

Searching for sponsors for four national rugby teams in Finland

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<p>How to get more sponsors to four national rugby teams in Finland? Finnish Rugby Federation and its four national teams are in the need of new long lasting sponsorship deals to fund the national teams' tournaments in Finland and abroad. Since rugby is quite unknown sports in Finland it faces challenges in getting new sponsorship deals and also its visibility is currently very low. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the current situation of rugby, sponsorship contracts Finnish rugby Federation now has and how the contacting is now done. The goal of this thesis is to analyse and give suggestions in how to get more sponsors more efficiently and engage them for longer time, so that both parties feel they benefit from this deal. Suggestions in improving digital marketing are also given, which helps to increase the visibility of rugby in Finland.</p> <p>This thesis starts with theory about sport marketing, brand management, sponsorship and what it is, how to get sponsors, in that section of thesis is also discussed sponsorship from the company's point of view, which is important since the sponsorship target needs to understand what the company wants to have from the deal. Theory concentrates in how to get sponsors, how to choose the correct sponsors with joining factors and what is rugby globally and in Finland. From theory the study continues to analyse the current situation of sponsorship the Finnish Rugby Federation and the four national teams now has and how the contacting of the sponsors are done currently. In this section of the study the national teams are presented more in detail and where they now get their money. The model for getting more sponsors and engaging them is gotten from ex-Finnish footballers and current manager of Finnish athletes Erkki Alaja. With Alaja's matching model in gaining new sponsors new possible sponsor companies are introduced and the matching process is presented in more details with its benefits. After the matching is important to go through how to present the national teams in the meeting with possible sponsor companies. In the end of the study there are recommendations in how to get more visibility by improving Finnish Rugby Federation's digital marketing.</p> <p>Conclusion of this study is that even though rugby is among the 10 most popular sports in the world, in Finland it still struggles to gain popularity because the visibility is still low. Being one of the Olympic sports has increased rugby's popularity all around the world, which will eventually also show in Finland. Possible new sponsor companies are visionary if they start a cooperation partnership with Finnish Rugby Federation, since they take the first step in increasing rugby visibility and can be creating together with the national teams rugby more famous in Finland and help the Finnish Women's teams enter the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.</p>	
Keywords Rugby, sponsorship, co-operation partnership, matching process, sport marketing	

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1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to find a way to get new sponsors for four Finnish national rugby teams, so that their tournaments and travelling fees are supported more. Intention is to develop a model, which helps to find better ways to attract sources of income to support these four national teams, so that the cost price of playing for players will be smaller. Another intention is to suggest new possible partners based on the model. Partners will be interested if they get visibility, so one aim is to think and find solutions in how to make rugby more visible. This study shall mostly focus on how to get new sponsors for the national teams, who they could be and how to keep these partners engaged in the future.

Based on Eero Valanko's book about sponsoring and cooperation, sponsorship can be determined as follows:

Cooperation partnership is a contract between two parties, which is based on material and immaterial performances and counter-performances, which meet the needs of both parties. It is for both parties a strategic solution and investment, which is designed together and utilized in practise both separate and together with different methods of marketing communications. It brings extra added value to both parties and their actions and also for the target audience. (Valanko E. 2009, p. 62. Translated by Ylönen N. 2016)

The organization, from which this subject has been received, is Finnish Rugby Federation, which governs rugby in Finland and represents Finland in World Rugby, Rugby Europe and the Finnish National Olympic Committee. The mission of Finnish Rugby Federation is to develop rugby in Finland, aim to Olympics with the Women's 7's national team, support the local rugby clubs in different cities and also make to sport more known here in Finland. Finnish Rugby Federation is referred in this thesis as SRL, meaning Suomen Rugby Liitto. The purpose of this thesis is to research the theory behind sponsoring and sports marketing and study the current state of SRL's sponsorships and partnerships and figure out who could be their potential sponsors and how to engage them for longer period. New possible partners are sampled and analysed based on a model by Erkki Alaja, who has a long career in sports sponsorship and managing athletes.

Making rugby more visible and known in Finland makes rugby also more tempting sponsorship target for the companies. This is why it is also important to think how rugby could be marketed better to make it more known and popular. The more there is visibility, the more there is interest among sponsors. Rugby being one of Olympic sports has opened up a new door for this sport also in Finland, since the future visibility will be higher.

2 Needs and objectives

The number of rugby players in Finland is increasing and the interest towards rugby is growing. Still rugby needs new players from different ages and levels, so that the interest towards this sport would keep growing. This study is needed, because currently the four national teams, which are men's and women's national teams in both 15's and 7's, are paying most of their expenses from their own money and Finnish Rugby Federation hopes to find better ways to attract sources of income so that the cost price for players will be smaller. Intention of this study is to suggest new possible partners and how keep them engaged.

I found out about the organizations needs by contacting the Union's Technical Director Stephen Whittaker, who also manages the men's national team. He takes care of the overall development for rugby in Finland. Whittaker told me that my proposal to do a thesis and a research for Finnish Rugby Federation could not have come at a better time, since this topic has been on their list for a good time. I am interested in this research and development project, because this study and the results can benefit the players and the SRL.

This study will contribute to the organization by creating a model on how to get new sponsors, finding new possible partners based on that model and also gives suggestions in how also in the future more sponsors can be found. My aim is to give useful suggestions to SRL and a solution to the topic they have been trying to solve for longer time.

2.1 Previous studies

For Warriors Rugby Club (Helsinki) was thesis made by Kasper Korhonen, s student in Haaga-Helia, during autumn 2016 about their current sponsors and how to improve the relations with sponsors. According to Korhonen's research roughly 10% of companies marketing budget goes into sponsoring and the goals for sponsoring for these 7 companies was to gain more visibility and popularity. According to Korhonen's thesis the Warrior's Rugby Club should focus in getting more visibility for the sponsors find ways to increase the sales of the companies and show the company how the deal with Warrior's brings extra value for the sponsors. (Korhonen K. 2016)

There are no previous studies made for SRL. (Whittaker, 8.7.2016). There are no books or extra sources available of SRL or rugby in Finland. Since rugby is known in other countries better, there are theses made from rugby, its' characteristics and development, but

nothing made from sport sponsorship in rugby. From other sports, such as floor ball and ice hockey has been made theses regarding sponsorship and also theses over companies point of view in sponsorship has been written. A thesis by Harri Setälä about possibilities and ways of funding sports clubs in Finland focuses more on creating a manual for people who are responsible for funding the sports club and in the thesis is discussed a lot about taxation and the theory of that thesis mainly focused on tax laws regarding non-profit organizations. In Setälä's study the conclusion was that sport clubs finance their activities mostly through membership fees, which in SRL's case is also currently the case but since rugby is not so popular sports yet, the membership fees are not enough to fund the national teams expenses, such as travelling and tournament costs.

2.2 Theoretical framework and content of report

Theoretical framework in this thesis is based on sports marketing, sponsorship theories and digital marketing. In this thesis is used theoretical framework from Finnish ex-footballer and well-known sport manager Erkki Alaja, who has also written many books about sport sponsorship and has been the manager of Mikael Forssell, Laura Lepistö and Topi Raitanen. The structure of this paper starts with theoretical framework, continues into analysing the current state of rugby globally and rugby in Finland. After theory and rugby in general this study focuses in more detail to rugby in Finland, the SRL and goes through the current state of sponsorship they have. After analysing the current state of sponsorship and how it is done, the study focuses on how to get new sponsors, suggesting some potential sponsors and partners from different industries and how to contacts and engage them better. Possible new sponsors are sampled through Alaja's model he uses when finding sponsors for the athletes he manages. At the end the new suggested model for gaining new sponsors for the national teams is represented and also few possible new sponsorship companies suggested to SRL, which could be contacted. At the end is also presented ways to gain more visibility for the SRL and rugby in Finland through modern digital marketing, since gaining more visibility means that more sponsors will be more interested of this sports.

The research of rugby and sponsoring is made by collecting information from different sources; interviews with Whittaker, books about marketing, sports marketing and sponsorship theory, discussions and lectures by Erkki Alaja and analysing the current state of the sponsorship deals SRL has now. Based on the current state analysis of the national teams and SRL's challenges in finding sponsors a new way of making sponsors interested of the four national teams is presented.

3 Methodology and methods

The philosophy and ontology in this study is interpretivism. Aspect of ontology will be objectivism.

“..interpretive researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments” (John Dudovskiy, 2015)

“...interpretivism studies usually focus on meaning and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue.” (John Dudovskiy, 2015)

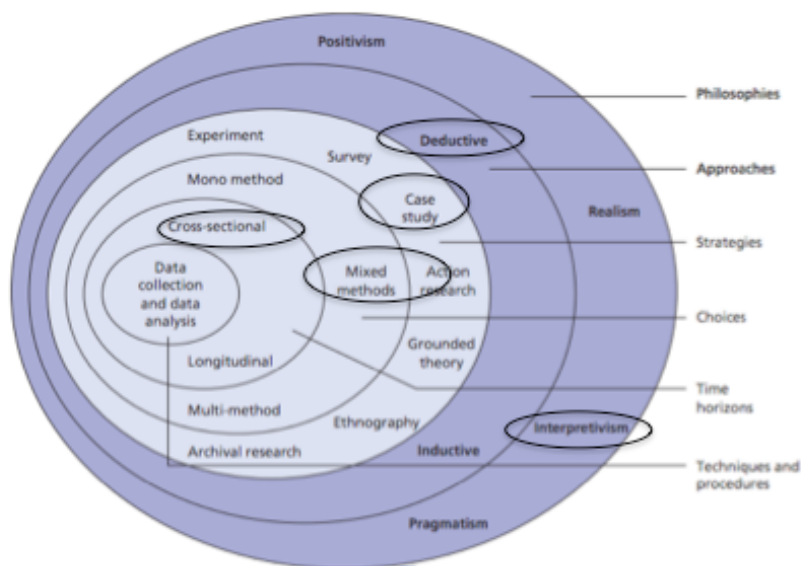
Interpretivist approach is based on relativist ontology and transactional or subjectivist epistemology. Relativist ontology means that reality is based on meanings and understanding on social and experimental level. In transactional epistemology or subjectivist epistemology people cannot be separated from the knowledge. Interpretivism in socially constructed, the researcher having interpretivist approach is cooperative, participative and interactive. Interviews and observations as well as secondary data are most popular data collection methods. (John Dudovskiy, 2015)

In interpretivism approach the data collection is small samples and in-depth investigations, interviews and observation are the most common techniques, which techniques will also be used in this study when analysing the current state of SRL and the sponsors of the four national teams. Secondary data research is also popular. In interpretivism the data is qualitative. The research approach in this study is deductive, because of the limited time. There is already lots of theory from sport sponsorship and sports marketing, which means that approaching the research questions from theory to data is possible. First the theory available is studied and hypothesis and suggestions are made based on the theory. Theory might be tested. After gathering the data and testing the theory, also new theories or models might formulate.

In this thesis many different data collection methods are used; interviews, lectures, books, secondary data, observation of the current state of digital marketing. Based on this data suggestions are given in how to improve the digital marketing, gain more sponsors and get more visibility for rugby in Finland. Plenty of data research has been done, such as researched statistic about rugby worldwide and much literature and news articles have been read to see the whole picture of the problem in Finland. Multiple email interviews have been made with Stephen Whittaker throughout the thesis process, since he has the knowledge in the situation of sponsorship deals that the SRL currently has and what the four national teams need. I have contacted a long-term professional in sports marketing

and listened to his lectures and workshops in few universities in Finland regarding sports sponsorships and how to match the sponsors and sponsorship target together. In this thesis the strategy is case study and mixed methods will be used. Time horizon will be cross-sectional. The following picture will show the research onion and which methods have been used in this study:

Picture 1. The Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill 2009, 108)



The data for this study from the present stage of sponsorship deals are gathered by qualitative interviews mostly with Stephen Whittaker. The model of how to match the sponsors and the sponsorship target and possible new sponsors are matched with the two national teams based on Erkki Alaja's model and knowledge and experience regarding sport sponsorship and engaging the sponsors, lectures and discussion at different Universities in Finland.

The following chapters will go through what is sport marketing, sponsorship in general and in Finland, what does sponsorship mean for both parties and how to choose the sponsor. The following chapters will analyse the current sponsor situation of SRL, how the marketing is currently done in SRL and SWOT analysis is made of SRL and rugby. After that this study goes closer to the four national teams analysing their operational environment and who those teams are. Erkki Alaja's model in how to match the sponsorship and sponsorship target is represented for the two national teams, how to match these four national teams with companies and how to continue after the matching process has been done. In the end of the study is analysed SRL's digital marketing and how to improve that, since digital marketing in today's world is a very efficient way to gain more visibility, which is something SRL and rugby in Finland needs.

4 Marketing mix

The basic marketing mix consist of 4 P's; product, place, price and promotion, which all need to attract the target market. Marketing mix means putting the right product in the right place at the right time with right price and doing this all well. There are also modifications of marketing mix with 7 P's and 4 C's. Marketing mix of 7 P's is more used in service industry and the P-letters consist of product, place, price, physical environment, promotion, process and people. Robert F. Lauterborn developed marketing mix of 4C's in 1990, as a modification of 4 P's and it is an extension of Marketing Mix definition. Marketing Mix with 4 C's is a modern version of the standard marketing mix and it will help an Internet marketer. The four C's are customer or consumer value, cost, convenience and communication. These four C's concentrate and help the company to think more from customers' point of view and becoming more customer-centric. (Marketing Mix, 2016) The following picture tell in more detail what these four C's mean in Marketing Mix.

Picture 2. Marketing Mix 4 C's



Since SRL is a non-profit organization and does it's marketing mostly online, the marketing mix of 4 C's is the most suitable for them. Target markets for SRL are the sponsors, the fans and people who are interested or playing rugby. For SRL is important to find out what customers need and want and then create a solution; the sponsors wish to have more visibility, so SRL needs to figure out how to offer them some solutions to this for

example through online marketing. Cost for SRL needs to be low, since it is a non-profit organization. SRL needs to consider the sponsors and make sure the price for sponsoring is equivalent to what the sponsors are receiving from SRL. Communication between SRL, the sponsors, fans and people interested of rugby needs to be appealing, active and professional. Communication in this marketing mix means the interaction between SRL and the sponsors and it needs to be on-going and professional and bring extra value to the sponsors. Convenience in this marketing mix means how and where does the customer want to purchase. SRL in this convenience sections should think how they advertise their games and events online, so that they make it easy for people (customers) to go and see the games, people notice faster when and where the games are organised and it is easy for people to participate in the events or get extra information from them.

4.1 Sport marketing

Companies seek visibility and the sponsorship targets search for the same through their sponsors. Companies can broaden their competitive advantage by improving and increasing their image and one way to increase credibility, promote the company and improve the image is by sponsoring events, teams, artists or places such as big arenas where huge events are held. Sponsoring for the company offers support for the event and opportunities for distinct marketing. With sponsorship deals companies can reach specific business goals, such as improving their image, influencing customer relations, differentiating from competitors, increasing sales or making brand stronger. (Friedman S. 13.10.2016)

Sport marketing means meeting the needs of sport consumers, people playing sports, watching sport programmes, buying sport merchandise, surfing sport-related websites or searching the latest news of favourite sport teams. Marketing is a process of planning and implementing activities that meet the needs and desires of these customers. Sport marketing is an on-going relationship between sports brand and its users. Key features of sports marketing are using general marketing practices to market sport related products and services and also marketing other consumer products or services through the sport. Sport marketing works both ways, marketing the sport itself and using the sport as a tool to market other products and services, such as sponsors' products and services. Marketing of sports means marketing directly to consumers the sport equipment, competitions, sport events and local clubs and their events. Marketing of sport also means marketing of a team, ticket selling or selling apparel. Marketing through sport means marketing a non-sport product which is associated to sport, for example a corporation sponsoring a sport event or team selling company's products through their web pages or on their events. In sport marketing the consumer needs to be aware of the sport products or service and the

consumer need to have reacted to the sport product or service somehow, for example on the web pages or signing into a newsletter. (Smith, A. C. T. 2008, p.3-4)

According to Ameri's and Bahiri's article about sponsorship being an element of sport marketing mix, they mention that sponsors hope that by investing their funds to sport property, they gain more consumer awareness of their brand and build their brand equity. In the next figure is shown the framework of sport marketing and where sponsorship is in it. This framework also works vice versa; sport teams or organizations can plan their marketing based on this framework as well.



Figure 1. Sport marketing framework (Ameri, S., Bashiri, M. 2010, p.19)

“Sponsorship in non-sport organizations aren't considered as an advertisement but it is considered as a part of a personal sales and an element of marketing mix.”

(Ameri, S., Bashiri, M. 2010, p.18)

Ameri and Bashiri divide sport-marketing framework (Fig 1.) into four different sections starting from identifying the opportunities in sport marketing. That includes understanding what is your environment and what is the external environment, analysing the organizations who could sponsor you or who you could sponsor and analysing the market overall and the consumers or customers. Next step is developing strategy and deciding where to aim the marketing; will it appeal on fans, on consumers, emotions, building brand awareness or perhaps increasing sales – what is the purpose? Planning the sport marketing mix includes what are we selling, to whom, where, on what price, what do we offer and who sponsors us or who do we sponsor and how and what do we wish to gain from this spon-

sponsorship deal. Implementation strategy and scheduling is also needed, as well as follow-up and measuring the results of the marketing plan.

For organizations, sponsoring is essential part of their marketing strategy and big companies include sponsoring as part of their marketing strategy. In the next chapter there is an example of O2, which has used its sponsorship deal successfully and gained more market share, visibility and made their brand stronger.

4.2 Sponsorship being a strong part of marketing for a company – Case example O2 and Irish Rugby

O2 is a leading digital communications company in United Kingdom and Ireland and has over 25 million customers. O2 launched in 2002 and ever since launching it has sponsored rugby in England and in Ireland. O2's strategy for Irish rugby is to create brand differentiation. The sponsorship for Irish rugby started in 2006 and O2 started competing with other sponsors such as Guinness and Heineken. O2 wanted to position themselves so that the Irish rugby fans felt that O2 understands the values and heritage of rugby, other challenge was to get the most of their budget, which was smaller than what the other sponsors provided and that's why O2 started active online marketing, into which the public could participate too. Rugby in Ireland is very crowded with sponsors, which is why it was challenging for O2 to enter the rugby sponsoring and differentiate from others. O2 strategy was to differentiate their brand in mobile market and the brand positioning focused on participation and engagement. Their marketing campaign was built around brand awareness, customer relationships and interaction. O2 wished to offer the fans a way to support their team in innovative way and bring the fans closer to their sport teams and this meant meaningful participation between the fans, O2 and the rugby team. O2's "Be the Difference" –campaign received huge success; O2 had social media campaign where the fans could show their support and helped in creating a bond with the team and the fans. Through this page fans felt they can help to support their team and register their jerseys. O2 enhanced the rugby fans experience by letting them participate and interact through online and social media channels. This kind of brand strategy put the consumers first, connected people and put the fans in the middle of the O2 campaign. This campaign opened doors for O2 to be in the centre of rugby sponsoring and create an image of brand, which helps to get closer to the things or experiences you love. After this campaign O2 continued with other campaigns, such as "Jersey Names", where fans could get their autograph on the back of the players shirts and "Bring Back the Roar"-campaign in 2011, which allowed fan involvement by submitting their recorded roar, such as "Come on Ireland!" etc. online and the winning roars were played before and during the important

matches. Sponsorship program was in the centre of O2's brand strategy and this sponsorship program offered competitive advantage and made the brand differentiation by emotional engagement. (Cahill, J., Meenaghan, T. 2013, p. 436-438)

O2's brand strategy and sponsorship deal with Irish rugby team helped O2 to get more famous in the eyes of rugby fans and improved O2's image. With their brand strategy they brought together the fans and the team and put customer first, which is why their brand grew stronger and gave positive image to the customers also about O2. O2 emotionally connected with customers through their sponsorship program and grew also their customer loyalty. These successful campaigns of O2 have been on-going already for 10 years and has made O2 more popular and known in Ireland and helped in growing their market share there. O2's brand strategy and sponsorship strategy is a good example of how the company can benefit and improve their business from the sponsorship deal, which has cost them less than other competitors.

5 Brand management

Part of marketing is brand management. Brand management means using techniques to increase value or brand and when done effectively, it increases customer loyalty, brand is associated positively, awareness of the brand is growing and the image of the brand grows stronger.

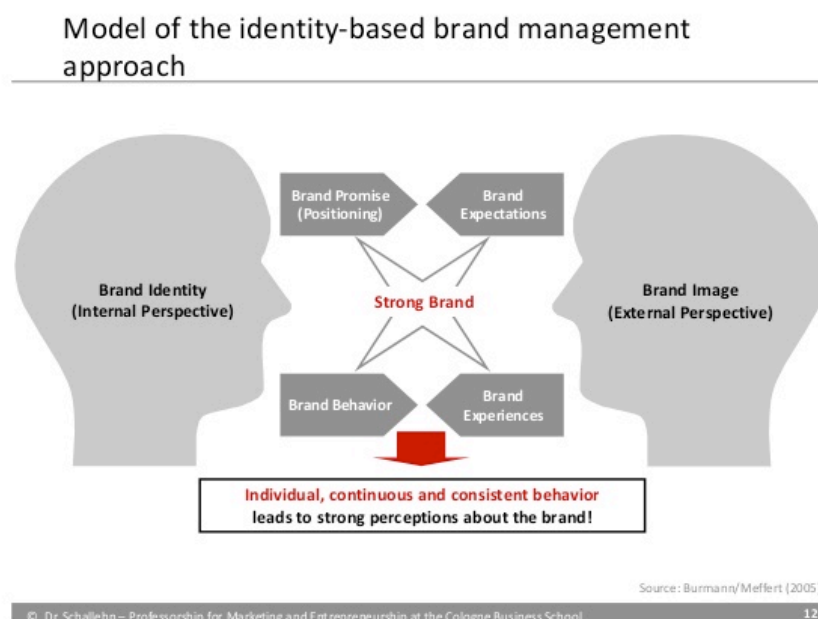
“Branding is considered by many today as central to marketing. It plays various roles. As a mental impression of a product and /or service, it has a key role of being distinctive and providing differential advantage. From a consumer’s perspective, it can facilitate decision making and purchase.” (Sudhakar B. D. 2016, p.295)

Parts of brand management are brand identity and brand communication, which are more closely discussed in the following chapters.

5.1 Brand identity and brand image

With brand identity is meant how the business wants to be perceived by the consumers. Brand components are for example logo and name, which reflect the value the company tries to bring and are meant for appealing the consumers. (Investopedia, 2016)

Picture 3. Identity-based brand management (Schallehn, M. 27.2.2013)



Brand identity is the perspective the company wishes to give out of themselves and of their products or services. Brand image means how consumers perceive the business, their brand and is it the same than how the company has meant it to be perceived. When building a brand, it is important to make sure the brand identity matches the brand image as much as possible – in other words meets the expectations of consumers. Strong brand is created from brand positioning, brand behaviour and brand expectations as well as experiences. When the business is consistent and continuous in the branding, it leads to strong perceptions of consumers about the brand.

The following figure tells in more detail about brand identity and brand image and what the business needs to consider, when creating brand strategy.

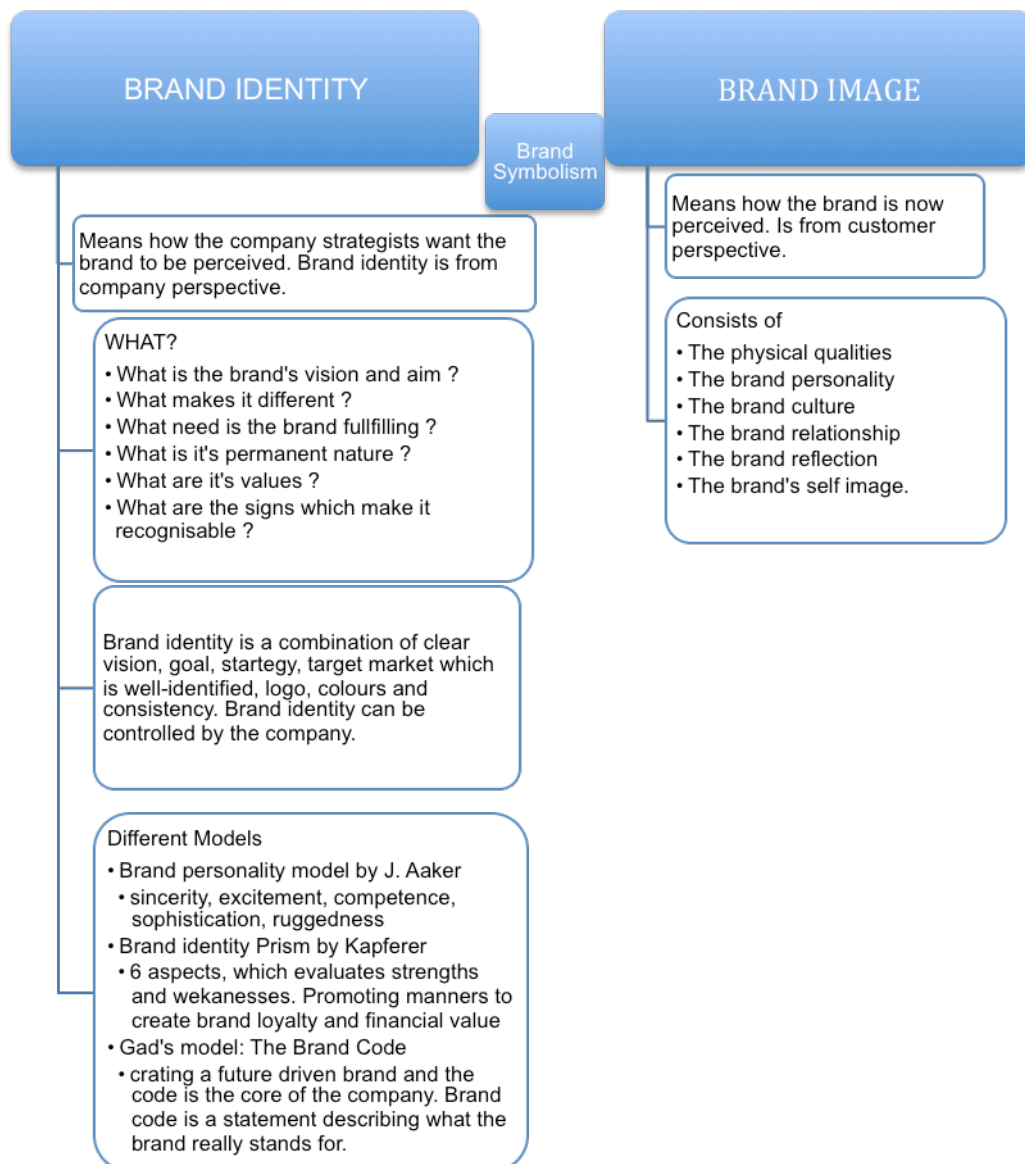


Figure 2. Brand identity and brand image (Aaker, D. 2010, Kapferer, J-N. 2008)

Brand identity is build by analysing the business itself and the market it is in. Business needs to determine where they would like to be and how to get there, so they can determine the key business goals and the brand identity should help in reaching these goals. Identifying the customers is important – to who do we wish to make the brand more known, who is our customer and what kind of message do we wish to give to our customers? In creating brand identity, all the elements such as logo, name, social media pages, tone of messages, products or services offered needs to support the overall business goals. (Investopedia, 2016)

Brand symbolism is between the identity and image (Fig. 2), symbols are designed by the business but through those symbols consumers get their perceptions and create their own image of the brand, which is why the symbolic elements needs to be also created with consideration. A part of brand identity is brand symbolism and the visual elements of brand. If the visual elements of brand symbolism are strong, customers will remember the brand easier and get positive associations, which is the meaning with brand symbolism. The visual elements of the brand describe to stakeholders and customers in symbolic terms what the brand offers. Brand symbolism consists of: visual elements such as logo, symbols, colour, font, social media, shops, staff, service, product or noise. Logo reflects the brand, needs to be unique and eye catching, and easy to reproduce. Logo's shape and location needs to be considered carefully. Font of newsletter, web pages and advertisement needs to be considered as well; different fonts have different meanings and some fonts can be very unclear or misunderstood. Different colours have also different meanings, what message does your company want to deliver to customers and partners? Brand symbolism needs to be in-line with the brand strategy, brand identity and brand image. In every country the visual elements of the brand needs to bring the same associations from the brand.

According to article and a research made by Robert James Thomas regarding event sponsorship, Dove Men -brand and Welsh Rugby and how fans perceive the sponsor, the results indicate that the fans are not just passive receivers of marketing information. Instead fans are the most likely to engage with sponsoring brand, fans develop attachment and become brand resonant. In this research it is mentioned that the event's image needs to be consistent with the sponsors brand and their goals in brand positioning. The sponsor and the event need to have a fit, a relationship, which joins the event and sponsor together. (Thomas R. J., 2014, p. 316)

Strong brand stays in people's minds and is remembered better. With effective branding of an event, a company, an organisation or a team the consumers and partners will re-

ceive more positive image and stay in peoples' minds better, which is why it is important to manage the brand properly and find the relationship between the two parties.

5.2 Brand communication

Brand communication is creating a message you would like to receive and sending the message out to priority audiences (both internal and external). The purpose of brand communication grows when the execution of marketing plan is getting closer. (Singer, G. 6.8.2013) Brand communication consists of storytelling and social media branding. Consumers constantly meet different brands through advertising, in magazines, by sponsorships, when purchasing materials and on supermarket shelves. Important in brand communication is to make the brand noticed. Brand communication starts when brand identity is figured out clearly. Brand communication reflects the brand strategy and is most effective when the message is in line with the receiver's existing opinions, beliefs and dispositions. Brand communication is more likely to be effective if the source has expertise, high status, objectivity or likeability. Communication with consumers is a dialogue between the company and its customers. Companies need to consider how they can reach their customers and how the customers can reach the company. (Slide Share, p. 1-14 2009)

With social media companies can communicate with consumers completely differently than before; companies can have a dialogue with customers to develop their brand and create something what interests people. The consumers are becoming the co-creators of in developing the company, it's products or services and brand, since marketing is based on communicating with consumers the way they prefer. Communicating the brand with consumers needs to be done authentically and through conversation. Authenticity means being real, flexible and spontaneous and having real-time dialogue with consumers online. These all help to position the brand, since if the company has effective social media marketing skills, the social media starts making marketing for the company automatically. Knowing whom the ideal customer is, helps to create more interesting content to which the customers respond in positive way. People, the consumers, "prefer connection over information", meaning that it is good to let the personality come thru and give the consumers option to relate to the company and the brand's face. In brand communication, sharing relevant content is important; the content needs to reach the consumers at right time and about interesting subject. Being helpful on social media is a good way to communicate positive brand image to the consumers; replying helpfully to the consumers instead of just linking pages will build relationship between the brand and consumers. Building trust between the company and the consumer can be done by replying in helpful and friendly tone and by being open. Social media is unique marketing method, which allows the company

to communicate with consumers very directly and on-time and sharing details of the companies journey or challenges can stand the company from other competitors and communicates to the consumer that the company is transparent and open. User-generated content is one way to get closer to the consumers. (Moraes, M. 19.6.2016)

Marketing has changed from marketing at consumers to marketing with consumers, which is why it is important to highlight the possibilities communicating through social media offers for the companies and to their brands. Social media marketing has opened doors to enhance brand awareness and brand communication and customer engagement. With social media the brand communication can be done to big crowds at the same time and more efficiently, but the social media communication needs to be in line with the brand identity and the visual brand elements. Barriers between consumers and companies are lower and more people can be reached through digital media effectively and in more genuine way.

6 Sponsorship

In 2002 sport sponsorship market was worth roughly 30 billion U.S. dollars, 33% from that was for European market. (Beech J. Chadwick S, 2007, p. 270). In 2012 the estimated value of global sponsorship market was already 40 billion U.S. dollars. 69% of the total sponsorship market was in North America (United States and Canada), but this includes also other sponsorships, not only sport sponsorships. Mega events in sports, such as the Olympics, Super Bowl, the FIFA world Cup and UEFA Euro are the most sponsored events and for example the Olympics held between 2009-2012 generated almost 1 billion U.S. dollars in sponsorship revenue. (Statista, 2016)

The next figure shows the changes in sport sponsorship spending and revenue between 2007-2015 worldwide.

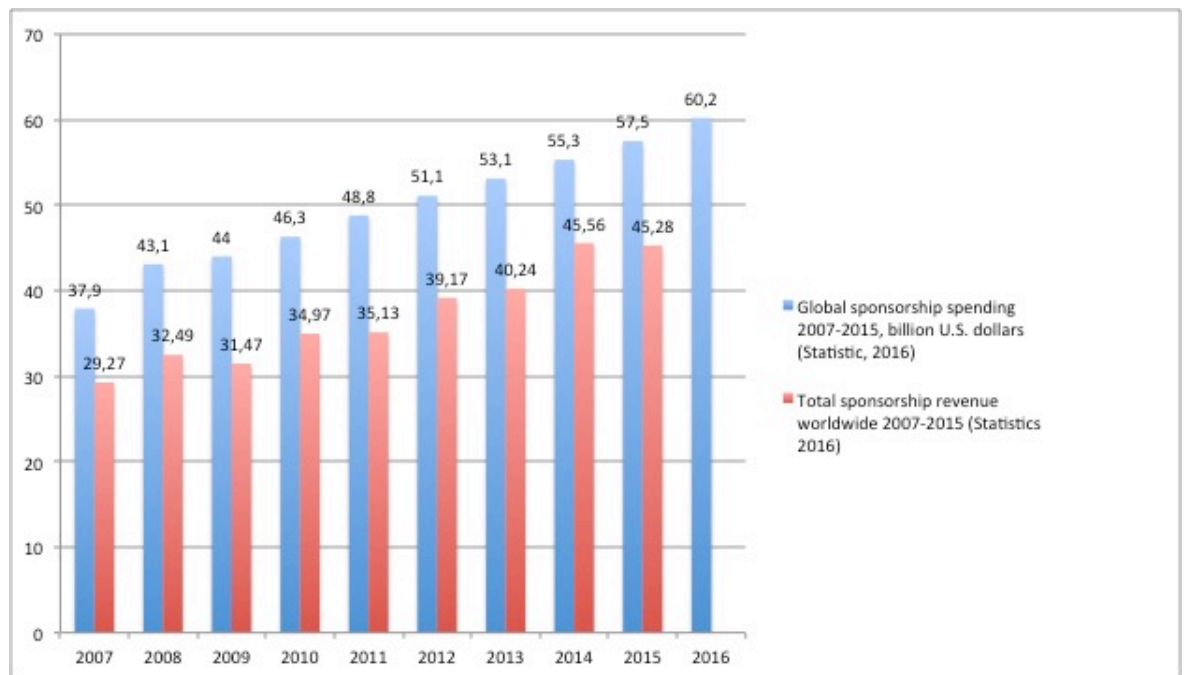


Figure 3. Sport sponsorship spending and revenue 2007-2015 (Statista, 2016)

In the figure can be seen that the spending towards sport sponsorship has grown year after year. Partly increase in sport sponsorship can be explained due to the increase in the salaries of many athletes and their demands to get higher earnings particularly through sponsorships. The revenue in the figure tells the total volume of revenue created from sport sponsorship worldwide and revenue forecasts for 2011-2015 and from that can be also seen, that the revenue from sport sponsorship is also growing yearly. (Statista 2016)

Sponsorship as a word brings many different thoughts into people's head. Sponsorship also has many different definitions and some of them can be a bit negative. Some people think sponsorship is just a financial support from the company and the company is not getting anything in return. In the next table there are few of different definitions of sport sponsorship.

Alaja, E. 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing cooperation between company and sport (Alaja, E 2000, p. 104) • "Sport sponsorship is company's way to send positive image of themselves through the sponsored company or organization and for the sport sponsorship target the sponsoring means competitive advantage.".."Sport sponsoring needs to be beneficial for the company and for the sponsorship target." (Alaja, E 2000, p. 105)
Valanko E. 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cooperation partnership is a contract between two parties, which is based on material and immaterial performances and counter-performances, which meet the needs of both parties. It is for both parties a strategic solution and investment, which is designed together and utilized in practise both separate and together with different methods of marketing communications. It brings extra added value to both parties and their actions and also for the target audience." (Valanko E. 2009, p. 62. Translated by Ylönen N. 2016)
Beech J., Chadwick S. 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every communication action where a sponsor engages contractually to support financially (or other) in order to associate in positive way its image, identity, brands, products or services to the event, activity, organisation or person it supports. (Beech J. Chadwick S, 2007, p. 270)
Alaja E. 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport sponsorship cooperation is marketing cooperation between two parties; the company and the sponsorship target (Alaja. E, 2016, translated Ylönen N. 2016)
Sponsorointi- ja tapahtumamarkkinointi ry, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship is cooperation, which has a goal and is done together between the company and the sponsorship target. In sponsorship both parties benefit from each others tangible and intangible values to reach their own business goals. (Sponsorointi- ja tapahtumamarkkinointi, 2016)
International Chamber of Commerce, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any commercial agreement by which a sponsor, for the mutual benefit of the sponsor and sponsored party, contractually provides financing or other support in order to establish an association between the sponsor's image, brands or products and a sponsorship property in return for rights to promote this association and/or for the granting of certain agreed direct or indirect benefits. (International Chamber of Commerce 2003, p.2)

Table 1. Sponsorship definitions

In these definitions above it is clearly defined that sport sponsorship and sponsoring in general needs to include both parties and the sponsorship partnership needs to benefit both parties of the contract, so that they both feel they get something from the deal. The ideal situation is that the sponsor and the sponsored party both gain benefits as well as new opportunities from this partnership. (Alaja, E. 3.11.2016) In this study sponsorship is considered as cooperation between the sponsor company and SRL.

It is important to think few things through when considering suggesting sponsorship deals:

- What is the sponsorship strategy; do we even have one? Is it well known in the whole company?
- What kind of added value do you get from sponsoring? Is that what you want to have? How do you utilize these added values in your company's sales?
- When have you last updated the sponsorship contracts? Are they still up-to-date with your business strategy and sponsorship strategy?

- What kind of reputation will you give out through the teams and clubs and organizations you sponsor?
(Valanko E. 2009, p. 45-47)

What the sponsorship targets need to think, when looking for sponsors is:

- Why are you searching for sponsors?
- Have you thought about sponsoring from the sponsors point of view? What kind of added value will you give for them if they decide to sponsor you?
- Do you understand corporate world and understand their needs, so that you can build and sell your activity productively?
- How well do you know your activity and it's unique selling proposition? Do you know what is your target group, people who participate in your activity, people who are interested of it and who are the wider target groups considering sponsorships?
- Do you have a concrete tactic how to sell sponsorship deals to companies? Do you have strategy and tactic for sponsorship? Do you have arguments how to prove your point?
- Have you taken a good and careful look of your activity on companies point of view and tailored your arguments to match companies goals and values?
- What kind of information do you have from your own activity; has someone for example made a survey of what kind of image do you give out to the public?
- How to start planning sponsoring? What kind of practical tolls do you need to plan it well?
(Valanko E. 2009, p. 45-47)

6.1 Sponsorship in Finland in general

Sponsorship in Finland was first born in 1980's and from that it has developed further. There are still many missed opportunities and co-operations: 70% of companies in Finland with over 5 people do not sponsor anyone and also there are plenty of smaller companies too. There are 130.000 registered organizations and societies in Finland. The market area for sponsorship is huge and there are many missed opportunities. Currently most of the companies just sponsor for example the teams their employees play at or support the teams their friends play at. Only few companies proactively plan and map the possible targets they could sponsor. Just few companies have proper sponsorship strategies, which is based on their values and business plan. Sponsoring a team or club or event offers many opportunities for sponsors; more publicity, activating the companies targets groups, getting more know-how in marketing, creating new contacts and networks, improving brand image and customer relations. The money is not the main thing for sponsor or for the sponsored, indirect benefits are bigger when the sponsors are looking for something, which is based on their company values. These companies, who have thought carefully the sponsorship targets, will not make a fuss about them, because these sponsorship decisions are business secrets and they do not wish the competitors to copy their way of sponsoring. The main reason for company to sponsor someone should be the same rea-

son they are doing business; to increase profitable sales and that how grow the companies return. The co-operation between the sponsor company and the sponsored should start from the desire of both parties to build joined success, which is based on professionalism, authenticity, trust and honesty. (Valanko E. 2009, p.36-38)

6.2 What, how and why to be part of cooperation partnership?

Sponsorship is not advertising, advertisement deal or replacement of advertisement, it is also not a donation or charity. Sponsorship tells more concrete about of companies brand and values. As a term sponsoring means a contract, which is based on a deal between the sponsor (usually a company) and the sponsorship target, which is usually an individual, organization, team or activity. This contract takes into account both parties: the best way to describe sponsoring nowadays is 'cooperation partnership' (*yhteistyökumppanuus* in Finnish), which describes both sponsor and sponsored and also the cooperation, which is required to make sponsorships to work. (Valanko E. 2009, p. 51-54). Erkki Alaja uses the term "sponsorointi yhteistyö," which' direct translation is *sponsorship collaboration*. (Alaja E, 3.11.2016)

Sponsorship is for example sponsoring multiple similar events or sponsoring some activity, sponsoring sports team or individual athlete or artist. Sponsorship can be sometimes mixed to marketing; sometimes companies, television advertisement and events use wrongly the word sponsorship and give wrong associations about sponsorship. Sponsorship is very versatile, which is why it is sometimes hard to make difference between advertisement and sponsoring. So what makes sponsoring 'sponsoring' in the actual meaning of the word?

- Sponsorship has two parties: the sponsor and the sponsorship target, which are both juridical companies/ organizations or activities
- It is cooperation partnership, which benefits both parties
- Sponsoring affect through images and associations
- It includes performance and counter-performance and it gives added values to both parties (material and immaterial value)
- Material values are given as money, products, material or service, which has a combined value
- The counter-performance includes also material and immaterial performance, such as more visibility for the sponsor / partner, making their brand stronger, giving more visibility, giving out tickets to games etc.
- The affect of sponsorship can be long term or short term
- It is always an investment for the company and it is based on the company's strategic needs.
- It is measurable, there are certain goals which company wishes to achieve by this cooperation partnership
- Cooperation partnerships builds brand, makes it different from competitors and its integrated part of marketing communications
- It shows the company values in practise

- It requires work from sponsor and sponsor target, based on how this is done there are different results
- Goals for sponsor is increasing the sales in short or long term, because the ultimate goal for company is to have profit from it's business decisions. Goals for sponsorship target is that their activity will develop and grow through the resources their sponsors provide for them.
- Win win win –situation: sponsor – sponsorship target – target audience. The sponsor will stay in target audiences mind, provides experiences and affects to all the senses
(Valanko E. 2009, p. 60-62)

Planning sponsorship needs to start from value derived mental images, which is usually adjectives; strong, happy, hard, joyful, active, fast, long lasting. Sponsorship need to offer experiences to target audience, which goes deep in their emotions, sponsorship needs to be authentic, provide experiences, be present, memorable and have content. Sponsoring also needs to have feeling, because feelings affect on the purchase decisions.

Sponsoring can be divided into different types. Most commonly sponsorship is divided into main sponsor, side sponsor, cause alliance and product selling. Main sponsor is the most important strategic partner for the sponsor target, it gives the biggest output for the sponsorship target. Many times a company participates in a sponsorship contract thinking it will be the main sponsor, but realizes they are just being among many of them when the event is starting, so it is good to be clear from this main sponsor term from the beginning and keep this one main sponsor as the most important strategic partner. Side sponsor is one sponsor among the many. Also term co-branding is different definition of sponsoring. Project sponsoring means sponsorship deal, which lasts a certain time and is related to a certain event or project only. Media sponsoring means that media gives as counter-performance time in television, space in magazine, picture or add in magazine. Media also sponsors and especially in big events like the Olympics there is also lots of money involved in media sponsoring. Cause alliance, which is a product or service sponsoring is usually based on a project or co-operation and it has logical reasons; usually local communities for example are part of this cause alliances, it can also be sport teams and cloth brands. Product selling is sponsoring too; in a big game certain products are sold to the target audience. Product placement in pictures and advertisement is part of this. Company needs to choose the best way for them to sponsor. The combinations of all these methods above, is the most common way to sponsor. (Valanko E. 2009, p. 66-72)

6.3 Sponsorship objectives

Usually the sponsorship target wishes to gain monetary or product benefits from the deal. Raising awareness, improving image, increasing sales, improve internal communication

and help in advertising can be objectives for sponsorship deals for the companies. Companies can consider making their brand name more known among the target audience by sponsorship contracts. Companies wish to be associated with interesting events or teams, so that the positive values, for example of the team is transferred to the company. Sponsorship contract is not able to change the image of a company by itself, but the company can be able to transfer the values of the team to consumers' minds through this sponsorship contract. The purpose of marketing is in the end to increase the sales and sometimes the sponsorship contracts' objective can be for the company to increase the sales of certain products or stimulate the consumer to try a new product. According to Beech and Chadwick the ultimate sponsorship goal is to increase turnover. But then again sport sponsorship is increasingly used by public communities and that is why the sales can not be considered as the main objective, but perhaps because of this sponsorship the change and increase in awareness, possible TV exposure and image will cause positive economic impact for the communities. The affects on internal communication in a company because of sponsorship contract can men for example that the people are brought together more on a shared project for example and this can develop team spirit and help in building company culture. (Beech J., Chadwick S. 2007, p. 272-274)

6.4 Choosing the sponsorship targets

Companies tend to have long processes when it comes to choosing the sponsorship targets. Big companies get multiple requests to partner with federations, to sponsor teams and support financially sport clubs or events and companies usually have some sort of procedure in how to go through them and choose the sponsorships targets among them. Those companies, who are active in sponsoring, also search actively sponsorship targets as well, which is why it is important that the visibility and the values are clearly shown on the web pages or social media or in the presentation given or send to the company. Some companies appreciate being visible locally and some wish to have national visibility and be part of a bigger national projects. Some companies might not get excited of dangerous sports, some support mainly youth or environmental targets. Some companies wish only to be part of the cooperation partnership if they are the main sponsors and get the most visibility and some companies might support multiple different organisations or events with smaller money amounts or product deals. Decision making for companies can be made easier by giving them hard facts for example of the image, values, target groups, participants, media visibility, trends and popularity globally, since sometimes just referring to emotions can make the decision making an awkward process. Usually the company chooses the sponsorship targets based on what kind of image this cooperation partnerships brings to the customers or their products. Sponsorship contracts can bring better

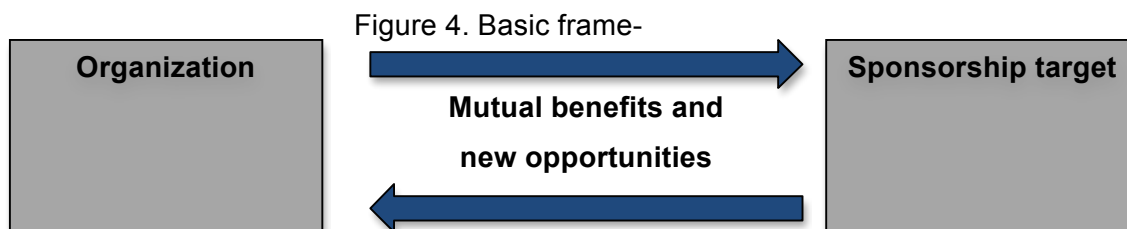
sales figures and more customers. The connection between the sponsorship target and company needs to be natural and the image needs to be somehow matching, a good example of this being motor oil and car companies. Sometimes this connection is not necessary though, since sponsoring is creative action and marketing of the company needs to be creative, trying new things and experiencing new ways to sponsor can open new possibilities for the companies. (Alaja E. 2000, p. 111-113)

The cooperation partnership can include for example advertisement deals, such as a sports team's kits and home pages having the logos visible for the sponsoring company, companies can use the sponsorship targets in their own advertisement (promotion, competitions, cars, products advertisement and so on). Companies can also add information about the sponsorship target for example on their intranet or companies own magazine, taking media part of their sponsorship contract by providing information to public media about the sponsorship targets and why the company has chosen exactly this target. Companies can also invite their own important partners to be part of an event where the sponsorship target is visible, they can combine business event and free time in interesting ways by combining work and pleasure and depending from the sponsorship target they can also offer new experiences to their workers or partners through their sponsorship deals. (Alaja E. 2000, p. 114-115)

6.5 How to get sponsors?

From the viewpoint the sponsorship target, it is important to think carefully how to present them, what kind of material to hand out and to whom. The first thing to do when thinking about getting cooperation partners is to think what are you selling to the company and how does the company benefit from this sponsorship deal. Think about the product or the team or the service, the selling arguments, values and features, what do you offer for the company and think also your presentations and material from the company's point of view – are they interesting and appealing and showing how the company benefits? Finding positive connections between the products or services and the company is important; there are no rules except being creative. Follow magazines, newspapers, and economical news, news from companies and contact your friends, relatives and get hints from professionals from other industries. When contacting the company for partnership contract, it is important to understand how companies work and you need to work with their terms and according to their schedules. Finding a correct contact person who knows how to proceed with possible contract is important. In Ideal situation both parties of the sponsorship deal offer equal benefits and equal new possibilities to each other, both parties feel they benefit greatly from the deal. New sponsors can be found through old contacts, they can be com-

panies sharing the same values, they can be new companies or companies successful in their own field, they can be small companies which have not sponsored anyone before, but it is better if they are also something else than contracts between friends. The following figure shows the basic framework for sponsorship cooperation between the organization and sponsorship target, with which Alaja matches his athletes with the companies. (Alaja E. 2000, p. 124-125).



work of sponsorship cooperation (Alaja, E. 3.11.2016)

Alaja discusses about matching process, which means that the sponsorship target first need to determine who they are and what they need. Then it is important to find a joined story with a potential company, this can be for example same values, actions or something else what combines the sport and the company together such as slogan or mission. Before meeting the company representatives it is important to understand the company's strategy and what they aim for and get to know the company. It is important to highlight the company what the teams are offering for the company, which can be for example social media marketing, sport lessons, help in advertising, logos on the kit or all of these combined. The more you offer, the more company engages and feels they benefit from the deal. Create images for the company of how they will benefit from this cooperation partnership and why is it beneficial for them to sponsor these teams. Benefits for the company can be for example bringing more visibility or offer exclusive experiences for the staff members or their customers. Alaja believes matching the sponsorship target and the company is important, because finding the joint story will create long lasting sponsorship contracts which benefits both of the parties equally and when the company really feels benefitting from this deal, they are happy to continue the contract for longer time. The next figure shows Alaja's model for matching the organizations and sponsorship targets. (Alaja E. 3.11.2016)

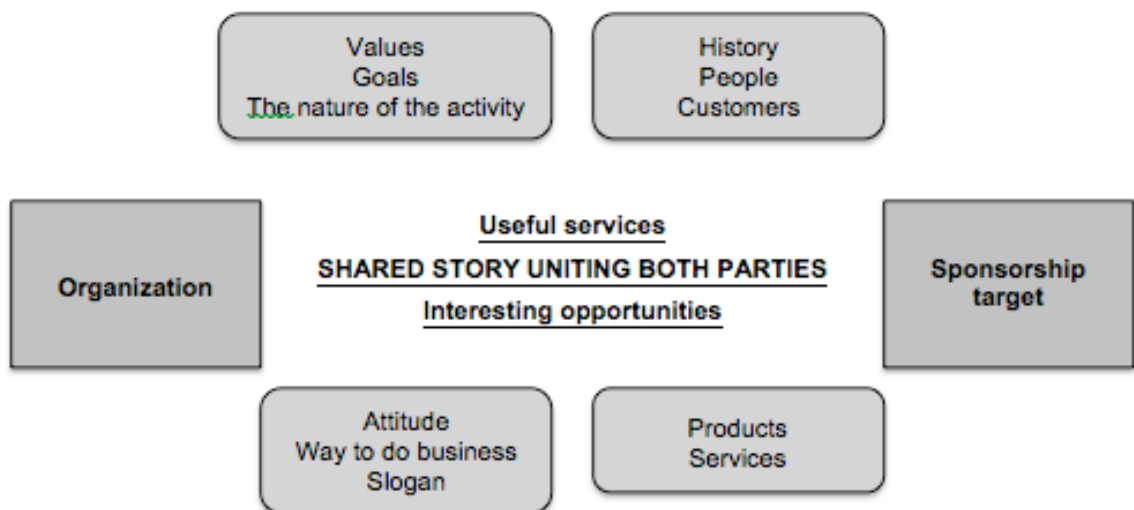


Figure 5. Model for uniting sponsors and sponsorship targets (Alaja E., 3.11.2016)

In this study Alaja’s model above will be used to determine the potential partners for the two national teams in Finland. Alaja’s model is used in this study, because it helps to find the companies who share the same values of the national teams, who have joined goals and needs which the national teams and SRL can also help with. The goal is to find sponsors with joining factors or uniting story and develop ideas in what to offer for them, so they feel that they will benefit from this partnership with SRL and the national teams and that way both parties will engage more towards sealing the deal.

In an article called 10 Rules for Seeking Sponsorship there are mentioned similar things as Alaja mentions in his model. The article states that the sponsorship relationship won’t work if the relationship is too lopsided one way. The sponsor does not have to love, you but instead they need to see how they benefit from the sponsorship deal, sharing the passion is completely another thing. The article also mentions that looking for a good fit is important. Like Alaja, this Spartan article suggests to look for sponsors from companies that seem to have natural fit with your event, organization or team. The organization needs to understand why they are important to you and you need to treat the sponsors as marketing partners. It is important to remember that sponsoring is not just about the logos and putting them on every shirt or pants, logos can be part of the sponsorship deal, but if that is the only thing you offer for the sponsors, it is not really worth expecting anything bigger in return. Finding sponsors take time and patience, it is important to plan the way of approaching them and get the sponsorship deal in writing. The Spartan article mentions how it is good to aim high and try to get few meaningful sponsors instead of lots of small ones, since managing few bigger sponsors is easier for the sponsorship target instead of

managing multiple smaller companies. Relationship building in sponsoring is important and time needs to be put in it. It is important to remember that after receiving the money from the sponsors, the relationship does not stop there; be in regular contact, remember to say thank you and keep your promises to the sponsors. Understanding the theory behind sponsorship is important and the more you know about sponsorship deals, sponsoring in general and about the company, the better you will be in the negotiation. After thinking potential sponsors, it is time to think how to attract them and how they can sponsor exactly you and your club. Making tailored proposals to each of the companies met is important and more effective than just a menu of predefined sponsorship packages. In the presentation for the company should be mentioned at least some of the following things; an overview of the club and why the organization should invest in you, your goals, your mission statement, marketing plan, opportunities, possibly fees and most important is to mention how this organization can benefit from this sponsorships deal with you. Before the meeting it is good to check details of the organization and see if it is possible to find information beforehand on what the organization wants from their sponsorship deals, where they aim with them and how they wish to benefit from these deals. Some companies might want exposure or publicity, some is to brand themselves better or be involved with community. These details are important to find, so at the meeting you can prove that your team is able to help them reach their goals with this sponsorship deal. Offer something creative for the organization, something they cannot get from anywhere else; players can be in their adds, you can organize training events for them and their employees or invite them to your games – offer unique opportunity which the organization simply cannot miss. (Spartan, 1.5.2015)

7 What is rugby?

Rugby is traditional sport, which was originally started playing in England in 1820's. The game has two teams and each team has 15 players. In 2016 Rio Olympics rugby was played with 7 players on each team. The old Finnish sport called salamapallo by Tahko Pihkala is very similar to rugby. In Finland rugby is a fairly unknown sport and whilst it was played in the 70's, mid 80's and again in the early 90's it only really gained momentum from 1999 and therefore it has been played in Finland only 18 years. The first championship league in Finland was started in 2002. In 2002 the league started with 5 teams. From year 2006 there has also been Finnish Cup for women. At the moment there are four national teams in Finland; one men's team and one women's team in 15's and a men's teams and women's team in 7's. Compared to other sports, rugby is still fairly unknown sport in Finland.

7.1 Rugby's rules in short

The purpose of rugby is to get the ball to the opponents' side by carrying, passing or kicking the ball and scoring ideally between the goal posts. The goal is as wide as the field (70 metres wide, 10-22 metres deep). You get extra points for converting the try; kicking the ball between the upper goal posts, by drop-kicking the ball to the goal and from penalty kicks. In rugby the whole team attacks the opponents and defend their own goal line. There are different roles for the players: the players in the front are *forwards* (number 1-8) and these players are usually more physically stronger. The players who play in the back of the fields are called *backs* and they are usually better at handling, faster and have more technical skills. Rugby is a contact sport and there are lots of tackles and collision with each other. The game might look sometimes confusing and rough to a person who does not know what is going on, but all the tackles and piles have their meaning. The "piles" of players have names also; scrum, ruck and maul and there are laws on how to make them and when to make them. The closest sport to rugby is American football, but they are very different sports overall. In rugby the players do not use any safeguards or protection like in American football; rugby players are only allowed thin soft padded helmet, thin soft padded shoulder pads and shin pads. A gum shield (for mouth protection) is optional. Other differences to American football are the size of the ball, which is bigger, the playing time, which in rugby it is 2 x 40 minutes and the game does not stop if someone gets tackled. The pitch markings are also different. One other major difference is that players in rugby play both offensive and defensive roles at the same time, unlike American football, which

changes players dependent on if the team is attacking or defending. (Tietoa Rugbysta, 2016)

7.2 Rugby globally

Rugby is one of the most popular sports in the world. Based on Total Sportek's ranking rugby is the 6th most popular sport. This ranking has used 13 different criteria, such as TV viewership numbers, professional leagues around the worlds, TV rights deals, endorsement and sponsorship deals, athlete salaries in top of the league, biggest competition and number of countries represented, social media presence and so on. According to the article more popular sports than rugby are only football, basketball, cricket, tennis and athletics. Rugby is the most popular in United Kingdom (England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland) and in southern hemisphere countries such as Australia, New Zealand and in South Africa. The game is continuously growing in Japan, Italy and Argentina, also in United States the popularity is getting higher. In 2015 the Rugby World Cup generated 250 million GB pounds revenue and it was the most attended sports event after FIFA World Cup 2014. Spectators and fans from 24 different countries travelled to England and Wales to see the games and almost 2,5 million tickets were sold all in total to this event. In television 120 million people watched how New Zealand beat South Africa and fifth of Japanese people tuned in to watch Japan versus Samoa. In England the opening television ceremony for the 2015 Rugby World Cup event was the most watched sports event in UK and hashtag #rwc2015 was used in twitter during the world cup every two seconds. (Total Sportek, 2016)

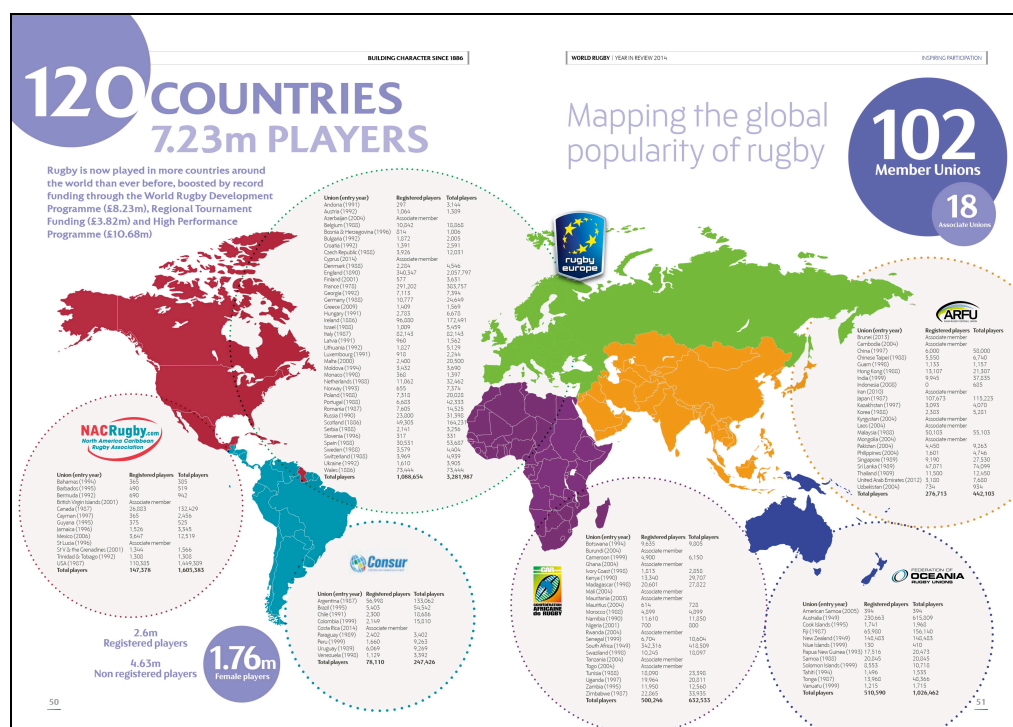
In Chandran Nushka's article on CNBC he contemplated if rugby would in the future match soccer or football in popularity. Currently there are roughly 7,6 rugby players globally, but HSBC predicts the amount to double in the next 10 years. Rugby's sevens is currently the fastest-growing women's sport in United States and already now 25-30% of all the players globally are women. (Chandran, N. 7.4.2016)

Mat Cole, the founder of Sporple.com, which is a sport recruitment platform for connecting athletes, agents and clubs globally wrote in June 2015 an article *How can we make rugby the world's favourite sport*. In the article he states that by supporting the teams and countries, which are struggling with rugby, rugby can be developed even more and make it even more popular in the world and grow the talent pool globally. Currently, there are just few countries, which pay enormous salaries to their players. These countries include South Africa, Ireland, England, Wales, Australia, France, Argentina and Scotland. But then there are countries such as Samoa, Fiji and Tonga where rugby is close to a religion

but the players are not getting paid almost at all. Cole is writing how supporting emerging rugby-playing nations and those countries who already play but are struggling, could help to make rugby the number one sports ion the world. Struggling countries such as Samoa and Fiji are lacking facilities and funding. Cole’s suggestion in how to make rugby more popular around the world is to make the countries, which are already doing well to help the struggling countries. One way to support and help these countries is for example by making sure they have proper pitches, great coaches, making sure the players get paid and they don’t have to pay the airplane tickets themselves. This kind of support will create in Coles opinion better, more skilled and exciting competition, building on current reputa-tion will be the key to make rugby world-class and world-supported game. (Cole M. 9.6.2015) When comparing salaries between football player and rugby player in United Kingdom, the rugby player’s one year’s salary is equivalent to one weeks salary of a foot-ball player. England also has a salary cap, which is set because rugby clubs have set budget for players salaries. This is why some players from southern hemisphere go to paly in France, because France does not have salary caps. For example rugby player Dan Carter was reported to have been paid 1 million for a one year contract in France. (Whit-taker 16.1.2017)

The following picture shows well the popularity of rugby among men and women around the world in 2014 as well as the amount of players and all different members of World Rugby.

Picture 4. Mapping the popularity of rugby around the world (World Rugby, 2014)



In the picture can be seen that already in 2014 there was in total over 2,6 million registered rugby players around the world and almost double amount of non-registered players, which in total means over 7,2 million players worldwide in 120 different countries.

7.3 2016 Rio Olympics brought more visibility to rugby

For the first time since 1924 rugby sevens was one of the Olympic Sports in the 2016 Rio Olympics and this brought more visibility to rugby. CNBC called it a crucial event to rugby's future as a global sport. The visibility gained from the Rio Olympics is believed to make rugby more popular and known, increase government support and funding for rugby and it is expected to create more national competitions between clubs. (Chandran, N. 7.4.2016)

"It wasn't a long ago that sevens rugby was considered the poor, fun, drunk cousin of the XV-man game...No more. Because sevens rugby is going to Rio. " (Cleary. M. 17.7.2016)

Rugby's visibility in Rio Olympics will most likely make rugby more known and amore popular sport in the world. Governments, national Olympic committees and educational bodies are investing on rugby and rugby is been taught at school in countries, where it previously wasn't because of the Olympics. World Rugby believes being part of Rio Olympics will be a game changer for the game worldwide, because ever since rugby was voted back to Olympics, more than one million children have participated in the "Get Into Rugby" programme at schools in Australia organized by World Rugby. (Cleary. M. 17.7.2016) Following picture describes rugby's journey to the Olympics in 2016.

Picture 5. Rugby's road to Rio Olympics (Chandran, N. 7.4.2016)



Survey made before the Olympics by Mindshare reveals that 53 % of the survey respondents will watch rugby in 2016 Rio Olympics and 65 percentages of these were men. According to the survey rugby was the 11th sports on the list of which the viewers were most excited about watching when the Olympics started. (Ariens C. 8.8.2016)

The Olympics increased rugby's visibility and boosted its revenue after it returned to Olympics after 92 years of being absent. Rugby is one of the most important sports in many countries, but then on the other hand it is an outsider sport in many countries as well. Perhaps the visibility got in the Rio Olympics will be a boost for schools to introduce this sports for their students around the world and people will get to know and start following this sports even more because of the publicity at the Olympics this year and in the coming years.

7.4 The future predictions for rugby

HSBC's report The Future of Rugby, which was published in 2016 predicts what will happen to rugby in the next ten years. In the report it is mentioned rugby will gain new countries, new players and new audiences. According to HSBC's report about rugby's future the predictions are the following:

- More nations will join rugby because of the Olympics and start driving funding into the game in both women's and men's sevens series
- The HSBC Sevens series (instead of the 15's) which was presented at the Olympics will create national competitions between clubs. This will increase knowledge of the sport among people and create new national media exposure
- Participation doubles. Currently there are over 7 million rugby players worldwide, perhaps over 10 million in 2020 because of Olympic exposure and continued investment from World Rugby. Inside a decade there might be 15 million players around the world.
- Women's rugby will grow the fastest, in both developing and emerging markets. It is predicted that in 2026 40% of rugby players will be females.
- New audience; development of broadcast coverage will bring the spectator excitement closer to the TV viewers. The broadcast methods will show better the player pace and agility, which will make the sport more interesting to new audience.
- Social platforms will replace TV; younger audiences will follow rugby and other sports through social media platforms instead of TV, 7's based video game will be published, instead of the already published 15's video game
- Because of the grown publicity and reputation, rugby sevens will be self funding: broader base of followers, income from ticket sales, media and sponsorship deals so that no funding is no longer needed
(Curry A., Heptonstall V., Warwick C. 2016, p. 7-9)

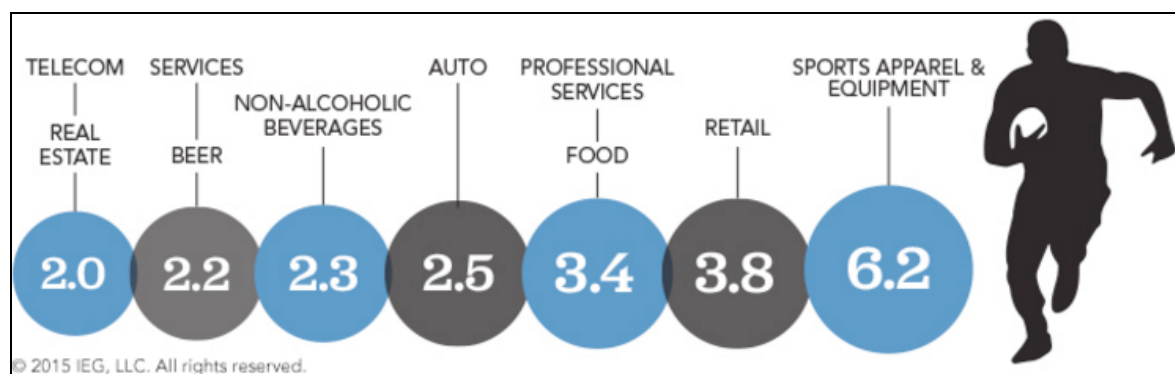
Rugby's member union amount has grown globally 25% since the start of 2000-century. Since accepted to the Olympics rugby got a record 350 million pounds funding through the World Rugby Development Programme and the participation in rugby has doubled in a

decade. For example in Pakistan participation doubled in 2011 alone and in America sevens is the fastest growing sport in the country. (Curry A., Heptonstall V., Warwick C. 2016, p. 7-9)

7.5 Rugby sponsors worldwide

According to IEG SR, which creates reports helping buyers and sellers regarding sponsorships, most active category sponsoring rugby is retail and most active company sponsoring rugby is Coca-Cola. According to IEG research “retailers are 3,8 times more likely to sponsor rugby than the average of all categories.” (IEG, 14.9.2015). Food services and professional services share the second spot in the most active sponsor category and third is car industry. In the picture below from IEG report can be seen the most active categories sponsoring rugby globally.

Picture 6. Most active categories sponsoring rugby globally (IEG, 14.9.2015)



Retail is the most active category sponsoring rugby and especially sports apparel and equipment category, which is 6,2 times more likely to sponsor rugby than the average of all sponsors. According to IEG’s report the most active company globally to sponsor rugby is Gilbert, which is a sport equipment store and the report states that 54% of teams who has a sponsor at the sports equipment category has Gilbert as their sponsor. Coca-Cola (30%), Unilever (20%) and Adidas (18%) are the next three most active sponsors. (IEG, 14.9.2015)

8 Finnish Rugby Federation (SRL)

SRL (Suomen Rugby Liitto ry) was founded originally in 1968 and it has been part of World Rugby since 1999. SRL is also part of Rugby Europe, Valo and Finnish Olympic committee. Members of the SRL are all the 19 active rugby clubs in Finland and four national teams. Before this thesis there has not been made any previous researches of rugby in Finland or SRL, sponsoring of rugby, rugby popularity or people's knowledge of rugby in Finland, but one thesis for Warriors Rugby Club in Helsinki has been made regarding current sponsorship contracts and developing them. All in total SRL has almost 800 members of which one quarter are women, approximately 60 coaches and 33 referees. (Whittaker S. 16.1.2017)

According to SRL's Stephen Whittaker the values of SRL and rugby in general are discipline, integrity, passion, respect and solidarity. He describes rugby as a friendly sport that works on those values. Ideally he hopes to find sponsors, which also match rugby's values and have common values and goals with rugby. (Whittaker S. 8.7.2016)

8.1 Operational environment of the Finnish national teams

There are four national teams in Finland; two women's teams and two men's teams. The Women's 7's National Team play all their tournaments abroad, currently there are not sufficient facilities or infrastructure to host a tournament in Finland. The Men's 15's National team will play two games in Finland and two games abroad per year as part of the Rugby Europe Conference to North. The latest additions to the national teams are the Men's 7's and they will play their first Rugby Europe hosted tournament in Estonia during July 2017. The Women's 15's National Team is revived from a few years ago and aims to re-integrate themselves into international competitions. Latest tournaments for the women have been organised in France, Russia, Lithuania, Norway, Slovakia, Belgium and Romania and Men's games next year are organized in Denmark, Gibraltar and Estonia. Currently the players are paying most of the travelling expenses themselves. Therefore the special focus of this study is to find ways to attract sources of income and figure out ways to get more partners to the players in the four national teams as well as improve the relations of Finnish Rugby Federation with possible new sponsor companies. These national teams play all internationally. Women's team play outside Finland only and they competed for a spot for Rio Olympics 2016. Their future goal is to get a spot in Tokyo Olympics 2020.

It is important to determine what is the operational environment of these national teams. Operational environment means the factors, which affect the functions of these teams.

These factors can be social, political, financial, environment or health factors. The operational environment consists also of competitors, sponsors, public authorities, values in the country and international operations. It is important to first understand who these national teams are, so that the cooperation is possible and has a right purpose. If the context is not thought at all when thinking about sponsorship, the whole bigger picture might not be understood correctly. (Perustietoa yrittäjälle, 2016)

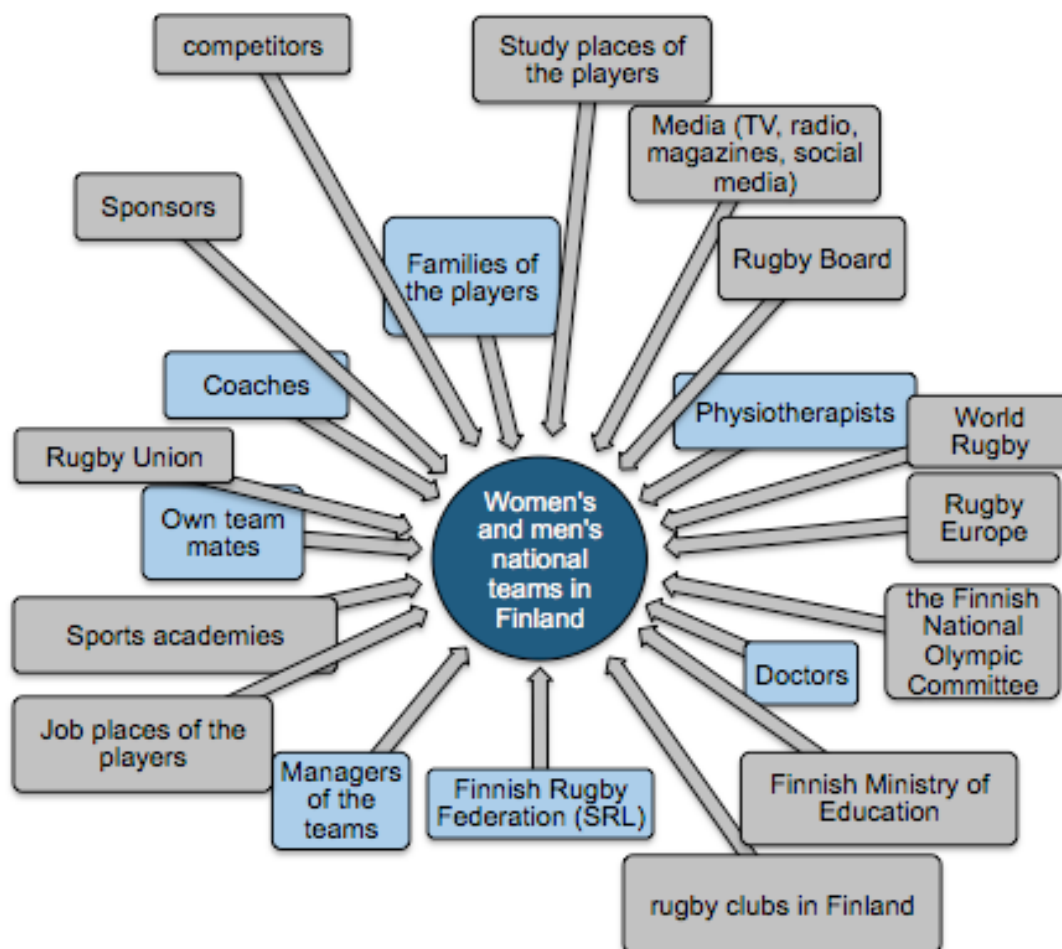


Figure 6. Operational environment of the national teams

The operational environment for the national teams consist of the closer circle with whom they operate in close contact with in each of the games, tournaments and trainings, this circle is marked in blue (Figure 4.). The outside circle of the operational environment includes all the other parties, which are somehow in contact with the national teams The outer circle includes the sponsors, the media and international sport governing bodies such as Rugby Europe and World Rugby.

8.2 Who are the national team players?

In the next figure is shown who these two national teams and their players are.

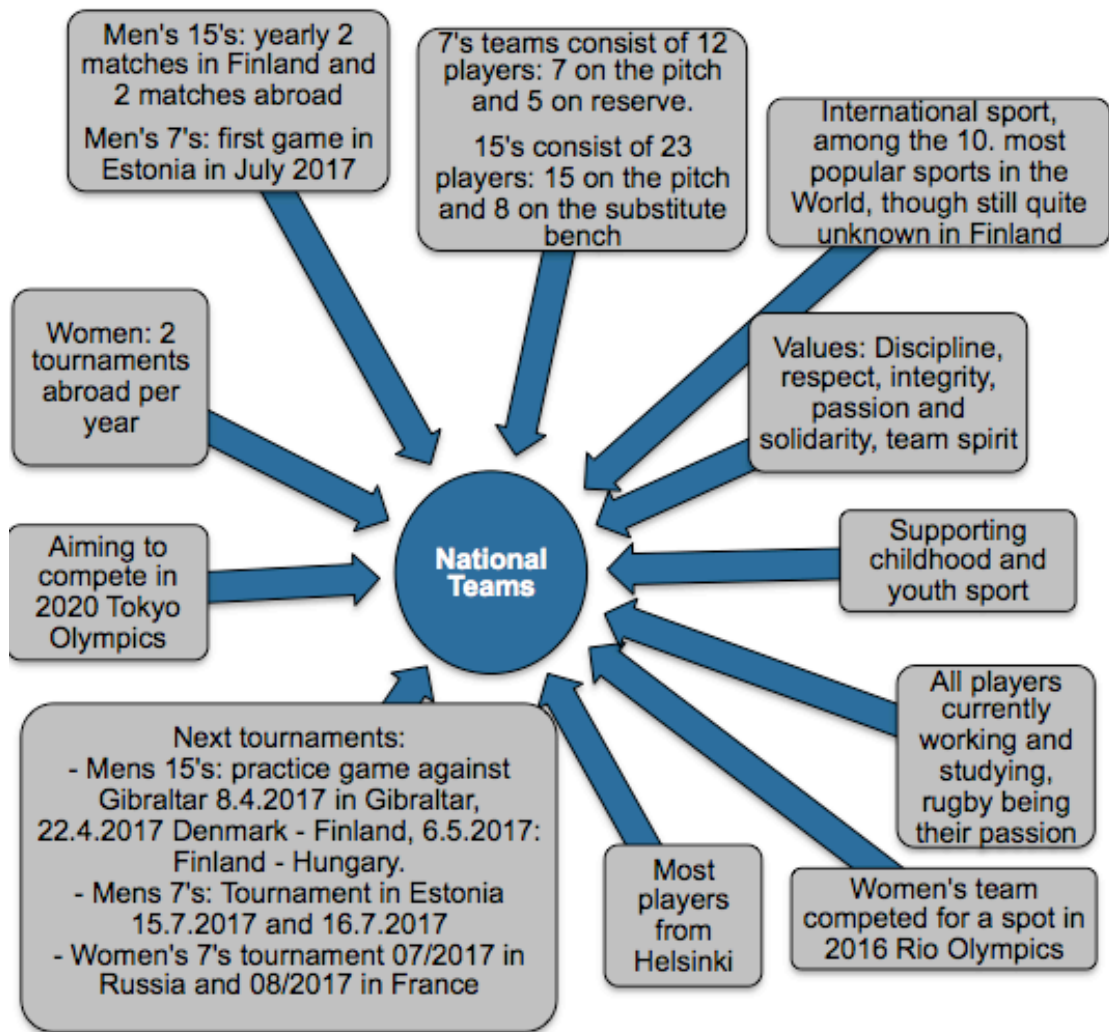


Figure 7. Details about the national teams (Whittaker 16.1.2017)

These details of the national teams are good to share with the companies when meeting them and it is important to keep this list updated. Because rugby is not familiar sport to everyone, it is good to tell first what it actually is. It is important for the sponsors to know whom are they sponsoring. From this figure above can be found some compatibility between the organization and the team, which might help with the matching process. Compatibilities can be for example the values the teams have, the future goal in Tokyo Olympics, the international aspect or the coming tournaments next year and their locations, passion towards their hobby and SRL's passion towards supporting children and youth sports.

8.3 Current funding of the national teams

Funding is received currently from Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, World Rugby and Rugby Europe. Other money SRL receives is from the club membership fees, players and from few smaller sponsors. The money Finnish Rugby Federation receives is used to

support the clubs, organize trainings and games for the national teams, coaching the players and support the players with their travel costs to tournaments inside Finland and in Europe. Ministry of Education in Finland gives the SRL 12.000 euros, in 2016 that figure was raised to 20.000 euros. World Rugby gives 24.000 pounds per year on a fluctuating exchange rate; this money is linked to specific criteria's and cannot be used for high performance activities (national teams). Rugby Europe gives roughly 6000 euros towards the national teams international travel and accommodation. No income is received from Rugby Europe for domestic games. Then the smaller sponsors donate equipment, give discounts and support with smaller monetary amounts. Some players get personal support towards their playing from their workplaces, but this support is more of a personal sponsorship from a company to their worker. SRL also receives licence fees from the players in the rugby clubs; from each player that is 33 euros, which SRL receives in December and approximately that makes 21.500 euros a year. The membership fee for the club is 175 euros. (Whittaker S 7.7.2016, Whittaker S. 8.7.2016)

Since the funding is small, there are plenty of fees SRL has to pay or he players pay themselves. SRL's goal is to find new partnerships and sponsors, so that the players can concentrate on playing the games instead of worrying about playing costs and where to get money towards them. Rugby in Finland is currently fairly unknown, it does not show on media and the amount of players is fairly small compared to Finnish national sport ice hockey.

9 Analysing of the current sponsorship situation of the national teams

At the moment there are just few sponsors supporting the teams. Technical director of SRL, Stephen has actively working to gain more sponsorship contracts. He told about the current situation in finding new sponsors the following:

"I spent a good deal of time contacting potential sponsors and hit out with 0 positive results. In fact over the summer the best outcome was sharing some beers with a friend and having him sponsor the Men's NT for 1000€... I've been sending emails to companies and have not had any success, those that I've had a direct contact with, friends or through physical contact, it's been better but still no positive sell... (Whittaker S, 7.11.2016)

Currently the sponsorship deals SRL has are bringing some extra money for the teams and also products, such as kits, nutrition bars and balls to support the teams trainings and tournaments. What they receive now is not enough to support the players in their tournament, travel and training fees and currently the players pay part of their costs themselves. Getting more funding would mean more motivation for the players to play rugby; they could concentrate more on improving themselves and their possibilities in getting into the Tokyo 2020 Olympics instead of stressing how to pay the travelling fees to different countries. Women's 7' national team pay each 500 euros per tournament and in total there are 2 official tournaments outside Finland, none in Finland. The players also pay membership fee 69 euros monthly, which includes the training camps they have at Eerikkilä. Women's team's total budget is approximately 50.000 euros a year, if more money would be received through sponsors the costs of travelling, tournaments and training camps could be covered and women would not have to pay anything themselves. Men's team play four official games of which two are abroad and two are in Finland. For the men's training camps the fees are borne by the players and travelling fee for them is roughly 200 euros per game for all the games away from Finland. For games held in Finland, the fee is roughly 50 euros per player. Men's team's budget is 40.000 euros, which is a bit less than the women's, since men play some of the games in Finland, all though games organised in Finland can sometimes be more expensive than those played abroad due to the lack of financial support from Rugby Europe for the domestic games. If men's team would receive this monetary support of 40.000 euros from sponsors, the players would not have to pay anything themselves regarding games, training camps or travelling. On top of all these expenses mentioned above, the players also need to have valid insurances from insur-

ance company, since it is a contact sport. Insurance is required to be valid in all the games and for example a one-year insurance can cost more than 400 euros for each player. (Whittaker S. 7.7.2016 and 7.11.2016)

All the team members are currently paying almost all the costs themselves and some of them with SRL's support. The challenge is for the players in the national teams is that their concentration goes into their current jobs and saving the money for the tournaments and with the help of new sponsors the team members could concentrate more on trainings and games and be more motivated when money is not a problem. The team members are dedicated in playing and using their own money to pay for the tournaments, but ideally the sponsorship deals should fund the tournament and training fees, which means that the teams combined would need tens of thousands of euros of support from sponsors, but currently they are getting from the smaller sponsors just few thousand euros. The challenges in getting more sponsors for these national teams are the non-existent popularity of rugby in Finland, the fact that the teams' games are not shown on television or reported in newspapers and that there are many others sports in Finland, which are way more popular and these sports tend to gain all the sponsors. Then on the other hand rugby is the new Olympic sports and women's team was very close in getting into the 2016 Rio Olympics, so they do have good opportunity to get into the Tokyo Olympics as well. Qualifying to the Olympics would mean that the sponsors would gain lots of visibility on television and on location in Tokyo if the Finnish team is qualified to play in the Olympics. To reach this, it would be important to support the trainings and games of these national teams, since the Olympic teams are chosen in 2019 and lots of training is needed before that.

9.1 Current sponsors for SRL

The current sponsors for the national teams are Macron Technical sportswear and Puls Nutrition. The men's national team are sponsored by Aussie Bar and MMK Rakenne. Ideally SRL wishes to have two-year contracts with the sponsors, especially when they are printing the logos on the kits for the players. (Whittaker, S. 7.11.2016)

Aussie bar sponsors men's national team with 4000 euros yearly and gives visibility to the games located in the cities Aussie Bar is located; Turku, Tampere and Helsinki. During the games there are banners with Aussie Bar's logo on them and Aussie Bar is advertised as official after game location for the players and viewers. (Whittaker S. 8.7.2016)

Macron Technical Sportswear company from Italy and also located in Turku Finland supports SRL and the teams with sportswear for the games and travelling. Macron supports the team with monetary amount for the next 3 years, approximately the amount being 4500 euros during the first year and second and third year 3000 euros yearly. Also Macron provides discount from the clothes to the players. The deal is that SRL has to use Macron for all on the field clothing and national teams off-field clothing. (Whittaker S. 7.11.2016)

Puls Nutrition is one of the newest sponsors. They give discount on their products (-30% 10/2016-06/2017). Puls Nutrition will also pay SRL 1000 euros, from which in return they got their logo on the SRL website and SRL advertises their products. Puls Nutrition has been given the opportunity to follow the national team games where they could also advertise their products, but they have not yet done that. (Whittaker S. 7.11.2016)

With Verisure security there is a deal made about an initiative: if people sign up to a 45 minute sales pitch from Securitas, then Verisure Security will pay to SRL 30 euros. SRL will give 15 euros to the club from where the leads come and there is no obligation to buy anything. (Whittaker S. 7.11.2016)

SRL's partner Eerikkilän Sports Institute offers a training academy for the national teams each autumn, where the teams can develop themselves, train together with multiple coaches and check video images of them playing and improve themselves based on the feedback. (Finnish Rugby 2016)

SRL has also had few other sponsors previously. These sponsors included Powerade, which supported the Men's National 15's Team with water bottles, Powerade Powder and paid to have their logo on few t-shirts. DHL sponsored SRL during the 2011 World Cup. DHL supported them by giving them 3000 euros worth of shipping goods (would have been cheaper and more simple to do through domestic postage and donating 2500 euros in 2015 towards a youth rugby day event held in Kamppi Square, where DHL were able to promote themselves at the event and market their involvement in the Rugby World Cup. DHL has also donated some rugby balls, since they have plenty of them because around the world DHL is a massive rugby partner. DHL is no longer partner for SRL, since the partnership deal was not beneficial for neither of the parties and DHL has not got back to SRL or been interested after the first sponsorship deal. This is primarily due to supporting its own employees sports activities and the lack of media coverage in the Finnish press. (Whittaker S. 2016)

9.2 Current marketing to gain new sponsorship contracts

SRL's goal in sponsorships is to get money for the players and support them in their tournament and travelling fees. Products sponsorship for SRL is great if the product is useful and it helps to save SRL's or the players' money. Good example of this is the current sponsor Macron who provides the new kits for the players on the first year (jerseys, shorts and socks) and 10 % discount for the rest and then on the second and third year they will give approximately 3000 euros for SRL to spend on the equipment in the next two years. SRL wishes to gain more sponsors, since having a bit bigger sponsor portfolio enables them to present their cause better and perhaps also that way to gain new sponsors. (Whitaker 7.7.2016)

Currently SRL offers the sponsors to be part of the national teams; logos on their kits and visibility on games, logos and visibility on social media and web pages and also to support the kids rugby and be part of the rugby values; discipline, respect, integrity, passion and solidarity. SRL made a brochure in September 2016 to the sponsors, which has all the support packages on show. Now there is more activity towards gaining and contacting new sponsors than on previous years. Below are pictures of the new brochures and the support packages for men and women's teams, both brochures are in made in Finnish and English language.

Picture 7. Rugby brochure with support package options for men's and women's national teams (Keogh, J. 6.11.2016)



SMALL SUPPORT - 1000€

ENTRY LEVEL SUPPORT

Your company's logo printed on the team training shirt
Company logo advertised on Facebook and the website
Signed ball and photo from the team

PLAYER SUPPORT - 1500€

YOUR OWN PLAYER BEARING THE COMPANY NAME

Your company's logo printed on the team training shirt
Company logo advertised on Facebook and the website
Marketing of your own sponsored player
Your sponsored player available for a company event (1 event per contract period)
Signed ball and photo from the team

MEDIUM SUPPORT - 2000€

MEDIUM WEIGHTED PACKAGE ON A LIGHT PRICE

Your company's logo printed on the team training shirt
Company logo advertised on Facebook and the website
Marketing of your own sponsored player
1 replica playing jersey
Sufficient players to support a company event (1 event per contract period)
Signed ball and photo from the team

MEDIUM SUPPORT PLUS - 2750€

EXTENDED VISIBILITY

Your company's logo printed on the team training shirt
Company logo advertised on Facebook and the website
Marketing of your own sponsored player
1 replica playing jersey
Sufficient players to support a company event (1 event per contract period)
Signed ball and photo from the team
PLUS YOUR COMPANY LOGO ON THE PLAYING SHORTS

LARGE SUPPORT - 5000€

THE ADDED BONUS OF PLAYING SHIRT VISIBILITY

Your company's logo printed on the team training shirt
Company logo advertised on Facebook and the website
Marketing of your own sponsored player
2 replica playing jersey
Sufficient players to support a company event (1 event per contract period)
Signed ball and photo from the team
YOUR COMPANY LOGO ON THE PLAYING JERSEY (NOT FRONT AND CENTRE)

**TAILOR MADE TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS.
EVERYTHING CAN BE NEGOTIATED.
CONTENT AND COSTS TO BE DISCUSSED:
CONTACT PARTNERSHIP@RUGBY.FI
TO FIND OUT MORE**

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US
SUOMEN RUGBYLIITTO RAIVOTTARET
Stephen Whittaker 0401679136
partnership@rugby.fi



**THE ROAD TO SUCCESS
FINNISH WOMENS NATIONAL TEAM
WITH YOUR COMPANY**



**BUSINESSES
LOOKING GOOD IN YOUR COMPANY
JOIN US IN SUPPORTING THE
WOMEN'S NATIONAL 7'S TEAM**

The Women's 7's National team - "Raivottaret" - is the Finnish Rugby Federation's 7's representative team. Raivottaret play in Rugby Europe's GPS tournament against opponents such as England, Wales, Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Belgium and several others.

Rugby is growing at a fast rate in Finland and is having year on year success. SRL's plans are to raise the Women's team to a high level and to develop the game within Finland to sustain the success of the current team. For this reason, a large media coverage is needed at home and abroad.

Familiarize yourself with the support packages and find one that suits your company's needs. It's a great way to achieve visualization and support a fast growing popular sport





The players and admin staff use these above brochures as a visual aid when discussing with new potential sponsors and after the meeting can be left with the target for their own perusal. They are not intended to be a stand-alone tool for sponsorship seeking as whilst full of sponsorship information, it does not fully tell the Finnish rugby story. When asking Whittaker about contacting the possible new sponsors with this new marketing material represented above, he replied:

"The responses have been crap, I contacted a few companies and tried to showcase to them, grass roots rugby and kids development. 2 of them actually replied that they are focusing on youth movement and getting kids active - which actually tells me they didn't even read the pitch." (Whittaker S, 7.11.2016)

Whittaker has faced the challenge of not getting replies from the companies or that companies have not read the material he has sent to them. The reply percentage has not been great and getting the interest of companies has been challenging. Whittaker mentions that it would be great if SRL were able to get any sponsor, which is already a big supporter of rugby outside Finland. These sponsors could be for example DHL, Land Rover or Coca-Cola. Ideal sponsors specifically from Finland could be according to Whittaker big companies such as Finnair, Fazer, Elisa, Sonera or Sisu and most importantly SRL wishes to get partners who want to get behind their national teams. Since SRL is currently not in a position to choose who they wish to have as sponsors, they are ready to take what they can. Unfortunately alcohol companies are not able to sponsor SRL even though around the world alcohol companies are usually the biggest supporters, because

Finnish alcohol laws are so strict. That rules out Lapin Kulta, Karhu, Koff and so on. SRL has already contacted Turkish Airlines asking to support the players with free flight to tournaments or reduced rates for the flights, which would save SRL's money and by that way reflect to player fees. (Whittaker 7.7.2016)

Whittaker has thought more of these new ideal sponsorship partners based on their status in Finland, their company size and financial situation. Each company contacted was researched and studied to find where the target aims were and if they were suitable for sports partnership. An introductory email with visual introduction to rugby and how it interacts with this company was sent, but it is challenging to get their interest. Looking for more long lasting sponsors and partners towards the journey for at least to 2020 Tokyo Olympics, it might be beneficial for both parties to share the same interest, values and goals and have something they both feel can benefit from, instead of the company just being the funder of the tournaments and games and trainings and having their logo on the kit. When both parties are engaged and feel they both benefit from the partnership, it creates longer lasting contracts and build better relationships between the parties. Most important is to make the company interested of the two national teams in the beginning and tell how the company will benefit from the deal with SRL.

9.3 SWOT analysis for SRL

SWOT analysis is a tool that is used understanding the problem and improving the strategy. It is a simple tool, which helps companies to develop and plan their projects, events and actions. This following SWOT table is made for SRL's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats regarding the sponsorships.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased activity in sourcing new sponsors - Motivated players in national teams, presenting Finland all over the world - Interesting sport with plenty of possibilities to improve and gain popularity in Finland - Few sponsors already - Improving the marketing material - Strong hope and lots of activity on getting new sponsors - Women's national team almost selected to 2016 Rio Olympics - Lots of potential to gain more visibility in Finland - Potential in finding a sponsor from Finland, which also operates in other countries where rugby is more popular - Partners can take part in rugby events and make their reputation better by supporting the rugby values - New sports to schools and as a hobby, will be more popular in the future 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not well-known sports or sports federation in Finland - Low visibility on Finnish TV or other media for the clubs and national teams - Currently few sponsors only - Not professional experience in marketing or gaining new sponsors; starting from scratch - Marketing material; spelling mistakes, lack of information on social media and on web pages - Web pages lacking up-to-date information - Despite several contact the co-operation between SRL and women's team is not active enough - Social media marketing and content of it is not interesting enough, the updates are not often enough or shared enough - Possible sponsors are searched just based on the money and who is willing to join in, instead of thinking the sponsorship contracts from the viewpoint of the company and how it benefits them - Bad sponsorship deals, which in the long run did not help the partner or SRL or the players - Not enough connections to companies to get face-to face meeting booked - No junior activity currently
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lots of companies in Finland, who does not sponsor anyone - New sport can make people interested - One of the most popular sports in the world - part of Olympic games since 2016, which brings more visibility, popularity and viewers - space for big companies to sponsor them worldwide; international sport with tournaments all around the world - globally very popular on TV and media - both women and men play rugby, expected to double the amount of players in the next 10 years - Sports, which will gain more popularity in the future around the world, becoming more popular sports in United States and other developed and emerging markets - Tokyo 2020 Olympics - People from traditional sport can change their hobby to rugby, because playing other sports becomes too expensive (the fees rising) 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsoring is not that big thing in Finland, when compared to other countries - Strict alcohol laws in Finland; alcohol companies cannot sponsor (huge sponsor everywhere else!) - Companies rather sponsor already big sport events and clubs in Finland - Possible sponsors do not understand the future possibilities of this sport and its increasing popularity in the World and possible that way in Finland too - Not popular sport in Finland currently, other sports and other free-time activities are more popular - No visibility currently in Finland on media - The quality of the sport is not improving that much in Finland

Table 2. SWOT analysis for SRL and the national teams

From the SWOT analysis can be seen that there are plenty of opportunities for SRL to gain more sponsors and gain more support for the national teams. Since rugby is a mas-

sive sport all around the world, there are enormous possibilities in getting new partners and more visibility. If for example the women's national team had played in 2016 Rio Olympic, the visibility for rugby in Finland would already now be bigger than it was before. Great opportunity for rugby to gain again more visibility and popularity is the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, especially if Finland is qualified the sport might get more followers also in Finland. One of the strengths mentioned in the SWOT analysis is Whittaker, who's dedication in sourcing new partnerships in the SRL has gained already few contracts and who is now actively trying to gain new sponsors for the federation and for the teams constantly. Even though Stephen is lacking the professional experience on marketing, already in short time he has been able to get new kit sponsor Macron and Puls Nutrition to support SRL and the teams. He is active and understands the sport, he also has then knowledge of rugby sponsoring else where in the world. Without dedicated activity at SRL getting more sponsors would not be possible.

The weaknesses in the SWOT table include the non-existent visibility of rugby currently in Finland and also the still quite small sponsorship culture in Finland. Getting in touch with the companies are challenging, because of the information flow and multiple requests companies keep receiving all the time, which is why it is important to think new ways of approaching and ways to make the companies more interested. One of the threats is that Finnish companies are not aware enough of how well-known and popular rugby is as a sport in the world and what kind of opportunities they might have globally if they would sponsor the national teams now.

10 Suggested possible sponsors for the national teams

In this study will be used Alaja's method called matching to find new possible sponsors for SRL and the national teams. Matching means compatibility between the company and the four national teams. Usually this compatibility can be for example values, goals, attitudes, way to work, history, clients, products or services and from those it is important to find something which links the company and the teams together and opens up new interesting possibilities for both parties. It is important to find elements, which combine the company and the sponsorship target together. (Alaja E, 3.11.2016)

These following suggestion of possible sponsors are chosen based on the information received from Whittaker and the values and details of these national teams. The companies in the following sub-chapters were chosen based on their values and goals, from which could be found matching elements to the nationals rugby teams in Finland. Each of the companies is from different industry, to show that matching factors can be found from all the industries. The company details and the joining factors were found online from each company's web pages and then compared and matched with the national teams.

Through discussion at Alaja's lecture and workshop at Tampere University on 3 November 2016 we participants were asked to think what kind of images rugby brings to us and the following words came up during the workshop:

- Fast
- Power
- Strong
- Primitive, nature, purity, raw
- Primeval power (*alkuvoima*)
- Internationally known, unfamiliar in Finland
- Team spirit
- Honesty
- High moral
- Strong future ahead
- Energy needed for the future challenges

I also executed a questionnaire on Facebook to my fellow students about what comes in mind when thinking about rugby. These were their answers:

- Rough
- Ragged
- Sweaty guys
- Britain
- Strength
- Danger
- Trauma
- Fans
- Mud
- Humour

- Bruises
 - Mud
 - Guys
 - Rough play
 - Shouting fans
 - Dirty English men
 - Rough game
 - Huge players
 - Dirty
 - Fit bodies
 - Pre-historic American football
 - Australia, hot men, QLD Maroons
 - Six nations
 - American football without the padding
 - A little bit crazy; great spectator sport
- (Facebook questionnaire, 10.11.2016)

Whittaker mentioned earlier the ideal sponsors for them to be Finnair, Fazer, Elisa, Sonera or Sisu, but after going through their mission, goals and vision they did not have that much matching criteria with SRL and the rugby teams. For example Fazer's mission is to create taste experiences, vision is to exceed expectations, values are to exceed customers expectations and offer quality products and work with others showing respect and even though these values are similar, they are not still matching that much with SRL and the national teams. Elisa's values are to be client-centred, be responsible, regenerate, be productive and cooperate, which again are similar values but not really matching with rugby. The ideal sponsors Whittaker mentioned earlier are the biggest companies in Finland, which creates a challenge to get them sponsor this fairly unknown sports, since there are many other organizations needing sponsors as well. This is why the sponsor companies presented in the following paragraphs are big companies from different industries, but not the biggest companies in Finland who everyone first approaches with sponsorship suggestions.

From the word list mentioned above and the values and image of rugby, possible sponsor companies were developed. The following companies in the next subchapters we narrowed down based on the joining factors they have with the two national rugby teams and SRL and I tried to find companies from different industries. Each of these companies was carefully studied online and their vision, mission and goals were checked to see if there were any matches with SRL and the national teams. In the next chapters are described shortly the companies chosen to be potential sponsors based on Erkki Alaja's model for the four national teams and what matches these companies to the national teams.

10.1 Potential sponsor number 1: Puhdistamo – Real Superfoods

Puhdistamo is a company in Tampere, which is founded in 2008 and concentrates on purity, quality, trust and all the products are high quality products from the nature. Puhdistamo offers raw food and super food, such as raw chocolate, Goji berries, cocoa beans and rice protein. Puhdistamo started, because of group of friends noticed that natural foods, super foods and raw foods will become more popular in recent years. Puhdistamo started from small idea and developed into a company, which offers the best possible ingredients and food what makes people feel better. The products are gathered from Finland and delivered internationally. Puhdistamo started from small online shop selling quality products, online shop was first step because super foods were still fairly unknown category in Finland. The popularity grew slowly but steadily and in 2010 autumn Puhdistamo changed its strategy and created its current brand and started selling its products in wholesale to retailers. Puhdistamo realized people appreciate healthy food, they are more aware of possibilities raw and pure food has to offer for consumers. Puhdistamo enjoys competitions and realizes that it helps to make their products more known as well. They wish to be honest to the consumers and provide quality products and ingredients to everyone from natural ingredients and offer easy solutions to consumers to eat healthier and more pure so that they are able for optimal performance. Puhdistamo is part lean in 5 weeks challenge. (Puhdistamo – Real Superfoods, 2016)

The joining factors between Puhdistamo and the national rugby teams in Finland are the nature and purity and the primeval power (*alkuvoima*) the super food offers and what rugby is. Super foods give energy, which is something the rugby players need for the future's journey towards the Olympics. Raw food is more known outside Finland or at least it was when this group of friends started their venture in Finland and also so is rugby now more known outside Finland but gaining more popularity also here slowly. Puhdistamo offers honest real food for the consumers with high quality and rugby values are high moral, honesty. The team performance in rugby is strongly based on team spirit and Puhdistamo started its business in Finland with a small group of friends with good team spirit among them and grew that way to a bigger company. Puhdistamo is a visionary company which brought super food to Finland and by supporting rugby they will continue being visionary by supporting sports, which is not yet a famous sport in Finland.

The next figure presents the shared story and values of both parties, which matches them together.

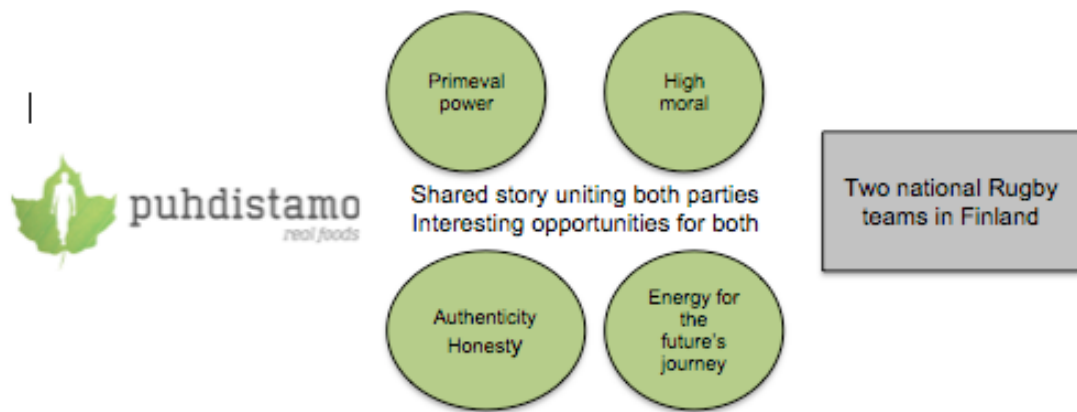


Figure 8. Shared story of Puhdistamo the national rugby teams in Finland

10.2 Potential sponsor number 2: Loiste -energy company

Loiste -energy company is a Finnish company, which has two offices; one in Helsinki and one in Kajaani. They have over 200.000 customers in Finland and their revenue was 149 million euros in 2015. Loiste supports Finnish youth and their free time activities and has projects for second year students about energy and how energy is produced, how to use energy smartly and how to save energy. Loiste supports children and youth's hobbies in Kainuu region with a yearly grant. Loiste is a company, which is open about its pricing and products to its customers and partners. They consider quality, environment, health- and safety issues important and follow these values in all their businesses such as energy sales, purchase and transfers. (Loiste Konserni, 2016)

Compatibilities and the joint story with the national teams and Loiste are the supportiveness towards children's and youth sports, energy and the primeval power the company shares and what rugby is. The national teams need energy for the future's journey and Loiste has the energy to give and they give it honestly and openly to their customers.

The following figure shows the shared story of Loiste and the national rugby teams.

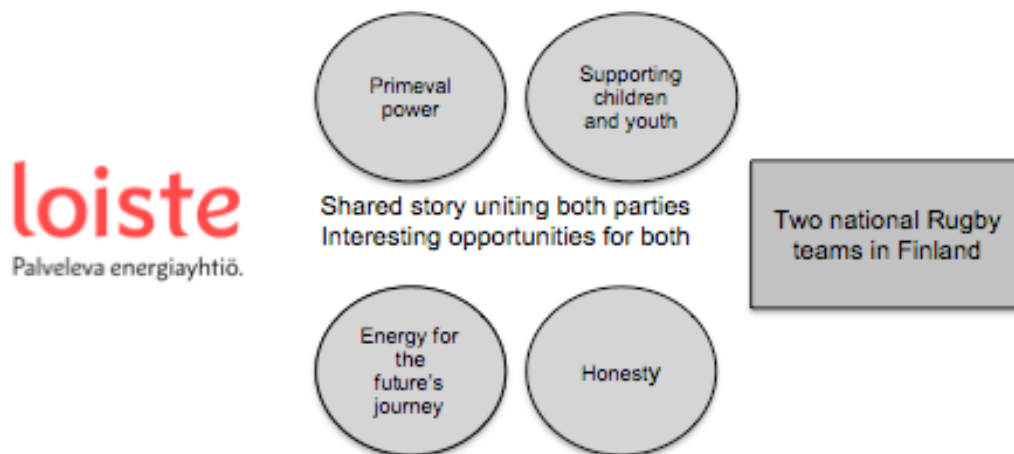


Figure 9. The shared story of Loiste and the national rugby teams

10.3 Potential sponsor number 3: Otto Brandt

Otto Brandt started as a small sport shop in Helsinki 111 years ago. Nowadays Otto Brandt is successful family organization, which imports and sells e.g. motorbikes, engines, moped cars to Finland as well as it sells and markets its Faster -boats in Baltics and Scandinavia. Otto Brandt has stores in Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and Vantaa, it has 50 employees and its revenue is over 26 million. Otto Brandt's values are offering high quality, being responsible and act as an example, being committed and enthusiastic. Otto Brandt wishes to be trusted, honest and open and its values are cooperation, helping others, valuing the community and others and it wishes to be trusted partner. (Otto Brandt, 2016)

The joint factors between Otto Brandt and the national teams are the values: being committed, helping others and valuing others. Joining factors are the pace, energy and the power Otto Brandt's products and the rugby players have. The following picture shows the uniting story of Otto Brandt and the national teams.



Figure 10. The shared story of Otto Brandt and the national rugby teams in Finland

10.4 Potential Sponsor number 4: Sodexo Oy

Sodexo Oy is a part of international Sodexo organization. Sodexo offers wide selection of reception, safety, cleaning and food services for companies, public sector and private sector. Sodexo has in total 11.000 employees in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark, its revenue is over 800 million euros. Sodexo's mission is to make every day better and offer services, which improve the quality of life. Its values are being helpful, creating good team spirit and aiming for continuous improvement. These values mean in more detail paying attention and listening to others, reacting fast, being effective, appreciating others, having a great team spirit and a common goal, having initiative and exceeding expectations. (Sodexo, 2016)

The uniting story between Sodexo and the national teams is the international company and international sports and all the values. Also Sodexo's ethical principles: trust, respecting people, being fair and honest in all the business they do are combining factors with the national teams. In the picture below is presented the joining factors of Sodexo and the national teams.



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Figure 11. The shared story of Sodexo and the national Finnish rugby teams

10.5 Potential sponsor number 5: Power Oy

Power started in 2015 in Denmark in a small town near Copenhagen. Power has been very successful ever since it opened in Denmark, because of its aggressive pricing and functioning online store as well as customer friendly stores. Power is part of Expert AS – organization, which revenues are approximately 800 million euros in total. Power has 28 stores in Finland, mainly in middle and south Finland and also one store in Rovaniemi in Northern Finland. (Power.fi 2016)

There are many uniting factors between the national rugby teams and Power; both have strong future ahead, playing rugby needs power, strength and speed, both are international, Power's pricing is aggressive and rugby is considered as bit of an aggressive sports with bruises and tackles and they both are fairly new in Finland. Rugby clubs are located in each of the cities Power has its stores and one of the games in April 2017 for Finnish National team is organized in Denmark.

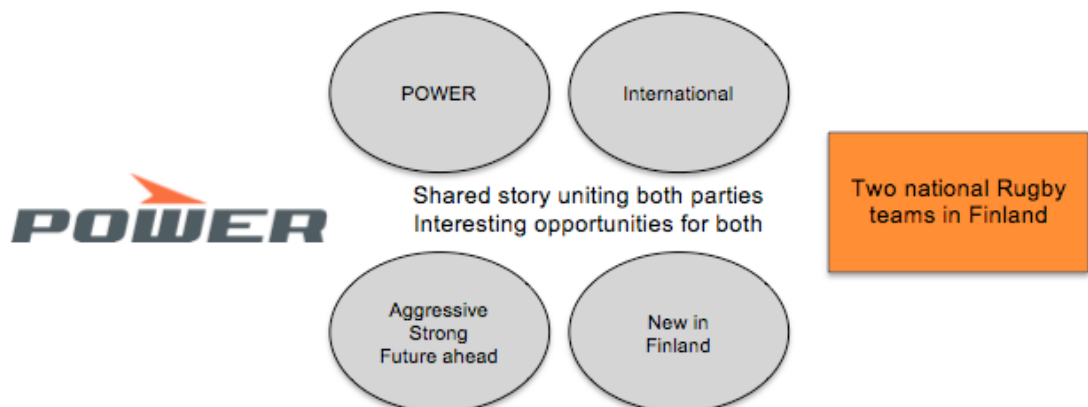


Figure 12. Uniting story between Power and the national rugby teams

After doing the matching process with the companies presented above, the creator of the model Erkki Alaja was contacted for comments and opinions. His comments from using his matching model was following:

- *Presenting the sports: good and needed, since rugby is not familiar to everyone*
 - *Power – matching is superb, you nailed it.*
 - *Puhdistamo: fascinating*
 - *Loiste: Interesting, could be possible. Energy company suits well and this Loiste has recently joined in sponsoring sports.*
 - *Otto Brandt: good*
 - *Sodexo: good arguments, not easy to get them to sponsor.*
 - *What we offer to you –page is very good.*
 - *When reading your matching, I started thinking that company who starts sponsoring rugby is a visionary company and that could be one benefit for the company, since it requires visionary attitude from the company to support fairly unknown sports.*
- (Alaja E. 9.12.2016)

Based on Alaja's comments I added the visionary aspect on the company benefits and it also suited with Puhdistamo quite well. This model can be tested with as many companies as possible, just as long there are joining factors or uniting story or some factors, which ties the possible sponsor and the teams together and makes the company interested and more engaged.

11 How to continue from here

Alaja highlights the importance of getting to know the possible sponsor company; finding information from them and knowing their values are important. Nowadays it is easier to find that information for example from the company's web pages. It is important to make the company presentation and give them material, which is designed just for them. The material needs to presents SRL and the teams and it needs to show clearly the benefits the company receives from this co-operations partnership. When contacting the company, it is best to try to book an appointment with them face-to-face or at least have a phone discussion of the subject and make them interested of you. Nowadays companies receive hundreds of emails every day and most likely the email sent to a company might not get read at all. Other contact options are also through social media; send a message on Twitter to the marketing manager or another person in the company and approach them through a bit different channel; this might catch their attention. Always make the contact specifically designed for that company.

11.1 Meeting the possible sponsor and after sealing the deal

At the meeting wit the potential sponsor is good to remember to appreciate their time and show how interested you are of this co-operation. At the meeting Alaja reminds to remember to:

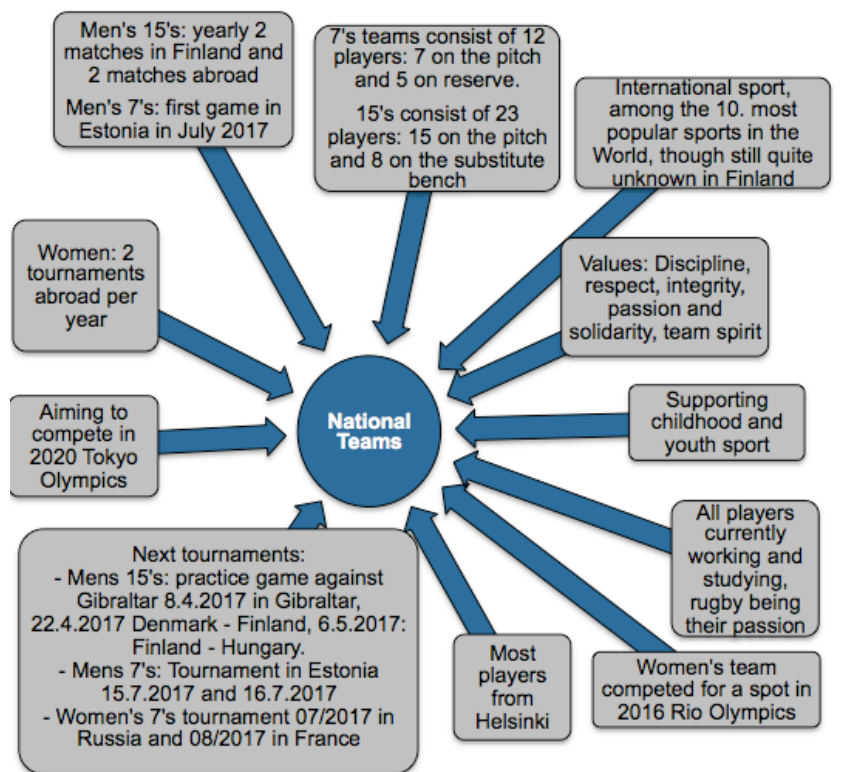
- Be energetic and firm, do not talk too much, but state all the facts clearly
 - Remember the matching and the uniting elements; it proves you know the company well and have made your homework, when you have found uniting elements
 - Present a service package for the company; who are the teams they would sponsor, what are the uniting factors or the what is the shared story and what benefits will the company receive from this cooperation
 - Think of a service, which has a well-being factor; rugby schools for the employees or partners supporting their well-being or rugby teams and the company supporting youth sports together in some events or organizing together a different kind of sports day for children
 - Offer an exclusive service, such as the rugby teams going to the company's event to market them for free or organizing special seats in rugby game for the company
 - Adding social responsibility factor to the negotiation can be beneficial
 - Tell about possible risks openly for the company
 - Highlight the benefits of this possible new partnership, offer solutions for problems
 - Highlight that you wish to make this a partnership between you two and help each others, you are not just taking the money and then forgetting them
- (Alaja E., 3.11.2016)

Purpose of the first meeting is to create interest in the company's preventatives. It is not necessary at this point of the meeting to discuss about the money issues in detail, since that can be done when the company decides to sponsor you. If in the first meet-

ing the company asks monetary amount, you can answer for example "we are looking something around 5.000 euros per year". After sealing the deal it is important to keep promises to the company and actively report and stay in contact with them of the teams' progress, even if they would not ask anything (probably they do not have time!). Trust is important to create in the beginning and maintain throughout the deal, the co-operation also needs to be fun and relaxed. SRL needs to show effort and appreciation towards the sponsor and offer the sponsor opportunities to benefit from the deal by suggesting possible events for them, giving free tickets to the games, inviting employees to trainings, games or anything the company itself does not understand or remember to ask. Digital marketing is also key issue: tell about your partnership online on social media and web pages actively and perhaps sometimes try to surprise the partners in a nice way. (Alaja E., 3.11.2016)

When meeting the company representatives, it is good to be prepared and because rugby is fairly unknown among Finnish people it is a good idea to tell shortly what is rugby and who are the national teams. This can also be a short but interesting video showing the sport and the players to the viewers. The following picture presents shortly the national teams and who they are, it was already shown earlier in this report and it is important to show it for the companies, since it tells in more detail about the teams and most likely the companies are not aware of the details of the team members.

Picture 8. Who are the national rugby teams in Finland?



The picture tells shortly to the company who are the people in the teams, where they play their games and when, what they do besides play rugby, where are they from and where they aim and what are the values of rugby and the teams. This makes the company representatives to get to know the teams a bit better and makes the presentation more personal, before going into the sponsorship deal more in detail.

After presenting the teams to the company it is good to make the company interested in the joining factors and uniting story by showing clearly how the teams and the company match together. This is more personal way to approach the sponsor and might make them more interested when the presenter has made effort to get to know the company, their values and has carefully thought how they match together. This makes the company feel more special and needed. After going through the uniting story, it is good to wrap up the presentation by telling what SRL and the teams will offer to the company in return and most importantly how the company will benefit from this cooperation partnership. It is very important that the company feels it benefits from the deal as much as the national teams and SRL, which is why my suggestion is that SRL offers the company and its partners more than just a logo. SRL and the teams or clubs could offer rugby schools, which is one way to get to know the sports, bring visibility more and make more people to know rugby. Offering this kind of activity means for the company that they get to organize something fun and new for they staff and partners with lower expenses. Offering visibility for the company is important; it is recommended to put the logo on the kit but also offer visibility in social media such as SRL web pages and on Facebook and Twitter. The companies might also be interested to participate together with SRL in the events organized for the children, which is why it is important to tell them about that opportunity and possible coming events.

Most importantly the company needs to know how they benefit from this cooperation partnership. SRL and the national teams could offer following benefits for the company:

- The company will support world famous sport, but is still visionary company in Finland for supporting Finnish rugby teams
- The national teams' players can help in advertising the company in their events, exhibitions, adverts, company's own Intranet
- Employees and partners of the company will get a chance to learn how to play rugby through participating trainings or participating in special sport events organized specifically to the company's personnel or partners
- By supporting the national teams, the company also supports children and youth sports and has the possibility to get visibility around Finland in different events organized by SRL

- Company will get visibility through social media and that how more people or more new segments will get to know their company better
- The company's logo will be shown and the company will be advertised on the tournaments organized in Finland and outside Finland for the national teams, but also the company can be advertised in the rugby clubs' games through out the Finnish season and in the snow rugby event in Jyväskylä
- Company gets a possibility to be advertised in the Tokyo Olympics if Finland is qualified, which brings a lot of visibility for the company

The purpose of the first meeting with the company is to create positive images to the company representatives, so that they get a feeling after the meeting that this deal will be great for the company and the company and its employees will benefit from this deal a lot. This is why telling how the company benefits from the deal is one of the most important things. There is no need to go into the details such as exact money amounts, what exactly the company gets or where the logo is put on the kit in the first meeting. The details can be discussed later after the interest for the sponsorship deal and doing something together is created. Usually after the meeting you can sense already if the deal is going to be made or not.

12 Marketing of SRL and the national teams

Currently the marketing of SRL and the rugby teams is done through digital marketing and SRL's web pages. SRL has also organized different kind of events during the year, such as sports for children and children getting to know rugby and introducing a new sport to locals through local rugby clubs' events of "open training for everyone" . Whittaker has his own personal car adomed with SRL's logo on it and SRL sells the new shirts online for everyone. Helsinki Rugby club also recently made a headline in Finnish news paper, because the players made a nude calendar.

Picture 9. Helsinki Rugby Club's calendar picture made headlines (Nykänen M. 2016)



Making into headlines in Finland is a good thing for rugby, even though the article is not directly about the sports itself. Also positive is that on Facebook pages of Finnish Rugby Federation there is questions from people, who are interested in starting to play rugby. It would be good to make it even simpler to the interested people to start playing rugby and give them the answer or contact details immediately.

The Facebook pages rugby has include Stephen Whitaker's own Facebook pages where he shares links to some of the sponsors pages, Suomen Rugbyliitto Facebook pages where is advertised the coming events and games for the national teams as well as the new shirts, which came out for the next season mid-November 2016. Both of the national teams have their own Facebook pages, called Finland Women's Rugby National Team Raivottaret and Finland National Team. Few videos have been shared forward between Suomen Rugbyliitto web pages and the women's and men's national teams web pages, the lady's have been active in taking videos from their trainings and posting them on Facebook. Men's Facebook pages have just recently been created by Whittaker and they have started making interesting content and interviews of the players.

12.1 Recommendations for more efficient social media marketing to gain more visibility

SOSTAC planning model is created by Paul Smith and it is a model for planning online marketing for companies. The following SOSTAC planning model describes the different phases from the viewpoint of SRL and mainly the two national teams and what actions are required to get more followers, more players and more visibility for rugby in Finland and the four national teams.

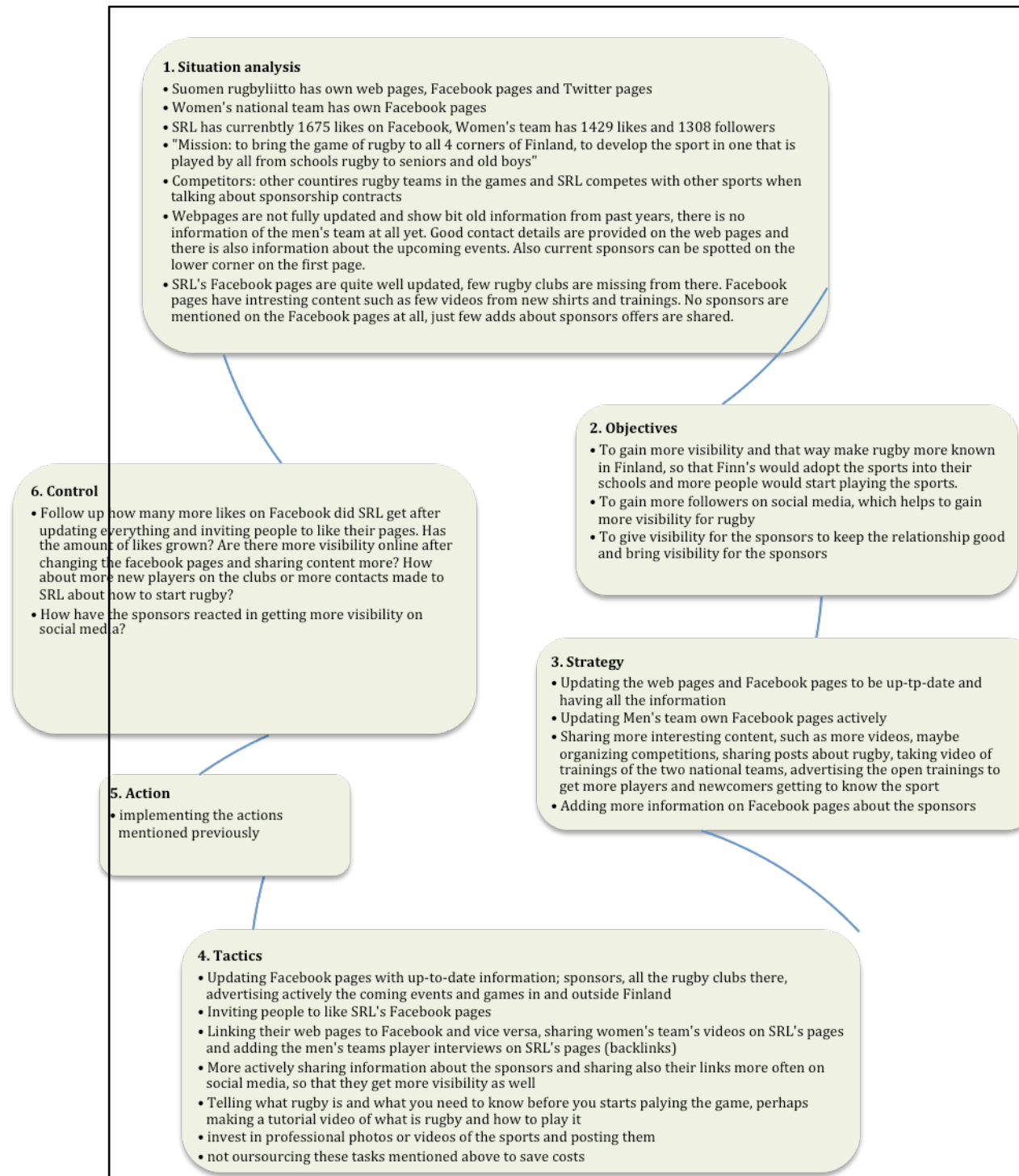


Figure 13. SOSTAC planning model to SRL's digital marketing

In digital marketing it is extremely important to share interesting content, which the followers are interested. Being active on social media is important in today's modern world where digital marketing is replacing the flyers and traditional emails more and more. SRL has currently quite little likes or followers on their social media pages, so it is important for them to gain more visibility and invite people to like their pages and share content more online. Content needs to appeal to young people and older people who are interested in trying a new sport. It is important to share interesting content with enough information, such as telling actively about the coming games on Facebook, who the players are and sharing these posts on Twitter as well as linking them to men's and women's rugby team's Facebook pages. Getting more followers can be hard for a non profit organization and rugby as a sport is relatively unknown in Finland, but nowadays digital marketing has a massive role in bringing more visibility and SRL should try to benefit from social media and marketing way more. SRL could share more of the videos women's and men's teams have posted on their own Facebook pages. Videos are interesting content and people might enjoy watching those videos. SRL's and the women's team's pages are quite separate and not sharing content that much in either of their pages from each other, also the men's Facebook pages which have recently been created needs to be contacted better with SRL's pages.

SRL and the national teams could get more visibility through their sponsors too, which is why it would be recommended to discuss how the sponsors can help them and perhaps the sponsors could also link the SRL's web pages and Facebook pages on their digital marketing or news letters or intranet. Perhaps through that way new interested followers or even new players would get into rugby and rugby would get more visibility in Finland that way. Rugby's benefit is that is among the 10 most popular sports in the world, so it does have a lot of potential to gain more popularity in Finland, especially if Finland will be competing at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Rugby, even though quite little known sports in Finland, is gaining slowly more and more popularity worldwide and also among women. In the beginning it just needs a lot of work to get new sponsors, make the sports more known and to be active on social media. Keeping everything updated and interesting to the current followers and possible new followers is important, because if the company checks the social media of SRL and the teams, they need to be up-to-date and interesting, but also follow the values of rugby.

12.2 Content marketing for SRL and the national teams

How to draw people on SRL's web sites and Facebook sites? People get interested and start following more, if the company or organization creates unique and interesting content

on the web pages and Facebook pages, which help people to solve their problem, such as how to start playing rugby or what is rugby. People get more interested if the headlines are catchy. Using key worked optimization is also important. Content on web and Facebook and Twitter need to be published frequently and links of posts, videos and news needs to be shared across these options actively. On Google Trends, which shows statistics of how many times some certain words have been looked up in Google and when, I searched for SRL and Suomen Rugbyliitto there were no matches for either one. Rugby Suomi had few results and had been searched few times, but not that actively in recent years. It would be important that some search results would appear on Google Trends and here it is good to also follow up, when some changes to the digital marketing have been done; have these search results changed since this study?

For interesting content, catchy headlines and subjects are important. People always check the headlines first and based on the headline and how interesting it is, they will click the article or page open. Powerful headlines and subjects for SRL's articles, blog posts and possible videos could be formed as follows:

- Make "how to"- videos or article, such as:
 - o *How to play rugby?*
 - o *How to tackle a way bigger person?*
- Use numbers on headlines:
 - o *Three ways to tackle*
 - o *Rugby is among the 10 most popular sports in the world*
- Mention ideal buyer in the headline:
 - o *Rugby for juniors, seniors, women and men – come and try your self and enjoy this unique contact sports!*
- Talk about mistakes or errors:
 - o *Do not do this when playing rugby*
 - o *The errors beginners make when trying rugby for the first time*
- Use questions
 - o *Why rugby is not yet known in Finland?*
 - o *How can I start playing rugby?*
 - o *How to teach children the rugby basics?*

Ultimate headline formula is to have a number, adjective, keyword, rationale and a promise in the same headline. SRL posts fairly regularly (not daily) some information to their Facebook pages, but there are far too little information about the coming events and where they are and who are playing or where to get information about rugby and the national teams. The few videos SRL and the women's team have on their pages are interesting and fun to look at, that kind of content would be ideal to catch more attention and that way get more visibility and followers.

Content marketing is not only about videos and articles. Content marketing refers to people's emotions, educates them, convinces them and entertains them. Usually emotional

content is more efficient, it gets stuck in people's head better but emotional content is easier to create. (Rouhiainen L. 2016)

Picture 9: Content marketing matrix (Bosomworth D. 2014)



Educational content is usually numbers, tutorials, press releases and guides. SRL's educational content could be a video of how to play rugby, how to sign in to a Finnish rugby club, how to start playing rugby or rugby rules guide. If the video or guide or what ever educational content has been done well, the content of the video can be also inspirational and give new ideas and thoughts for the public and make them more interested of rugby. It is important to keep the content short and on the point.

Entertainment section in the content matrix is used to get peoples attention and make customers aware of the service or product or sports This could be for example a competition or a quiz among followers or likers on Facebook and the prize is for example a free training and rugby balls for you and your five friends in the city which suits best for you or a new rugby shirt. This could motivate people to get to know SRL and the teams better and go more actively to their web and Facebook sites and share the sites among their own friends, which then means more visibility for SRL and rugby.

To get consumers inspired and follow and perhaps even try rugby, SRL and rugby need more likes and followers on social media, more interesting content and more link shares. Digital media is nowadays very powerful marketing tool and it is important for organizations with little money to spend on marketing to benefit from the free social media and digital marketing as much as possible.

12.3 Email marketing

Email marketing is the most traditional way of digital marketing and many companies have massive lists of emails to which they send the emails regularly. Email helps to engage, improve communication and provide information and all the companies should have an email list to whom to market. Email marketing normally increases sales for the company. SRL could start collecting emails from people who enter their web pages and they could market rugby and for example sell their kits through emails or market the games for the people who have left their email on SRL's web page. SRL could do following steps to make email marketing more efficient for them:

- Start to collect email marketing contact list on their web pages, Facebook pages and Twitter, so that they can start doing the email marketing actively for people who are interested of them (why else would they leave their email address).
- Adding pictures or videos to the emails they send making the emails visual and attractive to readers (such as adding pictures of the players, of the kits, video of a tackle in the game and so on). SRL could also attach animated GIF pictures from their trainings so that the email is visually interesting to the readers and people stop to read it through more carefully

Benefits for more active email marketing for SRL could be increased kit sales, getting more visibility, by advertising the game locations and times on emails to get more viewers and more people would get to know rugby better. Also engagement with the social media followers would improve by increasing online marketing. This kind of email marketing also saves money, since sending emails or collecting email contact list is free or at least very cheap, even if you use a proper email-marketing tool.

13 Conclusions

In this chapter I will draw together the results and suggestions of this study, go through what actions are needed from SRL to gain the most benefit from this study and how valid and trustworthy this thesis is. Last I will also analyse my own learning during the making of this thesis.

13.1 Consideration of the results

Challenges for SRL and the national teams are currently the lack of money, lack of interested sponsors and the low visibility and popularity of rugby in Finland. These challenges the SRL needs to try to overcome, so that rugby would gain more popularity and the teams more sponsors so that the national team members could concentrate on training. Possibilities for rugby are huge in Finland, since continuously rugby is gaining more popularity around the world and getting more known also in smaller countries. The fact that rugby is now one of Olympic sports had made more doors open to rugby and has also made more people interested in rugby. This is why also in Finland there are many possibilities for rugby to be one of the well-known sports, which is played in schools and followed on television. Many smaller companies in Finland do not currently sponsor anyone, so there is lots of potential and possibilities to get sponsors for rugby. Visionary companies, who see the future possibilities in rugby, can benefit a lot from sponsoring the four national Finnish rugby teams.

The companies matched with the national teams have not yet been contacted or met; the SRL will contact these possible sponsor companies themselves. Hopefully by using this model some of the suggested and possible some other new companies as well will do a sponsorship contract with SRL and the national teams and these new deals end up being long lasting cooperative relationships.

Future opportunities for gaining more sponsors are good and promising, since as mentioned previously rugby is gaining more and more fans, players and viewers around the world and it has been predicted that the amount of rugby players will increase tremendously in the future. This opens many doors for the sponsors and also getting visibility in the Tokyo Olympics would be a good opportunity for a Finnish company to gain huge international visibility. If Finland would qualify to Olympics in 2020, it would mean in four years time rugby's popularity in Finland could rise and more people would start following

rugby more. This would then mean more visibility to the sport itself and to the sponsors as well as more visibility on media, such as games could be shown on television.

When doing this matching process in the future and using it in presentations with the possible sponsor companies, the sponsorship presentation needs to be personal and show the company that SRL's representative has got to know the company well before the meeting. Most importantly it needs to be clearly stated to the company representatives how the company will benefit from this sponsorship deal with SRL and the national teams.

13.2 Suggestions for further development

SRL's needs to consider changing its current methods and practises of working and familiarise itself with this matching process suggested, doing this matching actively, so that the possible future contacting to new sponsors will become more efficient than what it has been now. The only way to make this process work and efficient is to practise and use it. Getting more sponsors is long process, it does not happen in one week.

Contacting the companies actively in different and also perhaps more modern ways is important; contacting through web pages or using social media in contacting the employees could work. Trying new ways to reach the companies is important, since the current way of contacting have mainly been by email or calling and they have not worked as good as hoped. Important is to tell the company how they will benefit from this deal with SRL and supporting the national teams, since this makes the company feel important, interested and engaged in doing the sponsorship deal. The sponsorship monetary amounts are details, which can be discussed later after the interest of the company has arisen. Most importantly SRL has to concentrate in showing how the company benefits from this deal as much as SRL and the national teams. Getting to know the company and it's values before the meeting is important and gives good impression, since it shows that SRL has made lots of background research of the company and is very interested in having them as a sponsor.

SRL needs to consider in offering more to the companies, since getting a signed picture and logo on the kit is not engaging enough for the company or make them feel they want to be part of this deal. In case SRL wishes to have bigger companies as sponsors, get more money and longer lasting cooperation partnerships with companies, it also needs to be able to offer more for the company. The ideal situation is that both parties feel they benefit from this deal equally.

13.3 Validity and reliability of this research

This research has been made using only qualitative data, which means there can be misinterpretations and misunderstandings during the interviews and discussions. Alaja's model is not the one and only way to get more sponsors, but it has been used in this report because the current way of trying to get more sponsors has not been worked and Alaja's model has proved to be working when he has used it in getting sponsors for the athletes he manages. Alaja himself has checked my suggestions of possible new sponsors and made sure I have understood the use of the model correctly. Trustworthiness of the matching model is tested by Alaja with his own athletes he manages and for example with this matching model he has got Fortum as a sponsor company for Topi Raitanen, Lähivakuutus for Risto Rappääjä and Idea Park -shopping centre for Aino-Kaisa Saarinen. All these had athletes and sponsors had uniting story or joining factors and according to Alaja the companies got very interested in the sponsorship deals when seeing his presentation and meeting him and the athlete. (Alaja E. 3.11.2016)

Validity means do the findings make sense and are they credible to Finnish Rugby Federation when they read them from my report. In this study the reports starts by getting to know sponsorship theory, how to approach possible sponsors and also sponsorship companies side is analysed and what the deal means for the company. Based on the theory the practical suggestions are given. The theory backs up the suggestions of this thesis and supports strongly Alaja's matching model. Uncertainty in this study is that even though I have given suggestions, analysed the companies and done plenty of research and used the matching model, it is not guaranteed that the model and this new way of approaching the sponsorship companies will be used or that it would work with every single company. The finding and usage of Alaja's model have been tested by Alaja himself and based on his results I have done the company matching myself, which is why I trust the findings to most likely work for some of the companies as well and also help in the future to find new possible sponsorship companies for the national teams. The theory supports strongly the matching process, since the company's benefit point of view is important and mentioned multiple times in the theory and also during the matching process it is highlighted as one of the most important factors in getting the company interested. SRL's representative has read this thesis through and corrected the mistakes or misunderstandings there were regarding rugby and the current situation of SRL and it's funding and marketing.

Whittaker has been contacted throughout doing this thesis. Even though the process has lasted a year from starting it and getting the thesis subject, Whittaker and myself have

kept each other fairly well updated in the changes happened during this year. Whittaker has provided me with plenty of information about the current way of contacting and getting the sponsors and the monetary situation of SRL and the national teams. This information has helped me to analyse more what is needed to make the situation better for the national teams. Whittaker and Alaja have both been honest and trustworthy when giving information about the current situation and the matching process. Also Alaja has been supportive and given his opinion openly and honestly about my findings and suggestions.

In interpretivism approach and philosophy the main disadvantage is that there is a lot of room for the researcher to be bias. This is because the primary data collected cannot be generalized, because the data is impacted by personal viewpoints and values. So the reliability needs to be considered. But on the other hand the validity can be considered high because data in interpretivist study is usually trustworthy and honest. Bias is a problem in this study, since I strongly wish the SRL and the national teams to get more sponsors and I believe I have had throughout the research empathy towards this subjects and I wish they would get more money and sponsors. I want to be positive and as a writer of this thesis I can be a bit too bias, since I wish all the best for SRL.

Reliability means that the process of the study is consistent and it has been done with reasonable care. The process of this study started with reading plenty of theory and articles of rugby, getting to know what rugby actually is and familiarising myself with this sports, since before doing thesis about this subject I have not had knowledge of this sports at all. In my opinion this is a good thing, since it gave me the possibility to approach this subject from also from the companies point of view and it has given me understanding in what people who do not know rugby think about this sports and why this sports currently struggles to get sponsors. After the theory the current situation of SRL and the national teams were analysed with the information got from Whittaker, Internet and articles. Based on the theory and practical information of this sport, the process continued in contacting Alaja and learning how to use his model to match the perfect company with the national teams. All the interviews have been done by email with Whittaker, Alaja has been contacted by email as well and also met face-to-face during the lecture in Tampere University. Data throughout this study has been qualitative interviews. The theory has been backing the qualitative data up. The matching model has been used exactly the same as Alaja has used it. Other similar thesis has not been made from this kind of subject earlier, which is why it is not possible to compare the results of this study to other theses results.

Biggest risk in this study is that even though the matching model has been used correctly and the process has been based on theory and from there brought to practice, it might be

that the companies are hard to contact and hard to organize a meeting face-to-face. This is why extra care is needed when contacting the companies and organizing the meeting, since the first meeting needs to be interesting enough for the company to make the deal. Other risk is that even though recommended, this matching model will never be used by SRL.

13.4 Evaluation of thesis process and my own learning

The subject for this thesis was received in the beginning of 2016 from SRL and Stephen Whittaker, who currently does the sales and contacts the possible sponsors. The process all in all has taken one year and in the beginning of starting to work with this thesis it has been made on spare time between work and other school courses, which is why the working has not been efficient and the planned schedule was delayed. Originally the plan was to have this thesis done and evaluated latest in December 2016.

From the beginning I found this subject interesting and my goal was to get to know the subject so well, that my findings would benefit SRL as much as possible. I found this subject interesting and motivating, because I felt I could actually help SRL by doing this thesis. The thesis process itself has been interesting, challenging and meant hard work for me, since before starting this thesis I have not been familiar with rugby or sponsoring at all. Even though my lack of knowledge has meant lots of hard work and reading the theory to learn myself before writing about it, it has also meant that I have been able to approach this subject through outsider's eyes and perhaps that has given me new ideas and thoughts regarding the subject. I feel I have been able to analyse more critically the current ways of contacting the sponsors and the current marketing material, since if I would be the one doing the contacting or creating the material, I might be more bias and blind to find new solutions.

I wish that this thesis and its suggestions and results would benefit SRL now, in the future and also give new ideas regarding contacting the possible partners. This subject has made me interested in sponsorship and marketing more and it has opened my eyes in importance of considering the benefits of both parties. This will also benefit myself in my own career, since being able to see the both sides of the story and thinking of the benefits of the other party or person will help me in consider how to present my needs so that both of us feel we benefit.

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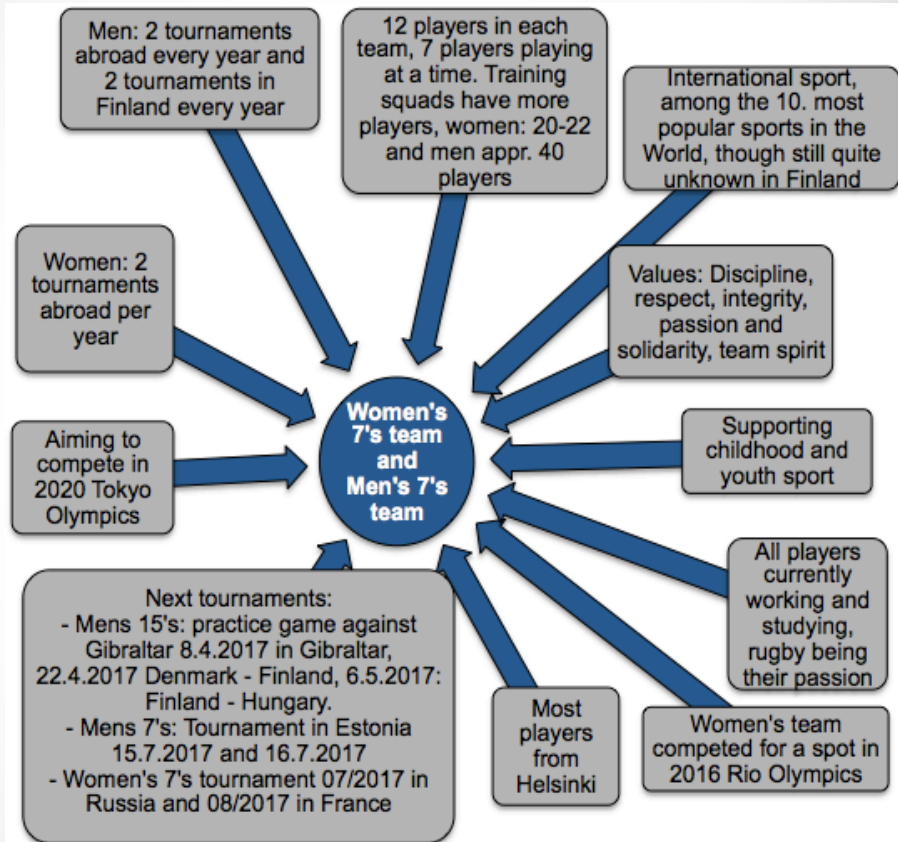
Appendix 1. Power Point presentation to SRL for the meetings with possible sponsors

Rugby in Finland

Finnish Rugby Federation
2 National rugby teams:
Women's 7's
Men's 7's



Who we are ?





POWER

International

Shared story uniting both parties
Interesting opportunities for both

Two national Rugby
teams in Finland

Aggressive

New in
Finland



Primeval
power

High
moral

Shared story uniting both parties
Interesting opportunities for both

Two national Rugby
teams in Finland

Authenticity
Honesty

Energy for
the
future's
journey

loiste

Palveleva energiayhtiö.

Primeval
power

Supporting
children
and youth

Shared story uniting both parties
Interesting opportunities for both

Two national Rugby
teams in Finland

Energy for
the
future's
journey

Honesty



Commitmen
tPassion

Appreciatin
g
community

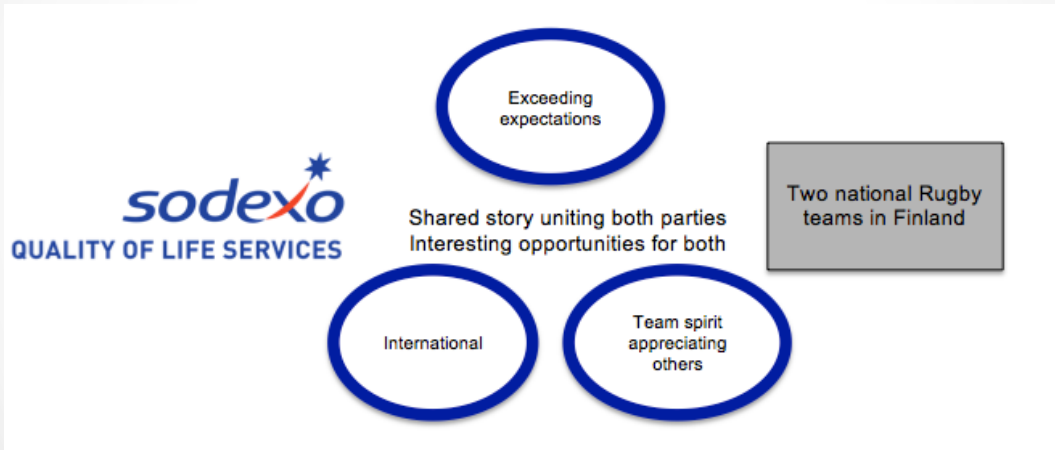
Shared story uniting both parties
Interesting opportunities for both

Two national Rugby
teams in Finland

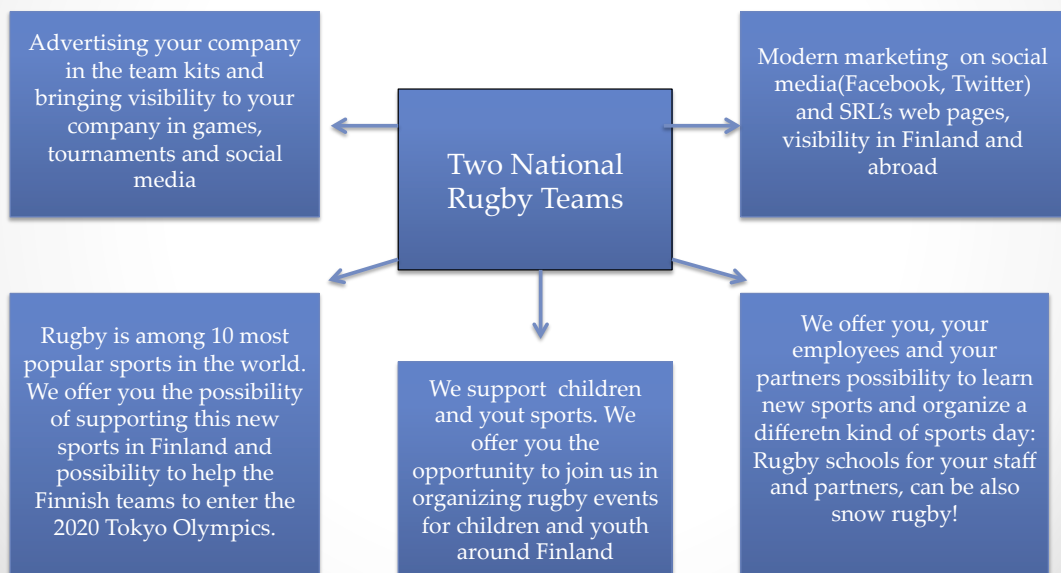
Energy
Power
Fast pace

Helping and
valuing
others





What we offer to you?



How you benefit from us?

Your company will be visionary for sponsoring a sports which is fairly new in Finland

Employees and partners get to learn rugby

By supporting us you support children and youth sports

You will support one of world famous sport

We participate in your events to advertise

You will get visibility through us on Facebook, Twitter and on our web pages

Possibility to show in 2020 Tokyo Olympics if Finland is qualified

Visibility around Finland in rugby clubs' games from Rovaniemi to Helsinki and from Turku to Kotka

Visibility on the national teams' games in Europe: Denmark, Hungary, Russia Estonia and France