

Dr Sean Ennis
Director, MSc International Marketing
Department of Marketing
University of Strathclyde
Stenhouse Building
173 Cathedral Street
Glasgow
G4 0RQ
Scotland
sean.ennis@strath.ac.uk
+ 44 141 548 3247

Daniel Hischer
Masters Graduate
Department of Marketing
University of Strathclyde
Stenhouse Building
173 Cathedral Street
Glasgow
G4 0RQ
Scotland

AMBUSH MARKETING IN ACTION: EVIDENCE FROM EURO 2008.

SUMMARY

The objectives of this paper are to review the extant literature in the area of ambush marketing; assess recent trends and developments in this area; present findings from the Euro 2008 championship and put forward recommendations for managing the threat of ambush marketing.

The authors used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data. This paper reports on the findings from a strategic observational audit of various host cities.

The results indicate that ambush marketers are proving to be extremely creative and adaptable in developing strategies to overcome the efforts of the event owners to protect the official sponsors. The observational audit revealed a number of instances where ambush activities worked effectively.

The authors argue that the property owner has to become more discriminating and sensitive to the needs of key players in the relationship, such as fans and local businesses. The authors suggest a number of initiatives that could address this challenge.

Keywords: Ambush marketing, sponsorship, sport, observation audit.

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

From limited scale activity, sponsorship has increased significantly over recent decades. It has become an important tool of marketing communication “*that seeks to achieve favourable publicity for a company and/ or its brands within a certain target audience via the support of an activity not directly linked to the company’s normal business*” (Bennett, 1999, p291). The sponsorship of sport experienced a spectacular rise, thus confirming that the world of sports turned from once a leisurely weekend activity into an economic, business-driven activity (Lagae, 2005). This is especially true for the sponsorship of global sport events such as the FIFA Football World Cup, the Olympic Games, or the UEFA European Football Championship, which provide an excellent opportunity for organisations to achieve communication objectives, resulting in the revaluation of the events.

However, in parallel with the growth of sport sponsorship, the practice of ambush marketing has emerged as a potentially effective strategy for companies to associate themselves with sport events, though without paying sponsorship fees (Shani and Sandler, 1998). Thus, official sponsors or potential sponsors are beginning to question their return on the sponsorship investment. Nonetheless, sponsorship is an important revenue source for owners of major sporting events. Therefore, in order to prevent ambush marketing and thus to secure the value of a sponsorship, event owners increasingly developed rights protection programmes (Hoek, 2005).

However, despite the growing role of sport sponsorship and ambush marketing among practitioners, no research study in recent years has discussed the extent and effectiveness of sport sponsorship and ambush marketing in consideration of rights protection programmes used by event owners. However, current rights protection programmes may have been developed and improved on the experience of past employed rights protection programmes. This may have an impact on the extent and effectiveness of sport sponsorship and ambush marketing at major sport events.

Furthermore, few studies, to date, have considered the impact of the more strict policies employed by event owners on consumers, i.e. fans. Hence, the literature in this area is relatively scant, thus meriting research.

This paper reports on two aspects of a study which was undertaken during the Euro 2008 Football Championship which was held in both Austria and Switzerland in June 2008.

Specifically, this paper focuses on two objectives:

Objective 1: To identify official and non-official sponsor activities and strategies.

Objective 2: To investigate the impact of the rights protection programme on fans.

By using a strategically designed observational audit, the authors were in a position to assess the extent and impact of ambush marketers on the activities of the official sponsors of this tournament.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term “ambush marketing” refers to a situation where companies or organisations attempt to gain similar benefits as official sponsors of events without having recourse to paying the requisite fees. Such activities have a commonality insofar as they are planned and fall into either of two categories. The first group involves activities traditionally considered as piracies, which have a clear-cut remedy in law and constitute infringements of the property rights such as the unauthorised use of an event logo. The second group includes other activities for which the remedy is less clear-cut or even does not exist. Therefore the second group is of most concern for event owners and official sponsors. Taking this into consideration, Meenaghan (1994, 1996) and Crompton (2004) identify several commonly employed ambush marketing strategies.

- * *Sponsoring the Broadcast of an Event*
- * *Purchasing Advertising Time in and around Event Broadcasts*
- * *Sponsoring individual Teams and Players*
- * *Advertising and Promotion around the Event Venue and Host City*
- * *Themed Advertising*
- * *Sponsoring a Subcategory within an Event*
- * *Development of other imaginative Ambush Strategies*

Implications of Ambush Marketing

Major sporting events are reliant on key revenue sources, most notably of marketing investments by companies, directly in the case of sponsorship and indirectly through

advertising, which covers broadcasters' costs of television rights (Payne, 1998). Ambush marketing may reduce the effectiveness of a company's sponsorship while undermining the quality and value of a sponsor's investment (Meenaghan, 1998b). Taking this into consideration, Townley et al. (1998) suggest that the "*extent of the damage will often be intangible, but will nevertheless clearly influence the way marketing departments perceive sponsorship value for the future.*" Hence, ambush marketing may have a negative impact on event owners as sponsors refuse to become involved with events. As a consequence, the staging of future events may be undertaken at lower levels of quality. Moreover, in order to fund an event, organisers may feel impelled to either increase ticket prices and/ or sell television rights to high bids from subscription television companies, meaning fans have to pay to watch an event (Payne, 1998; Chadwick, 2006).

Immoral or Ethical Practice

Considering the aforementioned implications, Meenaghan (1994) raises the question whether ambush marketing is immoral or an imaginative, creative ethical practice? Not surprisingly, among organisers and official sponsors, the consensus is that ambush marketing is unethical, because it threatens their ability to sell events or recoup investments made in these. For example, Payne (1998, p323), an IOC representative, claims that "*ambush marketing breaches one of the fundamental tenets of business activity, namely, truth in advertising and business communications.*"

By contrast, ambushers consider it as an ethical, healthy business practice that is consistent with the tradition of encouraging competition in the market place (Crompton, 2004). For example, Welsh, a former marketing executive of American Express, criticises the "*weak-minded view that competitors have a moral obligation to step back and allow an official sponsor to reap all the benefits from a special event*" (Meenaghan, 1996, pg. 109). Welsh further suggests that competitors have "*not only a right, but an obligation to shareholders to take advantage of such events*" and that "*all this talk about unethical ambushing is so much intellectual rubbish and posturing by people who are sloppy marketers*" (Meenaghan, 1996, p109).

With regard to these very different views of ambush marketing, event owners and official sponsors cannot assume that non-sponsors will agree with their ethical perspective and thus need to consider legal actions and prevention strategies.

Prevention of Ambush Marketing

In order to prevent ambush marketing, event owners of major sporting events have increasingly developed rights protection programmes. Hence they try to eliminate ambush marketing through more strict legislation, especially since the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, where the prevention of ambush marketing included strategies such as the protection of official trademarks and imagery, the prohibition of non-sponsors from using billboards, signs or posters near any of the Olympic venues, and an aircraft exclusion zone to prevent balloon advertising and sky-banners (Payne, 1998; Shani and Sandler, 1998; Hoek, 2005). However, Kendall and Curthoys (2001) question the effectiveness of the 2000 Sydney sponsorship protection programme.

With regard to the World Cup 2006, the FIFA developed a comprehensive global rights protection programme, centred upon the registration of all official FIFA marks. Overall 3,300 rights infringements were uncovered in 84 countries in relation to this event (FIFA, 2008). For example, Bavaria NV, a non-sponsor brewer distributed orange shorts to Dutch fans. However, those wearing the offending items at the stadium entrance were ordered to remove them for collection and many fans therefore watched the game in their underwear (Chadwick, 2006). This incident resulted in bad publicity for the FIFA and simultaneously raises the question to what extent rights protection programmes infringe fan rights or have an impact on their overall enjoyment of a sporting event. However, this has not been considered in the literature so far.

Shani and Sandler (1998, p381) argue that the real problem regarding the prevention of ambush marketing is “*the consumer’s lack of knowledge and confusion about the sponsors.*” The authors therefore emphasise the employment of education programmes to increase consumers’ awareness of ambushers and further claim that organisers should reduce the cost of broadcast rights to secure more control over whom these are sold to. Meenaghan (1998b) argues that sponsors should purchase advertising time and space in mass media to promote their sponsorship and the association with an event. In this regard, Payne (1998) stresses the importance of coordination between an event owner and the media in order to ensure that official sponsors have a first option for all broadcast sponsorship and advertising rights for the event.

However, numerous researchers (e.g. Crompton, 2004; Hoek, 2005) suggest that it is unlikely that official sponsors can ever be fully protected from ambush marketing. However, more strict legislation may make it more difficult and expensive for competitors to effectively engage in such a strategy. This raises the question whether future rights protection programmes, which may be developed and improved on the experience of past employed rights protection programmes, diminish the occurrence and the success of ambush marketing at major sporting events and thus reduce consumer confusion about sponsors.

UEFA EURO 2008: BACKGROUND

The UEFA European Football Championship is the third largest sporting event in the world after the FIFA Football World Cup and the Summer Olympic Games regarding viewer-interests and financial marketing opportunities (UEFA, 2006). It is held every four years. Euro 2008 took place from 7 June to 29 June 2008 in Austria and Switzerland. The 31 games were played in four cities in Switzerland and in four cities in Austria. Basel hosted the opening game and a semi-final, Bern, Geneva and Zurich hosted group games. Vienna hosted a semi-final and the final, while Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, and Salzburg hosted group games (UEFA, 2008a). Euro 2008 was broadcast in approximately 170 countries and was expected to achieve an accumulated total audience of eight billion viewers spread over the tournament (Allen, 2008). Moreover, the eight host cities constructed Fan Zones, which had a capacity of 320,000 visitors in total and were generally located in the city centre. In the Fan Zones, fans could watch the games on giant screens (UEFA, 2008b).

Marketing Structure and Revenues

The turnover of the European Football Championship increased dramatically over the last few decades and peaked at Euro 2004 with 839.7 million Euros being spent – more than three times higher than at the previous tournament. Key sources of financing Euro 2004 included the sale of media rights (TV, radio and new media) for 552.6 million Euros (67%) and commercial rights including sponsorship for 178.6 million Euros (21%), respectively (UEFA, 2006). Hence, the commercial support of sponsors plays an important role in order to cover the costs for the organisation and the realisation of such a major sporting event. Further revenues have been achieved through tickets and corporate hospitality (UEFA, 2006).

As illustrated in Table 1, UEFA used the revenues of the Euro 2004 amongst others to cover the costs of the event, for future operating expenses and particularly for solidarity payments

to the 52 football associations. Solidarity payments are used to support projects such as refurbishments of stadiums and training centres and the amateur football (UEFA, 2006).

Table 1: UEFA Usage of Euro 2004 Revenues

	Euro in million
Direct expenses for Euro 2008	169
Future operating expenses	154
Premiums for the teams of the final round	128
Solidarity payments	314
Expenses for media technologies	20
Net result	55
Total	840

Source: UEFA (2006)

For Euro 2008, UEFA expects revenues from sponsorship, TV deals, and tickets to generate approximately 900 million Euros to one billion Euros (Focus 2007, Margraff, 2005). Regarding the aim and objectives of this paper, sponsorship at Euro 2008 is of particular interest.

Sponsors of Euro 2008

For Euro 2008, the UEFA has developed a new marketing programme, EUROTOP, which aims to enhance the existing commercial offers for sponsorship partners (Margraff, 2005). For this reason, UEFA has reduced the number of sponsors for Euro 2008 to 14 compared to 22 at Euro 2000 (UEFA, 2006). The sponsoring programme for the Euro 2008 was completed two years ahead of the tournament, which is over a year earlier than the completion for Euro 2004 (Key Note, 2007). All other applicants were missed out.

The sponsors of Euro 2008 are separated into three categories. The first category consists of the six EUROTOP Partners such as MasterCard, Carlsberg, McDonald's, Coca-Cola, JVC and Hyundai-Kia, who have acquired global rights to EURO 2008 as well as to other Professional National Team Competitions¹ for approximately 26 million Euros each. The

¹ Other Professional National Team Competitions include the UEFA European Under 21- Championships (2006, 2007, 2009), UEFA European Futbol Championships (2007, 2009) and UEFA European Women's Championship (2009).

EUROTOP Partners are joined by four Event Sponsors such as Continental, Adidas, Castrol and Canon, who also possess global rights for the tournament and paid approximately 19 million Euros each. The third category consists of four National Supporters from Austria, which are Telekom Austria, Österreichische Post AG, UniCredit Group² and Hublot³, and four from Switzerland which are UBS, Swisscom, Hublot and Ferrero⁴, who have acquired sole national rights (UEFA, 2008c; Anonymous, 2008a). The Austrian National Supporters paid approximately 1.9 to 3.2 million Euros each while the Swiss National Supporters paid approximately 3.2 to 5.1 million Euros each for the rights acquisition. In comparison to the World Cup 2006, the prices for National Supporter of Euro 2008 are significantly higher by setting the amount in relation to the population figure (Anonymous, 2008a).⁵

Figure 1: Sponsors of Euro 2008



Source: own illustration based on UEFA (2008c)

² The UniCredit Group owns for example Bank Austria.

³ Hublot takes a special position because it has acquired the rights as national supporter for both host countries.

⁴ Trademarks of Ferrero are for example Nutella and Kinder.

⁵ National Supporters of World Cup 2006 in Germany had to pay 0.12 Euros per capita for Germany, while National Supporters of Euro 2008 have to pay 0.36 to 0.60 Euros per capita for Austria and 0.42 to 0.68 Euros for Switzerland (Anonymous, 2008b).

Exclusive Rights for Sponsors

The acquisition of global rights for the event entitles the organisations to exclusive rights and privileges. The sponsoring-package contains the use of the official marks, like the Euro 2008 logo, perimeter advertising, event-advertising like billboards etc., privileged advertising space on TV, VIP-areas, first-class catering, and ticket contingents, which may be used for lotteries and promotion activities. Moreover, the package offers the sponsoring of live TV coverage, Internet presences on the UEFA homepage, and the innovative “Match Partner” programme (UEFA, 2006). Furthermore, the sponsors, including the national supporters, have privileged rights within the official Fan Zones and at public viewing⁶ events (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, 2007; UEFA, 2008d).

However, the popularity of the event provides an ideal opportunity for ambush marketing that is illegal from the perspective of the UEFA (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, 2007). Therefore, UEFA developed a comprehensive global rights protection programme to actively prevent and protect infringements of UEFA’s rights related to Euro 2008 (UEFA, 2008e). In this regard, UEFA protects the official trademarks that may be used only by entities that have been granted special association rights. The organisers have protected brand names such as “Euro 2008”, “UEFA European Championship” or “Austria/ Switzerland 2008” (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, 2007). Moreover, only commercial affiliates appointed by UEFA for Euro 2008 have the right to associate themselves commercially with the event and to produce, sell and distribute items bearing the Official Marks. Sponsorship of public viewing events is only granted to official sponsors or to third parties whose primary business and/ or advertising associated to the Euro 2008 is not included in the list of reserved or prohibited product categories⁷ (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, 2007). Other Partners of public viewing events shall not associate themselves as a sponsor of Euro 2008. Moreover, within the Fan Zones, advertisements are reserved to Official Sponsors and solely INTERSPORT, the Official Sports Shop of Euro 2008, is allowed to sell licensed products (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, 2007, INTERSPORT, 2006).

⁶ The term “public viewing” for the public showing of football matches on giant screens has been familiar to football fans since the World Cup 2006 in Germany, if not before.

⁷ Reserved product categories include the product categories of the Official Sponsors such as cameras, office machines and equipment (Canon), all real and virtual payment systems (MasterCard) or quick service restaurants (McDonald’s). Prohibited product categories include hard alcohol, tobacco, betting and matter with sexual content.

Furthermore, UEFA recommends not wearing any clothing or carrying any item with obvious commercial advertising of non-sponsors in the stadiums, in particular if fans are in a group (UEFA, 2008f). Otherwise, people entering stadiums or Fan Zones may risk having clothing removed if they bear the unofficial logos. Therefore, UEFA plans the assignment of reconnaissance patrols on a match day to squelch ambush marketing activities (Focus, 2007). However, in this regard, UEFA chief operating officer Martin Kallen emphasises that “*a spectator wearing a non-authorised logo will not have any trouble to get in as long as it’s not part of a large scale organised ambush-action*” (Allen, 2008).

METHOD

As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the authors report here on two aspects of our research: firstly to identify official and non-official activities and strategies and secondly to evaluate the impact of the rights protection programme on fans attending the event.

The research that the authors report on here was based on the use of a strategic observation audit: where one of the authors spent some time visiting some of the venues and undertaking a detailed appraisal of the ongoing activities of the official sponsors (and unofficial organisations).

Observation

Observation involves “*the systematic activities of witnessing and recording the behavioural patterns of objects, people, events, and other phenomena without directly communicating with them*” (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2006, pg. 264). Especially with regard to objectives one and four it was important to attend Euro 2008. This allowed the researcher to get a first-hand impression whether the rights protection programme has an impact on fans and to identify promotional activities by sponsors to exploit their sponsorship as well as ambush marketing activities and strategies. There are generally five observational approaches to choose from, including natural versus contrived, open versus disguised, structured versus unstructured, mechanised versus human and participant versus non-participant observation (compare e.g. Wilson, 2006, p 90; McDaniel and Gates, 2001, p146). These five dimensions are usually not dichotomous and rather represent continuums (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996).

Participant observation was undertaken as this allows the researcher to get a better understanding of what is happening at Euro 2008 and a detailed description regarding

behaviours, situations, and events under study while the researcher actually participated in the research phenomena (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2002, Carson et al 2001). Euro 2008 was ideal for observational research as the human observer was able to observe in a natural unobtrusive manner, which did not interfere with people's behaviour. Possible concerns associated with participant observation such as the effort and cost in time to gain access to a particular situation were not of concern (Lee and Broderick, 2007). The observer visited Fan Zones, attended the game Portugal versus Germany, stayed in hostels and travelled by train between the host cities like many other fans to experience Euro 2008 first-hand.

The researcher has written down notes based on his observations, which represent the main data source. In addition, over 130 photos were taken at the event including examples of promotional activities around the host cities and venues.

In order to identify official and non-official sponsor activities and strategies around the host cities, participant observation was undertaken. The researcher attended Euro 2008 and visited with Vienna, Salzburg and Basel: three of the eight host cities. We report on the strategic observation audit that one of the authors undertook at each of these venues. A framework was developed whereby the researcher identified the main areas where there was likely to be unauthorised "ambush" activities. This is displayed in Figure 2.

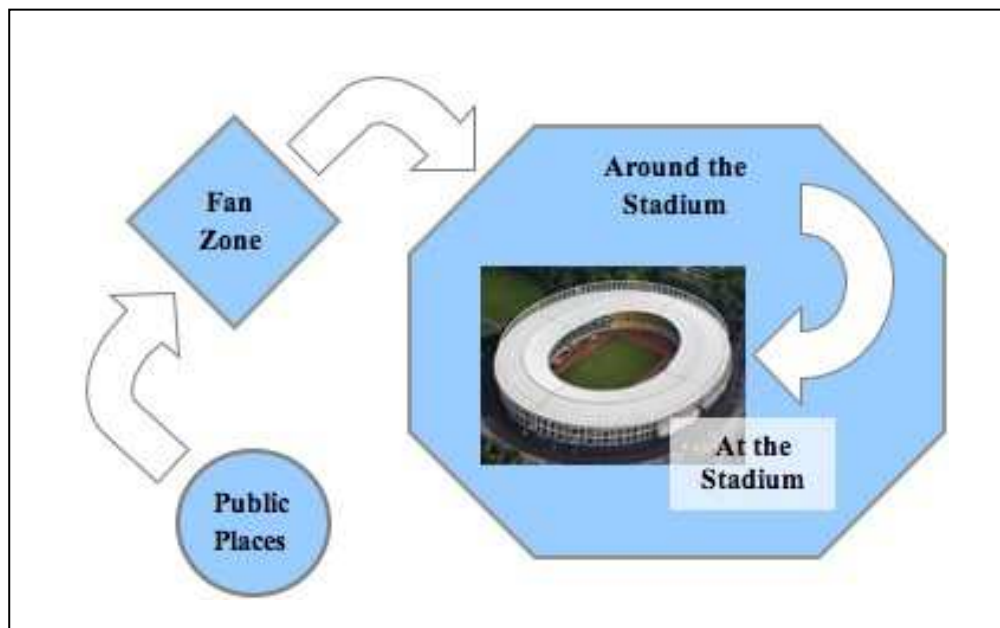


Figure 2: Systematic and Strategic Observational Approach

FINDINGS

Vienna

Public Places

At the airport, directly at the baggage claim area, banners with logos of all sponsors and stripes reading “UEFA Euro 2008” and “Part of the UEFA EURO 2008 Experience” were present. Moreover, there was a Euro 2008 information desk branded with all sponsors, where brochures and city maps promoted by Telekom Austria were distributed. The billboards as well as the information desk were very prominent and good advertisements for the event and its sponsors. On the motorway between the airport and city centre was a huge billboard of McDonald’s, advertising its Player Escort using a child in a jersey as a testimonial. At Southern Railway Station was a huge billboard of Euro 2008 with logos of all sponsors. Outside the station, directly at the tram station was a billboard of Samsung, which advertised a Plasma TV and featured the popular Chelsea FC football players John Terry, Michael Essien, Nicolas Anelka and Petr Cech. This was a good ambush marketing activity and the billboard was very prominent because many travellers had to pass it.



Samsung Billboard with Chelsea FC football Players

The subway station Stephansplatz, in the heart of the city centre of Vienna, was completely branded by Nutella (Ferrero), implementing ambush marketing.⁸ Around 20 billboards were set up throughout the whole station and its various levels. One of the billboards showed an Austrian football player holding a Nutella glass in the style of a cup in his hands while

⁸ Ferrero is a Swiss National Supporter and thus has only the right to associate itself with Euro 2008 in Switzerland (compare 3.4).

another one showed a huge Nutella glass. Both had a slogan reading “Österreich Hat’s Drauf. Hast Du’s Drauf?”⁹ Moreover, the billboards were designed in red-white-red, the colours of Austria’s flag. They were very prominent and it seemed that many people noticed them.



Nutella Billboard in Austria



Nutella Billboard in Austria

Furthermore, the subway station Western Railway Station was heavily branded with Canon billboards, showing football related images with a stripe reading “We Speak Image” and “Euro 2008 Official Sponsor”. The billboards were very eye-catching. In front of the MuseumsQuartier, Adidas displayed 16 giant-sized football boots (compare 3.5.2), which were prominent and many people took a picture of them. At Kärtner Straße, a big shopping street in the city centre, the Nike Store (ambusher) was wrapped with a huge banner featuring stars of its five sponsored national teams such as Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal), Ruud van Nistelrooy (Holland) and Luka Modric (Croatia).

⁹ Translation of the slogan: “Austria has got it. Do you have it?”



Adidas giant-sized Football Boots



Nike Store Vienna

Fan Zone

The Fan Zone, which stretched from the Rathaus (city hall) up to the Heldenplatz, was fenced in with banners. The banners showed logos and stripes of Euro 2008 and its sponsors. The Fan Zone itself was sponsored by Austrian Airlines, Kronen Zeitung¹⁰, ÖBB¹¹ and Wien Energie¹², which used banners at the fences and advertisements in the Fan Zone Guide to promote their sponsorship. Within the Fan Zone, there were several giant screens with logos of the sponsors on the sides and almost every sponsor had a booth such as McDonald's, Canon, MasterCard, Continental and adidas. There was also a huge UniCredit tower; however, it seemed that it served exclusively for hospitality purposes. Moreover, Austrian Airlines ran various promotions such as a lottery. The Fan Zone was crowded with thousands of fans and the sponsors were very prominent.



Giant Screen with Sponsor Logos on both Sides



Booth of McDonald's

¹⁰ Kronen Zeitung is an Austrian daily newspaper.

¹¹ ÖBB (Österreichische Bundesbahnen - Austrian Federal Railways) is the national railway system of Austria.

¹² Wien Energie is an electric utility.

Around the Stadium

The subway station Praterstern was completely branded with many Puma billboards. The billboards advertised football boots by using German national player Mario Gomez as a testimonial. The 15-20 billboards were very eye-catching and set up throughout the whole station. This was a very well selected venue to implement ambush marketing because the subway station was only a 20 minutes walk away from the stadium. The station was even recommended by UEFA in various official brochures and by employees of the public transport to get to the stadium.



Puma Billboard



Puma Billboard – Testimonial Mario Gomez

Outside the Praterstern station was a huge billboard of JVC, advertising a Plasma TV “to experience football live at home”, which was very noticeable. Next to the station is the main building of Bank Austria (UniCredit Group), which was wrapped with two huge billboards. One of them showed football players and a slogan reading “Ganz Österreich ist dabei”¹³ while the other one showed a businessman with a football next to his feet and a slogan reading “Wir sind mit Leidenschaft dabei.”¹⁴ At the Vienna Prater, which is close to the station, Adidas featured a giant image of Petr Cech on the Ferris wheel (compare 3.5.2), a trademark of Vienna. The advertisement was very prominent. Many fans stopped on their way to the stadium and took a picture of it.

¹³ Translation of the slogan: “All of Austria is participating.”

¹⁴ Translation of the slogan: “We take part with passion.”



Adidas “Dream Big” Campaign – Petr Cech

Very close to the stadium there were exclusively billboards of Euro 2008 with logos of all sponsors. The subway station Stadium, which was a 2 minutes walk away from the venue, was completely branded by UEFA with an estimated 10-15 billboards and murals. Some subway trains were branded with Canon and with Euro 2008 and logos of all sponsors.



Euro 2008 Billboard – all Sponsors



Euro 2008 Mural – Subway Station Stadium

At the Stadium

The stadium was fenced in with banners of UEFA EURO 2008. Booths of Carlsberg and Coca Cola were noticeable. At the top of the stadium was a huge banner of all sponsors.

Salzburg

Public Places

The main hall of central station was not branded with any promotion. However, on the main square outside of central station was a big tent with a stripe reading “Fan City”, signs of a

beer mug, information, toilets, TV, fork and knife as well as logotypes of Ottakringer, Vöslauer¹⁵, Eskimo¹⁶, Samsung and Almdudler¹⁷, implementing ambush marketing. The logo of Ottakringer beer is designed in red-white-red, the colours of Austria's flag, and a stripe reading "Inoffizielles Fanbier."¹⁸ The tent was very prominent because it was opposite of the main entrance/ exit of central station. The logos were well identifiable. However, the tent itself was not busy at all. Only a few people were sitting inside and had a drink and/ or meal.



Sponsors of "Fan City"



Logo of Ottakringer Beer

Moreover, a huge billboard from LG, implementing ambush marketing, was set up on the main building of central station, occupying the complete left house wall. The billboard showed an image of a Plasma TV, a non-famous football-player, and a slogan reading "Grenzenloses Bilderlebnis."¹⁹ The billboard was very eye-catching.

On the way from central station to the city-centre, there were several Coca Cola billboards showing pictures of sights of various European cities surrounded by footballs and a stripe reading that people can win a trip to the country of the winning team of Euro 2008. Furthermore, some Nutella (ambusher) billboards, the same as in Vienna, were set up between the pavement and the main street while paintings on the pavement with a TV, an arrow and a Carlsberg logo at intervals of around 100 metres were leading the way to the Fan Zone (see photo below).

¹⁵ Vöslauer is an Austrian mineral water.

¹⁶ Eskimo is the brand name of Unilever's Heartbrand ice cream. It is sold as Wall's in Great Britain.

¹⁷ Almdudler is an Austrian soft drink.

¹⁸ Translation of the slogan: "Unofficial fan beer."

¹⁹ Translation of the slogan: "Limitless visual experience."



Fan Zone

The Fan Zone was located in the historic city centre at Residence Square and Mozart Square. It was fenced in with banners. The banners showed logos and stripes of McDonald's, Hyundai and logos of all official sponsors. The Fan Zone itself was sponsored by Terra Reisen²⁰, Salzburg Airport, DB Schenker²¹ and ÖWD²², which were all shown together on several banners at the fence. Within the Fan Zone, there was a huge stage with a giant screen with logos of the sponsors, excluding the sponsors of the Fan Zone, on the left and on the right side of the stage.



McDonald's Banner on the Fence



Hyundai Booth

Furthermore, there were promotional booths of some sponsors such as Carlsberg, Coca Cola, MasterCard, Canon and Hyundai as well as huge billboards by Telekom Austria, flags by Canon and banners by Visitgreece.gr and Post.at. The latter showed a child with a football and the slogan reading "Die Post bringt den Fußball überall hin. Die schnellste Post

²⁰ Terra Reisen is an Austrian travel business.

²¹ DB Schenker is a logistics service provider

²² ÖWD is the Austrian sentry, which was responsible for the security in Salzburg at Euro 2008.

Europas.”²³ The promotion booths as well billboards and banners were very prominent. However, with an estimation of 3,000 people, the Fan Zone was not crowded in the evening.

Around the Stadium

Before the game Spain against Greece, a major ambush marketing activity was implemented outside of the shopping mall “EUROPARK”, which is only a ten minutes walk from the stadium and the final destination for all public transport to the stadium. A “Greek Village” has been constructed at the rear side of the shopping mall, directly at the exit. Companies such as Vodafone, Carrefour, GOODY’S²⁴, and Piraeus Bank sponsored it.²⁵ Heineken was the beer supplier.



“Greek Village”



Sponsors of “Greek Village”

The venue was well selected because many fans had to pass it on their way to the stadium. It was crowded with approximately 600-800 people, predominantly Greek football fans. However, there were always new people coming to the venue while others were leaving. Within the venue, large flags and promotion booths of the “Greek Village” sponsors as well as an entertainment stage with live music were present. At the various promotion booths, free merchandising was given away such as baseball caps with a logotype of Vodafone or Carrefour, umbrellas with a logotype of GOODY’S, signs that read “HELLAS” (Greece) with a logotype of GOODY’S as well as signs with a logotype of Piraeus Bank. All merchandise articles were designed in blue and white, the national colours of Greece. Many fans were wearing/ holding them.

²³ Translation of the slogan: “The post delivers the football everywhere. The fastest post in Europe.”

²⁴ GOODY’S is a Greek fast food company.

²⁵ Vodafone, Carrefour, and Piraeus Bank are all sponsors of the national football team of Greece.



Vodafone Employee giving away Baseball Caps for free

Moreover, many promotion booths used images that were related to the event such as football posters or showed highlights of football games of the Greek national team. There was a very good atmosphere and it seemed that especially the Greek fans enjoyed the time at the “Greek Village” before leaving to the stadium.

At the Stadium

The stadium was fenced in with banners of Euro 2008. At the top of the stadium was a huge billboard with logos of all sponsors. Trucks branded in MasterCard as well as Adidas flags were noticeable.

Basel

Public Places

In the main hall of Basel Badischer Bahnhof (railway station) were billboards of Puma (ambusher, compare Vienna), McDonalds promoting the Player Escort and Canon. There was also a billboard of Credit Suisse, showing players of the Swiss national team and children on a football pitch with a slogan reading “Sie denken an Hoffnungsträger. Wir machen Nachwuchsförderung. Seit 1993 Hauptsponsor der Fussball-Nationalmannschaft.”²⁶ This was a good ambush marketing activity. Furthermore there was an information desk branded with Euro 2008. Outside, on top of the main building of the railway station was a huge billboard of Samsung. Next to the railway station and in front of the tram station, a whole building was

²⁶ Translation of the slogan: “You are thinking of hope. We support young talent. Since 1993 main sponsor of the national football team.”

branded by Canon with two huge billboards and many flags on the roof. The billboards of Samsung and Canon were very prominent and well selected. It seemed that many travellers as well as drivers noticed them.



Credit Suisse Billboard



Canon Billboard and Flags

In the main hall of Basel central station were many huge banners of McDonald's, for example, showing a picture of a child with a slogan reading "Nicolas aus Mauri begleitet einen Star aufs Spielfeld."²⁷ Furthermore, there were many banners of Euro 2008 with logos of all sponsors. Outside, on the main building of central station was a huge billboard of Carlsberg, which was very eye-catching. In the city-centre were a few billboards including National Supporter UBS, Credit Suisse (ambusher) and a huge one of Carlsberg using the Swiss National Team as a testimonial?



Carlsberg Billboard at Central Station McDonald's Banners in the Main Hall of Central Station

²⁷ Translation of the slogan: "Nicolas from Mauri accompanies a star on the field."

Furthermore, on the match-day of Netherlands against Russia, several Dutch fans wore hats branded with the logo and name of Heineken. It is likely that these hats were distributed somewhere in the city centre as part of an ambush marketing strategy.

Moreover, Swiss International Air Lines implemented ambush marketing. Several trams were completely branded with the company, showing flags of various European countries with a stripe reading “Airline for all Fans.” There were also huge banners and billboards of Swiss International Air Lines at the airport, showing for example the Spanish or Polish flag with a stripe reading “Connecting all football nations”. The Swiss International Air Lines activities were prominent.



Swiss International Air Lines Banner at Basel Airport

Fan Zones

Basel had two Fan Zones in the city centre – “Kaserne-Riveria” and Münsterplatz (Minster Square). At the latter one were billboards of UBS and JVC as well as a booth of Carlsberg present. Moreover, the National Supporter Swisscom set up a telecommunications centre, where fans could, for example, use the Internet for free. However, there were only a few sponsor activities. In contrast, the Fan Zone Kaserne-Riviera was heavily wrapped by sponsor activities. There were booths of Coca Cola, Carlsberg, adidas, Continental, MasterCard, Hyundai, JVC, UBS as well as a Swisscom Centre. The booth of Canon was set up as a tunnel, which included an exhibition of historical football photographs. Furthermore, there were huge billboards of adidas, Hyundai and Canon. Both Fan Zones were supported by

Basler Zeitung²⁸, Winkler Veranstaltungstechnik²⁹ and radio Basel 1, which used banners at the fences and advertisements in the Fanguide to promote their sponsorship. Around 3,000 to 4,000 people visited the Fan Zone Kaserne-Riviera in the evening to watch a game.



Canon "Tunnel"

Around the Stadium

There were hardly any promotional activities around the stadium with the exception of a few billboards of INTERSPORT, the Official Sports Shop of Euro 2008. The billboards showed a football on a stadium ground with a stripe reading "The place where football starts".

At the Stadium

The stadium was fenced in with banners of Euro 2008. There were many booths of Carlsberg and Coca Cola as well as a few banners with logos of all sponsors. In the stadium, the sponsors were very prominent because of their perimeter advertising on the field. Just before kick-off of the game Portugal against Germany, fan messages were shown on the two giant screens presented by JVC. During half-time, many commercials of the sponsors were shown on screens. These included three spots of Mastercard and Coca Cola, two spots of Carlsberg and one spot each of McDonald's, Hyundai, JVC, Continental, Castrol, adidas and Canon. Moreover, further fan messages were shown sponsored by JVC. After the game, Carlsberg presented the Player of the Game. However, there were no further commercials.

²⁸ Basler Zeitung is a daily newspaper.

²⁹ Winkler Veranstaltungstechnik is a company for event technology.



Perimeter Advertising

DISCUSSION

- The findings strongly indicate that it is virtually impossible for the property owner to fully protect the rights of official sponsors. There will always be parts of the city that cannot be “captured” by the property owner” for its exclusive use. This was graphically evidenced by the establishment of the “Greek Village” in Salzburg, which was constructed at the rear side of a shopping mall near the stadium. It is unreasonable to expect that such a shopping centre would allow itself to be controlled by UEFA for the duration of the tournament. That said, there is also evidence to suggest that the property owner was too careless in identifying strategic locations such as train stations, where many fans would have used on their way to the stadium. Indeed the official brochures produced by UEFA recommended that fans alight from one such station. This was seized upon by Puma (an unofficial sponsor).
- The placing of billboards near the stadium was successfully tackled by UEFA at this tournament. It was evident that all such billboards near the stadia featured the official sponsors. The Fan Zones also were festooned with logos and booths representing the sponsors.
- The rights protection programme, although relatively successful in protecting the official sponsors had a negative impact on fans. It created restrictions that fans found to be overly intrusive and in one or two cases, from the observational audit, almost led to fist-fights between fans and officials.
- Findings from our interviews with fans (not reported in this paper for reasons of length) also indicate that the attitudes of fans to towards official sponsors would be more positive if a more proactive educational programme was to be adopted by the property owner.

This would involve clearer communication on tickets, official websites and brochures as well as greater collaboration with tour operators and the mass media.

LIMITATIONS

The authors were constrained by limited resources and were not in a position to cover all of the venues that staged the Euro 2008 competition. Inevitably a certain element of subjectivity enters into the analysis of the situation.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The authors recommend that further research should concentrate on primary research with other stakeholders in the equation besides the property owners, the event hosts and the fans. From the observation audit it was clear that the hosts and the property owners failed to spend sufficient time identifying strategic areas where ambushers could target their efforts.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The rights protection programme for this and other events needs a greater degree of balance between the protection of official sponsors on the one hand and generating a relaxed and positive experience for the fans on the other. Possible initiatives could include the following:

- Allow fans to bring one bottle of water at least into the fan zones.
- Apart from the official beer sponsor, one local brewery should have the opportunity to offer its beer within the stadia and the fan zones. This would have the additional advantage of bringing the property owner closer to the local traditions of the host venues

The policy of not allowing fans to wear clothing that conflicts with the official sponsors is too strict. As well as causing bad publicity, it may lead to “health and safety” issues if fans are asked to remove caps before entering the stadia without being offered an alternative one. Official sponsors should be encouraged to give out caps and tee shirts to replace and items that are confiscated.

Clearly, it is unrealistic in this commercial age of sport to advocate policies which seriously diminish the value of sponsorship. However we argue that a greater balance is required across

the interests of the key stakeholders in the process of delivering a hallmark event such as Euro 2008.

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