



Swedish Football clubs

*– A study of how to increase the revenues in
Allsvenskan*

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Abstract

The focus of the thesis is how football clubs can increase their revenues through brand equity and different marketing activities. The purpose is to develop a professional attitude towards football brands among the Swedish clubs and to increase the awareness of aspects possible to improve. Due to current regulations the Swedish league differs in some aspects from other leagues in Europe. Therefore this thesis will provide guidelines of how Swedish football clubs could increase their revenues.

The theoretical framework includes concepts such as brand equity, stakeholders and the European revenue model. In addition to this a general discussion about sport marketing and its differences from regular marketing will be provided. In order to answer the main research question; “How can Swedish football clubs increase their revenues through marketing activities in order to keep a competitive squad?” interviews with people associated to Swedish football have been conducted.

Different aspects have been identified that will provide the Swedish football clubs with important insights of how to improve their revenue stream. Recommendations will be given of how to proceed with increasing the clubs revenues.

Key words: Swedish football clubs, Brand equity, Spectators, Sponsors, Investors, Revenue model, Sport marketing, Increasing revenues, Merchandising, Attendance

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Pär Karlsson

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Fredrik Skännergård

Table of contents

List of Figures	VIII
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem discussion.....	2
1.2.1 Research background	2
1.2.2 Research approach.....	3
1.3 Problem definition.....	3
1.4 Purpose	5
1.5 Delimitations	5
1.6 Definition of terms	5
1.7 Thesis outline	7
2. Methodology	8
2.1 Scientific approach.....	8
2.2 Research strategy.....	9
2.3 Data Collection.....	11
2.3.1 Interviews	12
2.3.2 Documentation	14
2.3.3 Primary sources	15
2.3.4 Secondary sources	15
2.4 Selection of data sources	16
2.5 Quality of Research.....	16
2.5.1 Construct Validity	16
2.5.2 Internal Validity	17
2.5.3 External Validity	17
2.5.4 Reliability.....	18
3. Theoretical framework	19
3.1 Sport marketing	19
3.1.1 Definition of sport marketing.....	19
3.1.2 Customer Relationship Marketing	22

3.2 Understanding the football market	22
3.2.1 Revenue model for football clubs in Europe.....	23
3.3 Understanding the Football stakeholder.....	24
3.3.1 Spectators and Fans	24
3.3.2 Sponsors	27
3.3.3 Financial supporters	28
3.4 Developing football brands	29
3.4.1 Brand equity	29
3.4.2 Conceptual Model for Assessing Brand Equity	34
3.5 Marketing tools	36
3.5.1 Football Arena.....	36
3.5.2 Sponsorship in football.....	37
3.5.3 Merchandising	39
3.6 Sport integrated marketing communication mix	40
3.7 Summery	44
4. Empirical study	45
4.1 Presentation of respondents.....	45
4.2 Swedish football club's sport marketing.....	46
4.2.1 Types of marketing.....	46
4.2.2 Players and profiles in marketing.....	46
4.2.3 Relationships	47
4.3 Revenue model for clubs within Allsvenskan.....	49
4.3.1 Sponsors	50
4.3.2 Attendance.....	51
4.3.3 Central agreements	52
4.3.4 Revenue maximizing during game day	53
4.3.5 New revenue opportunities.....	53
4.4 Stakeholders in Allsvenskan	54
4.4.1 Supporters.....	54
4.4.2 Sponsors	55
4.4.3 Investors	56
4.5 Brands within Allsvenskan.....	57
4.5.1 Kalmar FF	58

4.5.2 IFK Norrköping	59
4.5.3 Mjällby AIF	60
4.5.4 Trelleborgs FF	61
4.6 Marketing tools for the Swedish football clubs	62
4.6.1 Arena	62
4.6.2 Sponsorship	63
4.6.3 Merchandising	63
4.6.4 Broadcasting rights	64
5. Analysis	65
5.1 Sport Marketing	65
5.2 Swedish revenue model for clubs within Allsvenskan	65
5.2.1 Sponsors	66
5.2.2 Attendance	66
5.2.3 Central agreements	67
5.3 Understanding the football stakeholder	68
5.3.1 Spectators	68
5.3.2 Sponsors	69
5.3.3 Investors	69
5.4 Brand equity for brands in Allsvenskan	70
5.4.1 Perceived quality	70
5.4.2 Brand awareness	71
5.4.3 Brand association	72
5.4.4 Brand loyalty	73
5.5 Marketing tools	73
5.5.1 Arena	73
5.5.2 Sponsorship	74
5.5.3 Merchandising	74
6. Conclusions	76
6.1 Revenue increasing model for Swedish football clubs	80
7. Recommendations	81
7.1 Brand	81
7.2 Revenue sources	83
Reference list	85

Appendix	89
Appendix 1 – Questionnaire football clubs	89
Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Lars-Åke Lagrell	90
Appendix 3 – Questionnaire Sten Söderman	91

List of Figures

Figure 1: Basic types of Designs for case studies	10
Figure 2: Six sources of evidence: Strengths and Weaknesses	12
Figure 3: Conceptual model for Assessing Brand Equity	34
Figure 4: Sport integrated marketing communication mix	41
Figure 5: Revenue increasing model for football clubs	44
Figure 6: Revenue increasing model for Swedish football clubs	80

1. Introduction

The introduction chapter will start with a background of the subject and proceed with the problem discussion. From the problem discussion the research questions will be derived and the problem will be more defined. The chapter will end with explaining the thesis purpose as well as delimitations and definition of terms.

1.1 Background

The sport sector, as a whole, and football in particular has been subject to increased commercialization, professionalization and internationalization (Lund, 2011). Since the 1960s there has been change in the structure, ownership and control of professional football clubs in Europe. This change started in Italy in the 1960s when non-profit football clubs transformed themselves into limited companies where new owners searched to gain financial profits. England followed their example in the 1980s, and in the 1990s Spain and Sweden also followed (Ibid). Furthermore Lund (2011) states that different socio-political changes have driven the commercialization of football. Another important influencing factor is the privatization of the previously state-owned television monopolies, which led to the introduction of advertising-funded television broadcasting and pay-TV. Professional sport clubs business model have changed dramatically due to this, which will be further explained later on in the thesis.

In the 1980s a unified system for the professional football clubs in Europe was developed, despite some opposition the progress was rapid. It became common, among the European football clubs, to be listed in the stock market which resulted in increased economical capital (Bjellert, 2010). However, the Swedish football system did not follow the “standard” and applied, and still applies, partly different rules. One example of this is that Swedish football clubs have to own the majority control of the stock share if they are going to be listed on the stock market (Lund, 2007).

The highest ranked football-league in Sweden for men was founded 1896 and called Svenska serien. In 1924 the Swedish football association changed structure and the name of the league to Allsvenskan. Today the league consists of 16 teams and the season normally runs from March to October. During a season the contesting teams will play against each other twice (home and away). The team with most points when all games have been played will be crowned Swedish champion (svenskfotboll.se). During 1980’s and 1990’s Swedish league

football flourished with IFK Göteborg as a strong contender in Europe. In this period IFK Göteborg won the UEFA- Cup two times (1982, 1987) and they qualified for group play in Champions league four times during the 1990s (ifkgoteborg.se).

In the last decade however the Swedish teams have found it difficult to compete in Europe, both in Champions league and Europe league. The last time a Swedish team advanced to the group stage in Champions league was 2000/01, when Helsingborg beat FC Internazionale Milano in the last qualifying round. During the group stage Helsingborg managed to acquire five points against teams like PSG, Bayern Munich and Rosenborg (hif.se).

1.2 Problem discussion

1.2.1 Research background

As mentioned before the Swedish football clubs transformed from non-profit football clubs into limited companies in the 1990s. Today Swedish football clubs are run and structured just as any other company with a board, economic department, marketing department and so on. According to Jansson & Söderman (2011) marketing is a major activity for sport clubs. The authors argue that *“clubs become outlets for commercial messages and through sponsoring they get involved in marketing system of firms”* (Jansson & Söderman, 2011, p 2). Due to this an important purpose for a professional elite club is to earn money and be profitable. In addition to increasing their own profitability they also serve as a tool to increase their sponsors profit (Jansson & Söderman, 2011). Aaker (2010) argues that by having high brand equity this can increase the value both for customers and the firm.

The status of Allsvenskan in Europe has decreased over the last decade and it has become more difficult for the Swedish clubs to keep their top players. One example of this is that the champion often gets raided of their star-players and the clubs usually struggle with replacing them with equally talented players. From a marketing point of view a strong squad helps to increase the interest about the club and therefore it could be dangerous to lose too many players. The decreased competitiveness for Swedish clubs in Europe also influences them economically. The loss of revenues might for example be in form of broadcasting deals, attendance and sponsorship deals. According to Lars-Christer Olsson (svtplay.se) the Swedish clubs has to increase their revenues a lot to be able to compete in Europe. Football clubs can generate incomes in several ways, for example by selling players or through marketing.

During the last eleven years there have been eight different league winners in Allsvenskan, the only club that have defended their title was Djurgårdens IF 2002 and 2003 (svenskfotboll.se). This is a clear indicator of the competitiveness among the teams in the league, with no certain winner before the season starts. Competitiveness could be good because the interest of the league is higher dealing with the uncertainty. Many of the different clubs' fans believe that a successful year is about to begin. This creates a general "buzz" about Allsvenskan. A negative aspect for the clubs, with an uncertain league position, is that they do not know how much revenue they will gain following year. The economical difference from playing in Europe or not is huge for the Swedish clubs and it is therefore important for them to become a sustainable top four club. By constantly playing in the European tournaments the interest for the club may be enhanced both in Sweden and abroad.

1.2.2 Research approach

The study will focus on the football clubs within Allsvenskan rather than the league itself. To give the study more economic depth Allsvenskan will be seen as an industry. The companies within this industry are represented by the Swedish clubs. Furthermore the football clubs main assets are the players and other profiles.

1.3 Problem definition

In this part a presentation concerning the different issues of the research will be done. The definition of the main research question and the sub-problems below will function as a guide during the research. The sub-problems will function as tools for answering the main question more in depth.

Main research question

How can Swedish football clubs increase their revenues through marketing activities?

To answer this question, more thoroughly, we have divided the question into three sub-problems.

Problem 1

How can Swedish football clubs increase the demand for their brand and make it more attractive for investments?

Problem 2

Which types of marketing activities can Swedish football clubs use to improve their revenues?

Problem 3

How is the Swedish football clubs affected by the different stakeholders and regulations in Allsvenskan?

1.4 Purpose

The purpose with this research is to analyze and evaluate what the Swedish football clubs has to improve in order to increase their revenues and brand knowledge. By answering the problems stated above the research will hopefully contribute with important insights and recommendations for how Swedish football clubs can achieve this.

1.5 Delimitations

- Revenue focus only

The thesis will only focus on how the clubs can increase their revenues and the clubs cost structure will therefore be disregarded. The scope of the study would be too broad if the cost structure were included.

- Revenues from transfers excluded

Revenues generated from player transfers are not taken in consideration because it is not seen as a marketing activity in this study. Furthermore player transfer revenues are very uncertain and specific to each case.

1.6 Definition of terms

Revenues from marketing- and sponsorship deals are vital factors for football clubs economy, therefore a definition of important terms for the thesis will be explained below.

Attendance revenues – is the revenues gained from visitors going to the arena on game day, as well as from other events in the arena. Sales of food, snacks and beverage will also be included in this term.

Shirt sponsoring – includes both companies logo on the game jersey and the actual sponsoring of the jerseys.

Merchandise – Sales of shirts, clothes and other types of souvenirs with the club logo.

Arena advertising – consists of the name of the arena, advertising spots on the arena and company VIP-lounges.

Broadcasting rights – is often dependent on the clubs position in the championship previous year. This is also based on revenues from participating in European tournaments.

Swedish football clubs – will be referred to as the four interviewed clubs. These clubs are Kalmar FF, Mjällby AIF, IFK Norrköping and Trelleborgs FF.

Social media – is according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) internet-based applications which permit the user to create and exchange content. Examples of different Social media are YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

1.7 Thesis outline

1. Introduction

- Background
- Problem discussion
- Problem definition
- Purpose
- Delimitations
- Definition of terms

2. Methodology

- Scientific approach
- Research strategy
- Data collection
- Selection of data sources
- Quality of research

3. Theoretical framework

- Sport marketing
- Revenue model for football clubs in Europe
- Understanding the football stakeholder
- Developing football brands
- Marketing tools
- Sport integrated communication mix
- Summary

4. Empirical study

- Background
- Swedish football club's sport marketing
- Revenue model for clubs within Allsvenskan
- Stakeholders in Allsvenskan
- Brands within Allsvenskan
- Marketing tool for Swedish football clubs

5. Analysis

- Sport marketing
- Swedish revenue model for clubs within Allsvenskan
- Understanding the football stakeholder
- Brand equity for brands in Allsvenskan
- Marketing tools

6. Conclusions

- Brands
- Swedish revenue model
- Stakeholders in Allsvenskan
- Increase revenue through marketing activities
- Revenue increasing model

7. Recommendations

- Unitary visual identity
- Believe in the brand
- Use technical solutions
- Sponsors
- Attendance
- Merchandising

2. Methodology

The methodology chapter's purpose is to introduce and explain the methods used in the research. The discussion will start with a presentation of the scientific approach followed by the chosen research strategy. Afterwards the data collection procedure will be explained and the chapter will end with a quality of research discussion.

2.1 Scientific approach

According to Scholz & Tietje (2002) a case study can be divided into three different categories; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Case studies are most often connected with the exploratory status, which is useful when gaining insights into a phenomenon by developing new theories. When using the descriptive approach the case use reference theory to describe a situation from a certain perspective. The explanatory approach is used to test different types of cause-and-effect relationships, when using a single case this type can only falsify a theory (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). This research is based on an exploratory approach and will procreate a theory or a model which will explain the chosen phenomenon. As most other case studies this thesis used the exploratory to gain insights in the phenomenon and help to either create a theory or recommendations of how to handle certain issues.

According to Merriam (2009) the research method can be either quantitative or qualitative. The quantitative research method has its focus on numerical findings and is often associated with surveys as a data collection tool. The qualitative method is more based on observations and interviews when collecting data. This is done to get a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). The qualitative researcher has interest in understanding the world and how it can make sense. Different experiences help the researcher to understand how people make sense of their world. The qualitative research is a technique to describe, decode, translate and come to the meaning of a certain phenomena. When conducting this kind of study the researcher is the primary instrument due to its ability to collect and analyze the data. As mentioned earlier the focus lies on meaning and understanding a specific phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). With the distinction made by Merriam (2009) in mind the research method used in this thesis is of qualitative nature. In-depth interviews have been performed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the chosen phenomenon. The data collected in the interviews cannot be statistically analyzed nor quantified which strengthen the argument that the research method is qualitative. It is the researchers' ability to analyze the collected data that has been of greater importance to the final outcomes of the thesis.

Dubois & Gadde (2002) explains an abductive approach to case research with the term systematic combining. Systematic combining is explained as a process in which theoretical framework, empirical fieldwork and case analysis is developed simultaneously. To create a deeper understanding of the phenomenon a continuous evaluation of the theory and the empirical data is done (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Using an abductive study is according to Dubois & Gadde (2002) the most suitable way when completing a case study. Furthermore Fisher (2010) explains that most studies use this type of combination of inductive and deductive approach, therefore a distinction between the two can be dangerous to make. An abductive approach have suited this thesis because there have been changes in theory depending on what interesting empirical data that was collected. There have been constant changes in the theoretical parts according to the capturing facts discovered from the respondents.

2.2 Research strategy

According to Yin (2003) there are five major research strategies, each with their own advantages and disadvantages. The strategies Yin (2003) refers to is experiments, surveys, archival analysis, histories and case study. In order to decide which type of research strategy to use three important conditions should be taken in consideration. The conditions are; (1) form of research question, (2) requires control of behavioral events and (3) focuses on contemporary events (Yin, 2003).

Yin (2003) demonstrates and explains how the five major research strategies are related to the three conditions mentioned above. With Yin (2003) definition of research strategies in mind our research strategy will be inform of a case study. The author states that a case study answer to research questions asked as “how” and “why”, which is in line with the research questions stated in this thesis. The underlying reason for using “how” and “why” questions, in a case study, are that they deal with operational links that can be traceable back in time (Yin, 2003).

The techniques used in a case study have many similarities to the ones used in history, which main sources of evidence are primary documents, secondary documents and cultural and physical artifacts (ibid). In addition to this the case study also consist of two sources of contemporary evidence; *direct observation of the events being studied* and *interviews of the person involved in the events*. The ability to manage a very broad variety of evidence, such as documents, artifacts, interviews and observations, is one of case studies unique strength (Yin, 2003). Furthermore Yin (2003) states that it is preferable to use case studies when there is a

desire to understand a social complex phenomena. Merriam (2009) supports this and argue that a case study is the search for meaning and understanding. In order to gain vital background information about the complexity of sport marketing secondary documents such as books, websites and thesis have been used. In addition to this, interviews with people containing knowledge about Swedish football have been performed. The thesis's aim is to explore and understand the complexity of increasing Swedish football clubs revenues. The most suitable research strategy for succeeding with this was, as mentioned before, case study.

According to Yin (2003) there are four basic designs for a case study, which is illustrated in the matrix below. A case study design can consist of one single-case or multiple-cases. This thesis is based on multiple-cases in form of four Swedish football clubs with different structure and prerequisite, which means that a multiple-case design have been used. The football clubs included in the thesis are: IFK Norrköping, Kalmar FF, Mjällby AIF and Trelleborgs FF. When using multiple-case studies it is important to have in mind that every case should serve a specific purpose within the scope of the study. Therefore each case, in a multiple-case study, should be carefully selected so it either predicts the same results or predicts contrasting result but for expected reasons (Yin, 2003). By using clubs with different structure and prerequisite certain tendencies have appeared and will be further discussed later on. Furthermore the analysis of the study can be either one unit (holistic) or multiple units (embedded). The difference between holistic and embedded analysis is that the latter includes several subunit in each case (Yin, 2003). The embedded analysis has been used in this study because several aspects within each case influenced the result of the study.

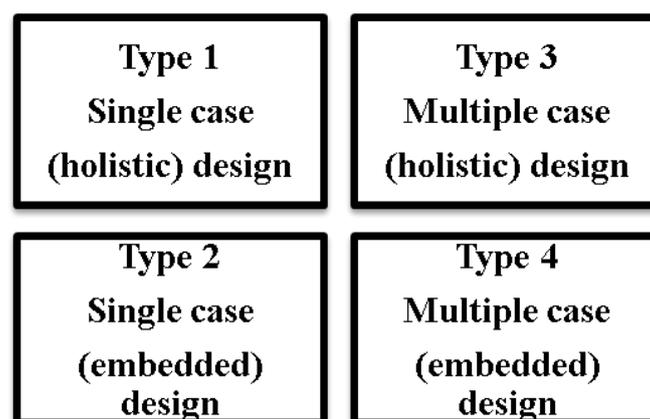


Figure 1: Basic types of Designs for case studies (Yin, 2003, p 40)

2.3 Data Collection

According to Yin (2009) the evidence in a case study stem from six different sources and they are; *documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant - observation* and *physical artifacts*. This thesis is based on interviews and documentation. Interviews will be the main information source and it will be supported by documentation, which will be explained more thorough below.

Source of Evidence	Strengths	Weaknesses
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stable – can be reviewed repeatedly • unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study • exact – contains exact names, references, and details of an event • broad coverage – long span of time, many events, and many settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retrievability – can be low • biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete • reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of author • access – may be deliberately blocked
Archival Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (same as above for documentation) • precise and quantitative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (same as above for documentation) • accessibility due to privacy reasons
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted – focuses directly on case study topic • insightful – provides perceived causal inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bias due to poorly constructed questions • response bias • inaccuracies due to poor recall • reflexivity – interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear
Direct Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reality – covers events in real time • contextual – covers context of event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time consuming • selectivity – unless broad coverage • reflexivity – event may

		proceed differently because of it is being observed
Participant Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (same as above for direct observations) • Insightful into interpersonal behavior and motives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (same as above for direct observations) • Bias due to investigator's manipulation of events
Physical Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insightful into cultural features • Insightful into technical operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selectivity • Availability

Figure 2: Six sources of evidence: Strengths and Weaknesses (Yin, 2009, p 102)

2.3.1 Interviews

Interviews are often used in qualitative research for collection of data (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2009) confirms this and argues that interviews are the most important information source in a case study, because it focuses directly on the research problem. This is also one of the main strengths with using interviews according to Yin (200). Person-to-person encounter is the most common form of interview. During this encounter one person (researcher) obtains important information from another person (respondent) (Merriam, 2009). It was important for us to conduct interviews because we were then able to ask questions that focused directly on the research problem. Furthermore all the interviews in this study except one have been performed in person-to-person encounter, which allowed us to ask additional questions.

Interviews can be structured in three different ways according to Merriam (2009), namely; *highly structured*, *semi-structured* and *unstructured*. Semi-structured interviews are a combination of highly structured and unstructured interviews. They are characterized with questions that are flexibly worded or by a mix of questions that are more or less structured. There is often a structured part in the interview which purpose is to generate specific information from all the respondents. Semi-structured interviews are usually guided by a list of questions or issues that it aims to explore. Neither the order of the questions nor the exact wording of the questions is decided before the interview (Merriam, 2009). As mentioned before interviews were the main information source, and we performed semi-structured interviews with sport directors and other knowledgeable people within the field. The questionnaire used in the interviews consisted of four big topics where brand and marketing

activities were the main areas. In addition each area consisted of a battery of questions. This approach gave the interviews structure and the specific data needed for us to be able to write this thesis. During the interviews we were asked additional questions depending on the respondents answer. Through semi-structured interviews we got a more open discussion about the subject with the respondents and we were at the same time able to make assumptions about how each club work. Person-to-person encounters in combination with a semi-structure have given us a good overview of the different clubs opinions within the different areas. The fact that the interviews took place at the different clubs workplace might have made them more comfortable and more willing to answer our questions. Interviews with four Swedish football clubs (Kalmar FF, IFK Norrköping, Trelleborgs FF, Mjällby AIF) have been performed to get an understanding of how the clubs work with marketing activities etc. In addition to this two expert interviews (Lars-Åke Lagrell & Sten Söderman) have been conducted to get initial knowledge about the subject.

Svante Samuelsson has worked as Club Executive for Kalmar FF since 2006 and is a former professional football player. He played for Kalmar FF, Örgryte IS, SK Brann and AIK during his career. The interview with Svante Samuelsson took place in Kalmar FF's office in Guldfågeln Arena. We performed the interview in one of their conference rooms and it was a relaxed and calm atmosphere. We were not disturbed during the interview and the respondent answered the questions as good as he could.

Krister Eriksson is fairly new to the position as Club Executive and has worked in IFK Norrköping since December 2010. Krister Eriksson last employment was as CEO at Grand Hotell, and he has also been a member of the board in IFK Norrköping before. The interview with Krister Eriksson was conducted in the restaurant during lunch hour on IFK Norrköpings arena, Nya Parken. The reason for this was a double-booking and in order to perform the interview at all we had to realize it during the respondents' lunch. The atmosphere was a bit stressful which influenced the interview, the answers were not as detailed as the other interviews and it was harder for us to ask additional questions. The interview was disrupted a few times because the respondent answered his phone, which influenced the flow of the interview. If the interview had been performed in an office we believe the answers would have been more detailed, even though the answers were good and provided great data.

Barbro Bengtsson has worked as marketing executive in Trelleborgs FF since 2004. Before Trelleborgs FF she worked as marketing director in the shipping industry but also in the travel

business and lived a few years in USA. The interview with Barbro Bengtsson was performed on Vångavallen outside their office on a balcony. The flow of the interview was good and the atmosphere was peaceful, which made it easy for us to ask additional questions.

Jörgen Martinsson is currently Club Executive in Mjällby AIF and works with it part time. He is also employed as CEO for “Svensk Minknäring”. He have lived in the community most of his life and played for Mjällby AIF in his early ages. The interview with Jörgen Martinsson was realized in their clubhouse on the arena premises. Even though the interview was disrupted the flow in the interview was good and the atmosphere was relaxed and calm. The answers were detailed and we were able to ask additional question.

Lars-Åke Lagrell is the Chairman of the Swedish football Association, a position he has occupied since 1991. Lagrell has now chosen not to be re-elected and will resign as chairman in 2012. The interview with Lars-Åke Lagrell took place in Guldfågeln Arena before the opening ceremony of the arena. There was no interruption during the interview and the flow was good. To sum up the data collected in the interviews are reliable and the respondents very open and complainant and answered every question as good they could.

Sten Söderman conducts research and has lectures at Stockholm University within the department of marketing. Sten Söderman has been researching sport marketing for almost ten years. This interview was conducted through e-mail correspondence and was mainly done to get initial knowledge about Swedish football market.

2.3.2 Documentation

Documentation consists of many different types of information sources, they could for example be; *letters, diaries, progress reports, news clippings and other media articles and formal studies or evaluations of the same case studied by the researcher* (Yin, 2009). The different kind of documents mentioned above is usually available through Internet. Even though they are useful it is important to have in mind that this information might lack in bias and accuracy. The most important use of documents, for case studies, is to increase and strengthen the reliability of other sources and verify them (Yin, 2009). To strengthen, verify and be able to analyze the data gathered in the interviews we have used different kind of documentation. The theoretical framework is based on research articles, books and media articles. Through the different kind documentations we have increased our knowledge about the problem under investigation.

Yin (2009) argues that one of the strengths when conducting case studies is the use multiple sources of evidence, so called triangulation. The importance for triangulation is especially important in case studies because it allows the investigator to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues. Furthermore Merriam (2009) also argues that triangulation is of im

portance to the research. The author argues that the use of multiple methods can easily be applied when talking to respondents and confirm what he/she says by looking around in the environment. This has been done in this thesis while most of the interviews were conducted on the club's arena. This made it easy for us, we saw the advertising done in the arena but also if they used all their possible revenues not just advertising.

2.3.3 Primary sources

According to Berg (2007) primary sources can be written or oral testimony of eyewitnesses. Primary sources are original artifacts, documents and items that can be directly connected to a certain event or experience. Documents, recordings, diaries and journals are typical examples of primary sources. The foundation in this thesis is the interviews realized by us, in other words interviews are our primary sources. In addition to this we have also used e-mail correspondence. Some of the face-to-face interviews have also been supplemented with e-mail interviews when some extra information was needed. The interviews have already been discussed and will therefore not be further explained.

2.3.4 Secondary sources

Secondary sources include written or oral testimonies from people that are not present themselves at the time of a certain event (Berg, 2007). Secondary sources is written documents created by others, furthermore they usually relates to a particular research question. Textbooks, encyclopedias, journal articles, newspaper stories are typical examples of secondary sources (Berg, 2007). As mentioned before the secondary sources used in this thesis are textbooks, journal articles and other internet sources. To make the thesis more reliable sources created more recent has been used. There have also been a few sources used in each part to be able to see differences or similarities in the arguments. Articles have been of good use due to the low amount of literature written about football marketing. Unfortunately there is not so much research done in football marketing, and therefore the number of secondary sources is limited. We have used general sport marketing theories that mainly focus

on the American sport such as American football, Baseball, Basket etc. However, we believe that the theories used can be applied to the football market as well.

2.4 Selection of data sources

The selection of the different data can be done through different approaches. According to Berg (2007) there are four types of sampling; *convenience sample*, *purposive sample*, *snowball sample* and *quota sample*. In this thesis the convenience sample will be used partly due to time limits, therefore that approach will be further explained. The convenience sampling is often used because of the high degree of accessibility (Berg, 2007). When using this type of approach the respondents have to be available and easy to access. Because of this convenience sampling sometimes is referred to as accidental or availability sample. Using this method could under some circumstances return useful and inexpensive preliminary data. Furthermore Berg (2007) discusses risks with using this type of sampling. The researcher might use subjects that are not suitable for the research, but it is convenient and accessible. Merriam (2009) also discuss risks with using convenience sampling and how the collected data often becomes “information-poor”. Furthermore she argues that this type of sampling is incorporated in all the other alternatives. The empirical data of this thesis has been sampled with the intent to enhance the thesis’s analysis, accessibility was a factor of importance when collecting data. Most of the clubs and journalists contacted did not want to participate in the interview due to their hectic schedule. Since the season has just begun most of the clubs has a lot of work to do and need to focus on those activities. Due to time limits the data collected was less than hoped, mostly because the travels to different clubs were very time consuming.

2.5 Quality of Research

Yin (2009) has divided the term validity in three parts; *construct validity*, *internal validity* and *external validity*. Validity is used to judge the quality of an empirical research and will here be further explained. The quality of the research is also dependent on its reliability (Yin, 2009) which also will be further explained.

2.5.1 Construct Validity

The construct validity, according to Yin (2009), occurs at the same time the data is collected. To increase this validity the researcher could use multiple sources of evidence, when establishing a chain of evidence it could be further increased. There are some critical points towards researchers doing case studies when using this validity. The lack of validity, when doing case studies, often depends on that the researcher sometimes use “subjective”

judgments when collecting the data (Yin, 2009). To increase the construct validity in our case we have used different clubs with different backgrounds to get versatility in our collected data. Due to problems occurring when clubs did not want to participate in the study our choice of respondents might have been convenient. The respondents that wanted to participate was accepted, this might have made the collection subjective. The clubs were thus perfect for the study because of their differences and their ideas on the subject.

2.5.2 Internal Validity

Internal validity is mostly used when conducting a causal case study that explains if a certain action led to a certain event. If the researcher does this conclusion without taking account for a third factor that might have influenced the result the research design might have failed to deal with internal validity. Furthermore the grade of internal validity lowers if the researcher makes inferences without a direct connection to a certain event. To increase the internal validity of the research the use of pattern matching, explanation building, address rival explanations and use of logic models can be used (Yin, 2003). Merriam (2009) on the other hand uses a slightly different definition of internal validity and states that it deals with the question; how congruent are the findings in reality? When conducting the study, do the researchers observe what they are expected to observe. The reality is nothing that can be explained due to its differences, depending on the person's perspective. According to Merriam (2009) a way to increase the internal validity is by using triangulation. Triangulation is the usage of multiple sources of data, theories, investigators and methods. To increase the internal validity of this research the analysis has been built on explanation building and the usage of deeper explanations to clarify a causal pattern. Multiple sources are also used when conducting the information and writing the thesis. There are a lot of different theories highlighting the same aspects which will be explained in the theoretical framework. Different Swedish clubs, for interviewing, has made it possible to get a more complete picture of the current situation but also their differences.

2.5.3 External Validity

External validity deals with the problem of generalizing. Can the study be used in similar areas and can the results be used to help other areas with the same problem. Yin (2003) states that single case studies often offer a poor basis of generalization. Due to this the thesis will be based on a few cases and broaden the ability to generalize within clubs in Allsvenskan. Since other clubs in Allsvenskan has the same problems as the clubs interviewed the results will also be applicable on them. Yin (2003) continues and explains that to be able to generalize the

study should be done in two or three similar places and with the same results to get strong support to the generalization. We have conducted the same study on four different clubs which has given us a good understanding of the similarities and the differences between the clubs in Allsvenskan. The thesis will only be able to be generalized within Allsvenskan due to large differences between countries and their regulations.

2.5.4 Reliability

Reliability is based on the idea that if a research should be done all over again by another researcher the results and findings would be the same (Yin, 2003). It is important to know that this is by doing the same case and not by replicating the study. A main reason for using reliability is to minimize the risk of errors and interpretations made by the researcher. To ensure that the research has reliability the researcher should document the actions made which also makes the “remake” of the research easier if the reliability should be questioned (Yin, 2003). Merriam (2009) is in line with this definition and sees reliability as how well the research findings can be replicated. To make the thesis reliable recordings of every interview exists and they are transcribed. This has been done to make it easy for future researchers to see how the thesis was produced and how the respondents actually answered the questions. One interview where as mentioned conducted during lunch hours in a restaurant and that is something that might have affected the answers. If doing this interview once again the answers might be more in depth and detailed. This is something that has affected the reliability of the research.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework presents and explain the theories used throughout this thesis. The main concepts used are; Sport marketing, Revenue model for European football clubs, Stakeholders, Brand equity, Marketing tools and Sport integrated marketing communication mix. The chapter will be summarized with a model of how to increase the revenues in a football club.

3.1 Sport marketing

3.1.1 Definition of sport marketing

Advertising age, which is an advertising magazine, came up with the term “sports marketing” 1979 to describe how service marketers used sport as a promotional vehicle to market consumer and industrial products. This definition is rather limited and it fails to recognize the marketing of sport events and services, which are central aspects of sport marketing (Mullin et al, 2007). Mullin et al (2007) define sport marketing as:

“Sport marketing consists of all activities designed to meet the needs and wants of sport consumers through exchange processes. Sport marketing has developed two major thrusts; the marketing of sport products and services directly to consumers of sport, and the marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through the use of sport promotions.”

(Mullin et al, 2007, p11)

The sport marketing industry have historically faced a problem called “marketing myopia” or “a lack of foresight in marketing ventures”. This problem are built on the assumption that sport marketing ideally consists of different activities of how to satisfy sport consumers wants and needs (Mullin et al, 2007).

According to Mullin et al (2007) sport marketing myopia can be characterized through different general symptoms, they are for example;

- Rather than identifying and satisfying the wants and needs of the consumers and their markets, there are a focus on producing and selling goods and services.
- The thought that winning solves and forget other problems.
- Disregard of competition from other activities than sport.

- Short-term thinking and focus on quick-return investments, such as price hikes rather than long-term investments through relationship marketing.

It is important to have these different symptoms in mind and there are different ways to reduce and cope with them. One example of this is that Atlanta Hawks (which is a basketball team in NBA) used ticket promo ads on cinemas to attract consumers. They had data that showed that their fans attended movies four or more times during three months. Statistics showed that moviegoers had 80 percent recall the next day, compared with 15-20 percent from television ads. Atlanta Hawks thereby used other competitive activities to increase their attendance (Mullin et al, 2007).

Beech & Chadwick (2007) provides a different but interesting definition of sport marketing:

“It is an ongoing process through which contests with an uncertain outcome are staged creating opportunities for the simultaneous fulfillment of direct and indirect objectives amongst sport customers, sport businesses and other related individuals and organizations.”

(Beech & Chadwick, 2007, p 4)

Beech & Chadwick (2007) states there are a big difference between marketing regular products and sport products. Armstrong & Kotler (2007) define regular products as *“anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or a need. Products include more than just tangible goods. Broadly defined, products include physical objects, services, events, persons, places, organizations, ideas, or mixes of these entities”* (Armstrong & Kotler, 2007, p 199). Beech & Chadwick (2007) states that in order to market a sport product a marketer has to consider several influencing factors that are unique for sport marketing. The most distinctive and challenging factors mentioned by Beech & Chadwick (2007) are for example that; *sport is product led, sport is all about the uncertainty of outcome, sport customers help to produce the product and sports fans are unlikely to purchase products from a rival sport organization.*

The success of a marketing effort is highly influenced by the sport organizations performance on the pitch, which indicates they are product led. It is often dominating players that determines and influence what happens in a sport organization rather the fans or customers (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

The uncertainty of outcome in sport is one of its cornerstones and the core of the sport product and it is the motivating factor for why people consume sport. Excitement, emotion, stress and tension are different levels of the uncertainty of outcome, and these words are not often associated with repeated purchase behavior. The challenge for sport marketers is how to act in order to market the experience the sport consumers experience during a game (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

One unique aspect that sport marketers have to have in mind is that sport customers help to produce the product. The presence of other customers is a fundamental part of the product, and it is vital for the customer's total consumption experience. The consumption experience, for the customers, can be further enhanced if they watch the game together with their friends, family or other supporters (ibid).

The fact that many sports fans are unlikely to purchase products from a rival sport organization is a big challenge in sport marketing. Products that are clearly associated with one club or a team tend to be seen as undesirable by rival fans. Therefore it is common that sport organizations marketplaces are clearly geographically bound. This is a clear example of the big difference between sport marketing and marketing of regular products (ibid).

Mullin et al (2007) have a quite similar understanding of the sport product as Beech & Chadwick (2007) but their explanation is more thorough. The sport product usually consists of the following elements; playful competition, separation from "normal" space and time, regulation by special rules, physical prowess and physical training and special facilities and special equipment. Other elements important in the basic sport product according to Mullin et al (2007) are for example:

Sports as a product is ephemeral, experimental, intangible and subjective, which makes it open to wide array of interpretations by consumers. It is hard for sport marketers to ensure a high probability of consumer satisfaction, because what each customer sees in sport is subjective. The benefits of consuming sport are hard to sell because it is hard to identify or describe them (Mullin et al, 2007).

Sport is produced and consumed at the same time and they must due to this be presold, just like events. It is often common that the sport consumers are co-producers of the game they consume (ibid).

Strong emotional and personal identification, which means that fans identify themselves with players and teams. When fans favorite teams win “basking in reflected glory” is common concept. Fans then use words such as “we”, “us” and “our” to connect them with the team. The opposite of this is “casting off reflected failure”, which mean that fans use words such as “them” or “they” when their team lose (Mullin et al, 2007).

Core-product control beyond marketer’s hands refers to the limited control sport marketers have of their core-product, which is the game itself. Game rules and schedule is decided by the league and it is often the general managers who are responsible for transfers (ibid).

3.1.2 Customer Relationship Marketing

When trading in services a relationship has the possibility to be built, when meeting the customer some elements creates the base for future relationships. If these connections are valuable for the customer a proper relationship is established between him/her and the company. Even though there has been an establishment of a relationship that is not enough for the customer to stay loyal to the company. But this require a deeper loyalty to be developed (Grönroos, 2008). Relationship marketing focuses on the relationship between a company and the customer. This has become an alternative focus for the marketers instead of concentrating on transactions and the exchange of goods (ibid). According to Harris & Ogbonna (2008) four aspects of creating a successful relationship with the football fans are: *intimacy*, *mutuality*, *trust* and *commitment*. The study made by Harris & Ogbonna (2008) discusses the English football supporter and their relationship with the different clubs they support. Though the larger part of the asked fans feel they have a relationship with the club there are almost in every case a lack of at least one of the four aspects of how to create a successful relationship. The different types of fans are lacking different aspects, for example the die-hard fans lack the trust for the hierarchical structure in the club. The die-hard fans also give the club a low rate of profitability due to their attitude towards club merchandise. They believe that using a club merchandise to show your opinion is a flamboyance behavior and you do not have to buy those things to show your loyalty (Harris & Ogbonna, 2008).

3.2 Understanding the football market

According to Shank (2005) sport is one of the most important institutions in our society today, it is estimated that the sport industry alone generates around \$200 billion dollar each year. This figure is based on various areas within the industry and it involves, among others, sponsorship, advertising, media broadcasting rights and spectators spending. The football

market is no exception, during the season 2007/08 the total European football market grew by € 1 billion to €14.6 billion in total. It was primarily the 'big five' (Premier League, La liga, Serie A, Bundesliga and Ligue 1) European leagues that contributed to this raise, with an increase of €0.7 billion to a total of €7.7 billion (Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, 2009).

Premier League is without hesitation the football league that generates the highest revenues. The Premier league clubs generated €2.4 billion together in 2007/08, which is over €1 billion more than the closest rivals in Europe. In pace with the increased revenues for the 'big five' European leagues the wages has also increased with almost €588 million to €4.8 billion since the season 2006/07. The biggest challenge for the 'big five' leagues is if they are able to retain their commercial revenues and ticket prices, and simultaneously address the wages and other cost inflations (Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, 2009).

3.2.1 Revenue model for football clubs in Europe

Andreff & Staudohar (2000) explains that European football clubs revenue model has changed a lot during the last two decades. During most of the 20th century gate receipts was the most essential source of revenue for the European football clubs. Other important revenue sources were government subsidies and corporate sponsors. As time has gone by the revenue sources, for the European football clubs, also have changed and today fees for television rights and sponsors are the most important revenue sources (Lund, 2011). Evans & Lefever (2011) confirms the importance of television rights. They argue that "*one of the most striking features of the modern sports business is its high dependency on cable and broadcasting revenues*" (Evans & Lefever 2011, p 34). The competition for live sport broadcasting rights has been intensified because of the introduction of pay-TV and digital broadcasting, which has led to inflated acquisition prices (Evans & Lefever, 2011). Beech & Chadwick (2007) states that customers are now paying more than £1 billion for something that they used to pay nothing for; sport channels on the television, the authors here argues that it is important for the sport marketer to realize new areas of revenues.

Lund (2011) argues that the revenue model used by football clubs today rest on four pillars namely; *media, corporations, merchandising* and *markets*, these may often be complementary. *The broadcasting media* most obvious contribution is financial resources in form of rights fees, but it also creates and delivers increased awareness for corporate sponsors through an enlarged audience. *The sponsoring corporations* mainly provide monetary terms,

but they could also be helpful with product improvements and marketing resources. *Merchandising* is useful for maintaining the loyalty of the fan base, and it also provides great exposure for sponsors. *The markets* (spectators) are the core asset for football clubs because of several reasons. It is the spectators who buy game-tickets, in addition to this they are also the target for broadcaster, sponsors and merchandisers. For football clubs in general the television revenues are the most important and dominant revenue source (Lund, 2011).

3.3 Understanding the Football stakeholder

Football clubs has two important stakeholders which are vital for their economy. These are spectators and fans to the club but also companies or individuals that support the club economically, so called sponsors. Both of these will be explained further in this part, starting with the spectators and fans.

3.3.1 Spectators and Fans

Beech & Chadwick (2007) discusses how to define the sport consumer in today's business. Yesterday's consumer is the live spectator who was attending the games and saw them live. During time the televised audience has outgrown the live spectators most people watches sport events through their television. Aspects that are becoming more and more important are sponsors and advertisers (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

Beech & Chadwick (2007) argues that different spectators are motivated by different aspects, depending on which level of spectatorship the individual is at. There are three different stages; *aficionados* or *diehard fans*, *fair-weather fans* and *theatre goers* or *spectacle whores*. Shank (2005) also divides fans into three different groups, the author uses the terms *low identification*, *medium identification* and *high identification*. According to Beech & Chadwick (2007) the aficionados-fans are very committed to the sport and to one specific team, the passionate supporter. Furthermore Shank (2005) explains that the high involvement fan often recruits new supporters to the team. This type of supporter is also likely to attend the games both home and away. The high involvement-fan thinks of the club as an important part of the community and invests a lot of money into it (Shank, 2005). The fair-weather fans can change their interest and even change teams depending on results, nevertheless this type of supporter enjoy the event almost as much as the aficionados fans. This fan usually show pride in the glory of the team and cuts of in case of failure (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). This is something that Shank (2005) agrees with but calls this type of fan the medium identification-fan. They often identify themselves with a team or a player but for a short period of time. When the

teams or the player drops in status the medium identification-fan will probably shift their focus to other players or teams (Shank, 2005). The theatre goers often attends or watches sport because of benefits they can gain for themselves, the music, comradeship and such are more important for these types of fans (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). According to Shank (2005) this fan type goes to the games most likely for the promotions or events that occur during the game. The low identification-fan or social fan, as Shank (2005) calls them, can become more interested in the game if they see what possibilities they gain by being involved.

3.3.1.1 Influencing factors

To understand spectators and how to increase the rate of attendance on sport events Shank (2005) explains a few factors that influence the choice between attending an event or not. Those of most importance to this thesis are; *fan motivation factors, economic factors and competitive factors*.

The basis for the sport marketer is to understand why spectators are attending a certain event, this is by Shank (2005) called fan motivation factors. The fan motivation factors are divided into eight different aspects; *Self-esteem enhancement, diversion from everyday life, entertainment value, eustress, economic value, aesthetic value, need for affiliation and family ties*. The motivation factors that Shank (2005) uses explains why spectators are attending sports events, either from home or at the stadium. These factors represent the most basic needs for the fans to attend a sport event and will be further explained later on (Shank, 2005).

Shank (2005) divides the economic factors into two different aspects; controllable and uncontrollable. The controllable factors are such as the club can influence and change, among these is ticket price and perceived value of the sport. Uncontrollable aspects are for example the economic health of the country and the average income of the population in the area. Shank (2005) mentions a study that found out that there is no relation between higher price and number of attendance in a sport event. This result has though been opposed by numbers of studies. Interesting discussion made by Shank (2005) is that owners who trade a lot of players to get the best team might lose revenues due to decreasing fan loyalty.

As well as the other factors the competitive factors are divided into different aspects, in this case it is direct (other sports) and indirect (other form of entertainment). One major direct competitive factor is the televised game. Reasons for watching the game via the television is different between the genders, for example men watch the televised game because they want a larger coverage of the sport. Women on the other hand watch it because they enjoy the social

aspect of watching the game with friends (low identification) (Shank, 2005). When watching sports events through the television this might affect the attendance at home games, not always negative though (ibid). Shank (2005) argues that the more a person watches away games on the television the more likely is he/her to attend a home game.

As mentioned earlier the fans are motivated by different factors. The eight factors influencing the fans according to Shank (2005) will here be further explained.

- *Self-Esteem Enhancement* – The fans gives themselves a boost when the team or player of their choice is winning or performing good. On the “fair weather fans” this is mostly applicable due to their ability to become more focused when the team or player is performing well and less when they perform poorly (Shank, 2005).
- *Diversion from Everyday Life* – Fans watching the games as a reason to get away from the normal routines of their everyday life. The game provides a reason to put aside the personal problems and focus on something else (ibid).
- *Entertainment Value* - This motivational factor and the one before are quite similar, entertainment is the drama that the game provides which makes you escape the everyday life (ibid).
- *Eustress* – Sport creates a positive level of arousal which motivates the fans to attend more games. This stimulates the fans senses, for example imagine the feeling of an American football fan when the opening kick-off at Super Bowl is made (ibid).
- *Economic Value* – Some fans are interested in the possibility to increase the financials by gambling on a sport event. Since there is only a small amount of fans that has this as their motivation factors this is the least motivating of the factors (ibid).
- *Aesthetic Value* – Sport is by some seen as an art-form, perhaps compared to ballet in some cases. The fans are motivated by the beauty in the athletic performances (ibid).
- *Need for Affiliation* – To be a part of something motivates a lot of the fans. This can also affect the game attendance, if the fans’ closest friends and family attends the games he/she will probably do that as well. The reference group also affects the perceived quality of the game (ibid).
- *Family Ties* – To get the family closer together and to spend time with each other, sport is a good way to do this according to some fans. This is a motivational factor mostly used by women (ibid).

3.3.2 Sponsors

Another important football stakeholder is the sponsors, they are often companies but they could also be private individuals. Sponsors exchange money or their product against the ability to use the clubs name and brand for their advertising. This area has increased a lot during the last decade and the clubs earn a lot of money from these kinds of activities (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

3.3.2.1 Companies

Tottenham Hotspurs FC, for example, got a three-year-deal with Carlsberg worth a six-figure amount which made Carlsberg a secure exclusive brand in Tottenham. When sponsors pay for a certain “product or service” they become customers to the club (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). This can be seen as a business-to-business relationship and a network of associates has been formed. The business-to-business network can have different formations, Ford et al (2006) discusses that there are three different types of B2B networks; *supplier networks*, *distribution networks* and *product development network*. When connected to a supplier network the sponsoring company gets a lot of *indirect relationships* with other suppliers. As a supplier there might only be direct contact with a few of the other suppliers but through this network the company will be connected to all others within it. *Coordination between relationships* is achieved when all the suppliers uses their relationships, both forward and backward in the supply chain, to create value for the end customer. When the suppliers do this well together the network is able to create a higher value. *Influence of large companies* is very important due to its ability to contribute with the company’s other networks and knowledge about how to proceed with the network. There could be *problems with a single perspective* and it is important to understand that the network is something that is constantly changing. Companies that have the idea of a network for only its own purposes will find it troubling to stay in a network of progress for longer period of time (Ford et al, 2006).

3.3.2.2 Private individuals

Donations when contributing to their favorite team could be financial, material or other ways to support them. The donator does not claim anything in return in comparison to sponsors who would like their brand to be shown. The distinction between these has though diminished and it is harder to separate them now. Sponsorship is a more clear way to advertise while donations give the donator attention even though that was not the purpose (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

3.3.3 Financial supporters

“The most important source of funding being the £ 950 million injected by “new owners” compared to 350 million attributed to securitization, 300 million originating from strategic media investment, 175 million generated through stock exchange listing and 150 million contributed by new player finance techniques” (Franck, 2009, p 28). The English Premier League’s funding-structure has changed over the last decades and the modern football corporation cannot compete with the private football firms when it comes to accessing money (ibid). Franck (2009) discusses that today spending power divides the large clubs instead of the profitability of the clubs.

The football industry differs from other types of industries in a few aspects, for example financial profitability has a small affect on the football clubs. The importance of financial profitability in other business can be seen as the key to understand their viability. Football clubs in general has large problems with their financial profitability and perform poorly when it comes to financial aspects (Franck, 2009). Franck (2009) discusses that regulations and commercialization within professional football has created an environment that drives for overinvestment. The competitiveness of the football clubs is no longer dependent on the profitability they are currently having, but of their spending power. The club with the biggest spending power has the largest competitive advantage in the industry (Franck, 2009).

The clubs within the industry could not be treated as a business due to the continuously negative financial results. If an owner continuously put more and more of his/her own money into the business, he/she would eventually lose the company. This differ the football industry since it attract owners that are able to lose a large amount of money, and can afford it. The perfect example is the Russian businessman Roman Abramovich who owns Chelsea FC since 2003, and has given the club an interest free loan which in June 2008 was calculated to £ 702 million (ibid). Franck (2009) argues that owners in this kind of ownership with that structure have to have other reasons for owning a club than to make profit. By owning the club it has to reward the owner in some way, otherwise the business with the club would stop (ibid). On the other side Andreff & Staudohar (2000) argues that the new owners are more developed entrepreneurs and acts as investors to improve the club’s profitability and brand knowledge to increase its value. According to the authors there are two major aspects that changes; professional managers and mobilizing funds. The current administration becomes replaced with more professional employees which almost every time improves the results of the club. The new investors can also mobilize additional funds to the club for further growth. Another

aspect the investors eagerly establish is vertical integration and the ability to control club assets such as control of the stadium, ownership of television rights and merchandising. The investors try to improve the business part of football (Andreff & Staudohar, 2000).

3.4 Developing football brands

According to Aaker (1991) a brand contains name, logo symbol and other characteristics that are associated with an organization, company or person. The different components, in a brand, are what set organizations, companies or persons in the same category apart from each other. FC Bayern Munich, FIFA and David Beckham are good examples of typical football brands (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Armstrong & Kotler (2007) argue that a brand is more than its name and symbols. It represents customer's perception and feelings about the product, in other words what it means for them.

3.4.1 Brand equity

The positive differential effect a brand name has on a customer's reaction towards a product or service is called brand equity. Brand equity can be measured by analyzing if the customers are willing to pay more money for the brand or not. If a company has high equity in their brand it will bring them competitive advantages, among others high level of brand awareness and loyalty (Armstrong & Kotler, 2007). According to Mullin et al (2007) a sport organization that succeed with creating a strong image of their brand in the consumer's mind, have realized brand equity in a good way. Manchester United is a good example of a sport organization that is able to attract monetary assets through their brand, the brand equity in the team is perceived as high (Mullin et al, 2007). Aaker (1991) agrees with Armstrong & Kotler (2007) and describes brand equity as the positive and negative factors that either strengthens or weaken the value of the brand. In addition to this he also describes four components that are useful for explaining what creates brand equity, the components are: *perceived quality*, *brand awareness*, *brand associations* and *brand loyalty*.

- *Perceived quality* is when consumers consider the overall purpose of the product as well as alternative options, in other words the brand is evaluated by the consumers.
- *Brand awareness* is when the consumer recognizes the organization's brand among competitors which compete in the same area.
- *Brand associations* are consumers' thoughts and feelings about the organizations brand.

- *Brand loyalty* refers to how well the brand is able to attract new consumers and keeping them, it also functions as an indicator of how connected the consumers are to the brand.

(Aaker, 1991)

According to Beech & Chadwick (2007) a sport manager has to consider two important variables when developing brand equity. First, it is important to decide which of the four components of brand equity (perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty) that *can* be influenced. Second, given the situation the organization is in, the sport manager has to decide which of the four components of brand equity that *should* be influenced. Beech & Chadwick (2007) present strategies and tactics for how sport organization can strengthen each part of their brand equity (based on the four components provided by Aaker, 1991).

3.4.1.1 Perceived quality

Perceived quality is according to Beech & Chadwick (2007) the component that is the hardest for sport managers to control. Fans' perception of quality is closely connected to the team's success on the pitch as well as other team-related aspects. Fans' will most likely perceive a higher team quality if a team extends the contract of their star player or if the team wins the league. However, it should be said that sport marketers often are unable to influence team-related aspects because it is beyond their control. In order to increase the perception of quality in a team sport marketers can use brand elements such as a star coach or players (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). For example, Manchester City has increased the perceived quality of their team by investing huge amount of money in star players. Special offerings and promotions tied to winning the league could work as an effective method for strengthen the perceived image of a quality in a team. In addition to this sport marketers can portray the teams' coaching staff and players as quality individuals by involving them in a promotional campaign (e.g., advertising spots, profiles, talk shows), or in a comprehensive community relations plan (e.g., visiting hospitals, autograph sessions, fundraisers) (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). It is impossible for sport marketers to promise the consumers a win, they can however assure the consumers that they will get a qualitative experience. Tools that sport marketers could use to their advantage are peripheral elements of the game such as the venue, the merchandise provided, the services provided from team employees and game delivery (Mullin et al, 2000). Beech & Chadwick (2007) argue that sport marketers can create a great overall

experience for fans even though the final outcome of the game is disappointing in the fans eyes. This can be achieved by guarantying safe and clean stadiums, high quality and adequate selection of merchandise items, service from all team employees and memorable game experience. The elements mentioned above could all provide a positive perception of quality of the parent brand and the core product among the fans (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

3.4.1.2 Brand awareness

Brand awareness may be the component that is the easiest for sport marketers to control, if the budget permits it. Usually both regional and national media coverage stem from high brand equity, despite this, sport marketers could design a comprehensive promotional plan in order to increase the awareness level of the organization even more. By using multiple sources of promotion such as promotional selling, sales promotion and advertising, in the promotional plan, a buzz can be created around the organization which might familiarize people with services provided by the club (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). The authors exemplify this with; “*information about schedule, the opponents (including existing rivalries), player transactions, community relations initiatives (e.g., player appearances, autograph sessions), extension products or services and anything else relating to the organization should be communicated to the public to encourage involvement with the team and to increase their excitement and affinity for the organization*” (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, p190). The amount of publicity (free exposure) received by sport organizations and sport celebrities is one of the unique elements of the sport product (Mullin et al, 2000). According to Beech & Chadwick (2007) this is what makes sport marketers job easier to some extent. Nevertheless, one should have in mind that publicity, unlike advertising, is not paid for and it can therefore be both positive and negative. In order for sport marketers to derive benefits for the organization from this tool, they should try to develop positive media relationships. This could for example be done through providing media representatives with access to club-related information to maintain the honesty and integrity of the interactions between them. The organization might benefit from wider media coverage, and they may also to some extent be protected from negative publicity and incidents (e.g., scandals) by doing so (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

3.4.1.3 Brand association

Brand associations are, according to Beech & Chadwick (2007), built-up by fans emotions, feelings and ideas towards the sport organization, in other words what they think about it. Brand associations consist of three distinct variables, and they are *attributes*, *benefits* and *attitudes* (Keller, 1993). Attributes are what the consumer thinks the product or service is or

has, that is the descriptive elements that characterize the brand. Furthermore attributes can be product related or non-product related. Benefits are the values consumers attach to a product or service, and they can be functional, experiential and symbolic. It is also what the consumer believes a certain brand can do for them. Finally, attitudes refers to consumers overall opinion of a brand, which is often reflected in the consumers' perception of the brand's attributes and benefits (Keller, 1993).

In addition to the three variables mentioned above, Keller (1993) explains that brand association can be further differentiated by *strength*, *favorability* and *uniqueness*. All these variables have to be present in order for the brand equity to be high. According to Beech & Chadwick (2007) brand associations that are strong, favorable and unique are extremely important because they can enhance other equity components, for example perceived quality and brand loyalty. Beech & Chadwick (2007) have proposed how the variables determined by Keller (1993) could influence sport organization.

According to Beech & Chadwick (2007) the *strength* of a brand can be enhanced by consistently providing consumers with information about the organization that is relevant. For a sport organization it could be to send out information about the club that is relevant for the consumers on a regular basis through various media (e.g., magazines, newspaper, TV-shows). By doing so sport organization give the fans inside information about their organization. A good example of this is that one of NBA's newest initiatives includes placing microphones on coaches during time-outs, and thereby sharing live information with the fans (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

Favorability of brand associations refers to if the brand offer the consumer desired and valued benefits. Sport organizations can reach this through success on the field (cannot be controlled by sport marketers) or fan and community initiatives, such as meet-and-greet sessions and player appearances, that directly influence how fans feel about the organization (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). The underlying goal with these activities is to create positive thoughts, in the head of the fans, when different team associations occur. This is however both complex and challenging, because associations might differ between markets and teams, in other words there are no premade association-strategy that works for everybody. A great example of this is that Manchester United has associations tied to their red colored kits, their historic stadium and their great success on the field (Ibid).

Uniqueness of brand associations are used to differentiate one certain brand from other brands, it is thereby the foundation for determine what creates an image of superiority for a brand. Sport organization can use emotions and thoughts linked to the tradition of their club to differentiate themselves from other clubs and by this create a unique brand association. Due to the high emotional nature of sport it is often quite easy for sport organization to create unique brand associations. Using this correctly can create higher benefits (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

3.4.1.4 Brand loyalty

The fourth and last component of brand equity is called *brand loyalty*. Brand loyalty includes a sport organizations' ability to keep and generate fans. There are two types of loyalty, *behavioral loyalty* and *attitudinal loyalty* (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

- *Behavioral loyalty* the things the consumers do.
- *Attitudinal loyalty* the consumers perceptions and attitudes towards the brand.

Behavioral loyalty is, in a sport context, displayed in the number of fans' that attend a team's games, the length of the fans loyalty towards a certain team and lastly their purchase of team merchandise (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). In contrast, attitudinal loyalty includes fans' commitment to and attachment with their favorite team, but also the fans willingness to follow their favorite team. In order to maintain a steady stream of loyal fans both types of loyalty are necessary (ibid).

According to Aaker (1996) loyalty is of utmost importance for a brand because it protects the brand from competition and it also permits the brand to take a higher price, which ultimately creates a stream of revenues. Brand loyalty can be measured through two methods; *price premium* and *customer satisfaction*. The amount a consumer is willing to pay for a brand that offers the same benefits, in comparison to other brands, is called price premium. Customer satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to the consumers' intention to buy the brand (over competitors' brands) and how willing they are to recommend the brand to other consumers, in other words the customers' level of satisfaction with a brand (Aaker, 1996).

Beech & Chadwick (2007) states that sport brands might be unique compared to other brands. Sport consumers often become loyal at an early age and it is not common that they shift their loyalty and start support a rival team. Nevertheless, one of the biggest mistakes sport marketers can do is to take their fans loyalty for granted. The sport organization will be highly influenced by how much the fans are willing to invest in the team, through for example

attending games and buying merchandise (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Fans loyalty can be enhanced by sport marketers in several ways. The main reasons with the efforts performed, by the sport marketers, are to increase the fans behavioral and attitudinal loyalty, as well as increasing their satisfaction level. The reason for implementing promotional and communications tactics should be to encourage fans to support and follow their favorite team by attending games, watching broadcast and/or reading about them (Ibid).

3.4.2 Conceptual Model for Assessing Brand Equity

Shank (2005) provides a unique model created by Gladden et al (1998) which focus on assessing brand equity in the sport industry, the model is illustrated below. The model consists of Aaker’s (1991) concept *brand equity*, and it also introduces two new concepts related to brand equity, which are *antecedents* and *consequences*.

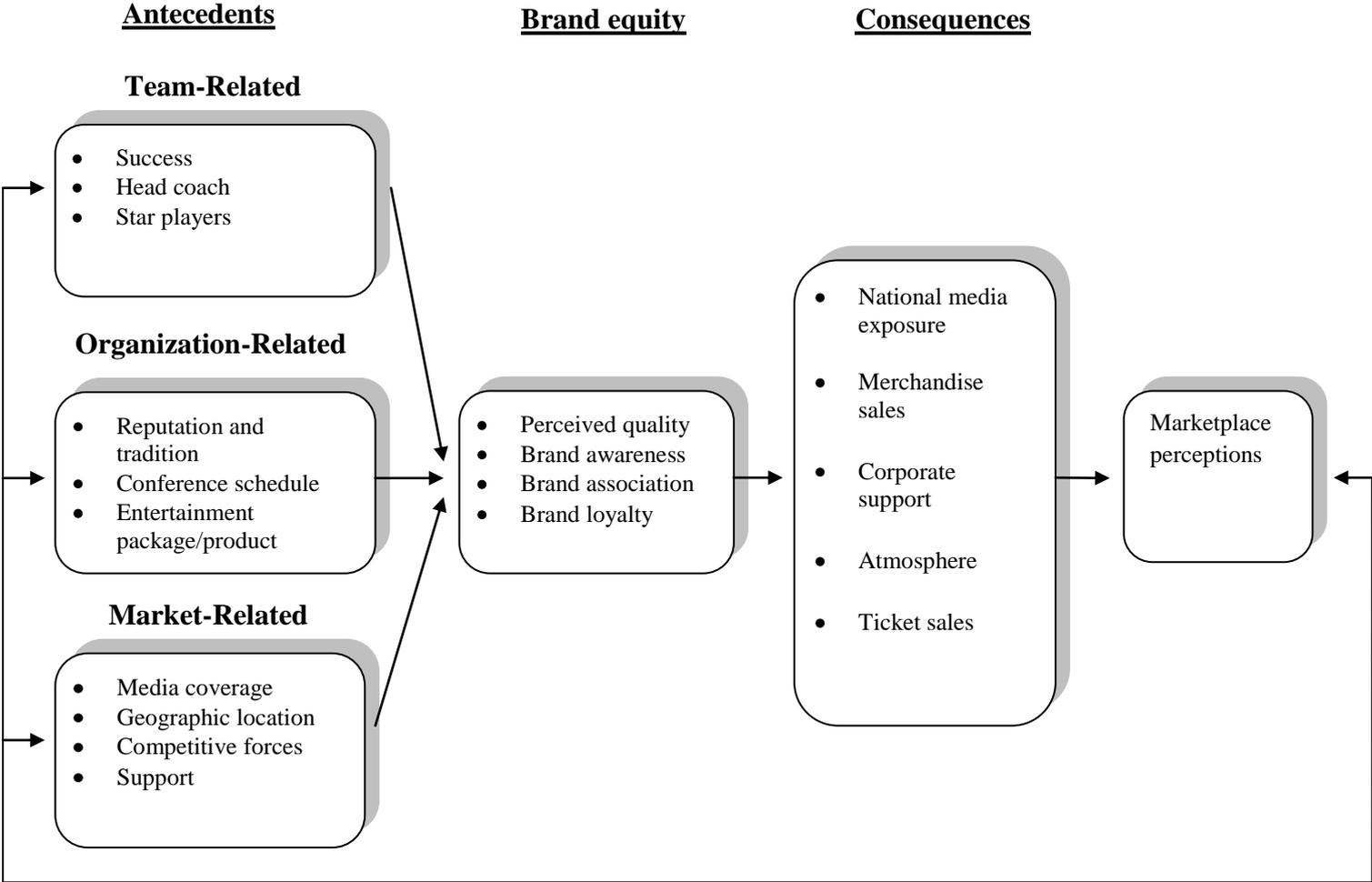


Figure 3: Conceptual model for Assessing Brand Equity (Shank 2005, p 229)

Antecedents are conditions that might have a big impact on the brand equity level, and they are therefore very important for sport marketers to understand. Antecedents are divided into three broad categories; team-related factors, organizational-related factors and market-related factors (Shank, 2005). The team-related factors are furthermore broken down into the head coach, star player(s) and success of the team. As mentioned before, the equity of a sport brand is highly influenced by winning or success, and a charismatic manager or player can also increase the equity of a sport brand (Ibid). Organizational-related factors refer to league and game schedule, reputation and tradition and the entertainment value of the game. The perceived image of a team can be influenced by the league itself and the schedule. Another organizational-related factor that is believed to influence a team's brand equity is the reputation and tradition of the team off the field (Ibid). Market-related factors are, for example, media coverage, competitive forces, geographical location and support from fans. The exposures gained in various media have a huge importance for a team's brand equity. Another influencing factor for the brand equity is the number of loyal fans supporting the team.

The Brand equity dimensions from a sport industry point of view are described by Gladden et al (1998) in the following way:

- *Perceived quality* as sport consumers' perception of team's success.
- *Brand awareness* as sport consumers' familiarity with a specific team or sport product.
- *Brand association* as the experiential and symbolic attributes provided by a team.
- *Brand loyalty* as the ability to attract and retain consumers.

(Shank, 2005)

Consequences are the related outcomes of establishing a strong brand in the sport industry (Shank, 2005). According to Shank (2005) Gladden et al (1998) believe that a sport organization will gain more national media exposure, greater sales of team merchandise, more support from corporate sponsors, enhanced stadium atmospherics and increased ticket sales through high levels of brand equity. The factors mentioned above are all consequences that sport marketers use to find out if the brand equity has increased or not (Shank, 2005). There are several different methods for measuring and evaluating brand equity. One quite popular technique is to evaluate a brand's performance across seven dimensions. The net brand related

profits, for an organization, are then calculated by using the seven dimensions, which are; (1) *leadership or the ability of the brand to influence its market*, (2) *stability or the ability of the brand to survive*, (3) *market or the trading environment of the brand internationality*, (4) *the ability of the brand to cross geographic and cultural borders*, (5) *trend or the ongoing direction of the brand's importance to the industry*, (6) *support or the effectiveness of the brand's communication* and (7) *protection of the owner's legal title*.

The long-term success of a sport organization is highly influenced and dependent on the overall equity of the brand. As discussed above there are several positive outcomes attached to increasing the brand equity. It could for example be increased loyalty from the fans, protection from scandals or the opportunity to increase ticket price without losing fans (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Furthermore, high brand equity facilitate for the expansion and the growth of the sport organizations. Through brand extension strategies the sport organizations are able to introduce themselves into a variety of sport- and non-sport related products and services (Ibid). This will be further explained later. There are however some challenges with developing a sports brand that have to be taken into consideration. A good example of this is that many sports organizations are too focused on winning. Instead it is important for sport organizations to shift from their short-term focus too long-term focus that builds on developing a strong brand, which goes beyond the on-the-field success.

3.5 Marketing tools

3.5.1 Football Arena

According to Shank (2005) the arena can affect the sport consumers in a number of ways. Factors that might influence them are among others the arena access, the newness of the arena, architecture and beauty of the arena, seat comfort and cleanness of the arena. The game attendance as well as the fans attitude toward the arena is positively associated with all the factors mentioned above (Shank, 2005). Shank (2005) present an interesting study conducted by *Money magazine* that looked at what 1000 sport fans value when they attend professional sporting events. In the study it became evident that the following aspects are valued high and influence sport fans;

- *“Parking costs less than \$8 and tickets under \$25 each.*
- *Adequate parking or convenient public transportation.*
- *A safe, comfortable seat that you can buy just a week before game.*

- *Reasonably priced snack foods, such as hot dog for \$2 or less.*
- *Home team with a winning record.*
- *A close score.*
- *A hometown star who is generally regarded as being among the sport's 10 best players.*
- *Reasonably priced souvenirs.*
- *A game than ends in less than three hours.*
- *A wide variety of snack foods.”*

(Shank, 2005 p 167-168)

It was found out in the study that the four most important factors (the four first listed above) were not related to the game itself. Instead it referred to how much the sport fans had to pay for the tickets or how much work they had to put in order to get to the arena. If these factors were not met they would rather stay at home (Shank, 2005). Furthermore spectators value arenas that are comfortable and clean with a good atmosphere. In order to maintain a good atmosphere it is important to control rowdy fans or offer a nonalcoholic section in the arena (ibid).

3.5.2 Sponsorship in football

Promotional licensing agreements have become a major part of sport and lifestyle marketing in today's society, one typical example of this is that Pizza Hut sells NCAA-logoed basketballs (Mullin et al, 2000). According to Mullin et al (2000) the term sponsorship has the same meaning as promotional sponsorship, namely the permission to affiliate or directly associate a product or event through the acquisition of rights. The purpose with sponsorship and licensing is to derive the benefits related to this affiliation or association. This relationship is then used by the sponsor to reach and fulfill its promotional objectives or to support and facilitate its overall marketing activities (Mullin et al, 2000).

3.5.2.1 Sponsorship

Beech & Chadwick (2007) have a similar understanding, as Mullin et al (2000), of the term sponsorship and they use definitions from Sahnoun and Howard & Grompton to explain the term. Sahnoun defines sponsorship as; “*sponsorship is a tool that allows an organization to directly link a brand (or a company) to an attractive event or a specific audience*” (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, p 269). The definition made by Howard & Grompton goes a little bit further

and defines sponsorship as; “*a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and a sport event or organization which offers in return some rights and association that may be used for commercial advantages*” (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, p 269-270).

According to Mullin et al (2007) sponsorship agreements may include, but are not restricted to, the following terms and benefits:

- *“The right to use a logo, a name, a trademark, and geographic representations signifying the purchaser’s connection with the product or event. These rights can be used in advertising, promotion, publicity, or other communication activities employed by the purchaser.*
- *The right to an exclusive association within a product or service category.*
- *The right of entitlement to an event or facility.*
- *The right to use various designations or phrases in connection with the product, event, or facility such as “official sponsor”, “official supplier”, “official product”, or “presented by”.*
- *The right of service (use of the product or exclusive use of the product) or the right to use purchaser’s product or service in conjunction with the event or facility.*
- *The right to conduct certain promotional activities, such as contests, advertising campaigns, or sales-driven activities, in conjunction with the sponsorship agreement.”*

(Mullin et al, 2007 p 315)

Sponsorship includes a lot of different areas connected to the communication within sport marketing. To attract this market, sponsors could send the message to the targeted audience. Organizations use more sponsors than before and the amount spent on sport and special events has never been as high (Mullin et al, 2007).

When using a sponsorship-message it hits the customer on their leisure pursuits and they are more susceptible to new messages. The audience is relaxed when watching a sport event which makes it easier to expose them to the brand (Mullin et al, 2007). The author continues to describe that it is important for the company to get associated with the sport brand because then the company also gains the credibility the sport brand provides. Sponsorship is also often exclusive to a certain company which gives them the benefit of a high level of exposure

without the competition. When using regular marketing there is a factor of hit-or-miss, which makes it uncertain. Sponsoring could be created as an event and appeal to all senses of the audience, best case scenario is if the audience remembers this as an event in itself. Another benefit for the company, when sponsoring a team, is that they by contract have the right to be included in the team's publicity (Mullin et al, 2007).

3.5.2.2 Licensing

Licensing has become an great alternative income variable for sport organizations and this type of revenue source was founded through NFL in 1963, but has in more recent years grown a lot. When a producer uses a team's logo, marks and insignia they have to pay a licensing fee for those rights. These products can be for example novelties, sport memorabilia, trading cards and apparel. Back in time apparel contributed with most of the licensing revenues, now on the other hand video-games has increased and make the biggest contributes (Irwin et al, 2008). Mullin et al (2007) defines licensing as "*items of clothing or products bearing the name or logo of a popular collegiate or professional sport team*". Shank (2005) agrees with the previous authors but add that in order to use a logo in a licensing purpose, the sport organization has to be compensated with a fee or royalty.

The licensing industry has grown rapidly in the recent years, and the yearly income is ridiculously high. For example, the amount for products sold with NFL-license in 2006 was \$ 3.25 billion (Irwin et al, 2008). Other advantages by using licensing in the club's marketing mentioned by Shank (2005) are that the licensor (the team) creates opportunities for new markets, penetrates the existing markets deeper than before and through that increase their revenue stream. The licensor also increase the awareness of the brand among a larger crowd and could if related with the correct markets increase its equity. One disadvantage though with licensing is that the licensor might lose control of their marketing mix. The producer might lower the price or sell products with the brand that has lower quality (Shank, 2005).

3.5.3 Merchandising

Merchandising in the sport business refers to when an owner of a brand (e.g. a sport brand) sell the right to use the brands trademark, for example logo and/or name. The most common way of doing this is through sponsorship and licensing agreements, as mentioned above. Merchandising licensing agreements allow the licensee to manufacture goods with a certain sport team's brand name, trademarks and logo (Rosner & Shropshire, 2004). The licensor (the team) are compensated with a royalty every time the licensed products are sold. The licensee

(e.g. Adidas, Nike, Reebok) reason for using merchandising agreements are to derive benefits from the team's goodwill that will enhance the perceived quality and value of the licensee's goods (ibid).

3.6 Sport integrated marketing communication mix

Regardless of the size or motivation of a company it has to use marketing communication. With the current noisy market the communication have to be well targeted and have a clear message to the customer. During the beginning of the 21st century the communication mix has become more integrated to get a clearer message across. The different parts of marketing communication is; *advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing* (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Fill (2006) defines marketing communication as:

“Marketing communication is a management process through which an organization seeks to engage with various audiences. To accomplish this, the organization develops, presents and evaluates a series of messages, which it sends to and receives from its different audiences. The objective of this process is to (re)position the organization and its offerings in the minds of particular audiences and in doing so encourage the development of relationships that are of mutual value.”

(Fill, 2006, p 8.)

The traditional integrated marketing communication mix creates a foundation for the “Sport integrated marketing communication mix” that differs in some aspects. The traditional mix is designed to enhance the sales and result in transactions. Sport integrated marketing mix has the intention to engage people in sports, which makes some parts of the usual marketing mix inadequate when the activities is based on that ambition (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Furthermore Beech & Chadwick (2007) provides a model from Irwin et al (2002) which specifies on sport marketing:

Relationship building and management
Advertising
Publicity
Personal contact

Incentives
Atmospheric
Licensing
Sponsorship

Figure 4: Sport integrated marketing communication mix (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, p 223)

Relationship building and management has been developed during the last couple of years and is divided into two parts; Relationship marketing and Customer Relationship Marketing. When an interaction is based on marketing incentives it can be labeled as relationship marketing and Beech & Chadwick (2007) argues that relationships are vital for successful sport marketing. When it comes to sport loyalty, tradition and emotions plays a large part and it is more common than in any other market. Supporters attract family and friends to the brand through season after season, this is a loyalty that other organization never going to get. Even though the supporters most likely will not change their supporting team they might reduce their attendance at games and shopping of merchandise if they feel mistreated by the club. By listening to the supporters and what they want the clubs can increase these numbers and create a better relationship with the supporters (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

Advertising provides the sport organization with attention, global width and the ability to reach out with persuasive messages, which makes it the most popular tool of communication. Advertising has though decreased because of the expansion of other tools, but also the high cost for sending messages has influenced it. Advertising is an exceptional way to create brand awareness and brand loyalty, by using it in the right way a noticeable change of behavior among consumers will be seen. Furthermore Beech & Chadwick (2007) uses a definition to better describe what advertising is, the definition is taken from Duncan (2005):

“Advertising is non-personal, paid announcements by an identified sponsor. It is used to reach large audiences, create brand awareness, help differentiate a brand from its competitors, and an image of the brand.

(Beech & Chadwick, 2007, p 225)

The advertising is paid for and the consumers are exposed through it by press or broadcasting media. In excess of this advertising could also be stadium signage, main sponsor of a match day or the game guide for example. Another advertising ability is the clubs own webpage in which the clubs can create a place for the long-distance supporter and people can buy

merchandise from it. Some advantages with internet advertising brought up are for example flexibility, currency and cost effectiveness (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

Publicity brings managed information to the consumer in a way that they understand, this has to be done properly otherwise the consumer feels deluded. A sport organization often has limited financial resources which make publicity important. To get good publicity the clubs has to have excellent media relationships, to be able to get the journalists to write adequate and accurate press. The local journalists are especially important to have good relations with because this media is crucial for the club to maintain the local fan base (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

Personal contact can be connected to the personal selling part in the usual marketing mix, as been said before sales are not always the intention when working with sport marketing. In sports the personal connection can be higher valued than an actual sale. The connection between customer and the sport organization needs a human element and that develops through the personal contact. One way of doing this is to arrange meetings in which the customers get the chance to meet the players. This event also creates an interest among younger fans which is important (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

Incentives can be described as the sales promotion component that has been altered into the sport marketing business. Incentives incorporate all aspects that could give the sport organization an open response. These aspects might be; emotional, social, psychological, functional or financial. To be able to use this in the right way the sport marketer needs to understand what motivates the supporters and how they behave (Beech & Chadwick, 2007). Furthermore Irwin et al (2008) explains that most incentives are based on reduced prices, giveaways, free samples and so on. There could be different ways to attract different people to see a game, and where they see it. For example people who attend the games might be interested in fireworks, celebrity appearances and similar, on the contrary people watching the game through the television broadcast might be interested in commentary and real live statistics (Irwin et al, 2008).

Atmospherics bases on the surroundings in which the purchase probably will be completed. This area has to appeal to the customer both behavioral and emotional. Including factors in the area are posters, displays, signs and other promotional material that affects the customer. Unique with the sport market is that the consumption and the production of the service

realizes at the same time. The atmosphere in a sport event cannot be compared to any other service being sold which makes it special (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

Licensing is one of the fastest growing aspects in the sport integrated marketing communication mix and might already be the number two revenue stream in sport. When using teams' or leagues' brand in an organizations advertising it will create customer awareness and identification. Licensing also creates profitability through a second part that pays to use the teams' brands, which can be compared with the "royalty"-system (Irwin et al, 2008).

Sponsorship is the newest factor within the marketing mix and sponsorship has become a very large part of the mix. Irwin et al (2008) argues that sponsorship could even contain all the other parts within the mix, the authors exemplifies this with; "*arena signage (advertising); event, team, or facility naming rights (publicity); hospitality (personal contact and atmospherics); retail promotional sales (incentives); and event, team or league cobranding (licensing)*". Corporate brands have recognized that by using sport sponsorship the organization could gain advantages and hopefully capture some of the supporter's loyalty (Irwin et al, 2008).

3.7 Summery

The research focus lies in increasing the revenues of the Swedish football clubs in Allsvenskan. To understand the different aspects in the theoretical framework a model has been created. This model will also be used as a tool to enhance the analysis in the end of the research.

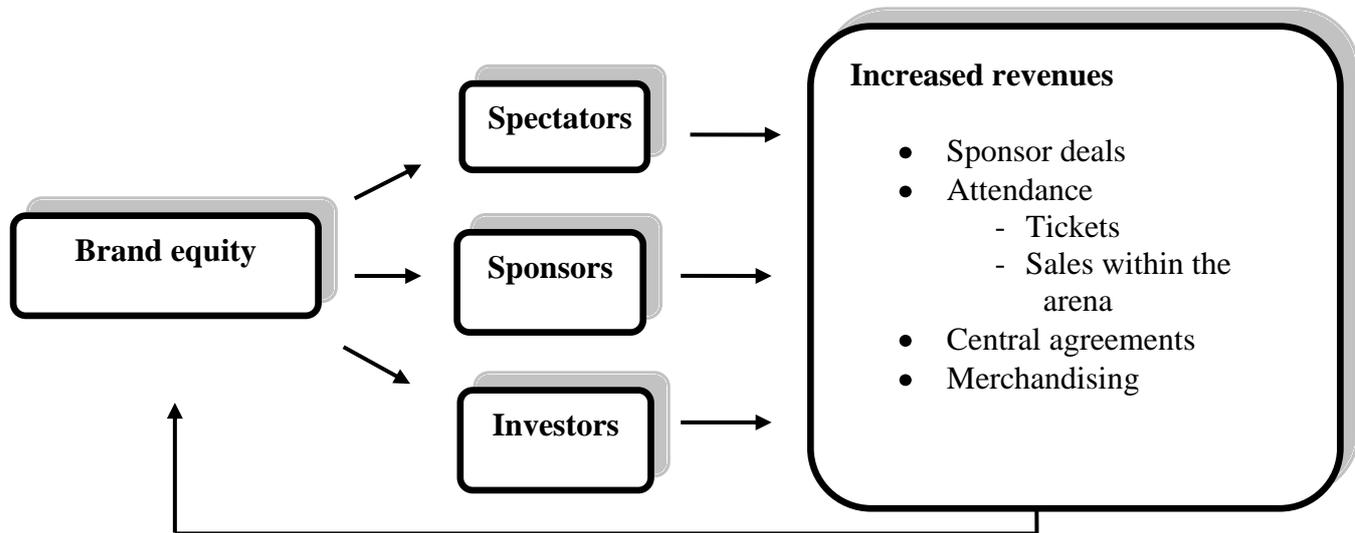


Figure 5: Revenue increasing model for football clubs (Karlsson & Skännestig, 2011)

The model explains that high brand equity influence the different stakeholders of a football club in different ways. According to the theory brand equity are based on perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty. By enhancing these factors the brand equity will be higher.

The brand equity influences the stakeholders which consist of spectators, sponsors and investors. When having high brand equity the stakeholders will be more attracted to the specific brand and see possible benefits by creating a relationship to the brand. Ultimately this will lead to value for both the brand and the stakeholder.

When creating this relationship the club can increase their revenues by the different factors mentioned in increased revenues. The factors mentioned are sponsor deals, attendance, central agreements and merchandising

The increased revenues then affect the brand equity because with larger sponsors new sponsors that want to be a part of the network might arrive. When fans buys merchandise the brand gets more visible and also the loyalty with the brand is strengthened.

4. Empirical study

The empirical study aims to provide an overview of the findings gathered from the interviews. The section will start with a presentation of the respondents. Thereafter the respondents' answers are divided under following concepts; Swedish football clubs sport marketing, revenue model for Swedish football clubs, stakeholders in Allsvenskan, brands within Allsvenskan and marketing tools.

4.1 Presentation of respondents

As mentioned before, five face-to-face interviews have been conducted with four different clubs and the Chairman of the Swedish Football Association. In addition to this an e-mail interview with a professor in sport has been performed. Below is a short introduction of the people involved in the empirical study.

- **Lars-Åke Lagrell, Chairman of the Swedish Football Association**
- **Svante Samuelsson, Club Executive Kalmar FF**
- **Krister Eriksson, Club Executive IFK Norrköping**
- **Barbro Bengtsson, Marketing Executive Trelleborgs FF**
- **Jörgen Martinsson, Club Executive Mjällby AIF**
- **Sten Söderman, Professor Stockholm University, School of Business**

4.2 Swedish football club's sport marketing

4.2.1 Types of marketing

IFK Norrköping uses three different parts in their marketing to increase the knowledge of the organization. Krister Eriksson explains that newspaper, television advertising and radio commercials are the best channels to market IFK Norrköping. To increase the success rate of the campaign they use players in these activities. Television advertising is on a local level and mostly before games to increase the attendance. Barbro Bengtsson from Trelleborgs FF argues that their most important marketing activity is relationship building with existing partners. One way to do this is to invite them to play football with Trelleborgs FF just for fun. Bengtsson believes that social media is very important to attract a younger crowd, but also to get new messages out fast. Today Trelleborgs FF uses both Facebook and Twitter in their marketing. They have also returned to usual posters to increase the interest before games. Kalmar FF also uses Facebook to increase the interest of certain events. Svante Samuelsson discuss that Kalmar FF have become more prepared and educated in their marketing this year. They use a lot of new knowledge in how to handle different campaigns and where to market themselves. One example of this is that before a game they enclosure the game guide in the local newspaper to increase the readers awareness of that a game is coming up. Jörgen Martinsson explains that Mjällby AIF uses a lot of different aspects in their marketing. They use Twitter and Facebook as well as many others, but mostly traditional marketing. Before a game they advertise through newspapers, internet and posters. Another important aspect for them is their partners, who often are invited to watch the games together with their partners. The interviewed football clubs use the similar marketing techniques except from some minor changes.

4.2.2 Players and profiles in marketing

Profiles connected to the club and players are something that all the clubs use in their marketing activities. Samuelsson talks about the individual players' parts in marketing the club and how they work. He argues that all players cannot shine all the time in newspapers and similar media. Samuelsson continues by saying that Kalmar FF try to use their players as much as possible when they attend to certain events and in sponsor advertising. Even though there has to be a balance to what players can and cannot do when it comes to serving the sponsors. Some of Kalmar FF's players have their own blogs which they work with during

their spare time. Samuelsson believes that this allows the supporter to get to know the players better and creates a larger interest around Kalmar FF. Samuelsson continues and declare that they often take the chance to visit TV-shows or similar activities to increase the interest around Kalmar FF. For example Nanne Bergstrand (Kalmar FF's head coach) was attending Viasat Sports' show about the Champions League recently. Mjällby AIF uses their players in a similar way with sponsor activities, the head-coach also performs lectures at corporate gatherings and talks a lot about leadership and how to create success. Martinsson says that they also use former Athletics coach Agne Bergvall (employed fitness-coach) who is very well-known for coaching Carolina Klüft (Swedish athlete).

Barbro Bengtsson discuss that players in Trelleborgs FF have different sponsors on the back of their game jerseys. She explains that it is important that the players are familiar with the company on their back and therefore she present them to the specific company. Trelleborgs FF also use their players at corporate gatherings and games played against the sponsors.

4.2.3 Relationships

4.2.3.1 Media relationships

An important aspect is the media according to Lagrell. He believes that if the clubs from Stockholm are successful they get more publicity and so does the rest of Allsvenskan, this creates larger attendances at the arenas. The national media is more focused on the larger teams from the Swedish capital, the reason for this is according to Lagrell that there are more people in those areas and the papers want to sell as many copies as possible. The relationship with media is very important and can be used to send a message, according to all respondents. Eriksson argues that media is a good way to increase the interest in players and explained that he talks with media about three times each day. In order to nurture the relationship with media and increase the benefits from it this is an important aspect. Jörgen Martinsson argues that a lot of media exposure makes it easier for the sales department to sell arena spots or game jersey advertising spots. Martinsson explains that Mjällby AIF works a lot with media and has an open approach to them. The benefits of being open to media, according to Martinsson, are that in some cases they angle articles to benefit Mjällby AIF. Bengtsson believes that media in some aspects are their window to the public and it is very important to have an open relationship with them. Trelleborgs FF allow media to enter the locker room after the games, just to give a nuanced picture. Svante Samuelsson agrees with the others and believes that it is beneficial to have an open relationship and be available to media. Furthermore Samuelsson

argues that it is a balancing act with the personal life, the relationship building with media should not overcome the personal life.

4.2.3.2 Relationships with supporters

Martinsson argues that because Mjällby AIF is such a “small-town”-club they do not have to use relationship building as much with the supporters. The supporters are often sponsors, former player, youth coaches and friends, which means that they already have a relationship with them. Mjällby AIF is a small club and the supporters are at the club house all the time and it is not a problem, if they want something or need something they just talk to Martinsson. IFK Norrköping, as a larger club, believes that to build good relationships with the supporters they have to feel benefits from being a member of IFK Norrköping. Eriksson discuss benefits and how they could improve the numbers of members in IFK Norrköping. He argues that these benefits could be for example discount in certain stores in Norrköping. The discount should of course be in their sponsors’ stores, so they can derive the benefits. These benefits are something that Barbro Bengtsson also discusses. When people under 18 years old buy a membership in True Blues (Trelleborgs FF’s fan club) they automatically get a season ticket in the standing sections at Trelleborgs FF’s home games. By doing this Bengtsson argues that they create growth in their fan-base in the early ages. Another way to improve the relationship with the supporters is to let official supporter club advertise for free both on Trelleborgs FF’s webpage but also in the game guide. Samuelsson agrees with Bengtsson that the fan-base has to get growth from the younger crowd and Kalmar FF has created a “family-package” which means that one parent could buy a season ticket and gets season tickets for their children at much discounted prices.

4.2.3.3 Relationship with sponsors

Eriksson believes that in order to build a long-lasting relationship with the sponsors there have to be a dialog between the club and each company. The companies do not have the same demands and therefore the club should not offer different standard solutions. Eriksson argues that the best way to keep and nurture the relationship between the club and a company is to tailor made every deal to suit the wants and needs of the company. Bengtsson also talks about the importance of relationships and that a deal cannot be a standard solution. The sponsors have to feel that they get what they want otherwise they can choose not to be a part of the club.

“Just because you have signed a three year deal you can’t just send the bill and then forget about the relationship. That would be a deadly sin.” – Barbro Bengtsson (translated by us)

The relationship is very important and Bengtsson feels that sometimes a longer deal could be good. But it could also be dangerous if the relationship between Trelleborgs FF and the sponsor is forgotten. Martinsson explain that Mjällby AIF try to nurture sponsors more than supporters, one example is the upcoming international game between Sweden and Netherlands. Mjällby AIF has arranged tickets for the sponsors including flight to Stockholm, a hotel visit, interesting lectures and of course the game. Kalmar FF also creates these kinds of events for their sponsors according to Samuelsson. They usually arrange sponsor trips to one of Kalmar FF's away games. Earlier they have also arranged a golf-competition for their sponsors, the prices were in the beginning mostly souvenirs and other merchandise. This year Samuelsson says that they have a lot more prices and for example the first price is a LED-TV. When making the prices more desirable they attract the decision makers of the companies to deepen their relationship and hopefully do business at the same time.

4.3 Revenue model for clubs within Allsvenskan

According to Lagrell the Swedish football association performed an investigation which concluded that the Swedish football clubs has to double their turn-over in order to increase their competitiveness. Lagrell explain that one important tool for increasing the turn-over is to invest money in new arenas. During a conference in 2001 with representatives from all clubs in Allsvenskan and the different districts in Swedish football the Swedish football association took a decision in principle concerning the arenas. It was decided that a new national football arena with a capacity of 50 000 spectators should be built. In addition to this they also came to an understanding of that all the arenas in Allsvenskan should be new. At the time Lagrell saw this as impossible but today this goal is almost reached. In addition to getting more attendance on the game day Lagrell argues that the clubs can generate money from restaurants, pubs, kiosks and company lounges. They can also rent out premises in the stadium to companies so they can generate revenues during non-game days as well.

When it comes to revenues from broadcasting rights the Swedish football association signed a deal a couple years back with the Swiss company Kentaro. This deal included three parts, the Swedish national team, Swedish Elite football (represent Allsvenskan and Superettan) and the Swedish women football elite organization. Kentaro has in turn sold these parts separately to other broadcasting companies and according to Lagrell the Swedish football association benefited from using Kentaro as an intermediary. He argues that Kentaro who work with buying and selling television rights on a daily basis know the hidden values in the television

market. Another reason is that it is easier to sell the television rights to other countries when using an intermediary.

It became evident during the interviews that the three most important revenue sources stem from sponsors, attendance and central agreements (e.g. television rights) from the Swedish football association. To exemplify this Svante Samuelsson explained that Kalmar FFs three most important revenue sources are attendance, sponsors and central agreements from the Swedish football association. When it comes to the central agreements from the Swedish football association Jörgen Martinsson explained that it is based on the clubs performance in the league. Even though the clubs most important revenue sources basically was the same, the clubs has different methods for maximizing them. In order to give a better overview of how the different clubs works with them they will be explained separately, starting with sponsors.

4.3.1 Sponsors

In order to maximize the revenues from sponsors all the respondents believes that it is important to create strong relationships as mentioned before, but the clubs has different ways for creating them. Barbro Bengtsson explains that Trelleborgs FF does not have premade packages that sponsors can chose between. Instead Bengtsson customize each sponsor deal for each sponsor. Even though this is more time consuming and require more work it generates more money to Trelleborgs FF. By having a discussion and working out a certain solution that suits Trelleborgs FF's customer it many times lead to extra money and satisfaction for their customer. IFK Norrköping also works with tailor made packages for the sponsors and argues that it is important that the customer gets what he/she wants.

Unlike Trelleborgs FF and IFK Norrköping, Kalmar FF sell premade packages to their sponsor according to Samuelsson. In order to inform and educate the sponsors about what they gain by being a sponsor for Kalmar FF, the marketing and sales department introduced a new and improved sales material. Instead of just offer a price catalogue of what the different packages consisted of the new sales material aims to tell the "Kalmar FF story". In addition to explaining the different packages and prices, the new material explains what Kalmar FF stands for. The sales material highlights the work with the youth teams, talented players Kalmar FF has developed, the new arena and information about what media have written about Kalmar FF. By providing a story about Kalmar FF, rather than just hard numbers, Samuelsson believe that Kalmar FF are more attractive for the sponsors today and something they want to be associated with. Martinsson explain that Mjällby AIF has around 500

different sponsors, which is quite much. But instead the sponsors they have are rather small, which is the reason for the large number of partners. However, the amount of partners is something that Mjällby AIF, according to Martinsson, has to work with. Instead of having many sponsors they want fewer that are willing to invest more money.

4.3.2 Attendance

When it comes to the revenues generated from the attendance it can be divided into two parts; *arena tickets* and *sales within the arena* (e.g. pub, kiosk, restaurant). When it comes to arena tickets the clubs work in a similar way but their prerequisite differ very much. The most obvious difference is the amount of seat tickets available for the fans in the different arenas. Samuelsson explained that Kalmar FF have one section of the stadium earmarked for families. In this section of the arena tickets are cheaper and if a parent buy season ticket the cost for the child are around 300 SEK. By having this approach Samuelsson believes it is easier for families to watch football games together and in the long run it creates new fans that like to watch live-football. IFK Norrköping also has a section in the stadium earmarked for families where the ticket price is cheaper. In order to increase the share of season tickets in the new arena Kalmar FF made it possible for the fans to make monthly payments.

Trelleborgs FF have a similar approach for creating new fans as Kalmar FF. They offer supporters younger than 18 years old free standing ticket for the whole season if they are members in the official fan club True Blues. According to Martinsson Mjällby AIF are limited when it comes to the revenues generated from arena tickets, because of the low number of seating tickets in the arena. He made a comparison with Kalmar FF who had similar overall average attendance last year in their old arena (Fredriksskans), but they generated more money than Mjällby AIF because they had more seat tickets. Mjällby AIF constantly works with how they could increase the revenues generated from the arena. However, today Mjällby AIF has a plan for how to improve the facilities around Strandvallen until 2014.

When it comes to sales within arena the clubs use different approaches. Trelleborgs FF and Kalmar FF have decided to outsource the operation of the kiosks and restaurants. Trelleborgs FF lease the kiosks from the municipality because they do not own their arena (Vångavallen). According to Bengtsson their organization cannot handle to operate these activities themselves, which is the reason for outsourcing. However, Trelleborgs FF gets revenues from the leasing agreement with the contractor who runs the kiosks. As mentioned before Kalmar FF also outsources the operation of the kiosks and restaurants, but the difference between

Kalmar FF and Trelleborgs FF is that Kalmar FF owns their arena (Guldfågeln Arena). Kalmar FF has signed a rental agreement with a local company called Rasta which implies that they pay turnover rent to Kalmar FF. In this agreement Rasta are responsible for the whole conference part including everything connected to the arena; kiosks, lounges, pub, conference rooms and so on. This agreement applies both when Kalmar FF plays games and non-game days. According to Samuelsson the conference aspect have got a good start. Kalmar FF is however responsible for the operation of the member's pub and the supporters' shop. The member's pub is only open for members in Kalmar FF. Samuelsson explains that the number of member increased dramatically with the new arena, and he think the reason for this is that the supporters' want to drink beer when watching football. The main reason for outsourcing to Rasta was, according to Samuelsson, that Kalmar FF as an organization did not have the knowledge necessary for operating kiosk and restaurants in an efficient way. Rasta both has knowledge in the food industry and a broad range of products. In addition to this Rasta are also responsible for all the administrative and personal cost.

In contrast to Trelleborgs FF and Kalmar FF Mjällby AIF are responsible for all the sales that take place in the arena (Strandvallen). They operate the kiosks, restaurant and supporter shop by themselves with their own workforce. The facilities in Strandvallen are limited and therefore Mjällby AIF uses a tent as their restaurant on the game day. Just as Trelleborgs FF Mjällby AIF rent Strandvallen from the municipality but the differences is, as mentioned above, that they handle the operation of the sales in the arena themselves. IFK Norrköping on the other hand has a separate company called Parken Event & Arena AB which is responsible for the sales in the arena.

4.3.3 Central agreements

The Swedish football association has several central agreements with different stakeholders that pay money to be associated with Swedish football. According to Lagrell the two biggest monetary stakeholders in Allsvenskan are Kentaro and Svenska Spel. The Swedish football association sold the television rights for Swedish football to Kentaro, which in turn have sold it to another customer. The other big stakeholder is Svenska Spel who is Allsvenskans biggest sponsor. Besides these two big agreements there are some minor agreements with Aftonbladet, Scandic and Posten just to mention a few. The revenues generated from these agreements are then divided between teams in Allsvenskan. According to Martinsson the agreement consist of 7-8 parts, where some are based on performance. In other words the amount the clubs, in Allsvenskan, get from the central agreements is partly dependent on how

well they perform in the league. According to Lagrell the Swedish football association has also introduced audience bonuses which imply that the clubs will be economically compensated if they meet certain attendance results.

4.3.4 Revenue maximizing during game day

All the clubs had similar ideas for maximizing the revenues during game day from kiosks, restaurants and supporter shops. They talked about the importance of rationalize each transaction, shorten the lines and have the “right” supply in order to serve as many customers as possible. Eriksson told us that IFK Norrköping had two seating’s in their restaurant during game day and that they constantly worked with improving the logistics. Samuelsson had similar reasoning and told us that it is important to have wide cabinets, even prices and a fast cash register to decrease the feeling of long lines. One other way for increasing the speed of each transaction, that Kalmar FF uses, is cash registers that have an integrated credit card terminal, which mean that the cashier only has to register the amount once. In the new arena (Guldfågeln Arena) the kiosks are placed so the spectators can watch the game from the line. In addition to the regular supporter shop Kalmar FF have a mobile supporter shop during game day which is used to sell souvenirs in the arena.

4.3.5 New revenue opportunities

In addition to the traditional revenue sources mentioned above Martinsson explained that Mjällby AIF constantly searching for new ways of generating incomes. They focus a lot on revenue opportunities that is not dependent on Mjällby AIFs success on the pitch. Mjällby AIF has a couple projects which generate passive incomes on a regular basis where companies use their brand name for sending out messages. One example is a project called “the Olympic challenge” that Mjällby AIF has together with a company called Athleticum and Swedish Olympic Committee which is quite unique. Together they offer health maintenance packages to both small and big companies and for every new agreement Mjällby AIF receives a commission fee. Agne Bergvall (employed by Mjällby) is an important part in the project because of his broad experience as a fitness coach.

Eriksson told us that IFK Norrköping looked at different ways for both reinforcing the value of watching the games live and increasing the revenues through new media and technical solutions. One example he mentioned was letting the spectators decide the game’s best players. Just as in big TV-shows the spectators decide who the best player of the match is

through text-message. For each message the club will generate revenues and at the same time the fans gets more involved.

4.4 Stakeholders in Allsvenskan

4.4.1 Supporters

The most important stakeholder in Allsvenskan according to Lagrell is the audience, without them there would not be any games at all. All audience is not always good though, sometimes small sections of the supporters scare other supporters from attending the games. He adds, in the arenas this is not a problem because the clubs can handle it there, but on the way to the games there could be a violent atmosphere, especially in derbies. In some cases the claque sections bad use of language prevent families from attending the games, because the parents do not want their children to learn that kind of language. According to Lagrell this might become a problem when the clubs feels like this kind of supporter will be too expensive. The clubs lose too much revenue from supporters that chose to watch the game from home. Martinsson argues that because of the small scale of their club they do not have an issue with this type of supporter otherwise than the away team supporters in some cases.

Today the supporters have more demands and needs for the game to be more than just a game. Lagrell explains that to increase the sales of season tickets the clubs should arrange so that two friends could have season tickets next to each other and similar arrangements. To improve the clubs work with this the Swedish Football Association gives, as mentioned before, an audience bonus to the clubs. So it is very important to make an event of the game to attract people not so interested in the game such as a restaurant where they can eat and socialize while the game is going on. Samuelsson agrees with the arguments that Lagrell has and argues that it is important to offer the audience a package of food and drinks when attending games. To attract a crowd that not usually goes to football this is very important and Samuelsson hopes that the games will become a place to meet people and socialize, not just watch the games. An important aspect of the new arena in Kalmar is the restaurants and the different pubs within it argue Samuelsson. This makes the game more attractive to people not so interested in just football. Another concept that Kalmar FF develops is the activities not attached to the game itself. One example mentioned is to invite make-up artists to lecture women about make-up and how to use it before the game. Afterwards they dine at the restaurant and watch the game together.

Bengtsson also uses events to attract a specific crowd, one example is that Trelleborgs FF work in association with Swedish stock association and invites stock interested people to dine and watch football. Since Trelleborgs FF do not own their arena they have a hard time creating events around the arena, which is a problem according to Bengtsson. They have though a restaurant tent which serves food to their sponsors and their customers. IFK Norrköping owns their arena and offers different alternatives for their supporters such as two different restaurants and pubs. Eriksson has the same ideas as Kalmar FF when it comes to attracting not so football interested people to the arena. To offer dining and drinking in connection to the games is a way to attract them. Eriksson also adds that this is something that the Swedish clubs has to improve, look at the American arena sport and how well they have developed events.

“Look at American arena sport, it is fantastic what they have achieved. You don’t have to watch the game you will be entertained anyway” – Krister Eriksson (Translated by us)

One thing all the clubs agree upon is that the achievement on the pitch is what really matter in the end. If the club is performing well the attendance to the games will increase. Bengtsson explained that more people showed up in the arena during the fall season last year because of the fact that the team was doing so well. When challenging for a higher position in the table people wants to follow their team more closely.

4.4.2 Sponsors

As mentioned before to increase the revenues of the clubs in Allsvenskan one part is to get favorable sponsorship deals according to Sten Söderman. He believes that this part is somewhat the best part to increase the revenues. Kalmar FF has worked a lot with this and how to increase the revenues from the sponsors. Samuelsson says that this year they had a trip to Milano with 45 of their sponsors just to get a feeling of a business network. To get the chance to join this trip the company has to be on a certain level. Samuelsson argues that knowing the perks of being at a certain level of sponsoring helps to create new sponsors but also increase many of the already existing companies’ commitment. Samuelsson also believes that today the sponsors need something more than before, the clubs have to give something back to the sponsors. As mentioned before Mjällby AIF has about 500 sponsors according to Martinsson, this is a large number, unfortunately they have no larger sponsors and this is a problem for them. Martinsson says that because there is no headquarters in their region there are no larger sponsors. Mjällby AIF is a small club so Martinsson feels that in some way they

are glad to be connected to smaller companies that struggle in the same way that Mjällby AIF does. This is though something that Mjällby AIF need to improve according to Martinsson, instead of having a lot of sponsors they need to have fewer but bigger. The reason for this is according to Martinsson that Mjällby AIF is pretty new in Allsvenskan and will have to adapt to their level, which will be a challenge.

Bengtsson argues that the best way to increase the revenues from sponsors is to work with relationships. Relationship with sponsors is not bound to results on the pitch. The personal connections could be negative according to Bengtsson, if she stops working for Trelleborgs FF some of the sponsors might leave as well just because of the personal relationship. The personal relationship could also help if one sponsor wants to leave, a discussion about what the sponsor wants could easily change their mind according to Bengtsson. IFK Norrköping works a lot with relationships as well. According to Eriksson there have been some problems during the last few years with sponsorship deals and how to handle the sponsors. Now they have a new organization and it feels like a brand new start for IFK Norrköping says Eriksson. The club has to think outside and in instead of reversed, it is important to see what IFK Norrköping can offer the sponsors instead of what the sponsors has to offer IFK Norrköping Eriksson continues. Today it is important to think that way and Eriksson usually gives the sponsors a lot of other benefits a part from their logo placed somewhere. IFK Norrköping has to become a partner that companies want to be connected to, this creates both new sponsors and a higher price for the already existing.

4.4.3 Investors

Lagrell talks about the unique Swedish restriction which implies that Swedish sport organizations have to own 51 percents of the votes in an annual meeting of shareholders. Other countries like Denmark and Norway do not have this rule and restriction for their football clubs. Therefore Lagrell believes that it will be impossible to not corporatize Swedish football some day. By keeping this restriction Lagrell sees some dangers, venture capitalists will exist with or without the restriction. If Riksidrottsförbundet let the clubs corporatize then the capital will be closer to the clubs. Today venture capitalist has to keep their distance from the clubs, which mean that they at any given time can leave with capital they gained from transfers. The clubs are scattered in the matter and believe that there are both positive and negative aspects. Eriksson says that it depends on what tax rules and other restrictions that will be applied to it. Otherwise he is carefully positive to a corporatization. Trelleborgs FF on the other hand believes that without the restriction Swedish football will slowly die.

Most of the clubs do not have investors to help them with transfers and similar activities. Mjällby AIF does have a venture capital to help them invest in the squad. Martinsson explains that the venture capital comes from ten long time supporters of Mjällby AIF. Mjällby AIF got 3 million SEK to invest in players and bought, among others, Dusan Melichárek (goalkeeper). He was later sold to Malmö FF, which made venture capitalists increase their invested capital. Martinsson declare it is very unusual that venture capitalists within football get more capital back than what they invested. Most parts of that capital have though been re-invested in new players according Martinsson.

According to Samuelsson has Kalmar FF no venture capitalist or stock registered company connected to them. This means that they do not use investors to help them with specific transfers or such. Both Trelleborgs FF and IFK Norrköping has the same situations as Kalmar FF and do not use any investors in that sense.

4.5 Brands within Allsvenskan

According to Lagrell the most tradition-bound competition in Sweden is Allsvenskan. Allsvenskan gathers and influence many people in the Swedish society and many Swedes have their own favorite team. The values Allsvenskan want to transmit are entertainment, joy and an association for everyone. When it comes to increasing the interest for Allsvenskan and to raise the average attendance it is all about hard work. Lagrell argues that it is up to each club to attract fans to their arena. In order to stimulate the clubs to work hard locally with attracting fans to the arenas the Swedish football association has, as mentioned before, invested 8 million SEK in audience bonus. If the clubs meet certain attendance result, they will be economically compensated. According to Lagrell the bonus system is by far the most effective way for increasing the attendance, and the underlying reason for the increased attendance thus far this season.

Allsvenskan's marketing has shifted over the years, but most focus lies on the neighboring countries such as Norway, Denmark and Finland. The Swedish football clubs have a larger audience than the other countries which is positive according Lagrell. To handle the work with marketing abroad the Swedish association "Svensk Elitfotboll" and the Swedish football association works with increasing the quality of the football played in Sweden. The broadcasting rights also make it possible for Swedish football to be shown in most countries around the world. This is something that Sten Söderman also discusses, with increased quality of the game and the players, the interest of Allsvenskan will also increase. Lagrell continues

and argues that although these associations do some work, it is up to the clubs how well they market themselves. According to Lagrell the best way of increasing their revenues is to actually get people to the arena partly through offer the audiences more of an event instead of just a game of football.

The overall impression among the interviewed clubs is that they perceive themselves as professional. Furthermore they emphasize the importance of always being open to fans, media and sponsors. To increase the awareness of the brand, the clubs talked much about the importance of new social media such as Facebook, blogs and Twitter. The clubs also use traditional media locally, for example newspaper and posters, to spread information about games and other activities. In addition to this the clubs have co-operations with aid organizations, where the underlying purpose is to generate goodwill to their brand. The design of the co-operation varies but the common denominator is to associate the brand with a “good cause”. However, the respondents argue that the most important thing for creating awareness is to produce result. Kalmar FF, IFK Norrköping and Mjällby AIF have undergone organizational changes which will be explained more thorough below. To give a better picture each club will be explained separately, starting with Kalmar FF.

4.5.1 Kalmar FF

Kalmar FF wants to be perceived as a “family” that is open to both fans and media. Examples of this openness are that journalists are welcome in the locker-room after the games, a few of the players have blogs and Kalmar FF’s chancery is very open and available. Samuelsson explains that too much availability, in the chancery, can be negative for the organization because it is first and foremost a workplace, but he underlines that it is important to make people feel welcome. The foundation for Kalmar FF is to create a safe environment where the players can develop and become good football players. Samuelsson believes that it is important to keep a sense of humility in order to project the image of Kalmar FF as a “family”.

During the last year Kalmar FF has worked more consciously with increasing the awareness of their brand according to Samuelsson. They employed new staff members which have led to an entirely new mindset when it comes to the brand Kalmar FF. The new marketing manager Per Rosenqvist was previously the head of marketing at Hultsfredsfestivalen and he contributes with a new mindset. With Rosenqvist in charge Kalmar FF has started to think in terms of different segment, where to turn and to niche themselves. In other words how to

profile the brand and make it more apparent what it stands for. Kalmar FF also created a new visual identity which is included in everything they do. Samuelsson believes that Kalmar FF is perceived as more professional today than before, which partly depends on the new arena and employees.

According to Samuelsson clubs like Kalmar FF get nothing for free and due to this the blogs their players run are important for creating awareness about Kalmar FF. Samuelsson also discusses that Kalmar FF's brand benefits a lot from having players from their own ranks in squad, because they are very popular among the fans. When Kalmar FF won the championship 2008, their star players were three brothers (Elm) from Kalmar. Kalmar FF gained much publicity and exposure in media from the Elm brothers according to Samuelsson. Furthermore Samuelsson believes it is important for the local brand to have local players because it is appreciated among the fans.

Since a couple years back Kalmar FF has a co-operation with Erikshjälpen (aid organization) according to Samuelsson. Last year when Kalmar FF turned 100 years old they stood behind a project where 11 artist sold their work of art, the money gathered which was around 95 000 SEK was then donated to Erikshjälpen.

Svante Samuelsson discusses Kalmar FF's marketing abroad and clarify that they are bad on it. The only marketing done in other countries is when they have played the European cups, which they have done the last four years. Even though there is no particular marketing Samuelsson believes that the connections made by playing in Europe are very important through an athletic point of view.

4.5.2 IFK Norrköping

Eriksson explains that IFK Norrköping aims to provide a product to their partners that give them added value. In other words the foundation in the brand IFK Norrköping is professionalism and they want to be perceived as good businessmen. IFK Norrköping also changed some staff which led to a revival for the whole organization and to a new mindset. It is important that both IFK Norrköping and the sponsors reap benefits from the collaboration. Eriksson also believes that it is important to have soft values connected that brand that are not related to football in the collaboration. One example of this is that their partners could bring their business associates to IFK Norrköping's arena Nya Parken and make business there.

To increase the awareness of IFK Norrköping the most important thing is to create a good team according to Eriksson. The first step and top priority is to be an established team in Allsvenskan. IFK Norrköping does not perform any measurements on how popular they are in Sweden. However, they measure from where people that visit their website are and Stockholm has proven to be the second largest city after Norrköping.

IFK Norrköping has several different projects with BRIS, which is an organization that helps underprivileged children in the community. Eriksson believes it is important to be present in these areas, because then IFK Norrköping is seen as a good organization that cares.

Krister Eriksson argues that IFK Norrköping foremost has to focus on the closer regions such as the Östergötland-area and try to get audience from cities closer before trying to go abroad. More local marketing should be a priority for the smaller clubs feels Eriksson and underline that they have no focus on other countries and will continue with closer regions.

4.5.3 Mjällby AIF

Mjällby AIF has chosen to brand them as the “underdog” and this approach is based on the clubs history. According to Martinsson it should be impossible for Mjällby AIF to play football on this level based on the external and economical conditions, but despite this they have done it for over 30 years. By branding Mjällby AIF as the “underdog” they want to create an image of making the impossible possible. Martinsson explains that Mjällby AIF tries to find sponsors that identify themselves as an “underdog” as well. In addition to this Mjällby AIF wants to be perceived as available for fans, sponsors and journalists. A good example of how they try to fulfill this is that both the sport director Thomas Andersson Borstam and Martinsson always are available, which they get much credit for from the journalists.

In order to improve and increase the knowledge of the brand Mjällby AIF, they hired a new marketing manager with experience from high and leading positions in sales and marketing for large companies such as Coca-Cola. In addition to this the new marketing manger had experience from working non-profit labor in a Swedish hockey club. This was an important aspect for Mjällby AIF, due to the marketing manager’s experience of working in a sport organization.

Marketing abroad is an aspect that Martinsson discusses as well. Mjällby AIF has connections all over Europe when talking about players, their agents and other clubs. Mjällby AIF has though started to watch possible developing abilities in Denmark and Poland. Searching

sponsors and getting them to invest in the club could be their possible activities in these countries when arriving there.

4.5.4 Trelleborgs FF

Trelleborgs FF want to be perceived as club that are safe, joyful, available and open for everyone. According to Bengtsson it is important for Trelleborgs FF that everyone with interest in the club feels involved. A clear example of this is that Trelleborgs FF has meetings with the fans twice each year, before the season and after. Bengtsson explained that they are very careful with their brand and how they use it and the brand is protected in several ways. Bengtsson believes that sponsors perceive Trelleborgs FF as a very professional business partner that honors their commitments.

Bengtsson explains that Trelleborgs FF's website is an important tool for creating awareness about the brand. One good initiative according to Bengtsson, which she pushed for, is that there should be a top bar at the top of their website where every team in Allsvenskan is included. Furthermore Bengtsson believe that it is essential to use new modern media such as Facebook and twitter to attract the younger generation because it is the most effective way to send out information. In addition to this Bengtsson underline the importance of carefully choosing how to spread the brand Trelleborgs FF, otherwise their brand could be perceived in the wrong way.

“Going abroad right now would be like climbing the Mount Everest without any experience at all.” – Barbro Bengtsson (translated by us)

Bengtsson thinks that market themselves in Denmark or any other country would be reaching for too much. She argues that there is no point going abroad if the club does not have longer experience of playing the European tournaments. Therefore, at the moment, this discussion is not relevant for Trelleborgs FF.

Trelleborgs FF have a big project with the municipality called “Young future in Trelleborg” where they help young people between the age of 16-24 years that in some way has fallen out of the social system. It could be that they have dropped out of high school or that they for some reason are unemployed. Bengtsson explain that Trelleborgs FF use their network to help them back in the system by providing them with internships or actual jobs. There are over sixty people involved in the project and twelve of them have been handed internship and four got a permanent position. Trelleborgs FF has also a co-operation with a school where children

between 5-12 years are invited to play football, a so called “football youth leisure centre”. Bengtsson hope that they can include more schools in this co-operation in the future.

4.6 Marketing tools for the Swedish football clubs

4.6.1 Arena

The Swedish clubs has different abilities in their arena, depending on if they own the arena or not. IFK Norrköping and Kalmar FF currently own their arenas and can work free with developing revenues from using it. Mjällby AIF and Trelleborgs FF rents the arena from the municipality that the arena is placed in, this means that there are some differences in ability to use it. According to Bengtsson they can only use the arena during their home-game days, other days they only rent the chancery for the staff. As mentioned earlier Trelleborgs FF use a restaurant-tent for their sponsors and their clients to dine in. Bengtsson explains that they want areas such as conference-rooms to increase the interest at the arena and versatile the usage of it. Lagrell discuss the same topic and argues that the arenas are very important for increasing the revenues in Allsvenskan, but also for the quality of the games played. The Swedish football association took a decision in 2001, as mentioned before, that there should be new arenas in all clubs in Allsvenskan. According to Lagrell new arenas can increase the clubs revenues and they can more easily keep important players and the overall interest of the league will increase.

IFK Norrköping owns their arena and can offer a variety of different revenue building activities. Some example made by Eriksson is conference-rooms, two restaurants, lounges and pubs. IFK Norrköping also has a training facility next to the arena, this facility is called Teknikhallen. Eriksson explains that Teknikhallen can be rebuilt and used for many kinds of events such as venues, exhibition halls and similar activities. This is in line with Eriksson’s idea of how to attract not so football interested people. He argues that to attract those people the club has to offer something else, they should want to come to the arena for other purposes than football. To increase the revenues during the game IFK Norrköping works a lot with the logistics, examples made by Eriksson is two seating in the restaurants, easy sold products and keeping the purchase price low. Martinsson also talks about the aspect of logistics, in Mjällby AIF’s case they talk about the kiosks and how to make people “buy and move”. The lines has to be shortened and it all has to go faster says Martinsson. Since Mjällby AIF does not own their arena they use a similar tent as Trelleborgs FF before the games for their sponsors. Martinsson explains that the coach comes down here before the game and talks about the

upcoming battle. Martinsson says that Strandvallen is an area in which Mjällby AIF has to improve and argues that it is the problem with having an old arena which they do not own.

Kalmar FF uses the similar strategies as IFK Norrköping when it comes to lounges and restaurants since they own their arena. The arena is newly built which has increased the interest from larger areas around Kalmar and this is something that has to be taken advantage of. According to Samuelsson it is important to have a lot of guided tours in the beginning to create awareness. This is something that Kalmar does in pure “good-will” purpose and therefore they do not charge for it. Lagrell also explains that the new arena probably has created a “buzz” around Kalmar FF in this area.

4.6.2 Sponsorship

According to Bengtsson sponsorships stand for one third of Trelleborgs revenues and due to this very important. Trelleborgs FF has names on their game jerseys, not in the ordinary spot though. Bengtsson explains that Trelleborgs FF cannot decline the revenues gained from that spot. Now they have placed the name across the ribs on the players, so they have their names and the sponsors have their spots. Another interesting aspect discussed by Bengtsson is that they use different sponsors on different players. To deeper the connection with the sponsors Bengtsson takes the players to their specific sponsor for a visit. All the other clubs interviewed has chosen not to have any name on their jersey, Eriksson answer shortly to why; “Money talks”. According to Samuelsson it is not worth to give away that sponsoring spot.

As mentioned before the relationship with the sponsors is very important and for example Bengtsson argues that by having a closer relationship the club can increase their revenues. When talking to Lagrell about licensing this was unknown to him, the clubs do not work with this type of revenue building in Sweden. Furthermore he said that the clubs receives no revenues from licensing in video-games for example.

4.6.3 Merchandising

Selling merchandise is not a large business for Kalmar FF according to Samuelsson. Last year they sold for almost 1 million SEK. As a business it is not very important for Kalmar FF, it is more a problem with the inventory that comes with ordering more than can be sold. Samuelsson argues though that people wearing their merchandise creates a culture around Kalmar FF as a brand and a club. Martinsson also talks about merchandising as something that has to be improved, last year they had sales on almost 500 000 SEK, he adds that three

years back it was only 100 000 SEK so it has improved a lot. Mjällby AIF sells merchandise next to their arena and also through their webpage.

Krister Eriksson discusses new ways of getting their merchandise out to the fans. IFK Norrköping is now working with getting their products in to all Stadiums in Östergötland and through this get more exposure of their products. In addition to this they also decrease their own warehouse management and similar problems.

4.6.4 Broadcasting rights

The current broadcasting rights were, as mentioned earlier, negotiated by the Swedish football association who hired Kentaro to help them get the results and the deal that they wanted. Lagrell continues and states that they tried to get a great broadcasting deal without Kentaro but was not able to and this is the reason for why Kentaro were hired. Kentaro also has a great interest in Swedish football according to Lagrell, with this new deal Swedish football can be shown in most countries in the world. Kentaro has a package with all their channels which gives people outside of Sweden the ability to watch Swedish football. Lagrell sees no possibility for this deal to be increased economically. The negotiations were very long because the Swedish elite football wanted more money than the broadcasting companies offered. The only ability to increase this is if a new broadcasting company arrives on the Swedish market and increase the competition between all of them according to Lagrell.

5. Analysis

The analysis is based on the theoretical concepts mentioned in the theoretical framework and the empirical findings from the empirical study. First the main theories will be presented and then the empirical findings will be connected and compared to them.

5.1 Sport Marketing

The theoretical framework addresses that it is hard to separate sport marketing from regular marketing. There are small differences between what is done in regular marketing from what is done in sport marketing. The clubs work a lot with traditional media, mostly campaigns close to game-day in local television and local newspapers. Difficulties in the sport marketing according to the theory are that marketers often face the problem of “marketing myopia”. The theory describes “marketing myopia” as the marketers getting stuck, for example having the belief that winning solves all problems, disregard competition from other activities than sport. Sport marketers also think in terms of quick return on investment instead of long term relationships. The clubs know some of these parts and address them. Both Trelleborgs FF and Mjällby AIF, who is smaller clubs, works with creating ways to get revenues not depending on their placement in the league. This is an aspect that the clubs could work a lot more with and develop, for example like Mjällby AIF who is providing health packages for companies. It is important for the clubs to increase both the revenues and brand knowledge collaterally with sport achievement.

The theory also mentions that sport as a product is hard to market since the feelings towards it are very subjective and it is produced and consumed at the same time. Positive aspects of that the product are closely connected to emotions and a cornerstone in the product is its uncertain outcome. The theory also argues that the sport customers are a part of producing the product. This could be used more often in the marketing and mostly before games against rivals or bigger teams. The teams work with increased marketing closer to game-day which is good, but no one hinted on the emotional aspects when discussing pre-game marketing.

5.2 Swedish revenue model for clubs within Allsvenskan

The theoretical framework implies that European football clubs revenue model has changed a lot during the last two decades. Before the clubs heavily relied on revenues from attendance, but today broadcasting rights and corporate sponsors are just as important. The revenue model presented in the theory relies on four pillars which often are complementary: *broadcasting*

media, sponsors, merchandising and attendance. During the empirical study it became apparent that Swedish football clubs revenue model have many similarities with the model presented in the theory, they main difference however is that merchandising barely exists. Instead the Swedish revenue model only consists of three pillars and they are *sponsors, attendance* and *central agreements*. From the interviews it was obvious that the clubs had different approaches for maximizing these revenue sources.

5.2.1 Sponsors

According to the theory sponsors main contribution is to provide monetary terms. Furthermore the sponsors could provide marketing resources and be helpful with improvements of the product. When it comes to the revenues generated from sponsors Trelleborgs FF and IFK Norrköping worked with customizing each deal after their sponsor's desire, while Kalmar FF mainly sold premade sponsor packages. By customizing every single sponsor deal the product will fit the customer's specific needs in a better way, which most certainly will lead to higher satisfaction. In addition to this it may also open up the possibility for additional sales during the negotiation process. The risk with using premade packages is that the offer may include parts that the customer does not need, which might lower the value for them. During the interview with Kalmar FF Svante Samuelsson explained that they had introduced a new sales approach towards the sponsors. The new approach implied that Kalmar FF inform and educate the sponsors about Kalmar FF. This is a very interesting and wise approach, because the sponsors then know what they invest their money in. By increasing the awareness of the brand, among the sponsors, they will feel more attached to club and the opportunity for creating a long-term relationship with them will enhance. As an effect of this the sponsors also might be willing to invest more money in the club.

5.2.2 Attendance

The theoretical framework explains that the spectators are the core asset for football clubs. The spectators buy the arena tickets, merchandises and they are also the target for broadcasters and sponsors. In the empirical study it became evident that revenues generated from attendance stem from two sources *arena tickets* and *sales within the arena*. In order to increase the attendance and thereby also the revenues from arena tickets the clubs has different approaches. Kalmar FF for instance offers the possibility to pay season ticket on a monthly basis. Fans who were unable to watch live-football before because they could not afford to pay a lump sum are now potential customers. Sales efforts such as this therefore extend the customer base, which most certainly will lead to an increased amount of season

tickets, as well as higher average attendance in general. Another interesting method for increasing the number of fans, discussed during the interviews, was the use of family sections in the arena. Kalmar FF and IFK Norrköping for example have certain sections earmarked for families where the prices are lower. The clubs gain in several aspects by providing a family section. Without this option the club might lose revenues due to loss of live-spectators. Fans with families might watch the game at home on the television instead of going to the arena because they cannot afford to bring the whole family. Even though the amount per ticket is lower in this section the club will generate money from sales within the arena. One other important aspect with the family section is that it is a great tool for creating the fans of tomorrow.

In the empirical study it was clarified that sales within the arena refer to revenues from kiosks, restaurants, pub and the supporter shop, in other words all sales in the arena. The operation of sales in the arena differed between the interviewed clubs. Kalmar FF and Trelleborgs FF outsourced the main part of the operation of sales in the arena, while IFK Norrköping and Mjällby AIF run the operation themselves. There are positive and negative aspects with both approaches. If the club uses rental agreements they will get a small percentage of the return. In addition to this it will be hard for them to increase the revenues through cost-effectiveness actions. However, the benefit with outsourcing the sales within the arena is that the club does not need to employ new personnel and they are guaranteed money for every transaction made. On the other hand if the club is responsible for the operation of sales they will have the opportunity to increase their return through different cost-effective actions. In addition to this they will also have a better control over how the personnel interact with the customers. If there is an intermediary the club will not be able to fire personnel that misbehave for example.

5.2.3 Central agreements

As presented in the theoretical framework the importance of television rights has increased enormously during the last decades. In addition to the financial contribution it also creates and delivers increased awareness for the sponsors. According to the respondents it is the Swedish football association who owns the television rights to Swedish football and they have sold them to a company called Kentaro. The revenues generated from the television rights and other central agreements are then divided by the Swedish football association to the clubs, which mean that the club cannot control them. For instance the clubs are compensated for how well they perform in the league and how much attendance they can attract. Which mean

that the only thing the clubs can do to increase their revenues from the central agreements are to perform well in the league and attract more fans to their arena.

5.3 Understanding the football stakeholder

The theory implies that it is important to create long-term revenues by creating relationships with the stakeholders. According to the theory the following aspects has to exist for a relationship to be created; intimacy, mutuality, trust and commitment. All the clubs tries to work with long-term relationships both with the sponsors and fans. The interviewed clubs argues that relationships with the stakeholders are very important. Furthermore the clubs believe that their relationship with the stakeholders is good.

5.3.1 Spectators

The football stakeholder can, according to the theory, be of different nature. The theory addresses three different types of fans; the diehard fans/high identification, fair-weather/medium identification and theatre goers/low identification fans. The clubs seems to be aware that these three parts exists within their fan base. The respondents discuss the ability to attract the theatre goers in larger scale than before because that is an area which has not been exploited well. The clubs agree that to get these types of fans to the arena the games has to be created more as an event. This event could for example contain half time entertainment from artists, local or national. When creating games to events the theatre goers will attend in a larger scale but also the fair-weather fans. To increase the attendance from the fair-weather fans the clubs has to use their players more in their marketing. According to the theory fair-weather fans attends games to watch a favorite player or team when they are successful. Trelleborgs FF agrees with this idea and exemplifies it with last year's increased amount of attendance during the fall when they were placed top five in the league. Since the clubs has a hard time keeping their top players they have to take advantage of their success while they are still in the club. Exploit these players as much as possible to increase interest with the fair-weather fans.

According to the theory the fans have different influencing factors for attending games. The theory takes up eight different aspects; self-esteem enhancement, diversion from everyday life, entertainment value, eustress, economic value, aesthetic value, need for affiliation and family ties. Lagrell argues that the entertainment value and the aesthetic value both are something that will be more important when the clubs have new arenas and the field will be better. The respondents also believe that the fields have to improve for the game to be better.

When the field is getting better the quality of the game might improve but the clubs also has to be able to keep the players for the quality to be improved. The clubs also have to work more in their marketing with the eustress moment of influencing factors, getting the fans to feel the arousal before games. As mentioned before some of the clubs has worked with family ties and made it easier and cheaper for them to go and watch the games together. The possibility to go and watch the games as a family increases which is a good way to interest both new spectators but also to getting fans more often to the arena.

5.3.2 Sponsors

The theory argues that sponsors are a very important revenue source to the football clubs. The club becomes a central part in a larger business network in which they all have connections with each other. Furthermore the theory argues that when connected to this type of business network the connected companies get a lot of indirect connections to other companies. Also if these connections are used in the correct way a higher value could be created for the end consumer. The theory also argues that the presence of larger companies in the network can both attract new companies but also contribute a lot to the network. The empirical study showed that creating a network is very important for all the clubs. The clubs agree that since this is one of the largest sources of income it has to be nurtured in the right way. By creating a brand that will attract sponsors the clubs can increase their revenues but also their attractiveness. IFK Norrköping works a lot with creating a beneficial environment for their partners. They feel that the network does not only serve IFK Norrköping and that is not the purpose. According to Eriksson the network should be built as a two-way street where both benefit from working with each other. If they can create cooperation it will be beneficial to the end customer (the fans). The clubs interviewed has almost the same attitude towards the sponsors and how to create a long-term relationship with them. The clubs uses meetings with all the sponsors, take them on trips and arrange tickets to both league and international games. This is something that the clubs are doing well, they treat the sponsors in a nurturing way for the relationship. In the relationship with the sponsors intimacy is built. They are both getting something out of the relationship so it has both mutuality and commitment.

5.3.3 Investors

According to the theory the funding structure for the clubs has been changed during the last decade, and this foremost concern the Premier League but also the rest of Europe. The structure of a football corporation cannot compete with the spending power and ability to access money as a private football firm. The ability to create an economically healthy

organization with good profitability is no longer important, the spending power will create an advantage in the industry either way. Lagrell says that this development is inevitable for the Swedish football clubs even though it will not happen in a close future. To create a competitive league larger capital has to arrive to the league to attract players but also to attract sponsors. To increase the clubs spending power the corporatization is very important. The development of this might take some years but if Allsvenskan wants to compete in Europe this is an important step. Some of the clubs are very negative to the idea and feels that this will destroy Swedish football, other clubs are positive. Mjällby AIF is the only one of the clubs interviewed using a venture capitalist to support them financially and they are so far positive with the usage of that system.

5.4 Brand equity for brands in Allsvenskan

According to the theory a brand includes more than its characteristics, the brand also involves the customer's perception of the brand. The theory also addresses that brand equity and explains it as positive and negative factors that either enhance or weakens customer's impression of a brand. In order to determine a sport brands equity the components used are *perceived quality, brand awareness, brand association and brand loyalty*. It became evident in the empirical study that the clubs have started to realize the value of having a strong brand. A clear indication of this is that three out of four interviewed clubs have undergone some kind of organizational change in the recent years on the marketing side. If a comparison is made between a sport brand and a normal brand one could see many similarities but there are also rather big differences. At the moment the interviewed clubs, consciously or unconsciously, work with many of the aspects that will be addressed by us in this section. In order to provide a deeper explanation of their effect on a clubs' brand each equity dimension will be explained more thorough, starting with perceived quality.

5.4.1 Perceived quality

The theoretical framework states that perceived quality refers to team-related aspects and success on the pitch. Star players or coaches can be used in different ways for increasing the perception of quality in a sport brand. The empirical study shows that the clubs are aware of the most basic elements for creating perceived quality such as success on the pitch and using players in different ways. The respondents explained that the players are used in many different occasions to market the clubs. For example, all clubs make their players available for advertising activities for their sponsors. Other typical examples provided in the empirical study are that individual player's blogs, coaches and/or players attend TV-shows and other

staff members are used in seminars or similar activities. It is evident that the interviewed clubs work with activities that enhance the perceived quality of their brand, but the question is: are they aware of the importance of these activities?

According to the theory sport organizations can also increase the perceived quality through peripheral elements of the game such as the arena, the quality of the game and merchandises provided to the fans. From the interviews it became apparent that the peripheral elements are something the Swedish clubs has to become better in. One really important aspect presented in the empirical data is that more and more clubs within Allsvenskan own their arenas. It is important that this development continues, because if the clubs can offer clean and safe arenas the spectators will get a better impression of the offered product (the game). If the clubs becomes better in providing the fans with merchandises their affiliation to the team might become stronger. In accordance with the theory these are activities that strengthen the fans perceived value of the brand.

5.4.2 Brand awareness

According to the theory brand awareness can be created through marketing activities such as promotional selling, sales promotion and advertising. Furthermore a buzz can be created around the organization by spreading information about player transaction, game schedule and community relations activities just to mention a few. In addition to this the theory implies that it is important to have a good relation with media representatives, because the sport organization can gain free publicity from them. The empirical study showed that all the clubs believe it is important to be open and available towards the media. One example of this mentioned by Svante Samuelsson are that journalists were allowed in the locker-room after the games. As the theory implies it is essential to have strong relationship with journalist for several reason. First of all it could lead to a wider media coverage which is important because then the clubs gets more attention. With increased awareness of the brand the value for the sponsors grows, but most importantly it could lead to an increased fan base. Beyond this the clubs could, to some extent, be protected from bad publicity or scandals. In addition to this the respondents has co-operation with different kinds of aid organization to increase the awareness of their brand. The clubs can receive much “good-will” through co-operations such as these. However, in order to maximize their effect it is important that the clubs make sure that their brand is visible.

5.4.3 Brand association

The theory argues that brand association is the fans emotion and feeling towards the sport organization. Brand association can be further divided by strength, favorability and uniqueness, all these parts are important for keeping the brand equity high.

The theory clarifies that the strength of a brand can be enhanced by providing the consumers with information of the brand through various media. The empirical study showed that the clubs use multiple communication channels in their interaction with the fans. The clubs used traditional media to spread information about games and other activities to the fans. Social media is used to increase the knowledge of the clubs brand on a wider basis. In addition to this the clubs use their websites as a portal to provide information about their activities. Facebook is something that the clubs have started to work a lot with in the recent years, especially to connect with the younger generation. By constantly providing the fans with information about the club they will get a stronger bond to the brand, because they feel more connected and involved to the club. However, it is important that the club do not forget the older supporters. They are generally more affluent than the younger fans, and thereby more likely to watch the games live. With the following arguments in mind it is apparent that the clubs benefit a lot by using several information sources, because they cover the whole fan base which is very important.

According to the theory favorability of a brand refers to if the consumers gain desired value and benefits from the brand. Community initiatives and success on the football pitch are examples of how to increase the fans favorability. During the interviews the respondents talked about that producing result is the best way for creating pleased fans. In addition to this it became evident that all clubs also has different types of co-operations with aid organization, where the underlying purpose to create “good-will”. Through these co-operations the clubs create positive thoughts in the head of the fans which might strengthen their attachment to the brand. One other way for creating this is by exploiting the players more evident in the clubs marketing. By doing this they create a stronger bond between their fans and players. To increase the favorability of a brand in Allsvenskan the arena is a great tool. The development of new arenas in Allsvenskan is due to this very important. A new arena generally creates an interest in community about the club and the opportunity for watching football live increases. With a new arena the condition for delivering a qualitative product to the customers increases in several ways. For example the quality of the actual football match will become better and

the comfort in the arena is higher. Due to these reasons the arena is a great tool for increasing brands favorability among fans.

The theoretical framework states that uniqueness of a brand differentiates brands from each other. By using emotions and thoughts linked to the sport organizations brand they can differentiate themselves from other brands. In Allsvenskan it is common that the brand (team) is differentiated based on geographical location.

5.4.4 Brand loyalty

The theory explains that sport organizations' ability to keep and generate fans is called brand loyalty. It is also stated in the theory that sport brands are unique because the customers (fans) often become loyal in an early age, and it is not common that they change team. However, even though the fans are loyal their attachment to the club differs and can be influenced. Therefore it is important that the club influence and involve their fans in the club in different ways. In order to create fans that are willing to spend both their time and money in their favorite team in Allsvenskan the clubs has to offer them a qualitative experience both on and off the pitch. Tools that could be used to enhance to fans involvement are, unitary visual identity, the arena, charismatic players/coach, openness to fans/media, technical solutions just to mention a few.

5.5 Marketing tools

5.5.1 Arena

The theory addresses facts that affect the attendances to the arena and how the arena could be improved. Factors that influence the spectators are arena access, newness of the arena, architecture and beauty of arena, seat comfort and the cleanness of the arena. According to the theory the price of the ticket (under \$25) and price of the parking (under \$8) were also something that influenced people to attend the games. Convenient public transportation to the arena is also important. Lagrell discuss these issues and says that the arenas have to be improved in order to attract more people. According to Lagrell a lot of the clubs in the league has already started to build new arenas and he hopes that the rest will follow. Two of the clubs interviewed do not own there arena and two of the clubs are not in charge of the sales (snacks, food etc.) on it. Trelleborgs FF's arena for example is very old and has a hard time coming up in the same quality as Kalmar FF's arena which is newly built. With a new arena the ability to attract sponsors increase, the interest of the club increases and non-football interested people

might attend the arena just to see it. Another aspect discussed in the theory is the variety of snacks during the game and also reasonable pricing can attract people.

5.5.2 Sponsorship

The theoretical framework takes up a few definitions of sponsorship and argues that it is when a company is allowed to show their logo to a specific audience during an event or similar. When sponsoring a club for example the company gets an exclusive association with the club and the right to use their logo or a name to show the connection between them. The theory argues that sponsoring a sport event is very good for companies because the spectators are relaxed and very recipient during games. The empirical study showed that all the clubs attract sponsors with their relationship and the possibility to be a part of a network of success. Doing this is very good and by creating a relationship the possibility to keep a sponsor during bad performances increases. The clubs has to explain to the sponsors that they get the ability to be seen by a certain amount of people exclusively. According to the empirical study most of the clubs takes their players to the sponsors for meetings and other similar events.

Licensing is according to the theory when a company produces something with a clubs name or insignia on it and sells it. The club later gets “royalties” according to the amount sold of the specific product. This can help the club to penetrate their already existing markets deeper but also broaden into new markets. The theory exemplifies this with products such as video games, novelties, sport memorabilia, trading cards and apparel. The empirical study showed that licensing is not used in Swedish football. Lagrell argued that the clubs in Allsvenskan do not receive revenues from videogames etc. Furthermore the theory underlines that licensing has grown a lot in USA during the last decade and have become an important revenue source.

5.5.3 Merchandising

As presented in the theory merchandising is one of the most important revenues source for football clubs today. Merchandising provides great exposure for the sponsors and it is an important tool for keeping the fan base loyal. During the interviews with the respondents it became evident that merchandising barely exists as a revenue source for the interviewed clubs. Svante Samuelsson explained that Kalmar sold merchandises for around 1 million SEK, but due to high purchasing costs the profit from merchandising is very small. Jörgen Martinsson told us that merchandising was something that Mjällby AIF has to improve a lot, even though they have become better on it in recent years. It is essential that the clubs put more focus on improving how they work with merchandising, because of several reasons.

First of all merchandising is a great tool for enhancing and spreading the clubs' brand among the fans, in other words create awareness of the brand. Second, by increasing the brand awareness it will create more exposure for the sponsors which mean that the value of the clubs' brand increases. With an increased brand value the clubs can either attract more sponsors or demand higher compensation from the existing sponsors.

6. Conclusions

The conclusion chapter's purpose is to answer the research questions stated in the introduction chapter. To start with the sub-problems will be answered and then used to answer the main research question. The findings collected during the multiple-case study research are the basis for all the answers presented in this chapter.

The multiple-case study conducted with the Swedish clubs IFK Norrköping, Kalmar FF, Mjällby AIF and Trelleborgs FF are foundation for the results presented in the conclusion. Even though the findings are based on these four clubs we believe that parts of the results might be applicable on other clubs within Allsvenskan as well.

Problem 1

How can Swedish football clubs increase the demand for their brand and make it more attractive for investments?

In order to increase the interest of the brand among the existing stakeholders such as spectators, sponsors and investors, the clubs have to continue their work with developing the brand. According to the case study the Swedish clubs has started to realize the value of having a strong brand. Today the clubs in Allsvenskan could be compared to large companies, which is the underlying reason for the importance of a strong brand. With high brand awareness the clubs have the opportunity to increase the revenues from sponsors and spectators. Furthermore the possibility to charge a higher price from the stakeholders increases with a strong brand.

To enhance the perceived quality of the clubs brand they use profiles and players in their marketing. In addition to this the perceived quality can increase through producing good results on the pitch. The usage of players is easier to control than producing results on the pitch, which is the underlying reason for why clubs, in Allsvenskan, use players and profiles to a high degree. The clubs use different kind of communication channels to attract customers and make them relate to their brand. In addition to traditional media such as newspaper, TV-commercials and posters the clubs have started to use social media. By using social media the clubs in Allsvenskan are able to spread information fast, which create a strong bond between

the club and the customers. The clubs brand value will become visible in their ability to keep and generate customers. This is however both hard and complicated for the clubs because fans often become loyal to them in a young age and it is unlikely that they change team. This is one reason for why the clubs works a lot with attracting young fans to the arena.

Problem 2

Which types of marketing activities can Swedish football clubs use to improve their revenues?

The Swedish revenue model are based on three big pillars; sponsors, attendance and central agreements. In comparison to the larger European football clubs, where merchandising is an important revenue source, it barely exists in Sweden. There are two approaches for generating higher revenues from sponsorship deals among the clubs in Allsvenskan. One is based on customizing each deal for the specific sponsor. The other is based on selling pre-made packages in different price ranges. Revenues from attendance are divided into two distinct categories, arena tickets and sales within the arena. When it comes to the former it is highly influenced of the quality of the game and the possibility to make it to an event. This is something that clubs work sparely with at the moment. There are two approaches to increase sales within the arena. One way is to outsource the operation of kiosks, restaurants, pubs etc. This approach implies that the clubs use an intermediary who is responsible for the sales. In return the club receives percentage on each transaction. The other approach implies that the clubs run the operation themselves. This means that the clubs are responsible for staff and warehouse management among others. Central agreements are controlled by the Swedish football association which means that the clubs are unable to control these revenues. However, the clubs can increase the revenues from central agreements through high placement in the league and/or by increasing the number of attendance.

Today the Swedish football clubs use these pillars to increase the revenues rather good. To increase the revenues from sponsors they arrange sponsor trips and use relationship building for example. Activities to increase attendance that the clubs use are marketing close to game-day through traditional and social media. When increasing the attendance the revenues from central agreements might increase as well.

Problem 3

How is the Swedish football clubs affected by the different stakeholders and regulations in Allsvenskan?

The most important stakeholders for Swedish clubs are spectators and sponsors. In European leagues investors are an important stakeholder as well, but due to certain regulations in Swedish football their influence is rather. The regulation implies that a club has to own the majority of the votes in the annual meeting of shareholders. The interest for investing in a Swedish club is affected by this to a high degree, because the investor cannot do any vital changes on their own. One way for the Swedish clubs to increase their spending power today is by using venture capitalists. Venture capitalists provide the clubs with funds for transfers, in other words the clubs can access more money through them. A risk with using venture capitalists is that they “own” the players and can at any given time sell him. Another downside is that the venture capitalist can leave the club or choose not to re-invest earned money.

As mentioned before, the influence from spectators and sponsors are most evident for Swedish clubs. Spectators are the foundation and underlying reason for the clubs whole organization, without them they would not exist. Since attendance is one of the large revenue pillars both tickets and sales in the arena are essential for the clubs survival. In addition to this spectators are a major part of creating an atmosphere in the arena during game-day, due to this they enhance the product. The sponsors are also a vital aspect to the Swedish clubs economy. To increase the revenues gained from sponsors the Swedish clubs work a lot with creating deeper relationships. When creating a relationship with different kind of benefits sponsors are more eager to be a part of the club. The Swedish clubs are focused on creating networks with their sponsors that are beneficial to both parties. The sponsors are often an aspect that can increase the awareness of both the clubs’ brand and the companies’ brand.

Main research question

How can Swedish football clubs increase their revenues through marketing activities in order to keep a competitive squad?

For the Swedish football clubs to increase their revenues through marketing activities and at the same time keep a competitive squad, certain aspects need to be taken in consideration. The clubs' brands are the main assets and the foundation for realizing different marketing activities. The brand consists of different elements such as the club name, logo, players, etc. By influencing these elements, in different ways, the clubs can increase the value of their brand. If the value of their brand increase and become more attractive among stakeholders the clubs can demand higher compensation.

Stakeholders are an important factor to increase revenues and it is done by creating a strong brand and offer stakeholders benefits. Today the Swedish clubs search for new sponsors with focus on the local environment. To keep already existing sponsors clubs nurture the relationships and create benefits for both parties. To enhance the number of spectators attending the arena clubs work with traditional media but also social media. Most of this is pre-game marketing some days before the game. In pre-game marketing clubs use players and other profiles connected to the club to increase the interest of the game.

Revenues generated from merchandising are rather undeveloped among the Swedish clubs and therefore this is an unexploited source of revenue. The clubs has merchandising sales but they generally do not focus on improving them since this market is small in Sweden today. In addition to being a great revenue source it is also a great tool for increasing the brands awareness.

6.1 Revenue increasing model for Swedish football clubs

The model below is based on the model presented in the theoretical framework. This model has been modified to be more suitable for the Swedish football clubs. This has been done with influences from the theoretical framework as well as the empirical data collected.

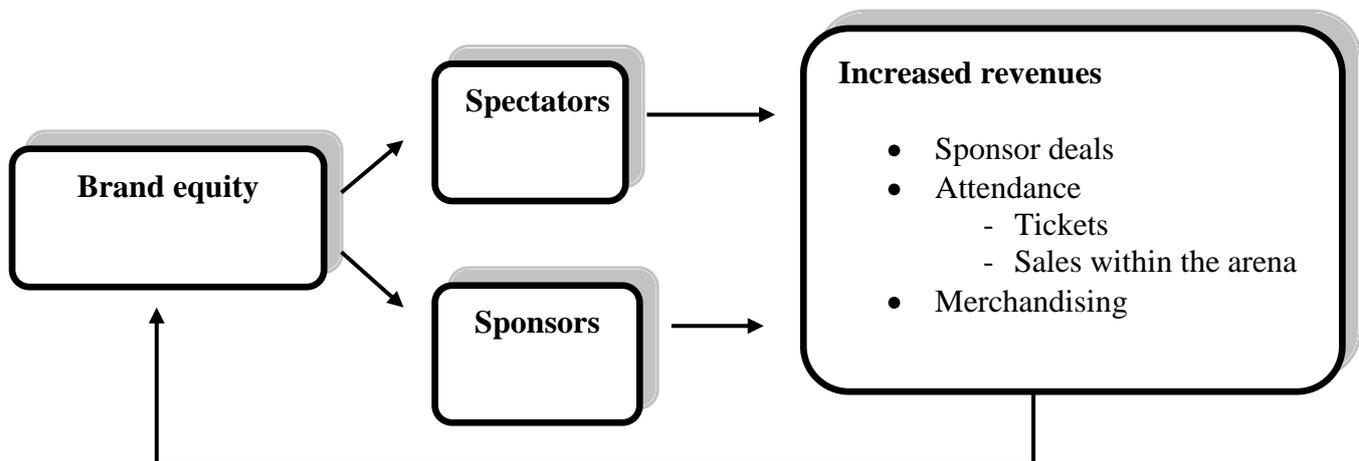


Figure 6: Revenue increasing model for Swedish football clubs (Karlsson & Skännestig, 2011)

The significant differences according to the model presented in the theoretical framework are the absence of investors and central agreements. Investors have been left out because of the existing regulations against being a single owner in a Swedish football club. These regulations will not disappear in close future and therefore the investor is not seen as a relevant aspect to take in consideration.

Since the Swedish clubs cannot influence the central agreements this will not be a part of the model either. One part of the central agreements is for example dependent on the clubs placement in the league. Therefore the central agreements are not considered when creating this model of how Swedish football clubs could increase their revenues.

7. Recommendations

The Recommendation chapter consists of two main areas namely brand and revenues. The chapter provides recommendations for how the Swedish clubs could strengthen their brand and increase their revenues.

The recommendation chapter will provide Swedish clubs with guidelines for how they can increase their revenues through marketing activities. The recommendations will be divided into two distinct categories, brand and revenue sources.

7.1 Brand

Important aspects for developing the brand and make it more attractive for investments:

- **Unitary visual identity**

The clubs has to create a unitary visual identity that goes through every aspect of the club. The visual identity includes logo, club colors, club values and phrases connected to the club. This should be apparent on everything from the napkins in the restaurants to the players' outfits during media attention. The clubs could ask their players to talk about the club in their blogs or if they attend TV-shows because it will increase the brand's perceived quality and awareness.

- **Believe in the brand**

When trying to attract sponsors the clubs has to believe in the benefits that their brand brings. The club has to realize that the brand is not geographically bound and start to seek sponsors not only locally. The clubs also has to improve their ability to negotiate with the sponsors. By explaining the club's history and the perks with being associated to brand the sponsors will be more open to receive the message.

- **Use of technical solutions**

To increase the fans involvement in the club even more technical solutions could be used in different ways. Among the younger generation so called "smart phones" are becoming more and more common. The clubs could for example create applications that provide the fans with

information. Furthermore the clubs could ask question to the fans through the application or other similar activities to make them more involved.

7.2 Revenue sources

The Swedish revenue model explained in the conclusion chapter is exploited in a good way by the clubs in Allsvenskan. Even though there are some areas they could develop further.

- **Sponsors**

To increase the revenues from sponsor the clubs could divide them into different categories. For example one or two shirt sponsors, several arena sponsors and companies sponsoring with their products. This will enhance the exclusiveness of the clubs sponsoring spots and therefore also the value for the sponsors. The clubs may be able to charge a higher price depending on the category by doing so. With fewer spots on the game jersey it becomes more exclusive and the sponsors are willing to pay more money to be alone on it. With a cleaner shirt the merchandising might increase as well. On the arena the clubs get to work more with quantity and increase the number of sponsors without damaging the shirt. Companies sponsoring with their products might for example be a bus company providing travel to away games or similar product sponsoring. In addition to this the clubs should customize each deal separately and increase the knowledge about the brand in order to maximize the revenues from sponsors.

The clubs also has to work on creating deals with larger companies and stop thinking locally. To be able to increase their revenues gained by sponsors they have to broaden their horizons and believe in their brand. If connecting themselves to larger companies other companies will want to be a part of the network as well.

- **Attendance**

Since attendance is one of the large pillars in the Swedish football clubs' economy they have to focus on increasing the revenue stream gained from this activity. The building of new arenas has of course affected this positively and hopefully it will continue with more clubs. To attract more people to the arenas the clubs has to work harder with creating exciting events. People not so interested in football should be able to attend a game and afterwards feel satisfied and wanting to go again. By having local or national artists performing either before or in the halftime break the number of visitors may increase. The clubs could also have different activities outside the arena before the games. This is a space that their sponsors could benefit a lot from. To attract more people to the arenas the clubs could work with larger spotlights on their profiles and players. By having a "star player" in the team, the attraction of

the game is increased and fans not so interested in the team itself will attend to watch him play.

One other way clubs can increase their revenues from attendance is from the sales within the arena. In order to maximize the revenues that stem from this source they should run the operation themselves. By being responsible for the operation clubs have the opportunity to increase their revenues through cost-effective actions.

- **Merchandising**

Merchandising is something that Swedish football clubs should start to focus more on because today it is an undeveloped revenue source. It is a great tool for increasing the brands awareness among the stakeholders. By increasing the awareness the clubs brand value will be perceived higher. The clubs will then be able to demand higher sponsor deal compensation and then number of fans visiting the arena might also increase, and thereby also the fan base. Merchandising increases the other revenue sources indirectly which makes it an important part of the *Revenue increasing model for Swedish football clubs* presented in the analysis.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire football clubs

Varumärke

Vilka värden vill ni förmedla med ert varumärke?

Hur tror du ert varumärke uppfattas av supportrarna?

- Hur uppfattas ert varumärke av sponsorerna?
- Hur uppfattas ert varumärke av investerarna?

Hur arbetar ni för att öka kännedomen om ert varumärke i Sverige?

- Arbetar ni med att öka kännedomen av ert varumärke utomlands också?

Använder ni ert varumärke i andra situationer än sportsliga? (t.ex. Hjälporganisationer eller dylikt)

Anser Ni det är viktigt att ha en bra relation med media?

- Hur jobbar Ni för att stärka Er relation med dem?
- Hur öppna är ni mot dem? (tillgänglighet)

Marknadsföringsaktiviteter

Hur ser er marknadsföringsmix ut?

Hur använder ni spelare och profiler i Er marknadsföring?

- Hur kommer det sig att ni inte har namn på Era tröjor?

Vilka är era viktigaste inkomstkällor, spelarförsäljning exkluderat?

Hur gör ni för att öka er sponsorintäkter?

Hur arbetar ni för att skapa en långvarig relation med supportrarna?

- Hur arbetar ni för att skapa en långvarig relation med sponsorerna?
- Hur arbetar ni för att skapa en långvarig relation med investerarna?

Arena specifika

Vad erbjuder Er Arena för aktiviteter bortsett från fotbollsmatcher (Konferenslokal, pubar, restaurang, kiosk, kontor, guide turer osv)?

- Hur motiverar Ni människor att gå på Era hemmamatcher?
- Hur jobbar Ni för att locka personer som inte är så fotbollsintresserade till era hemmamatcher?
- Hur arbetar Ni för att maximera Era intäkter under matchdag? (Souvenir shop, pubar, restaurang kiosk)
- Hur arbetar Ni för att skapa intäkter när det inte är matchdag? (Sponsring, konferenser, konserter osv)

Övriga frågor

Har ni något samarbete med den officiella supporterklubben? På vilket sätt?

Hur ställer ni er till majoritetsägarskap?

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Lars-Åke Lagrell

Frågor gällande Allsvenskans struktur

Hur kan Allsvenskan utvecklas enligt dig?

Hur ställer du dig till en försäljning av Allsvenskan?

På vilket sätt har 51-49 procentsregeln påverkat Allsvenskan samt de Allsvenska klubbarna?

Tror du det finns intresse för majoritetsägarskap i en Allsvensk klubb?

Hur skulle Allsvenskan påverkas av att spela höst/vår istället för vår/höst?

Hur tror du den svenska skattestrukturen för utländska spelare har påverkat Allsvenskan?

Marknadsförings relaterade frågor

Vad har Allsvenskan för kärnvärden?

Hur arbetar svenska fotbollsförbundet för att öka intresset för Allsvenskan?

- Finns det intresse för Allsvenskan i andra länder? Hur tror du man kan öka det?

Vilken klubb tycker du har starkast varumärke i Allsvenskan?

Hur tror du en Allsvensk klubb kan öka sina intäkter?

Hur kan man öka Allsvenskans status i Europa?

Jobbar Svenska fotbollsförbundet med att locka fler åskådare till de Allsvenska matcherna?

Vem bestämmer över licensrättigheter, tex TV-spel?

Övriga frågor

Vad tror du är anledningen till att svensk fotboll har tappat konkurrenskraft i Europa?

Hur har utvecklingen av TV-rättigheter för Allsvenskan utvecklats över åren?

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire Sten Söderman

Beskriv kortfattat dig själv och din tidigare erfarenhet.

Vilka är de bakomliggande orsakerna till att svensk klubbblagsfotboll har tappat i konkurrenskraft de senaste åren?

Hur tror du att kan man öka intresset för Allsvenskan?

Vad anser du är de viktigaste inkomstkällorna för klubbarna idag?

- Hur kan de utvecklas?
- Hur tror du det kommer se ut om 10 år?

Vad tycker du om den nuvarande regeln angående ägarförhållande i svensk fotboll? (51-49 procentsregeln)

- Vad skulle det innebära om den försvann?



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On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

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