

BRAND MANAGEMENT: PERCEIVING OF SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES BRAND BY THE CZECH PUBLIC

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Abstract

This article presents the results of brand personality research of big sport events on the example of the Summer Olympic Games. The research is based on the methodology standardized by American author J. Aaker who specializes in the field of brand management. According to this research 42 features of sport brands were evaluated and subsequently divided into 5 dimensions. The results consist both of the features that positively describe the brand and the features that cannot be considered as describing the brand. Last but not least, the authors suggest specific arrangements that could improve the brand personality of the Summer Olympic Games and that, moreover, could contribute to better relations with fans, spectators and public. Nevertheless, these suggestions can also be used for creating the brand value perceived by the public and for conceiving the communication strategy.

Introduction

Sport branding is currently an actual topic of sport marketing and the expression of its identity is a crucial factor for business practices in the sport field. The factors determining the sport brand are formed by:

- the fan platform - sufficient number of fans both at home and at the international level, their buying power and license sphere,
- historical success – long-term and extensive success has influence on the growth of the sport brand value,
- communication strategy of the brand – ways of communication of the brand toward the general public maximizes its financial value (i.e. communication strategy during the top soccer championships),
- brand value – specific values that are defined for the sport brand and that are attractive to the public (i.e. Manchester United “the theatre of dreams”),
- athletes in the position of stars – connecting the past and the present they provide splendor and desire to be connected with the brand,
- regulated deficiency – it influences the growth of the brand value (i.e. regulated access to the championships, fewer teams in the championships, etc.) (Čáslavová, 2006, Schilhaneck, 2005)

Evaluation of these factors is visible mainly at major European soccer clubs (Manchester United, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich) or at professional sport teams such Ferrari F1, McLaren Mercedes.

According to J. Aaker brand personality is defined as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Why is it so important to view the brand as a person? When consumers think about a brand, the human characteristics that they associate with this brand help them create and form a relationship with the brand (e.g. sport event). Such a relationship between a consumer and a sport event can be further used in the field of sport marketing, specifically through secondary sport products related with the sport events. A positive attitude to the brand personality traits of sport events can not only influence the content and way of sport events' promotion but also their complex marketing strategy. Furthermore, it also has an indirect impact on the creation of new financial sources.

The purpose of this article is to identify brand personality of Summer Olympic Games (hereinfter „SOG“). This analysis can be further used for modification of current or creation of new marketing strategies, especially concerning fans, spectators and general public. In connection with the sport events, it mainly concerns organizers of these sport events, i.e. national and international sport federations, their marketing departments as well as independent marketing agencies. It is undoubted that the brand personality is used and communicated for better understanding with fans, spectators and public, for creating communication strategy, for creating the brand value with the public.

We mainly concentrated on the brand of the summer Olympic Games as there has been a constant discussion both in the sport and general public around the possibility of holding the Olympic Games in Prague and the subsequent candidacy application of Prague for the Olympic and Paralympics Games in 2020. The discussion and the approach of the public towards this issue showed the view of the brand personality of the Olympic Games and evaluation of the economic impact on public finances.

1 Methods

The mentioned methodology by J. Aaker creates a basis for a generalized spectrum of measuring the brand personalities. It involves a group of variables that were deduced in order to assure the most possible objectivity from:

- personality psychology,
- already existing variables used for measuring brand personalities,
- variables determined according to the association of consumers.

The result of J.L. Aaker's study was the formation of five factors (dimensions) that cover 42 carefully chosen traits that reliably and accurately represent these dimensions. The dimensions are as follows: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Each of these dimensions is represented by several chosen facets (15 together) that best describe this dimension, which means such facets that show the highest correlation regarding the particular dimensions.

The particular facets represent the selected cluster of 42 traits and their value is dependent on the results of measuring these characteristics. These facets are always represented by two to three characteristics:

- Sincerity: down to earth – down to earth; family oriented; small-town; honest – honest; sincere; real; wholesome – wholesome; original; cheerful – cheerful; sentimental; friendly;
- Excitement: daring – daring; trendy; exciting; spirited – spirited; cool; young; imaginative – imaginative; unique; up-to-date – up-to-date; independent; contemporary;

- Competence: reliable – reliable; hard working; secure; intelligent – intelligent; technical; team spirit; successful – successful; leader; confident;
- Sophistication: upper class – upper class; glamorous; good looking; charming – charming; feminine; smooth;
- Ruggedness: outdoorsy – outdoorsy; masculine; western; tough – tough; rugged;

Since this framework can be generalized across product categories, it enables researchers of brand personality theory to understand the symbolic use of brands in general and provides theoretical insights into when and why consumers buy brands for self-expressive purposes.

This measurement scale of brand personality can be used with particular groups of subjects which were confirmed by factor analysis on four sub-samples of subjects (females, males, younger subjects and older subjects). This analysis proved the similarity of the results of the four principal components both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The relevance of J.L. Aaker's theory has been proven by much empirical research and studies and thus we considered this theory suitable for evaluating and measuring the brand personalities of big sport events. On this basis we can consider the theory as a good base for brand personality analysis.

2 Sample, Instruments and variables

A group of 296 university students, primarily the age of 21-25 years was used as subjects for this study. Less than 40% were male. As mentioned earlier, the validity of measuring the brand personality according to the J. L. Aaker method was confirmed for various groups of subjects, thus this sample can be considered as representative for the Czech population.

The relevance of the J.L. Aaker's theory has been proven by much empirical research and studies we relied on the already verified reliability and validity of this method.

For the purposes of our research we used the method of written questionnaires where the subjects evaluated particular personality traits using the five-point Likert scale. Point 1 being fully descriptive and point 5 not at all descriptive. The results were subject to statistical analysis when each of the 42 personality traits forming the brand personality dimension was evaluated with the use of statistical instruments arithmetic mean, modus, standard deviation and skew-whiff.

3 Results: Brand personality of summer Olympic Games

3.1 Dimension of sincerity

Based on the results, it can be confirmed that the dimension of sincerity and authenticity unambiguously describe the Summer Olympic Games (SOG) brand personality, because the average value of this dimension is 2.249. With the exception of two, all of the traits of this dimension were marked as unambiguously describing the SOG brand personality. The only trait marked as definitely not describing this brand personality is the trait suburban but it has almost no value for this very global event.

The trait of warm-hearted is perceived by the subjects as partially describing this brand personality but its value is very low for this sport event as it was for the previously analyzed sport events because it is in partial contradiction to the essence of many sport events.

Traits proper and sincere (publicly accessible) can be perceived as characteristic for this dimension and thus for the overall SOG brand personality which results not only from the average values but also from the other characteristics that describe them. Overall it can be

stated that the SOG brand personality is perceived as a sincere and authentic person and it is not necessary to try to change the perception of any of the traits.

3.2 Dimension of excitement

The dimension of excitement of the SOG brand personality is perceived as unambiguously describing the personality of this brand similar to the dimension of sincerity. Only two traits forming this dimension were marked as neutral. These were traits calm (well-balanced) and youthful. Insignificant influence of the trait calm (well-balanced) was found at the other sport events as well and thus it is not necessary to strive for improvement in this. The trait youthful was marked as partially describing and partially not describing the SOG brand personality which is clear from the modus values and the average values as well as from a very low value of skewness. The reason for such an attitude is probably the fact that the SOG brand is a very traditional brand and it is based on tradition. Thus it is not necessary for it to be perceived as youthful.

The traits exciting and unique (typical) are characteristic traits of this dimension and thus characteristic for the SOG brand personality. It is clear from the above mentioned results that the SOG brand personality does not have to take any special steps to influence this dimension. The reason the attitude of the public does not have a negative influence on any of the given traits of this brand personality.

3.3 Dimension of competence

The dimension of competence is clearly the most characteristic dimension of the SOG brand personality because its average value is the lowest in comparison with the values of the other dimensions. All but one trait of this dimension have very positive influence on forming of this dimension and thus on the overall personality of this brand.

The trait evocating sense of security, the only trait that cannot be described as having unambiguously positive influence, does not have a major impact on the personality of this brand as well as on the other two brands and thus it is not necessary to stimulate it.

Similar to the previous dimensions of this brand personality, there is no need to take any steps to influence or support the particular traits of this dimension. The traits hard working, successful, self-confident and having team spirit can be considered as characteristic for the SOG brand personality. Also other traits of this dimension are perceived as unambiguously describing the SOG brand personality and thus this brand can be considered as competent.

3.4 Dimension of sophistication

The results show that this dimension is perceived as unambiguously describing the SOG brand personality which is evident in the positive perception of the traits of this dimension other than the trait feminine. This trait is not a key element of the SOG brand personality and thus it is not significant for the brand to be perceived as feminine or male. In contrast to the FIFA World Championship or the Tour de France this sport event is very neutral and everyone can find something interesting from the wide selection of options.

Thus, not even this dimension of the SOG brand personality needs to be changed in any way. Upper class and splendid traits were marked as characteristic for this dimension and the SOG brand personality is overall perceived as sophisticated.

3.5 Dimension of ruggedness

The last dimension of the SOG brand personality is ruggedness. All of the traits of this dimension are perceived as rather describing the personality of this brand, and the traits tough and striking (prominent) can be marked as characteristic. The perception of the trait male and western is not fully definite but the value is not very high for this brand personality due to the already mentioned neutrality and global impact.

The SOG brand can be considered as rugged based on the research results.

4 Discussion

The brands of sport events have a very specific character and are perceived primarily as symbolic brands. Thus it is very important to adjust the chosen method of measuring the brand personality to the character of the target audience, therefore the method of J. L. Aaker. This is based on the fact that not all traits need to be used when identifying the brand personality. Some of the traits used are in contradiction with the specific character of these sport events and their inclusion in the measurements distorts partially the particular dimensions and thus the overall personality of the given brands. Elimination of such traits that have insignificant influence on the brand personality can help to give a clearer picture of the brand personality and thus to improve identification.

The results of this research were also analyzed by the gender of the subjects and based on this analysis it can be confirmed that measurements of the brand personality are not dependent on gender because the values obtained are almost the same for the majority of the traits. Thus we can confirm the hypothesis that this method of measuring the brand personality can be used with samples from a certain segment of population, as verified in the J. L. Aaker study (1997) by factor analysis of four basic groups (females, males, younger subjects and older subjects). Consequently this confirms the validity of the conclusions resulting from this research for the general public.

Next, it is also very important to think over the particular traits and the general dimensions as they are perceived across various cultures. Some traits, even though described by the same expression, may not be understood in the same way across various cultures and thus it is important to consider the national specifics and adjust this method of measuring the brand personality.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the SOG brand personality we can identify its specific brand personality in the Czech Republic as it was set in the objectives of our research. The detailed analysis of all dimensions enabled an identification of the traits that are characteristic for the brands. In order to provide a comprehensive view of the brand personality, also the traits that can be considered as weak spots of this sport event were identified.

Based on the performed analysis of the SOG brand personality, we can state that the public definitely views the brand positively and this holds true in all the important traits. Of course, it is possible for the brand to concentrate on support of some traits which it considers as important and which can be even stronger.

The SOG brand personality in the Czech Republic is perceived as proper, sincere (publicly accessible), exciting, unique (typical), hard working, successful, self-confident, upper class, splendid, striking (prominent) with team spirit. In contrast to the other two brands there were no relevant insufficiencies identified. The strength and uniqueness of this brand is built on the

above mentioned traits and therefore its marketing strategy should be formed accordingly in order to support the desired image.

Literature

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BRAND MANAGEMENT: VNÍMÁNÍ ZNAČKY LETNÍCH OLYMPIJSKÝCH HER ČESKOU VEŘEJNOSTÍ

Článek prezentuje výsledky výzkumu osobnosti sportovních značek velkých sportovních akcí na příkladu letních olympijských her. Výzkum využívá metodiky standardizované americkou autorkou J. Aaker zabývající se značkou. Ve výzkumu bylo zhodnoceno 42 vlastností sportovních značek rozdělených do 5 dimenzí. Výsledky prezentují vlastnosti, které vystihují pozitivně danou značku, dále vlastnosti, které danou značku nevystihují a vlastnosti, ke kterým veřejnost zastává neutrální postoj. Autoři pak uvádějí ke každé sportovní značce návrh opatření vedoucích ke zlepšení osobnosti značky letních olympijských her, která lze využít pro lepší porozumění s diváky a veřejností, pro vytváření komunikační strategie a pro rozvíjení hodnoty značky u veřejnosti.

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Der Artikel präsentiert Ergebnisse der Markenpersönlichkeitsforschung bei großen Sportveranstaltungen am Beispiel der Olympischen Sommerspiele. Die Untersuchung verwendet die von der amerikanischen Autorin J. Aaker standardisierte Methode, die sich mit Marken beschäftigt. In der Untersuchung wurden 42 Eigenschaften der Sportmarken, unterteilt in fünf Gruppen, bewertet. Die Ergebnisse präsentieren die Eigenschaften, die die entsprechende Marke positiv beschreiben, des Weiteren die Eigenschaften, die die entsprechende Marke nicht beschreiben, und Eigenschaften, zu denen die Öffentlichkeit eine neutrale Haltung einnimmt. Dann legen die Autoren für jede Sportmarke einen Entwurf zur Verbesserung der Markenpersönlichkeit bei den Olympischen Sommerspielen beitragenden Maßnahmen vor, die zur besseren Verständigung mit den Zuschauern und der Öffentlichkeit, der Schaffung einer Kommunikationsstrategie und der Entwicklung des von der Öffentlichkeit wahrgenommenen Markenwerts verwendet werden können.

BRAND MANAGEMENT: POSTRZEGANIE MARKI LETNICH IGRZYSK OLIMPIJSKICH PRZEZ CZESKĄ OPINIĘ PUBLICZNĄ

Artykuł stanowi prezentację wyników badań indywidualności marek sportowych największych imprez sportowych na przykładzie letnich olimpiad. W badaniach wykorzystano metodykę zestandaryzowaną przez amerykańską autorkę J. Aaker, która zajmuje się markami. W ramach badań ocenie poddano 42 cechy marek sportowych, podzielonych na 5 grup. Wyniki z jednej strony ukazują, które cechy przy danej imprezie sportowej określają daną markę pozytywnie, a z drugiej cechy, które przy danej marce nie są brane pod uwagę. Na bazie wyników przeprowadzonych badań autorzy proponują dla każdej marki sportowej działania mające na celu poprawę postrzegania indywidualności marki na letnich olimpiadach sportowych, które można zastosować w celu lepszego kontaktu z kibicami, widzami i opinią publiczną. Ponadto zalecenia te mogą być wykorzystane do opracowania strategii komunikacji oraz w celu rozwijania wartości marki w oczach opinii publicznej.