’ understanding of how to translate overall company goals into action. This process has to be carried out by employees themselves while supported by their nearest manager. Additionally, this is
important as it is the employees’ daily work and the quality of that work which reflects what
the actual brand and organization represents (ibid).

Moreover, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 91) state that seen from a communication and
meaning creating perspective it is of up-most importance that organizational members are
allowed to discuss with each other, as well as with the company management in order to
achieve a mutual understanding of company goals. Without a mutual understanding there is
a risk of new values, catchwords, or a company brand to become something that co-workers
in best case can recite when asked for, without actually understanding them. Therefore,
there is a need for organizations to remind themselves of what they stand for and what
unites them through the use of different symbols, catchwords, and values (ibid).

2.5 Communication Strategies
According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 94-95) research has shown that an
organization’s communication strategies are often based on existing theories combined with
mental activity. Based on this research, five strategies for internal communication has been
identified as “Spray and Beg”, “Tell and Sell”, “Underline and Investigate”, “Identify and
Answer” and “Withhold and Defend”. These strategies can be applied together or hybrids of
two or more strategies can be applied (ibid).

2.5.1 Spray and Beg
The first strategy is based on top-level management flooding base-level employees with all
kinds of company information, and thereby postulates that its co-workers are competent
enough to sort out relevant from irrelevant information. This strategy is built on the rational
idea that humans have an unlimited ability to receive information, analyze information and
use the result of the analysis to make an optimal decision. The core of this strategy is that if
employees are well informed they can make better decisions (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007,
p. 94).

2.5.2 Tell and Sell
In this strategy organizational member receives less information than in the “Spray and Beg”
strategy, and top-level management only communicates information that in their opinion is
connected to an organization’s core activities. The first step in this strategy is that top-level
management enunciates important points, and in the second step they attempt to sell in
their view of the matter. Managers that adopt this strategy devote time and energy in
creating flashy presentations, but rarely care about creating meaningful discussions with co-
workers. Furthermore, feedback from co-workers is not seen as important for the reason
that managers applying this strategy are convinced that they know best (Falkheimer and
Heide, 2007, p. 94).

2.5.3 Underline and Investigate
This third strategy is based on top-level management developing main ideas, which they
later on let co-workers discuss and try out. Top-level managers applying this strategy have a
large trust for their employees, and their opinion is viewed as important for an
organization’s development. The fundamental attitude among top-level management is to
listen to its co-workers to identify possible misunderstandings or obstacles that can occur (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p. 94).

2.5.4 Identify and Answer
This strategy centers on co-workers, and emphasizes the importance of understanding and creation of meaning in a complex reality. This is a defensive strategy where top-level management attempts to identify issues that employees might have in order to solve them. Employees set an agenda where top-level management addresses for example rumors, leaks, and insinuations. In opposite to the previous strategy, “Underline and Investigate”, the attitude is that employees know best what critical factors that could affect an organization (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p. 94).

2.5.5 Withhold and Defend
This strategy is based on top-level management withholding information from co-workers until they are forced to share that information. Managers assume that information equals power and refuses to share that power with other employees. Another common assumption is that co-workers cannot grasp the whole picture, and should not be given more information than necessary (Falkheimer and Heide, 2007, p. 95).

2.6 Conceptual Framework
This conceptual framework will be used as a guideline for our collection of data for this study, and will be applied to answer the formulated research questions stated in chapter one. This will be achieved by choosing relevant theories that we can rely on when conducting our research. The theories chosen for this study are selected based on one part of sponsorship; the five principal objectives of sponsorship, combined with building brand image and brand awareness through sponsorship. In addition, theories concerning internal communication in an organization will also be applied.

2.6.1 Building a Company Profile through Sport Sponsorship
When answering the first research question: how can a company build a profile through applying sport sponsorship?, we have chosen to apply the following theories; Jobber (2004), and Gwinner (1997). According to Jobber (2004, p. 608) companies have five principal objectives when applying sponsorship:

- Gain publicity
- Create entertainment opportunities
- Foster favorable brand and company associations
- Improve community relations
- Create promotional opportunities

Moreover, as previously mentioned we will also rely on a theory by Gwinner (1997) stating that event image is created through event type, and that image transfers on to a brand image under the influence of moderating variables, as seen in figure 2.1.
2.6.2 Communicating a Sport Sponsorship Profile Internally
The theory relevant to answer research question two: *how can a company communicate its sport sponsorship profile internally?*, is Falkheimer and Heide’s (2007, p. 80) theory that internal communication is based on three communication methods referred to as "building blocks" which are the following:

- Hierarchical communication
- Medium communication
- Informal communication

2.6.3 Employees’ Involvement in Building and Implementing a Sport Sponsorship Profile
The theories relevant to answer research question three: *how can employees be involved in building and implementing a sport sponsorship profile?*, are both formulated by Falkheimer and Heide (2007). Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 90, 94) state that employees function as company ambassadors, and explain five communication strategies for encouraging employees to adopt information:

- Spray and Beg
- Tell and Sell
- Underline and Investigate
- Identify and Answer
- Withhold and Defend
3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we will present the methodology applied to answer the previously formulated research questions. This methodology chapter will include a presentation of the following topics: research purpose, research approach, research strategy, data collection method, and expected models for analysis. Finally, the quality standards of this thesis are discussed.

3.1 Research Purpose: Primarily Descriptive

According to Foster (1998), there are three different purposes to apply when carrying out academic research. These purposes can be described as exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (ibid).

3.1.1 Exploratory studies

Exploratory studies are investigations that aim to discover new insights to issues, in addition to measuring phenomena in a new way. When new data and insights arise, researchers that apply an exploratory research need to be prepared to alter their research approach, as this research method is developed to be adjustable and flexible (Saunders et al., 2000).

3.1.2 Explanatory studies

Explanatory studies develop theory that can be applied to explain the empirical generalizations that emerged in the descriptive stage, resulting in construction, testing and reformulation of theory (Foster, 1998).

3.1.3 Descriptive studies

Descriptive studies are according to Foster (1998) the development of careful descriptions of patterns deriving from exploratory research, and the purpose can also be to develop empirical generalizations. Descriptive has by Miles and Huberman (1994) been defined as: “making complicated things understandable by reducing them to their component parts” (ibid). Additionally, previous mentioned empirical generalizations are of value to explain as they begin to emerge, this leads to long term theory development leading to the exploratory stage of a study (Foster, 1998).

As we describe and analyze literature deriving from previous exploratory research, established a conceptual framework, collected data based on a company’s sports sponsorship profile and the internal communication of those objectives, together with the selection process as well as an evaluation of the effectiveness; the purpose of this thesis will primarily be descriptive.

3.2 Research Approach: Qualitative Research

According to Denscombe (2000, p. 203) two different approaches to research exist: quantitative and qualitative. Wilderdom.com (2008) defines the aim of quantitative research as to: “...classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed”. Furthermore, Wilderdom.com (2008) continues to define the aim of qualitative research as to provide: “...a complete, detailed description”.

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The main point of qualitative research is that it involves analysis of data, for example words from interviews and pictures or objects such as artifacts. In contrast, the main point of quantitative research is that it involves analysis of numerical data (ibid).

Denscombe (2000, p. 205) states that a qualitative research is often associated with a descriptive approach, is suitable for small-scale studies, and is often associated with an involvement from the researcher (ibid). Therefore, this is the most suitable choice of approach for our research, as this thesis purpose is primarily descriptive and the study will be conducted in a small-scale. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding for how a company uses sports sponsorship to build a profile, with emphasis on how a company manages the internal communication of that profile, and the research questions are formulated in a way where the answers contributes to an understanding of a social phenomena. In addition, the aim in this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding for the chosen field of research through the formulated research questions, with focus on adding to existing theory in the research field. After choosing qualitative research as the most suitable approach, the next step in the methodology is to choose an appropriate research strategy.

3.3 Research Strategy: Case Study
According to Yin (1994, p. 6), there are five primary strategies for social science research. These include surveys, archival analysis, experiments, histories, and case studies. The choice of strategy depends upon the following conditions; the type of research question posed, the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to behavior events (ibid).

Denscombe (2000, p. 43) states that a case study focuses on one or a few units of research with the purpose to obtain an in-depth review of events, relationships, experiences, or processes which take place in a particular research unit (ibid). Disadvantages with a case study could be the credibility of generalizations made based on the result of a case study, difficulties to limit the number of data sources, gaining access to environment that is under investigation, and make sure that those investigated are acting as normal as possible and not changing their behavior when observed (Denscombe, 2000, pp. 53-54). Moreover, advantages with a case study could be that researchers can focus on specific details in complex social situations, it is possible to apply more than one research method, researchers are encouraged to apply more than one source in order to facilitate a method triangulation, and researchers are not forced to change or control the circumstances for the reason that a case study is conducted in a natural environment (Denscombe, 2000, pp. 52-53).

Based on Denscombe’s (2000, p. 43) definition of a case study, it is the most appropriate choice of research strategy for our thesis, as we are conducting an in-depth investigation on one specific research unit, in addition to applying multiple research methods and sources to answer our research question.
3.4 Data Collection Method: Documentation and Interviews

According to Yin (2003, p. 86), there are six sources of evidence when conducting a case study: direct observations, interviews, participant observations, physical artifacts, archival records, and documentation. No source can be seen as better than another (ibid). Additionally, Yin (1994, p. 91) adds that “[a] major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence”. Two of the methods used to collect data for the case study are documentation and interviews. We have in this thesis chosen to use documentation and face-to-face interviews to collect data and information for our case study. A detailed description of the methods’ strengths and weaknesses are illustrated in table 3.1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Evidence</th>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Documentation      | - Stable: can be reviewed repeatedly  
                    - Unobtrusive: not created as a result of the case  
                    - Exact: contains exact names, references, and details of an event  
                    - Broad coverage: long span of time, many events, and many settings | - Retrievability: can be low  
                    - Biased selectivity: if collection is incomplete  
                    - Reporting bias: reflects (unknown) bias of author  
                    - Access: may be deliberately blocked |
| Interviews         | - Targeted: focuses directly on case study topic  
                    - Insightful: provides perceived causal inferences | - Bias due to poorly constructed questionnaires  
                    - Response bias  
                    - Inaccuracies due to poor recall  
                    - Reflexivity: interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear |

Source: Adapted from Yin (1994, p. 80)

Yin (2003) states that possible sources for documentation information can be: agendas, letters, newspapers, formal studies, or evaluation and administrative documents. Documentation information is used to confirm and add to evidence collected from other sources such as literature. Furthermore, when conducting interviews names and titles of an organization can be misspelled, and documents can be used to correct inaccuracies (ibid). The primary purpose for using documentation as a data collection method is to collect background information concerning our chosen field of research.

According to Yin (2003, p. 86) interviews is one of the most important sources when collecting data for a case study. In addition, Denscombe (2000, p. 133) argues that interviews are appropriate to use if an investigation requires detailed information from a smaller number of informants. Denscombe (2000, p. 134) continues to state that there are three different interviews structures: structured interviews where a researcher has a strong control over the stated questions and answers; semi-structured interviews where an
interviewer has an agenda over topics to discuss and questions to be answered. However, an interviewer is more flexible when it comes to the sequence of questions, and the questions are of an open nature; unstructured interviews where the interviewers involvement is to intervene as little as possible, and start an interview by introducing the theme of discussion (ibid). We have chosen to conduct semi-structured interviews in order to collect relevant information. A semi-structured interview will enable us to get specific information concerning the field of research, as well as allowing the interviewees to express their opinion and share their experiences without being restrained by a too rigid interview situation, which would be the case when conducting structured interviews.

Furthermore, according to Denscombe (2000, p. 136) the most common type of semi-structured interview is the personal interview, which is a meeting between a researcher and an informant, and is relatively easy to arrange. Moreover, the opinions and views voiced during an interview originate from a single source, the interviewed. This makes it easier for a researcher to connect special ideas to specific individuals. In addition, the personal interview is relatively easy to control, the researcher only has one individual’s ideas to explore and bone up on (ibid). Therefore, based on Denscombe’s (2000, p. 136) description we have decided to conduct personal interviews, because it is suitable for us when arranging a number of interviews during a short period of time.

3.5 Sample Selection: Purposive Sampling

There exist mainly two sample selection methods: probability sampling which is: “... any method of sampling that uses some form of random selection. In order to have a random selection method, you must set up some process or procedure that assures that the different units in your population have equal probabilities of being chose”, and non-probability sampling where the different units do not have the same probabilities of being selected (Sampling and Basic Descriptive Statistics, 2008). When selecting a sample for our case study we have chosen to apply purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method. The reason for this is that purposive sampling allows us to choose the case that is most suitable for answering our formulated research questions and research problem; in addition, according to Saunders (2007) a purposive sampling method, also referred to as judgemental sampling, is commonly applied when conducting small scale research and working with small samples for example, case studies (ibid).

As a sample for this case study we wanted to select a Swedish company involved in sport sponsorship with different employee levels, and a local branch of its operations located in the county of Norrbotten. Based on our own knowledge of different sport events in Norrbotten we visited one specific event’s website, and thereby came across a name of one of the event’s sponsors; a company active in the general dealer industry in Sweden, with local branches all over the country including the county of Norrbotten. In addition, we have previous experience and knowledge about the company in question, which had a significant impact on our selection of company. Based on our own observations and the theories from the conceptual framework, we divided the chosen company’s employees into three different employee levels or subunits (see figure 3.2), which will function as a
guideline for the interviews, the interview questions, the theories, and models discussed in chapter two; in order to answer our research questions and research problem.

**Figure 3.2 Criteria for Case Sub-units/Employee Levels**

In order for us to gain access to more detailed and rather sensitive company information for this case study, the company in question has requested to be anonymous and not be mentioned by its company name in this thesis. Therefore, we will in this thesis refer to the chosen company as “Company X”. Moreover, as seen in figure 3.2 interviews will be conducted with three different levels of company employees. The employees selected from all three levels for the interviews, were chosen based on the knowledge and guidance from a member of Company X’s middle-level management, in addition to the recommendations from a member of Company X’s top-level management.

**3.6 Data Analysis: Within-Case Analysis**

After collecting our empirical data the data analysis process begins. The purpose of carrying out the analysis is to answer our thesis objectives. According to Miles and
Huberman (1994, p. 10) a researcher can apply either a cross-case analysis or a within-case analysis when analyzing case study data (ibid), a within-case analysis is suitable when conducting a single case study (Data analysis in qualitative research, 2008). Therefore, this thesis will rely on a within-case analysis, as we are comparing our collected empirical data, from a single case study, against theories and models relevant to the field of research. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) data analysis can be defined as: “... consisting of three concurrent flows of activity: (1) Data reduction, (2) Data display, and (3) Conclusion drawing/verification”. Furthermore, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) explains these three stages as the following:

1. **Data reduction** is the process of selecting, focusing, abstracting, simplifying, and transforming collected data. The aim is to organize the data in order for the researcher to draw and verify conclusions.

2. **Data display** is a compressed assembly of organized information that allows a researcher to draw conclusions and take action. The purpose is to understand the analysis process and decide whether to analyze further or take action.

3. **Conclusion drawing and verification** is the last stage in carrying out a data analysis. A qualitative analyst is in this stage required to determine the meaning of things for example, noting patterns, regularities, possible configurations, propositions, explanations, and causal flows (ibid).

When we have collected data for each of our three research questions we will select, simplify, and reduce our data with the use of the previously mentioned within-case study. The within-case analysis will be conducted based on the stated conceptual framework in chapter two.

### 3.7 Quality Standards

According to Yin (2003, p. 34) the two concepts reliability and validity can be applied to judge the quality standards of a research. Furthermore, Denscombe (2000, pp. 250-251) states that validity is how well a research method measures what it is supposed to measure, and reliability is how well another researcher can repeat a study and get the same result or draw the same conclusions as the original study (ibid).

As previously mentioned we conducted a single case study for this thesis. As our research purpose and research questions required data collection from three levels of employees within the chosen company, we conducted six interviews with seven individuals from Company X. We contacted a member of the middle-level management in order for us to gain information about individuals suitable for taking part in our interviews, and most importantly get permission to conduct interviews with the company employees during their working hours. After receiving permission for the interviews, and a recommendation of suitable employees, we constructed three different interview guides for the three different levels of employees. These interview guides were formulated in Swedish and the interviews were conducted in Swedish, as it is the mother tongue of the interviewees. This can cause translation errors for the reason that we are writing a thesis in English, and we
need to translate both the interview guides as well as the information collected during the interviews from Swedish to English.

All interviews were face-to-face and personal interviews, and the interviewees were anonymous, in order for us to gain more detailed, honest, and valuable information. However, we are aware of that this can be an issue for researchers attempting to repeat our study of this field. By conducting the interviews face-to-face it was easier to establish a relationship with the interviewee and make them feel comfortable with the situation. Furthermore, face-to-face interviews enabled us to read the interviewees’ body language and detect for example, if the interviewees were nervous, relaxed, honest, dishonest, or were experiencing difficulties in understanding any of the interview questions, and thereby enable us to gain trust and correct any obvious misinterpretations.

Furthermore, all interviews were recorded with a digital dictaphone to make sure that no information was lost, and most importantly it made it possible for us to have eye contact with the interviewees, read their body language, and actively participating in the interviews in order to create a positive and relaxed atmosphere, resulting in more detailed and in-depth answers. As we decided upon conducting semi-structured interviews it allowed us to be more flexible, and let the interviewees speak more freely and further develop interesting opinions and observations. In addition, we choose to not send out an interview guide to level three employees (the base-level employees). The reason for this is that we are conducting research on how Company X communicates its sport sponsorship profile to its base-level employees, and we wanted to investigate their actual knowledge of the company profile at that time, and not affect their answers by sending out guidelines in advance that may force them to research the answers before the interview. This could have result in the given answers being based on collected information instead of their own personal knowledge.

Moreover, we have in detail described our data collection, the questions asked during the interviews and to whom; furthermore, a thorough description of our methodology for this case study has been presented. In addition, both an English and Swedish version of the three interview guides has been attached in Appendix A and Appendix B. During the interviews we were careful to not ask leading questions, and make sure that the interviewees were allowed to finish their train of thought. Additionally, all information collected during the six interviews was presented to prevent any misinterpretations in the analysis. Due to the fact that this field of research is relatively new and unexplored, we experienced difficulties in finding relevant and suitable theories and models that can support our field of research. Therefore, we have made the deliberation to apply theories that in our opinion are relevant for this study, even though the majority of our chosen theories are supported by a single or few sources. We are also aware of the fact that our research could become biased as a result of this; however, we considered it to be the best solution, and felt that applying theories that are perceived to be less relevant for our research could damage our thesis instead of supporting it.
4. DATA PRESENTATION

In this chapter we will present data collected from the six interviews conducted with seven individuals in this case study. First we will give a brief background of Company X focusing on the three identified employee levels in the company. The empirical data collected for each of our research questions will then be presented separately in the following order: (1) the top-level management, (2) the middle-level management, (3) the base-level employees.

4.1 Company X

Company X is a company located in the county of Norrbotten, and is a branch of a larger Swedish organization active in the general dealer industry. The company applies sponsorship as a part of their marketing strategy, and primarily sponsors events and activities within the sports category for example, ice-hockey, soccer, and basketball. In this case study the focus is not on how and why the company builds a profile through sport sponsorship, but rather how they communicate the established profile internally through the company’s three identified employee levels. In addition, during the interviews the concept image was defined as how the company is perceived by both the members and non-members of the organization, and the concept profile was defined as how the company wants to be perceived by both the members and non-members of the organization.

4.2 The Top-level Management’s View on Building a Sport Sponsorship Profile

Individual A has been employed at Company X for 40 years in different positions within the company, and is currently working at the branch head office in the county of Norrbotten. Individual A is also a member of the top-level management group dealing with decisions concerning the choice of sponsorship objectives, and selection of sponsorship activities.

Company X is involved in sponsorship of both annual and one-off sport events. The company is mainly involved in annual events such as, sponsorship of local elite sport teams in ice-hockey, soccer and basketball. Three times a year a sponsorship group consisting of the head of personnel, the head of marketing, the head of economy, and the head informer/educator, hold a meeting where it is decided which teams, events and activities the company will sponsor. It is currently sponsoring a male basketball team, a female basketball team, a male ice-hockey team, and a male soccer team. Furthermore, the company is also involved in sponsorship of local youth teams within the sports category, and an exercise event for females. During the female exercise event the company hands out gift bags printed with the company logo, which are filled with company product samples to participants at the event. As a part of their sponsorship strategy Company X’s employees can participate free of charge in this females only exercise event.

In addition, youth teams, school class etcetera can fill out a sponsorship application on the company website in order to receive sponsorship from the company. In return the teams and class are required to make counter performance for example, assisting the company
during the annual female exercise event. Moreover, the company’s sponsorship budget is divided into two parts: 1/3 of the budget goes to sponsorship of local elite sport teams in Norrbotten, and the remaining 2/3 of the budget is equally divided between male and female youth sport teams. It is important for the company that sport teams of both genders receive equal sponsorship efforts, and every year the company formulates a plan for equality in the distribution of sponsorship efforts between both genders.

Company X does not have specific sales related or product related goals that it wants to achieve when applying sponsorship, instead it has an overall purpose of gaining more customers, as well as to create and gain publicity and goodwill for the company and its products. The company also wants to be seen during the sponsored sport events and activities, and the main objective is to be associated with positive features such as: young, healthy, sporty, supporting the local community, and supporting youth teams to promote healthy living as well as generating positive word of mouth. It aims to reach these objectives by being associated with local elite sport teams. In addition, sponsorship of sport teams creates visibility for the company. The overall strategy applied when sponsoring is the same for all activities, and does not change depending on the nature of activity. Although the sponsorship group in most cases decides what activities to sponsor, the head of each company branch decides over the local distribution of 1/3 of the sponsorship budget.

Furthermore, the company is not actively attempting to transfer values from sponsored activity to the company and its employees. However, the number of employees on long term sick-leave has recently begun to decrease, probably as a result of the company’s efforts to inspire their employees to exercise and live a more healthy life for example: becoming health coaches certified through a local amateur athletic club, free fruit in the employee lunch room, and a sum of 1,250 SEK per year to all employees to be used for a gym membership or other health promoting activities.

When it comes to internal communication of the company’s involvement in sponsorship of local youth and elite sport teams, the head of marketing holds the main responsibility for forwarding relevant information from the top-level management to the middle-level management. This is carried out through the distribution of paper copies containing relevant company information, as well as publishing updated information continuously on the company intranet. In addition, weekly or monthly meetings are held where the top-level management is informed of sponsorship events and activities that the company is involved in, teams applying for sponsorship, and the amount of money available in their sponsorship budget. In general, the top-level management forwards information to the middle-level management, who is then responsible for forwarding the information to the base-level employees. Although information is distributed within Company X, it does not have a formulated strategy for internal communication that can be applied in all situations.

Additionally, the company management strives to create a “we-feeling” among its employees through internal training programs, setting a good example for healthy living, and most recently planning to conduct an extensive employee survey. All personnel will
take part in the survey and remain anonymous, with the purpose of receiving more honest answers concerning management and the company in general. However, the company does not apply any tools to measure the effectiveness of the internal communication or how well informed the employees, primarily the base-level employees, are regarding the company’s involvement in sport sponsorship and the company profile it wishes to achieve through applying sport sponsorship.

4.3 The Middle-level Management’s View on Internal Communication of a Sport Sponsorship Profile

We conducted four interviews with four members of Company X’s middle-level management referred to as Individual B, C, D and E.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Position in Company X</th>
<th>Time of Service within the company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual B</td>
<td>Head-manager of the middle-level management</td>
<td>29 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual C</td>
<td>Middle-level department manager</td>
<td>26 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual D</td>
<td>Company team leader</td>
<td>19 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual E</td>
<td>Sales manager</td>
<td>35 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 4.1 Summary of Interviewee Information

As we are interested in the interviewees’ general knowledge of the chosen field of research, we have made the decision to present a compilation of the information given from the Individuals B, C, D and E, rather than present specific information connected to one specific individual.

Sponsorship was by the middle-level management defined as gaining goodwill for the company, a work exchange between sponsor and sponsored activity, building a trade mark, gaining publicity, showing support for the local community, create awareness among potential customers, and/or receive a counter performance from sponsored activity or event through ads showing the sponsor’s logo at the events or activities’ location. In addition, two of the middle-level managers identified two different kinds of sponsorship that Company X is involved in: one where the local branch itself decides over which activities or events to sponsor with goods, and one where the head-office three times a year decides over which elite sport teams and other larger events or youth sport teams to sponsor with money. The middle-level managers were aware of some of the elite sport teams and other sport related events that Company X is sponsoring for example, a ice-hockey, basketball and soccer team, and a annual female exercise event. However, the middle-level managers had primarily gained this knowledge on their own, and not through communication from the top-level management.

The middle-level management defined Company X’s image as lusty, more youthful than before, morally correct, innovative, solid, environmental-friendly, supporting the local
community, local elite and youth sport teams. When asked to illustrate the company profile, the middle-level managers describe it as a wish to be youthful, athletic, wholesome, generous, giving back to the local community, environmental friendly, and supporting a healthy living among young individuals. However, although the majority of the middle-level managers were aware of Company X’s image as well as profile, one of the middle-level managers was not able to describe the company image and profile, as the manager had no clear perception of Company X’s image and profile due to a lack of information from the top-level management.

The purpose of sponsoring sport teams was by the middle- level management perceived as an attempt to gain publicity, be seen where the action is, create visibility for the company and its brand, and be associated with health and youthfulness through sponsorship of local elite and youth sport teams. The purpose of sponsorship was also in their opinion a way of gaining new customers among those individuals involved in the sponsored activities, teams, and events as well as the audience at these events; while showing support for the local community and the individuals living there.

Moreover, when it comes to verbal and written information concerning Company X’s image, profile, and sponsorship involvement two of the middle-level managers recall to have received some form of information from the top-level management for example, what criteria the company applies when choosing what event, activity, or team to sponsor. However, one of these two managers did not remember any detailed information, due to the volume of information given at that time. The other two middle-level managers did not recall to have received any form of verbal or written information concerning Company X’s sport sponsorship objectives.

According to all four middle-level managers the company does not have a formulated strategy for internal communication of its sport sponsorship profile. The company applies some tools to communicate relevant information, for example monthly and weekly meetings for both the middle-level managers as well as the base-level employees. Other communication tools used are billboards directed to company employees, telephone calls, information posted in the employee lunch room and using the company intranet. However, the intranet is not available for all employees; only higher level management has access to the information published there. One middle-level manager’s opinion was that even if all employees had access to the intranet, all of the employees would not visit the intranet frequently enough to be updated to the most recent company information.

Moreover, one of the middle-level managers addressed the issue of all employees not receiving relevant information regarding decisions taken by the top-level management. The reason for this is the large volume of information given at the same time, and the issue of determining what information that needs to be distributed to the base-level employees. In spite the lack of strategy for internal communication, the company aims to keep all employees informed of recent changes and decisions. However, every employee has their own responsibility to take part of the information made available by the top and middle- level management. Additionally, the most common way of communication is verbal.
communication from middle-level management to base-level employees. In Company X, information exchange between the top and middle-level management is communicated via the use of e-mail, as some of the base-level employees do not have an e-mail address.

The internal communication in Company X consists of distributing information either from the top-level management to the head of middle-level management, who then distributes the information to the other middle-level managers. The middle-managers then distribute the information to the base-level employees. However, the head of middle-level management can choose to skip a step in the internal communication process and distribute relevant information directly to the base-level employees. The middle-level managers’ view of the internal communication, between the different employee levels in Company X is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

![Figure 4.1 Internal Communications between Employee Levels in Company X](image)

Furthermore, in one the middle-level managers’ opinion it is important that all employees are aware of the company sport sponsorship image and profile. The reason for this is that they are ambassadors for the company, and it is important that they act in line with company objectives in order to maintain an image that corresponds to its profile. However, two of the middle-level managers had no perception of Company X’s sport sponsorship profile and it is therefore difficult for them to communicate the company profile to the base-level employees when their own knowledge is insufficient. If all levels of employees are informed and involved in some way in building and implementing the company’s image and sport sponsorship profile, one of the middle-level managers believe that it would create a better working environment where employees feel a greater commitment for the company, as well as creating the feeling of being an important part of the organization. This could, according to the same manager, result in the employees feeling a greater joy for their work and create a “we-feeling” among the company personnel.

In the middle-managers’ opinion, it is their own responsibility as managers as well as the top-level management’s responsibility to distribute relevant information to all the base-
level employees. It is also the base-level employees’ responsibility to take part of information made available by the top and middle-level management. Moreover, the middle-level managers recall that some measures have been taken in order to motivate them to distribute information and act in line with its sport sponsorship profile. Such measures are for example, internal education concerning healthy food and Nordic walking, and covering the entry fee for all employees participating in the previously mentioned female exercise event. The main measure taken to motivate employees to act in line with their healthy profile is that the company provides all company employees with a “health maintenance contribution” of 1,250 SEK each year. This money can be used for all kinds of activities improving the employee’s health and life quality, for example gym membership or dance lessons. One of the middle-level managers points out that all these measures are not seen as a cost; it is rather an investment for the future and hopefully results in healthier and happier personnel.

In order to secure if the correct information reaches the right receiver, one of the managers applies an agenda when informing the personnel to ensure that all relevant information is brought up for discussion. However, in general the company does not apply any tools, theories or measures in order to secure that the right information has been distributed to all employees involved in and affected by the information. In addition, all the middle-level managers agreed on the importance of supporting verbal statements with appropriate actions, in order to achieve an image that corresponds with the company’s profile.

4.4 The Base-level Employees’ View on their Involvement in Building and Implementing a Sport Sponsorship Profile

We conducted one interview with two members of Company X’s base-level employees referred to as Individual F and G. Individual F has been employed at Company X for five years in different positions within the company. Individual G has been employed at Company X for 23 years in different positions within the company. Both individuals are currently working as base-level employees in two different departments in Company X.

As previously mentioned we are solely interested in the interviewees’ general knowledge of the chosen field of research, we have made the decision to present a compilation of the information given from the Individuals F and G, rather than present specific information gained from one specific individual.

The concept of sponsorship was by one of the base-level employees described as: donating money or goods to individuals or sport teams that are in need of sponsorship, and sponsorship of different sport events. However, one of the interviewed had no knowledge of the concept of sponsorship, or if Company X was involved in any kind of sponsorship. Moreover, one of the base-level employees was aware of some of the events, elite sport teams, and youth sport teams that Company X sponsors for example, an ice-hockey team, a female exercise event, a soccer team, and local skiing competitions. The same individual had not received any information concerning the company’s sponsorship involvement by
the top or middle-level management; instead the base-level employee had gained that information single-handed through other means. The other individual had no knowledge of which event, activities, or teams that Company X sponsors, as the individual had received no information from the company management concerning its sponsorship involvement.

Moreover, when asked to define Company X’s profile the base-level employees described it as: healthy, supplier of ecological goods, supporter of the local community, environmental friendly, and supporting some local businesses through primarily buying perishable products produced locally, instead of buying perishable products transported from the southern parts of Sweden. When asked to define the company’s image the interviewed individuals described it as: environmental friendly, and with good manpower-care. However, the individuals had difficulties in describing the company image, and in their opinion customers do not reflect over the company’s image. Additionally, the base-level employees were not informed of the company’s involvement in sponsorship, which events, teams or activities the company sponsors and the profile the company wants to achieve; therefore it was difficult for them to identify the company’s image and profile. However, according to one of the base-level employees the purpose of sponsorship sport teams and events could be that the company wants to be associated with health, and gain positive publicity for supporting and promoting physical exercise and healthy living.

The general opinion among the base-level employees were that they do not receive enough information regarding the company’s sport sponsorship involvement, or what the company wants to achieve by applying sport sponsorship. According to them it is difficult to know what the company wants to achieve if they are not better informed. Furthermore, in the interviewed base-level employees’ opinion it is important to be informed of the company profile and image by their nearest manager, in order to support the company’s formulated sport sponsorship profile instead of undermining it through their actions. In addition, the base-level employees would like to receive more information concerning the company sport sponsorship profile, preferably verbal information from their nearest manager, as they believe that it would motivate them to act in line with the profile.

The interviewed base-level employees experience frustration due to the lack of information and insufficient internal communication in some situations, which have lead to the interviewed base-level employees feeling left out from important information concerning decisions that could or will affect them some way. According to one of the interviewed base-level employees the internal communication has improved compared to before. However, some of the information during personnel meetings is perceived to be inadequate, and sometimes the information reaches the right receiver too late or not at all. When an employee due to different reasons is not able to attend at Company X’s monthly and weekly personnel meetings, they feel that it is difficult to obtain the information presented at the meeting in retrospect. This in turn results in a level of uncertainty among the employees who feel like they might be missing out on important information, as well as creating a feeling of unimportance resulting in a lower level of employee motivation.
Additionally, in the opinion of the interviewed base-level employees all levels of Company X are responsible for both distributing and receiving information; both concerning the company’s sport sponsorship profile and image, as well as other relevant information affecting the employees in one way or another. The main responsibility lies with the top and middle-level management as they are the first to receive the information, and should have the ability to determine what parts of the information that needs to be passed on to the base-level employees. However, the interviewed base-level employees feel like they are equally responsible for taking the initiative to obtain relevant information. They also feel that the lack of information might be a result of their managers not being aware of the importance of informing the staff, or that the staff wants to be updated on important company information even though the information might not affect them directly.

Moreover, the insufficient communication of company information could be improved by: more frequent verbal information from the middle-level management to the base-level employees, and not posting any important information on the personnel billboard as few employees actually reads the documents posted on the billboard. Instead the manager should on a regular basis print out a summary of relevant information and make it available as a compendium in the staff lunch room, and have more frequent employee meetings where updated information concerning the company’s sport sponsorship involvement is discussed. Managers should also realize that the company’s employees want to be informed of recent news and decisions, especially concerning sport sponsorship involvement, on a regular basis. In conclusion, it is the interviewed base-level employees’ opinion that they would feel more motivated and committed to the company, in addition to creating a “we-feeling” among the employees, if they were kept informed and updated on both general company information and information concerning its sport sponsorship involvement.
5. DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter we will present an analysis of the collected empirical data presented in chapter four. In order to compare the data from this case study with the previously stated conceptual framework we will conduct a within-case analysis. When analyzing the data we will look for similarities as well as differences between the collected data and selected theory. We will present an analysis of the data collected for each research question separately. Additionally, we have chosen to utilize two different ways to display the summary of our data analysis in the exhibits, this for the reason that it is in our opinion, the most suitable and understandable way to display the data analysis.

5.1 RQ 1: Building a Sport Sponsorship Profile

In the conceptual framework of this thesis, Jobber (2004, p. 608) states that companies have five principle objectives when applying sponsorship: to gain publicity, create entertainment opportunities, foster favorable brand and company associations, improve community relations, and create promotional opportunities. Furthermore, according to Gwinner (1997) event image is created through event type, for example sports or music related, and that image is transferred on to the image of the brand under the influence of the following moderating variables: degree of similarity, level of sponsorship, event frequency, and product involvement.

5.1.1 The Top-level Management

According to Company X’s top-level management one of the objectives for applying sport sponsorship is to gain more publicity, both for the brand and the company itself, in addition to gaining more customers and create goodwill for the company and its products. This data is generally consistent with the theory by Jobber (2004, p. 608), where one of the principle objectives is to gain publicity through applying sponsorship of major sport events (ibid). Another of Company X’s main objectives for applying sponsorship is to be seen during the sponsored events, in addition to giving out gift bags printed with the company name and logo to participants at the sponsored events and activities, and thereby create awareness for the brand and the company. This data corresponds both with Jobber’s (2004, p. 610) statement that creating promotional opportunities is another principle objective when applying sponsorship (ibid); and with Gwinner’s (1997) statement that the most important goals when applying sponsorship are to establish, change or strengthen brand image, and increase brand awareness.

As Company X is involved in the sponsorship of a female exercise event, the company covers the entire entry fee for all female employees participating in the exercise event. The purpose of this is to motivate company employees to exercise and be healthier, in addition to generating positive word of mouth. This data partly corresponds with Jobber’s (2004, p. 609) theory to create entertainment opportunities as a principle objective of sponsorship, more exactly the argument that employees can attend at company sponsored events as a reward for a job well done (ibid). This reasoning can also be connected to Gwinner’s (1997) theory that company staff engaged in sponsored activities will influence customers’
perceptions of an event’s overall image, in addition to generating positive word of mouth among event participants.

According to the top-level management another of Company X’s sponsorship objectives is to be associated with positive features such as: young, healthy, sporty, supporting the local community, and supporting youth teams to promote healthy living. Company X’s sponsorship strategy and goals does not vary depending on the nature of the sponsored event, and the same strategy and goals are applied on all sponsorship activities. Moreover, the company wishes to be associated with the features healthy, sporty and supporting the local community, and this data is partly supported by two of Jobber’s (2004, pp. 609-610) five principal objectives of sponsorship: fostering favorable brand and company associations, and improving community relations through sponsoring school classes; in addition, Gwinner (1997) also argues that a company can be associated with certain values, such as youthful, relaxing, and elite when linked to an event. Jobber (2004, pp. 609-610) states that companies applying sponsorship within the sports category could also be associated with features such as: energetic, fast, vibrant and masculine; these are features that Company X are associated with when sponsoring for example, an ice-hockey team. However, the company’s top-level management did not express a wish to be associated with the features energetic, fast, vibrant, and masculine which results in the company’s sport sponsorship objectives deviating from Jobber’s (2004, pp. 609-610) theory of five principle objectives for sponsorship. In addition, Gwinner (1997) continues to argue that an event image can vary with different consumer groups (ibid); this argument is not consistent with Company X’s sponsorship strategy to apply the same strategy on all sponsorship activities.

Furthermore, Company X primarily sponsors annual events such as the female exercise event, in addition to developing an ongoing sponsorship business agreement with local elite sport teams. In both cases the company is a major sponsor making substantial sponsorship contributions; however, both the female exercise event and the elite sport teams also have business agreements with other major sponsors. As previously mentioned the company gives out gift bags filled with a selection of company products during the female exercise events, and the company logo can be seen on signs at the events and in the sport arenas. The company is also involved in one-off sponsorship activities and events, especially sponsoring school class and youth sport teams in the local community. This is partly supported by Gwinner (1997) who argues that the frequency of event, product involvement, degree of similarity, and level of sponsorship are all moderating variables affecting an image transfer between event and brand (ibid).

5.1.2 Matrix Summary
We will summarize our analysis of the first research question in exhibit 5.1, where the theory from the conceptual framework will be compared with the empirical data collected from one interview conducted with a member of Company X’s top-level management. Theories that are consistent with the collected empirical data are in exhibit 5.1 outlined in black and underlined, and theories not corresponding with the collected empirical data are in exhibit 5.1 outlined in gray.
### Sport Sponsorship Profile Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Gain more publicity</td>
<td>➢ Gain publicity</td>
<td>➢ Establish, change or strengthen brand image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Gain more customers</td>
<td>➢ Create entertainment opportunities</td>
<td>➢ Increase brand awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Create goodwill</td>
<td>➢ Foster favorable brand and company associations</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Create awareness for the company and its brand</td>
<td>➢ Improve community relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Create entertainment opportunities</td>
<td>➢ Create promotional opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Be associated with health</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>➢ Healthy</td>
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<td>➢ Relaxing</td>
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<td>➢ Young</td>
<td>➢ Youthful</td>
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<td>➢ Sporty</td>
<td>➢ Energetic</td>
<td>➢ Athletic</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Supporting the local community</td>
<td>➢ Fast</td>
<td>➢ Elite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Vibrant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Masculine</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>➢ Sports category</td>
<td>➢ Sports related</td>
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<td></td>
<td>➢ Highbrow arts category</td>
<td>➢ Music related</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Mass arts category</td>
<td>➢ Festival/Fair related</td>
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<tr>
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<td>➢ Social causes category</td>
<td>➢ Fine arts related</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Environment programs category</td>
<td>➢ Professional meeting/trade show related</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Annual events</td>
<td>➢ Degree of similarity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ One of multiple sponsors</td>
<td>➢ Level of sponsorship; single or one of multiple sponsors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ High/low product involvement</td>
<td>➢ Event frequency; annual or one-off events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Product involvement; high or low</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 5.1 Sport Sponsorship Profile Summary
As seen in exhibit 5.1 Company X’s sponsorship strategy is in general in line with the theories principal objectives when applying sponsorship, type of event sponsored, and moderating variables affecting the transfer of image from event to brand. However, Company X’s sponsorship strategy is only partly in line with the theory of perceived values transferred from sponsored activity to sponsor.

5.2 RQ 2: Internal Communication of a Sport Sponsorship Profile

In the conceptual framework Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 80) state that internal communication is based on three communication methods called “building blocks” which are: hierarchical, medium, and informal communication.

5.2.1 The Middle-level Management

According to the middle-level management it is the company’s top-level management that holds the main responsibility for communicating information to the other employee levels in the company. The most frequently used communication method in Company X is that the top-level management forwards information concerning company decisions to the head of the middle-level management, who is then responsible for forwarding the information to other members of the middle-level management. When the other members of the middle-level management in Company X have received and processed the information, it is their responsibility to forward any relevant information to the base-level employees.

In addition, the head of middle-level management can also forward verbal or written information directly to the base-level employees, instead of using the other members of middle-level management as a channel for communication. Even though Company X does not have a formulated company strategy for internal communication, its way of communicating information comports with Falkheimer and Heide’s (2007, pp. 80-82) theory of hierarchical communication, where information is distributed from the top-level management to the base-level employees via the middle-level management, as a method of internal communication. Furthermore, when the head of company X’s middle-level management verbally communicates directly to the base-level employees, it is similar to Falkheimer and Heide’s (2007, p. 82) theory of company managers applying “management by walking around”, where the manager interacts with the base-level employees and show an interest in their work; in order to create a better flow of information between the different levels of the company.

When the top and middle-level management communicates with each other they utilize the following communication tools: e-mail, intranet, telephone calls, and verbal communication via monthly and weekly face-to-face meetings. Additionally, when the middle-level management forwards relevant information to the base-level employees they utilize the following communication tools: verbal face-to-face communication at the work place, documents posted on billboards directed to employees, compendiums containing relevant company information is made available in the employee lunchroom, and weekly and monthly employee meetings. By utilizing these communication tools this aspect of
Company X’s internal communication have similarities with Falkheimer and Heide’s (2007, pp. 83-85) medium communication theory; where a company’s tools for communicating internally is identified as for example, e-mail, meetings, and employee newsletters.

Moreover, Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 85-87) argue that informal communication is the largest and most important part of a company’s internal communication, and can contribute to its success. Informal communication is constantly present in a company, and all employees engage in informal communication in one way or another (ibid). During the interviews with Company X’s middle-level management the interviewees did not address the topic of informal communication as a method for internal communication in Company X. Therefore, the empirical data collected for this case study does not completely correspond with the theory of informal communication as a method for internal communication by Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 85-87).

5.2.2 Matrix Summary
We will summarize our analysis of the second research question in exhibit 5.2, where the theory from the conceptual framework will be compared with the empirical data collected from four interviews conducted with members of Company X’s middle-level management. Theories that are consistent with the collected empirical data are in exhibit 5.2 coded with a YES, and theories not corresponding with the collected empirical data are in exhibit 5.2 coded with a NO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERNAL COMMUNICATION METHODS</th>
<th>Theory by Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 80-87)</th>
<th>Middle-level Management Company X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical Communication</td>
<td>Distributing information from the top-level management to the base-level employees via middle-level management</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Communication</td>
<td>Internal communication via mediums such as e-mail, intranet, meetings, and employee newsletters</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Communication</td>
<td>Communication at department meetings, in corridors, company lunchrooms and via e-mail</td>
<td>YES / NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 5.2 Internal Communication Methods Summary

As seen in exhibit 5.2 Company X is in line with both the hierarchical communication theory, and the medium communication theory. However, the company’s communication methods are not completely consistent with the informal communication theory, as the company is not aware of the fact that it is using informal communication in the company.
5.3 RQ 3: Employees Involvement in Building and Implementing a Sport Sponsorship Profile

In the conceptual framework of this thesis Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 90-94) state that employees function as company ambassadors; furthermore, they explain five communication strategies for motivating employees to adopt company information: Spray and Beg, Tell and Sell, Underline and Investigate, Identify and Answer, and Withhold and Defend.

5.3.1 The Base-level Employees

According to Falkheimer and Heide (2007, p. 90) employees play an important involvement in establishing, strengthening, and reproducing an organization’s brand and identity through their every day actions, and can in optimal situations function as an organization’s ultimate ambassadors (ibid). The theory does not correspond with the empirical data collected from Company X, as the base-level employees had not gained any information regarding the company’s sponsorship involvement from the top or middle-level management; instead any information that the employees had was gained through other information channels.

None of the interviewed base-level employees had any knowledge concerning Company X’s sponsorship objectives; due to the inadequate communication of information from the company’s top and middle-level management, the base-level employees also had difficulties in identifying the company’s sport sponsorship profile and image. In addition, the insufficient communication of information resulted in the interviewed base-level employees having difficulties in understanding what the company wants to achieve, through applying sport sponsorship. Therefore, it is difficult for them to act in line with Company X’s sport sponsorship profile, and function as company ambassadors. This is similar to Falkheimer and Heide’s (2007, p. 90) argument that many organizations ignore or have a lack of knowledge concerning the importance of “living the brand”, which is when co-workers’ actions is based on organizational values. In Company X, the top-level management distributes large quantities of information to the company’s middle-level management, and the middle-level management has experienced difficulties in processing the large amount of information given, in order for them to fully understand it and later on forward relevant information to the base-level employees. This data is partly supported by two of Falkheimer and Heide’s (2007, p. 94) internal communication strategies Spray and Beg (forwarding large amounts of information), and Tell and Sell (only forwarding information that is connected to an organization’s core activities).

5.3.2 Matrix Summary

We will summarize our analysis of the third research question in exhibit 5.3, where the theory from the conceptual framework will be compared with the empirical data collected from one interview conducted with two members of Company X’s middle-level management. Theories that are consistent with the collected empirical data are in exhibit 5.3 coded with a YES, and theories not corresponding with the collected empirical data are in exhibit 5.3 coded with a NO.
### STRATEGIES FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theory by Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp. 90-94)</th>
<th>Communication Between the Middle-level Management and the Base-level Employees in Company X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spray and Beg</strong></td>
<td>Forwarding large amounts of unprocessed information</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tell and Sell</strong></td>
<td>Only forwarding information that is connected to an organization’s core activities</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Underline and Investigate</strong></td>
<td>Co-workers discussing and trying out ideas developed by top-level management</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identify and Answer</strong></td>
<td>Centers around co-workers, the attitude is that employees know best what critical factors that could affect an organization</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Withhold and Defend</strong></td>
<td>Top-level management withholds information from co-workers until they are forced to share that information</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exhibit 5.3 Strategies for Internal Communication**

As seen in exhibit 5.3 Company X’s internal communication strategies are mainly consistent with the **Spray and Beg**, and **Tell and Sell** strategy. However, the company’s internal communication strategies are generally not in line with the **Underline and Investigate**, **Identify and Answer**, and **Withhold and Defend** strategy, by Falkheimer and Heide (2007, pp.90-94).
6. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we will present the findings from our conducted case study, and present our own conclusions. By answering our research questions stated in chapter one, this chapter will serve our research purpose:

“To provide a deeper understanding for how a company uses sports sponsorship to build a profile, with emphasis on how a company manages the internal communication of its profile”

In the end of this chapter we will present this case study’s implications and recommendations for theory, for management, and for future research.

6.1 How a Company can Build a Profile through Applying Sport Sponsorship

Our research found that Company X’s primary objective when applying sponsorship within the sport category is to gain more customers. It applies sport sponsorship to build a profile associated with values such as health, sports, youthfulness, and supporting the local community; in addition to establishing a profile based on solely sponsoring local elite and youth sport teams in the county of Norrbotten for example, an ice-hockey team and a soccer team. Other profile related objectives when applying sport sponsorship are to: create goodwill, and generate positive word of mouth.

Company X’s primary objective for applying sponsorship within the sport category, which is to gain more customers, emphasizes how important customers are as it cannot survive without them. Therefore, the company utilizes all sport sponsorship activities in order for it to gain more customers, in addition to create awareness for the company and the brand among existing and potential customers observing or participating in events or activities sponsored by Company X. One primary reason for why Company X applies sponsorship within the sport category is to gain values associated with events and activities within this category, and thereby establish, alter, improve, and/or strengthen customers’ perception of the company and its brand as healthy and sporty.

Company X’s main strategy to solely sponsor local elite and youth teams in the county of Norrbotten is to create positive company associations, among people involved in or connected to the sponsored teams; thereby, it aims to generate positive word of mouth among other individuals living in communities within the county, individuals which in the future could be potential customers. Additionally, our research has found that Company X believes that the local elite sport teams it sponsors have a strong rooted ness in the county, as well as in the heart and soul of the members of the communities. The company utilizes this fact and sponsors local elite sport teams, in order to build a sponsorship profile based on the transfer of values between the sport teams and the company. The aim is also to etch the company logo and brand into the mind of inhabitants living in the communities.
Regarding the wish to be perceived as a company supporting the local community, the purpose is to gain goodwill from existing or potential customers living in the community. When for example supporting the local community through applying sponsorship of a school class, Company X gains goodwill from members of the community; in this case the goodwill can be gained from the parents of the sponsored school children, who may be existing or potential customers.

To summarize, a company involved in sport sponsorship can build a profile through:
- Creating awareness for company and brand
- Creating favorable company and brand associations
- Creating goodwill
- Generating positive word of mouth
- Establish good community relations

In conclusion, the company applies sport sponsorship as an attempt to build a profile through associations and values transferred from the chosen event, activity, and/or sport team on to the company. The company’s main objectives when building a sport sponsorship profile are to gain more customers, etch the company logo into the mind of the consumers, create goodwill for the company, and generate positive word of mouth among customers. Therefore, all its sponsoring efforts are primarily directed towards potential and existing customers.

The company needs to consider some profile related issues before and during its involvement in sport sponsorship:
- What values are associated with an event, activity or sport team?
- What values do the company itself want to be associated with?
- Does the image of the sponsored event, activity and/or sport team correspond with the desired company sport sponsorship profile?

6.2 How a Company can Communicate a Sport Sponsorship Profile Internally

In general, there exist three internal communication methods; hierarchical, medium, and informal communication. These methods are applied by the company when forwarding information, regarding its sport sponsorship profile, to different employee levels. Additionally, our research has found that the company utilizes more than one internal communication method, and often combines different methods in order to forward information more effectively.

Hierarchical communication is used in the company as it has a hierarchical company structure with numerous employee levels. Furthermore, it often exists a great deal of information that needs to be distributed within the company, and it is of great importance
that the right information reaches the right receiver on time. Therefore, the company uses intermediaries to effectively forward information from the top-level management to the base-level employees. Our research has found that the reasons for using a hierarchical communication method in the company are: that it is not necessary that all employees receive information concerning every company decision made by the top-level management, and employees seem to prefer being informed by their nearest company manager. Furthermore, it is also indicated that the company’s overall goal needs to be divided into sub targets for every level of the hierarchy in order to enable an understanding of the goal in all employee levels, as well as clarify what necessary actions every employee level need to take in order for the company to reach its stated sport sponsorship objectives.

Medium communication is primarily applied to support the company’s hierarchical communication, and is often used as a complementary communication method. Medium communication provides the company with suitable tools for forwarding internal information in a hierarchical company structure, and our research has found that medium communication facilitates the company’s distribution of information; in addition to making the internal communication more effective and efficient. However, the company faces the challenge of finding the right mix of communication tools, which can be used for effectively forwarding different types of information to all employee levels. The company’s most frequently used medium communication tools are the following:

- Face-to-face meetings
- Telephone calls
- Company intranet
- Employee billboards
- Employee newsletters

Our research has also found that informal communication does exist in the company and between all employee levels. However, the company is not aware of the impact informal communication can have on its internal communication. Theory indicates that informal communication is the largest and most commonly used communication method; our research found that the company does not realize the importance of utilizing and fully understanding the concept of informal communication. This has shown to create unsureness among employees due to the fact that the company’s formal communication might not correspond with its informal communication; it could also lessen the effectiveness of the company’s internal communication, and could result in misinterpretations of the distributed information.

In conclusion, Company X does not have a formulated strategy for forwarding sport sponsorship information internally, and is not fully aware of the fact that it actually utilizes a combination of two internal communication methods; hierarchical communication and medium communication. In addition, Company X is unaware of the magnitude of its
informal communication and the importance of it. Our research found that the company in general place too much emphasis on more tangible and measurable communication methods, resulting in it missing out on utilizing the informal communication method, which is a very important method for distributing company information internally. Due to this, it is a need for an improved communication competence and awareness among the company’s top and middle-level management groups.

Therefore, when applying internal communication the company needs to be aware of the following aspects:

♦ Be aware of the fact that there exists three internal communication methods
♦ Understand the internal communication methods and know how to apply them
♦ Formulate and implement an overall company strategy for internal communication based on the combination of all three internal communication methods
♦ Fully understand the importance of informal communication in the company, and know how to utilize it in the best possible way

6.3 How Employees can be Involved in Building and Implementing a Sport Sponsorship Profile

There exist five strategies for internal communication, and we have identified that the company most commonly use the Spray and Beg and Tell and Sell strategies combined. Furthermore, our research found that in the top and middle-level managers’ opinion, it is important that employees are informed of and understand the company’s sport sponsorship profile, and it is important that the company applies measures to motivate its employees to act in line with the company’s sport sponsorship profile. However, we have also found that managers experience difficulties in deciding what information, concerning the company’s sport sponsorship involvement, which is relevant to forward to the base-level employees. This may be the reason for why the base-level employees feel that they are receiving insufficient information regarding the company’s sport sponsorship profile.

Our research found that the top-level management generally applies the Spray and Beg communication strategy when forwarding information, concerning the company’s sport sponsorship profile, to the middle-level management. The reason for applying this method is that the top-level management is confident in the middle-level management’s ability to process large amounts of sport sponsorship information, and decide which information that it is relevant to forward to the base-level employees. Moreover, in general the company’s middle-level management applies the Tell and Sell strategy where they solely forward information that in their opinion is relevant for the base-level employees. Our research indicates that the basis for applying the Tell and Sell strategy is that the middle-level management has made the deliberation that the base-level employees solely need to receive company information that, in the middle-level managers’ opinion, will directly affect them.
Our research indicates that the company in general applies different measures to motivate its employees to act in line with the company’s sport sponsorship profile. In addition, our research indicates that when the company applies measures that show its employees that they are valued and appreciated it motivates the employees to act in line with the company’s sport sponsorship profile.

In conclusion, the top and middle-level management perceived that it is important for the company that all employees are informed and understand its sport sponsorship profile. It will enable the employees to act as company ambassadors, and through their every day actions support and strengthen the company profile. In addition, our research also found that the base-level employees must fully understand the company’s sport sponsorship profile in order to act in line with it. However, it is a difficult task for the employees to act in line with the company’s sport sponsorship profile if the information given is insufficient. Our research also indicated that employees can play two involvements in building and implementing a company sport sponsorship profile: supporting or undermining it. If employees are well informed of the company’s sport sponsorship profile, and measures are applied to motive them to act in line with the formulated profile, they can through their every day actions support the company’s sport sponsorship profile. However, if the employees are ill informed of the company’s sport sponsorship profile, and are not motivated to act in line with it they can actually damage and undermine the sport sponsorship profile through their every day actions.

Regarding employees’ involvement in building and implementing the company’s sport sponsorship profile, the company needs to consider the following aspects:

- The importance of employees understanding the company’s sport sponsorship profile in order for them to act as the company’s ambassadors
- Applying measures to motivate the employees to act in line with the company’s sport sponsorship profile
- Secure that the right information concerning the company’s sport sponsorship involvement reaches the right receiver

6.4 Implications and Recommendations

As a result of our research findings, stated in the previous section, we have identified several implications for theory, management, and future research which will be presented in the following sections.

6.4.1 Implications for Theory

The purpose of our thesis was to investigate and gain a better understanding of the chosen field of research; internal communication of a company’s sport sponsorship profile. Investigating the connection between internal communication and building and implementing a sport sponsorship profile is a relatively unexplored field of research, and therefore it exist little research within this area. In our opinion, previous research primarily
focuses on external communication of a sport sponsorship profile, as it is relatively easy to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of external communication of a sport sponsorship profile, in opposite to measuring the effects of internal communication.

As previously mentioned in chapter two there is generally a lack in knowledge, in most companies, regarding the importance of an efficient and effective internal communication within the different levels of a company. Therefore, there is a need for further research considerations within the research area of internal communication of a company sport sponsorship profile. Through our research we have discovered that a majority of existing theories, within the field of building and implementing a company sport sponsorship profile, are based on achieving this primarily through the use of external communication. Due to this there is a need for the formulation of models and theories focusing on internal communication, especially the connection between building and implementing a company sport sponsorship profile and internal communication. Furthermore, the majority of the theories chosen for this case study was based on external communication of a company sport sponsorship profile; however, after some adaptations were made to the chosen theories and models it was possible for us to apply them on the internal communication of a company sport sponsorship profile as well.

In conclusion, our research found that the chosen theories and models generally corresponds with the empirical data collected for this study, and Company X is not aware that it is in fact utilizing a majority of the models presented in this study in one way or another. Moreover, in our opinion, this indicates that the theories and models chosen for this study can be applied by a company in an actual situation.

6.4.2 Implications for Management
We have studied how a company’s sport sponsorship profile can be communicated internally between three different employee levels in a company. Therefore, the implications for management will only concern the top and middle-level management in Company X.

It is of great importance that the top and middle-level managers fully understand and utilizes the internal communication in the company. If the internal communication is insufficient it creates uncertainty among the base-level employees, and the uncertainty can in turn result in the base-level employees undermining the company’s desired profile through their every day actions. In addition, the most powerful internal communication strategy for communicating the company’s sport sponsorship profile in the company is the informal communication. However, our study found that the top and middle-level managers in Company X are not aware of or simply do not understand the meaning of informal communications, or the implications caused by not realizing the significance of using informal communication as an effective communication tool.

Additionally, the top and middle-level management should consider internal communication, both formal and informal, as an effective and important tool for
establishing, strengthening, and supporting the company’s sport sponsorship profile. It is also important for the top and middle-level management to be aware of the fact that the base-level employees are an important part of building and implementing the company’s sport sponsorship profile. Base-level employees often function as company ambassadors and can either strengthen the company’s sport sponsorship profile if they are well informed, or undermine the company's sport sponsorship profile if there is a lack of information, or the information given is insufficient. Base-level employees’ actions can also be perceived as a reflection of the company’s sport sponsorship profile, which can affect how consumers perceive the company’s sport sponsorship image.

In our opinion, when establishing, strengthening and supporting the company’s sport sponsorship profile, the top and middle-level management should consider the following aspects of internal communication:

- Understand, utilize, and combine all three “building blocks” of the company’s internal communication
- Formulate and implement a strategy for how communication of relevant information should be carried out internally
- Educate the top and middle-level managers in how to apply and utilize the company's formulated strategy for internal communication of a sport sponsorship profile
- Realize the importance of informing all employee levels of the sport sponsorship profile that the company wants to establish, in order to support and strengthen it
- Apply suitable communication tools to measure and secure that the right information regarding the company’s sport sponsorship profile reaches the right receiver, within a reasonable period of time
- Secure that the company’s perceived sport sponsorship image corresponds with the company’s formulated sport sponsorship profile
- Awareness of the nature of the values transferred from the sponsored activity, event, and team on to the company and its brand; are all values transferred corresponding with the company’s sport sponsorship profile or in fact undermining it?
- The company’s base-level employees want to be informed of and updated on information regarding both the company in general, and its involvement in sport sponsorship, in addition to receiving information that is not directly connected to their every day work tasks
- Realizing the importance of applying measures that motivates the base-level employees to act in line with the company’s formulated sport sponsorship profile

6.4.3 Implications for Future Research

We have focused on a company in the county of Norrbotten, and how the company communicates a sport sponsorship profile internally. Our findings and conclusions are therefore solely valid towards the investigated company, and its internal communication
process of the company’s sport sponsorship profile. This results in the fact that our research cannot be used to generalize the internal communication process of a sport sponsorship profile, or the process of utilizing internal communication to build and implement a company sport sponsorship profile in other companies. Therefore, we recommend that further research is conducted within this field, to determine if our findings can be used to draw general conclusions or not. During the task of completing this thesis we identified a number of issues suitable for future fields of research:

- Implications for a company applying sponsorship within the sport category
- Values transferred from sponsored activity, event, and team on to the sponsoring company and its brand
- Building a sport sponsorship image through external and/or internal communication
- Communicating a sport sponsorship profile internally and/or externally
- The “building blocks” of internal communication
- The “building blocks” effect on a company’s internal communication
- Hierarchical communication as a method for internal communication
- Medium communication as a method for internal communication
- Informal communication as a method for internal communication
- Base-level employees’ involvement as company ambassadors
- Strategies for internal communication
- The effect of internal communication strategies
- The Spray and Beg strategy as measure for internally forwarding information
- The Tell and Sell strategy as measure for internally forwarding information
- The Underline and Investigate strategy as measure for internally forwarding information
- The Identify and Answer strategy as measure for internally forwarding information
- The Defend and Withhold strategy as measure for internally forwarding information
LIST OF REFERENCES


*Interviews:*

Individual A, member of top-level management at Company X, Norrbotten, 2008, April 18th at 11.15

Individual B, member of middle-level management at Company X, Norrbotten, 2008, April 8th at 13.00

Individual C, member of middle-level management at Company X, Norrbotten, 2008, April 8th at 13.30

Individual D, member of middle-level management at Company X, Norrbotten, 2008, April 8th at 14.00

Individual E, member of middle-level management at Company X, Norrbotten, 2008, April 8th at 14.30

Individual F and Individual G, base-level employees at Company X, Norrbotten, 2008, April 15th at 13.00
APPENDIX A- INTERVIEW GUIDES (ENGLISH)

Sport Sponsorship

>This bachelor’s thesis will discuss how a company applies sponsorship of sport events to put across a company profile, and the main emphasis will be placed on how a company communicates its sport sponsorship profile internally.

Interview Guide: Employee Level 1 (Top-level Management)

> We wish to clarify that in this context the concept of profile is **how a company wants to be perceived** by both members and non-members of the organization, and the concept of image is **how the company is perceived** by both members and non-members of the organization.

**General Information:**

1. Age
2. Position in the company
3. Length of service within the company

**Sponsorship/Sport Sponsorship:**

4. What events, activities, or teams does the company sponsor?
5. Who/whom decides which events, activities, or teams that the company will sponsor?
6. What does the company want to achieve by applying sponsorship?
7. What kind of profile does the company want to create/maintain/support by applying sponsorship?
8. What kind of image does the company want to create/maintain/support by applying sponsorship?
9. How much of the company’s marketing budget is reserved for sponsorship involvement?
10. What kind of sport events, activities, and/or teams does the company sponsor?

**Sponsorship/Sport Sponsorship Ambitions:**

11. Does the company have a blanket strategy for how it applies sponsorship; and if so how is that strategy formulated?
12. Does the company have any overall goals it wants to achieve by applying sponsorship; and if so what are those goals?
13. Does the sponsorship goals vary depending on the nature of the events, activities, and/or teams that the company targets through its sponsorship involvement, and if so how do they vary?
14. Motivate why the company chooses to sponsor sport events, activities, and/or teams?
15. Does the company have any sales related goals it wants to achieve by sponsoring sport events, activities, and/or teams?
Communication within the Organization

16. Does the company have a formulated strategy for how it distributes information regarding company decisions; and if so what does the strategy entail?
17. Between which employee levels in the organization does the internal communication take place, and how?
18. How does the company communicate its sponsorship profile to its employees?
19. In your opinion, is it important that the company’s employees are aware/informed of the company’s sponsorship profile; and if so, why is it important/not important?
20. How does the company secure that information, regarding the company’s sponsorship involvement, is distributed to all members of the organization?
21. Does the company apply any theoretical tools or models to measure how effectively the information, regarding the company’s sponsorship involvement, reaches company employees; and if so, which tools or models are applied?
22. Who is responsible for making sure that information, regarding the company’s sponsorship involvement, reaches all company employees?
23. Does the company apply any measure to motivate its employees to forward and act in line with the company’s formulated sponsorship profile; and if so, what are those measures?
Interview Guide: Employee Level 2 (Middle-level Management)

This bachelor’s thesis will discuss how a company applies sponsorship of sport events to put across a company profile, and the main emphasis will be placed on how a company communicates its sport sponsorship profile internally.

We wish to clarify that in this context the concept of profile is how a company wants to be perceived by both members and non-members of the organization, and the concept of image is how the company is perceived by both members and non-members of the organization.

General Information:

1. Age
2. Position in the company
3. Length of service within the company

Sponsorship/Sport Sponsorship:

1. How would you, in your own words, describe the concept of sponsorship?
2. Describe, in your own words, how you perceive the company’s profile?
3. Do you know if the company applies sponsorship as a part of the company’s marketing strategy, and what events, activities, and/or teams the company sponsors?
4. How would you, in your own words, describe the company’s sponsorship profile?
5. How would you, in your own words, describe the company’s sponsorship image?
6. Have you, in verbal or written form, received information regarding the company’s objectives for applying sponsorship; and if so what did the information entail?

Communication within the Organization

7. Does the company have a formulated strategy for how it distributes information regarding company decisions; and if so what does the strategy entail?
8. Between which employee levels in the organization does the internal communication take place, and how?
9. How does the company communicate its sponsorship profile to its employees?
10. In your opinion, is it important that the company’s employees are aware/informed of the company’s sponsorship profile; and if so, why is it important/not important?
11. How does the company secure that information, regarding the company’s sponsorship involvement, is distributed to all members of the organization?
12. Does the company apply any theoretical tools or models to measure how effectively the information, regarding the company’s sponsorship involvement, reaches company employees; and if so, which tools or models are applied?
13. Who is responsible for making sure that information, regarding the company’s sponsorship involvement, reaches all company employees?
14. Does the company apply any measure to motivate its employees to forward and act in line with the company’s formulated sponsorship profile; and if so, what are those measures.
Interview Guide: Employee Level 3 (Base-level Employees)

This bachelor’s thesis will discuss how a company applies sponsorship of sport events to put across a company profile, and the main emphasis will be placed on how a company communicates its sport sponsorship profile internally.

We wish to clarify that in this context the concept of profile is **how a company wants to be perceived** by both members and non-members of the organization, and the concept of image is **how the company is perceived** by both members and non-members of the organization.

**General Information:**

1. Age
2. Position in the company
3. Length of service within the company

**Communication with Employees:**

4. How would you, in your own words, describe the concept of sponsorship?
5. Describe, in your own words, how you perceive the company’s profile?
6. Do you know if the company applies sponsorship as a part of the company’s marketing strategy, and what events, activities, and/or teams the company sponsors?
7. How would you, in your own words, describe the company’s sponsorship profile?
8. How would you, in your own words, describe the company’s sponsorship image?
9. Have you, in verbal or written form, received information regarding the company’s objectives for applying sponsorship; and if so what did the information entail?
10. In your opinion and in your own words, is the information you receive today, regarding the company’s sponsorship profile, adequate or inadequate and why?
11. Would you like to, on a regular basis, be informed of the development of the company’s sponsorship profile; if so, from who would you like to receive the information?
12. In your opinion, do you feel that you as an employee can contribute to maintain and/or support the company’s sponsorship profile and image; if so, in which way can you contribute?
APPENDIX B- INTERVIEW GUIDES (SWEDISH)

Sponsring
Denna kandidatuppsats kommer att behandla hur ett företag använder sig av sponsring av sportevenemang för att förmedla en image. Fokus kommer att ligga på hur företaget kommunicerar denna image internt.

Guide för Intervju: Personal Nivå 1 (Top-level Management)
Vi vill förtydliga att i detta sammanhang har begreppet profil betydelsen: hur ett företag vill bli uppfattat av individer inne och i organisationen, och begreppet image har betydelsen: hur ett företag faktiskt uppfattas externt, det vill säga hur företaget uppfattas av individer inne i och utanför organisationen.

Allmän Information:
1. Ålder
2. Befattning inom företaget
3. Anställningslångd inom företaget

Sponsring:
4. Vilka evenemang, aktiviteter, och/eller lag sponsrar företaget?
5. Vem/vilka tar beslut om vilka evenemang, aktiviteter, och/eller lag som ska sponsras?
6. Vad vill företaget uppnå med sponsringen?
7. Vilken profil vill företaget skapa/bygga vidare på med hjälp av sponsring?
8. Vilken image vill företaget skapa/bygga vidare på med hjälp av sponsring?
9. Hur stor del av budgeten för marknadsföring är avsatt till sponsring?
10. Vilka sportevenemang, aktiviteter, och/eller lag sponsrar företaget?

Målsättning med Sponsring:
11. Har företaget en övergripande strategi för sponsring, och hur ser den i sådana fall ut?
12. Har företaget några övergripande mål för sponsringen, och i sådana fall vilka?
13. Varierar målen beroende på typen av sponsring, och de målgrupper som företaget riktar sig till, och i sådana fall hur?
14. Motivera företagets val att sponsra sportevenemang?
15. Har företaget satt upp försäljningsrelaterade mål som skall uppfyllas med hjälp av sponsring av sportevenemang?

Kommunikation inom Organisationen:
16. Har ni någon uttalad strategi för hur företaget för ut information om fattade beslut inom organisationen, och i sådana fall hur ser kommunikationen ut?
17. Mellan vilka nivåer sker kommunikationen i organisationen och hur?
18. Hur kommunicerar företaget sin image till de anställda?
19. Är det viktigt att organisationens anställda är medvetna om företagets image, och i sådana fall varför?
20. Hur säkerställer företaget att budskapet når ut till alla delar av organisationen/ alla anställda?
21. Använder företaget några teoretiska verktyg och modeller för att mäta hur effektivt budskapet nått ut till de anställda, och i sådana fall vilka?
22. Vem/vilka har ansvaret för att budskapet når ut till de olika nivåerna i organisationen?
23. Tillämpas några åtgärder för att motivera de anställda att för ut och agera enligt företagets önskade image, i sådana fall vilka?
Guide för intervju: Personal Nivå 2 (Middle-level Management)
Denna kandidatuppsats kommer att behandla hur ett företag använder sig av sponsring av sportevenemang för att förmedla en image. Fokus kommer att ligga på hur företaget kommunicerar denna image internt.

Vi vill förtydliga att i detta sammanhang har begreppet profil betydelsen: hur ett företag vill bli uppfattat, och begreppet image har betydelsen: hur ett företag faktiskt uppfattas externt, det vill säga hur företaget uppfattas bland individer utanför organisationen.

Allmän information:
1. Ålder
2. Befattning inom företaget
3. Anställningslångd inom företaget

Sponsring:
4. Hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva vad sponsring är?
5. Beskriv med egna ord hur du uppfattar företagets profil?
6. Vet du om företaget tillämpar sponsring som en del av sin marknadsförings strategi, och i sådana fall vad företaget sponsrar?
7. Hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva företagets profil när det gäller sponsring?
8. Hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva företagets image när det gäller sponsring?
9. Har du blivit muntligt eller skriftligt informerad om vad företaget vill uppnå med hjälp av sponsring, och i sådana fall vad innehöll den informationen?

Kommunikation inom organisationen:
10. Har ni någon uttalad strategi för hur företaget för ut information om fattade beslut inom organisationen, och i sådana fall hur ser kommunikationen ut?
11. Mellan vilka nivåer sker kommunikationen i organisationen och hur?
12. Hur kommunicerar företaget sin image till de anställda?
13. Är det viktigt att organisationens anställda är medvetna om företagets image, och i sådana fall varför?
14. Hur säkerställer företaget att budskapet når ut till alla delar av organisationen/ alla anställda?
15. Använder företaget några teoretiska verktyg och modeller för att mäta hur effektivt budskapet nått ut till de anställda, och i sådana fall vilka?
16. Vem/vilka har ansvaret för att budskapet når ut till de olika nivåerna i organisationen?
17. Tillämpas några åtgärder för att motivera de anställda att för ut och agera enligt företagets önskade image, i sådana fall vilka?
Guide för intervju: Personal Nivå 3 (Base-level Employees)
Denna kandidatuppsats kommer att behandla hur ett företag använder sig av sponsring av sportevenemang för att förmedla en image. Fokus kommer att ligga på hur företaget kommunikerar denna image internt.

Vi vill förtydliga att i detta sammanhang har begreppet profil betydelsen: hur ett företag vill bli uppfattat, och begreppet image har betydelsen: hur ett företag faktiskt uppfattas externt, det vill säga hur företaget uppfattas bland individer utanför organisationen.

Allmän information:
1. Ålder
2. Befattning inom företaget
3. Anställningslängd inom företaget

Kommunikation till anställda:
4. Hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva vad sponsring är?
5. Beskriv med egna ord hur du uppfattar företagets profil?
6. Vet du om företaget tillämpar sponsring som en del av sin marknadsförings strategi, och i sådana fall vad företaget sponsrar?
7. Hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva företagets profil när det gäller sponsring?
8. Hur skulle du med egna ord beskriva företagets image när det gäller sponsring?
9. Har du blivit muntligt eller skriftligt informerad om vad företaget vill uppnå med hjälp av sponsring, och i sådana fall vad innehöll den informationen?
10. Anser du att den informationen du får idag, om företagets profil, är tillräcklig?(motivera ditt svar med egna ord)
11. Skulle du vilja bli regelbundet informerad om utvecklingen av företagets profil, och i sådana fall av vem/på vilket sätt?
12. Anser du att du kan bidra till att upprätthålla och stärka företagets profil och image, och i sådana fall på vilket sätt/eller varför inte?