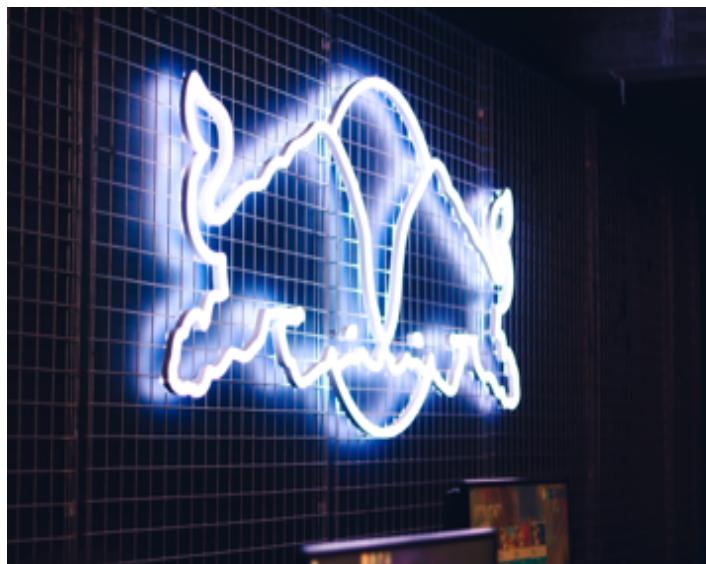
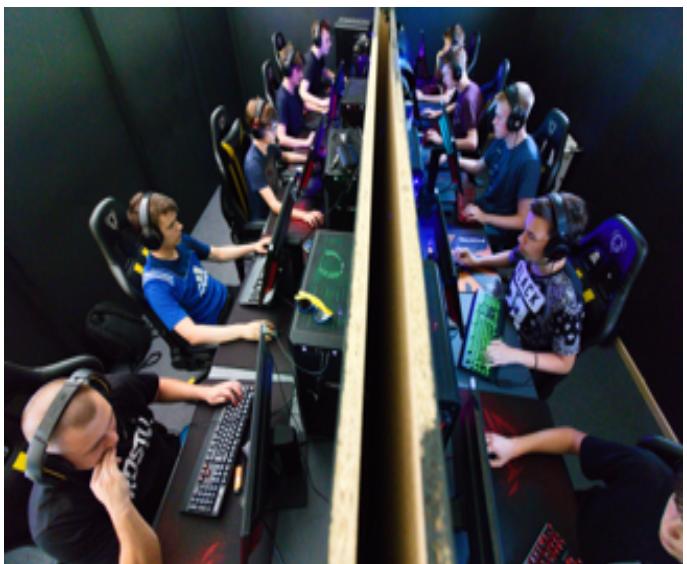


# Esports branding guide



## Branding Challenges for Sponsors in Esports

An Explanatory Case Study in the Danish Esports Industry

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## **Executive Summary**

In recent years, esports has become a rapidly growing global industry, with a young and technology interested audience that is appealing for marketers. Brands worldwide are seizing the opportunity to become part of the esports ecosystem by sponsoring esports partners, making sponsorship the most significant contributor of revenue for the entire industry. Brands who wish to sponsor esports partners have to overcome specific branding challenges related to esports. These branding challenges involve the lack of mainstream media coverage, the trouble for brands to make clear associations to esports, and the prejudices and negative associations concerning gaming and gamers. This thesis investigated how sponsoring brands in esports overcome these branding challenges.

Since sponsorships in esports or esports marketing is a rather new phenomenon, theoretical and academic literature on the topic is still limited. This thesis applied traditional sports sponsorship theory to multiple cases of esports sponsorships in order to identify any variances, gaps, or similarities between sports sponsorship literature and the practice of sponsorship in esports. This approach allowed for the development of theoretical contributions specific to esports sponsorships. This thesis explored the Danish esports market in a multiple case study with six cases of Danish esports sponsorships. In the multiple case study, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were conducted with a total of 12 participants.

Analysis of the responses showed how different types of sponsorship properties, like individuals, teams, or events, provide different opportunities for brand exposure. The analysis also revealed how customized sponsorship activation programs could be used to associate different types of brands to the world of esports, as well as to tackle some of the negative associations in esports and reduce prejudices about gamers' health or behaviors. Moreover, the results showed how brands use their sponsorships to support and develop the esports industry. Based on the results, it was concluded that by integrating the goal of contributing to the esports industry into the brand's sponsorship strategy, selecting the right property for the brand's exposure ambitions, customizing activation programs to associate the brand to esports and to counter negative associations, sponsoring brands in esports can overcome the branding challenges.

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## **Introduction**

In this chapter, the reader will be introduced to the phenomenon of esports and the most important and relevant areas of esports regarding the subject of this thesis. The problematization, research question, and delimitations will also be introduced and described.

### **The Rise of Esports**

Videogames and videogame competitions have existed for decades. However, in the last few years, a significant change in the world of competitive gaming has occurred, and esports is now a global, billion-dollar industry that is still growing rapidly. 'Esports' describes the world of competitive and organized video gaming. Gamers can compete in video games against each other, often in front of spectators. In the same way that traditional sports have competitions and leagues in sports like football, baseball, and hockey, esports encompasses competitions and professional leagues across a variety of video games. The most popular ones are games such as League of Legends (LoL), World of Warcraft (WoW), Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), Fortnite, FIFA, DOTA2, Call of Duty (CoD) and Overwatch (Esportsobserver, 2019).

In contrast to traditional sports, gamers and the esports audience are also engaged in non-competitive gaming, usually streamed online by gamers for entertainment and socializing purposes. Sometimes these streamers can make a living out of streaming by obtaining sponsors and receiving donations. Streaming services and online broadcasting of live events have been a massive contributor in turning casual gaming into a global industry, with star athletes', professional teams, and world championships, just as we see in traditional sports. With millions of viewers across the globe and prize pools in tournaments that stretch into the tens of millions, esports is growing fast.

The global esports market is estimated to generate revenues of \$1.1 billion in 2019, up 26,7% year on year, according to Newzoo, an organization providing marketing intelligence for esports and global gaming. On its current trajectory, the esports market will generate \$1.8 billion in 2022. Newzoo also estimates the global esports audience to be at 453.8 million people in 2019, made up of 201.2 million esports enthusiasts, and 252.6 million occasional viewers (Newzoo, 2019).

## **Sponsorships in Esports**

As the industry is growing, esports are adopting the business models of traditional sports, with team and league revenue coming from advertising, sponsorship, streaming, media rights, ticket, and merchandise sales. Of these, sponsorship is the most significant contributor of revenue in the esports industry. It is estimated that sponsorships make up about 40 percent of revenue in the global eSports industry. International brands such as Coca-Cola, Toyota, and Intel already entered the market, and the sponsorships in this growing industry are expected to increase both in number and value. Previously, it was mainly technology and hardware companies that were behind the sponsorship agreements in esports, but there is an increasing tendency for non-industry related companies to obtain sponsorships as well. Just as the entire revenue of esports is expected to increase, the sponsorship agreements are expected to increase as well (Vækstfonden, 2019).

80% of viewers are under the age of 35, which causes eSport to hit a target group that is traditionally difficult to reach. These young people know how to avoid both traditional and online marketing; they use ad-blockers, they do not watch TV, and they consume their entertainment almost entirely on-demand. However, through sponsorship in esports, brands have the opportunity to reach this engaged and passionate fan base (Vækstfonden, 2019).

## **The Esports Ecosystem**

Trying to establish who and what constitutes the esports ecosystem can be a challenge to newcomers. The following illustration of the esports ecosystem is meant to give the reader an overview of the many avenues of esports sponsorship through which brands can reach consumers. While the esports ecosystem is undoubtedly more complex than this illustration, this overview should provide a good representation of the various components that constitute the world of professional competitive gaming.

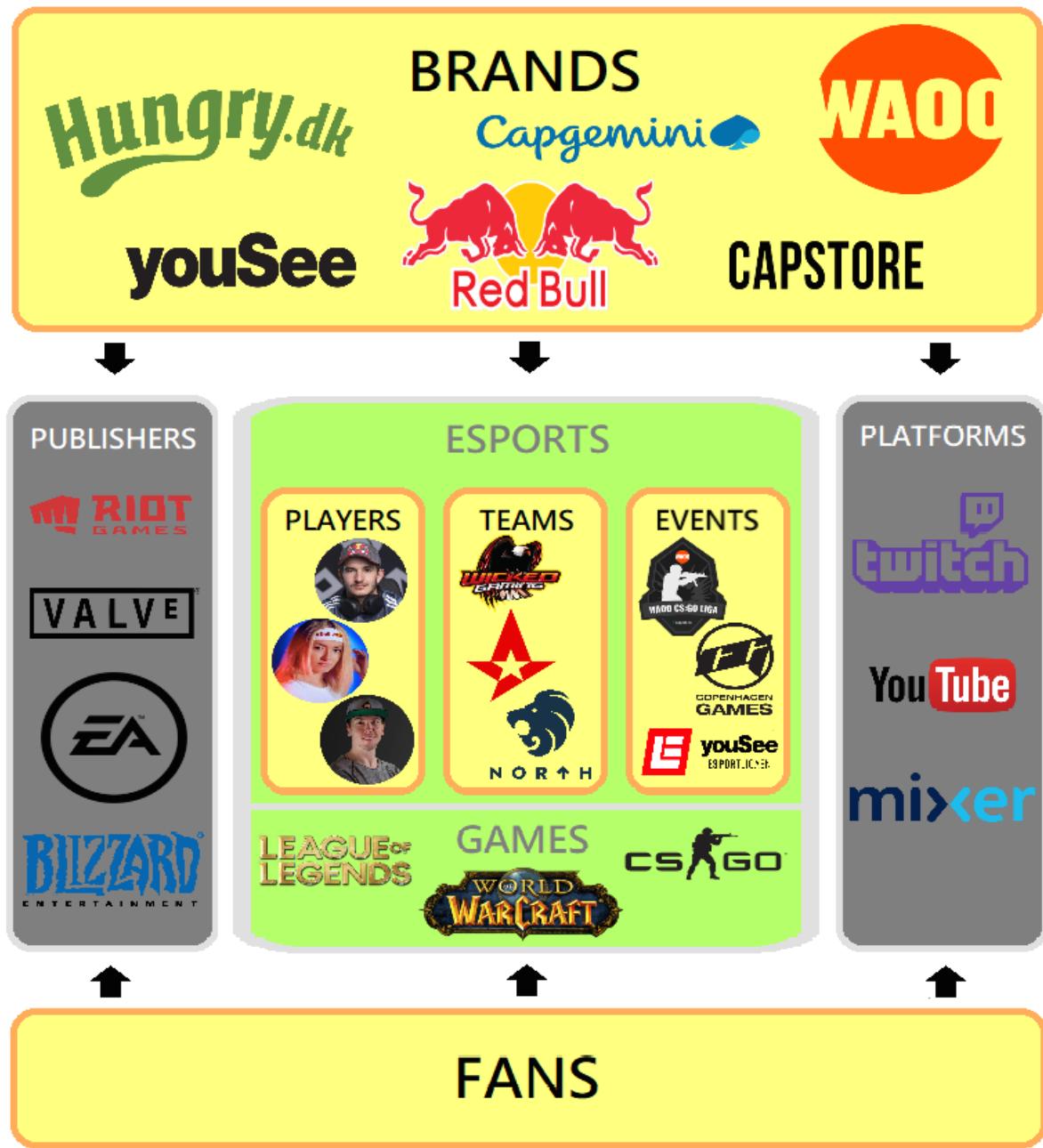


Figure 1: The Esports Ecosystem

### Fans

The fans are the people who watch esports live and online. Esports fans are often gamers themselves, and therefore very passionate about the industry. Brands have begun to invest in esports, specifically targeting gamers and people aged around 16 to 24, the core audience in esports. Moreover, the number of 16 to 24-year old's watching esports is growing fast, with data suggesting that the global audience in this age group was up by more than 60 percent from 2017

to 2018. For context, the global esports audience is already; twice the size of the global audience for Formula 1 motor racing; eight times the size of the TV audience for the baseball World Series, and ten times the number of people who watched the 2019 Super Bowl (GlobalWebIndex, 2018).

## **Brands**

Brands are the companies that sponsor within the esports ecosystem. Among these brands are Red Bull, Capgemini, Hungry.dk, Waoo, Capstore, YouSee, and many others who are backing esports. The Esports Ecosystem illustrates the various avenues of esports sponsorship through which brands can reach the target audience, such as sponsorships of individuals, - teams, - events, and leagues, as well as platforms and publishers. In this thesis, the possible avenues of sponsorships will be delimited into three overall categories and properties of sponsorship. Property 1: Players (including streamers), Property 2: Teams (including organizations), and Property 3. Events (including tournaments and leagues).

## **Players**

Players include both professional esports athletes and streamers. Big international names include Faker, Rekkless, Ninja, and dev1ce. Professional players in esports maintain training schedules akin to traditional sports athletes with many hours of practice every day, as well as physical and mental training. Professional players in esports can have many sources of income, including streaming ad/subscription revenues, tournament prize pools, individual sponsorship, fan donations, merchandise sales, and, of course, their salary from their respective team.

## **Teams**

Esports teams are organizations which characteristically oversee multiple esports players and teams under one unified brand. Some of the more renowned teams in esports are Astralis, North, and G2 Esports, to name a few. These players and teams have acquired substantial fan bases, and the organizations can impact all other stakeholders in the ecosystem, mainly through deciding which games their teams will be competing in. A noticeable difference between esports teams and traditional sports teams is that esports teams can leverage its brand in a wide array of different esports, as opposed to being exclusively tied to a single game or league.

## **Events**

Events cover both tournaments, competitions, and leagues. These events are often hosted either directly by game publishers, such as Riot's 'League of Legends European Championship' (LEC) and Activision Blizzard's 'Overwatch League' (OWL), or by third parties such as Electronic Sports League's (ESL) 'ESL One'. Events, leagues, competitions, and the like can also be hosted by companies dealing with event organizing, local sports clubs, and unions. League and event organizers typically receive their revenue through media rights, ticket sales, and sponsorships.

## **Platforms**

Streaming platforms distribute live and video on-demand (VOD) content. Esports have existed for decades, but the rise of esports has accelerated with the launch of streaming and social media platforms such as Twitch, Mixer, YouTube Gaming, and more. Especially Twitch, who is dedicated to the streaming of gaming and esports, has dominated this marketplace. In 2019 Twitch had 3.7 million unique streamers per month, drawing in 1.260.000 average concurrent viewers and had 639 billion minutes of content watched through the platform. The main revenue comes from selling ads, custom content integrations, and premium subscription services (Twitchtracker, 2019).

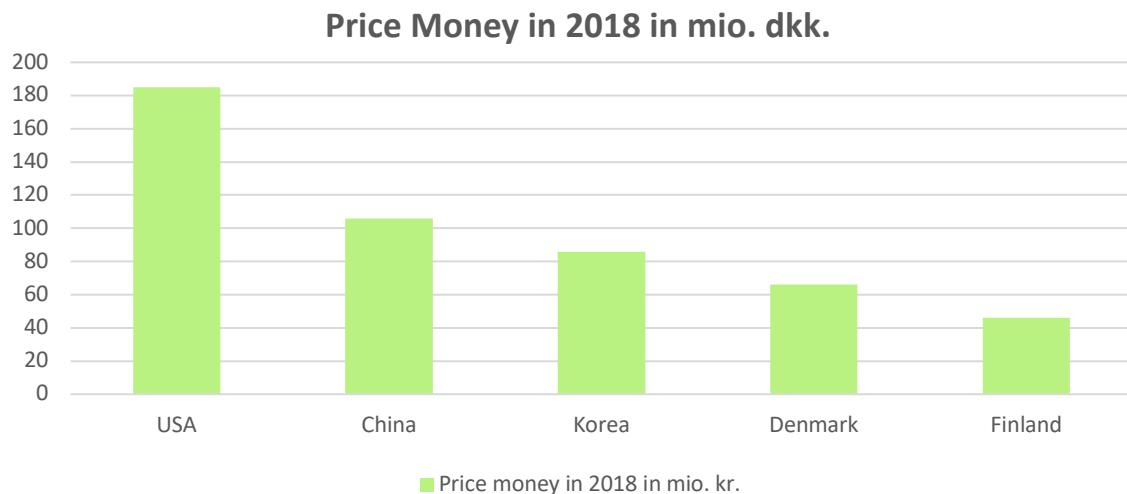
## **Publishers**

Publishers are the game developers, who create and distribute the video games. Their income sources are primarily through game sales and the sale of downloadable in-game content (DLC). Popular publishers include Activision Blizzard, Electronic Arts (EA), Riot Games and Valve. As publishers and game developers create and own the intellectual property of the game, all other stakeholders in the esports ecosystem are dependent on the publishers' approval to host tournaments, broadcast streams, and even play (Esportbet, 2019).

As there are no Danish publishers of games that are played on a professional level, nor any Danish developers or owners of popular streaming platforms, these will not be considered properties of sponsorship in the Danish esports market in this thesis.

## The Danish Esports Market

This thesis will explore the Danish esports market. Danish esports professionals have achieved significant results and success in the international esports scene. Denmark has some of the world's best players in both DOTA2, CS:GO, and FIFA. Across all esports, Denmark is the fourth most winning nation measured in prize money:



**Figure 2:** Price Money in 2018 in mio. dkk. (Vækstfonden, 2019)

Correspondingly, Danish esports athletes are among the world's most successful, some examples include:

- **Number one in Counter-Strike**

Denmark has two teams in the top 10 on the CS:GO rankings: Astralis and North. Astralis tops the ranking and is the first team to win an Intel Grand Sludge and the one million dollars prize money.

- **The second most winning player**

Johan Sundstein, playing DOTA2, is estimated to be the second most winning esports player in the world, and won 72 million Danish kroner together with his team 'AND DOTA'.

- **Winner of eWorld Cup**

Denmark has two times won the FIFA eWorld Cup: August Rosenmeier in 2014 and Mohamad Al-Bacha in 2016. The tournament has only existed since 2004.

Another example is Danish RFRSH Entertainment, an esports media production company, and a well-known player in the development and production of global esports events. In general, Denmark has culturally come a long way in regards to esports, where boarding schools offer esports classes, and clubs are beginning to offer that children and youth can practice esports as an after-school activity (Vækstfonden, 2019). Even though Denmark has some big players on the international scene, esports is still a new phenomenon in the country, and the local industry still has a lot of work to do before it becomes mainstream.

## **Challenges for Brands in Esports**

In traditional sports, you often see people being fans of the team that represents their city or their country, even if the actual sports discipline might not interest them. In esports, however, teams are not rooted in their local community in the same way as traditional sports teams are. The OWL franchise London Spitfire, for instance, has US owners based in Los Angeles, while nearly all the players are from Korea (Campaignlive, 2018). The fact is, esports is a digital arena, games are played, broadcasted and streamed online. Being an almost entirely digital phenomenon, there is a lack of mainstream media coverage like newspapers, radio, and television. Yet, according to industry experts, getting especially TV attention is critical to making it mainstream (Schultz, E. J., n.d.). Through TV and other media, traditional sports sponsorships benefit from a broad exposure to a large audience during games, interviews, news reports, articles, documentaries, and so on, including people who have possibly never watched that particular sport before. However, the same kind of cross-awareness does not usually exist within esports. People do not accidentally enter a website or a stream in the same way that they zap through the channels on their TV, watch the news, or read through the headlines and stories in a newspaper.

In Denmark, a few examples of televised esports content and news have surfaced recently, like 'Mod stjernerne' (Towards the stars), a documentary by DR (2017) about the Counter-Strike team, Astralis (DR, 2017). Also worth mentioning is 'Løvehjerter' (Lion hearts), a special report made with the esports team North on TV2, 2019 (TV2, 2019). Other examples of mainstream media attention surrounding esports in Denmark have been when Astralis have won championships at major international events. There are, however, not many other Danish esports sponsors who benefit from this kind of mainstream exposure just yet. So, how do esports sponsors ensure brand

exposure, taking the lack of mainstream media coverage into consideration? If the sponsor does not receive exposure to a relevant audience through the sponsorship, it will be difficult to achieve any branding related objectives. So essentially, it is about finding ways to reach the desired audience through their sponsorship. These issues represent the first branding challenge that will be explored in this thesis. To examine how sponsors overcome these issues, they will be summarized and phrased as the question: **how do brands in esports reach and gain exposure to the audience?**

Brands within the esports ecosystem are often split into two groups, endemic and non-endemic, depending on whether or not their product category is related to esports and gaming. Endemic brands provide products or services that are naturally associated with esports, such as keyboards, monitors, PCs, headsets, gaming chairs, and software. Technology and consumer hardware brands considered 'endemic' to esports were some of the first to sponsor esports players, teams and events, due to the obvious associations. Non-endemic brands provide products or services that are not directly linked or associated with esports, e.g., beverages, cars, clothing, footwear, and payment services. Just as product categories such as car and payment companies sponsor major traditional sports leagues to grow their brand awareness and attract new audiences, these opportunities are now available within the established esports ecosystem. Even though the window for all brands to enter this ecosystem is open, most of the non-endemic brands that try to seize the opportunity still struggle to find meaningful entrance points to their specific product category. Jeffrey Clark, director of business strategy for gaming and esports at Intel, says that "you are going to have a lot of non-endemics trying to figure out how to reach the audience and you will see experimentation in how to monetize esports. A lot of that will be pages ripped from the traditional sports playbook" (Campaignlive, 2018). Esports as an industry is still young, and fans will reward brands (also non-endemic) that help the industry grow by backing players, teams, and tournaments. However, as enthusiastic as the gaming audience can be, they can be equally critical of outsiders simply trying to exploit the space that they are engaged in and care about. Brands that do a simple logo-slap on the screen or sponsor a single event might not see the results they were hoping for. This added pressure can often have a paralyzing effect on non-endemic brands' willingness to enter the esports ecosystem altogether (Schultz, E. J., n.d.). It is a question of planning your entrance carefully to make a lasting, positive impression on the fans. These issues

represent the second branding challenge that will be examined. To explore how sponsors overcome these issues, they will be summarized and phrased as the question: **how do brands form meaningful associations to esports?**

With the act of sponsorship also follows the risk of being associated with disreputable or negative behavior, which has a high potential of significantly damaging the sponsor's image. Negative behavior may appear from multiple sides, including from the sponsored property or even from the fans. In esports, violent or aggressive behavior is a rare sight, but the same cannot be said for toxic behavior, such as foul language, discrimination, and anti-social behavior. Toxic behavior is considered a serious issue as it often leads to a bad viewing experience (Neto, Yokoyama & Becker, 2017), which can lead to negative brand associations and reputation and thus cause lasting damage to the brand image. In esports, there are already many negative associations concerning gamers. Gaming has a bad reputation of being unhealthy and anti-social. Especially the older or adult generations, typically the parents of most of today's gamers, share these views and prejudices. As a result, many parents discourage their children from spending too much time on their computer (New York Times, 2019).

Similar to sponsoring traditional sports stars, there is a risk of that individual doing something disreputable. In esports, there have been issues with doping and also players using cheat-software to win games, which of course, do not put the individual or team sponsor in a good position. There are also issues regarding the violent nature of many games. Robin Clarke, global head of Publicis Media Sports & Entertainment, says he has had a "number of conversations" with brands regarding concerns over such negative associations (Campaignlive, 2018). As a result, many are being drawn toward non-combat games. However, most video games and especially the popular ones like CS:GO and LoL, are definitely violent in nature. These issues represent the third branding challenge that will be investigated. To examine how sponsors overcome these issues, they will be summarized and phrased as the question: **how do brands in esports protect their image from negative associations to gaming?**

## **Problem Statement**

***How do companies overcome the branding challenges in esports sponsorships?***

The challenges presented in the last chapter will constitute three work questions that will help investigate the problem statement:

How do different sponsoring brands in the Danish esports market;

1. reach and gain exposure to the audience?
2. form meaningful associations to esports?
3. protect their image from negative associations to gaming?

## **Theoretical Framework**

In this chapter, the theoretical framework will be introduced and described. The theoretical framework is the structure that will hold and support the theory of this research study. The purpose is to define and discuss theories relevant to the research problem.

## **Theoretical Background**

### **Branding**

According to Kotler and Keller (2015), "branding is endowing products and services with the power of a brand". Branding is the practice of giving meaning to a specific company, organization, product, service, or person by establishing and shaping a brand in the consumer's mind.

Moreover, branding is a marketing strategy that aims to help consumers swiftly identify and experience the brand, and at the same time, distance the brand from competitors. The objective of branding is to attract and retain loyal customers and other stakeholders by delivering a product that is always aligned with what the brand promises (The Branding Journal, 2015). Organizations and companies tend to use different tools to create and shape a brand. For instance, branding can be achieved through brand positioning, brand identity (name, visual design, logo, etc.), advertising

and communications (TV, radio, magazine, and website), sponsoring and partnership, product packaging, customer service, and more. A few of the most important branding terms are; brand exposure, brand image, brand recall, and brand loyalty.

## **Sponsorship**

Fortunato (2013) provides a general description of sponsorship as another form of promotional communication with the basic goal of persuading a target audience. He states that sponsorship is often only one component of a company's promotional communication strategy. Like all other communication strategies, it offers a chance for brand exposure and brand recall. Sponsorship also offers opportunities for increasing brand loyalty, enhancing brand image, or in other ways supporting the brand and increasing its value (Lagae, 2005). Sandler and Shani (1989) offer a broader description of sponsorship, as they emphasize the associations that can be created between the sponsor and property. They describe sponsorship as "the provision of resources by an organization directly to an event or activity in exchange for a direct association to the event or activity. The providing organization can then use this direct association to achieve either their corporate, market, or media objectives" (p. 10). Cameron (2009) suggests that "sponsorship involves a three-way communication process in which the consumer views the brand message together with the property in a 'passion' mode'" (p. 134). He summarizes that sponsorship is a three-way relationship between the sponsor, the property, and the consumer.

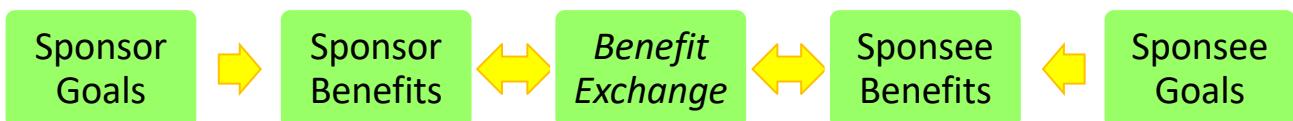
## **Sponsorship Goals and Objectives**

### **Exchange of Benefits**

In terms of what the specific goals for choosing sponsorship as part of a marketing strategy are will, of course, vary from company to company. They will also vary for the different partners in a certain sponsorship. For a sponsor, sponsorship is generally an opportunity to communicate the brand message to the target audience on a more personal level than in other kinds of advertising. Public relation objectives, such as gaining acceptance or creating goodwill, can also be important sponsorship goals (Fortunato, 2013). A general description of sponsorship goals as explained by Wilmshurst (1993) includes both elements of advertising and public relations: "Sponsorship is usually undertaken to encourage more favorable attitudes towards the sponsoring company or its

products within a relevant target audience, such as consumers, trade customers, employees or the community in which it operates" (p. 377). The sponsee's goals for the partnership are typically different. Sponsee goals are usually about obtaining funds or resources, but sports organizations, for instance, are increasingly becoming brands in their own right and have brand positioning and image improvement objectives as well (Shilbury, Westerbeek, Quick & Funk, 2009).

If both sponsor and sponsee are to benefit from a partnership, certain goals of both need to be satisfied. Both sponsor and sponsee need to ask themselves the question: How can we successfully reach our own goals by assisting the sponsor/sponsee in reaching their goals? The sponsorship framework in which win-win situations are created is quite simple. The assumption is that certain benefits will satisfy certain goals, and these benefits can only be delivered by another entity. Shilbury et al. (2009) explain, "if two entities, both in search of benefits to satisfy their own goals, are able to deliver the benefits needed by the other entity, they can become engaged in an exchange of benefits." (p. 251)



The sponsor may have a brand positioning goal, which will be satisfied with the benefit of media exposure, naming rights, and hospitality opportunities. The sponsee may have a goal of obtaining funds and resources that will be satisfied with the benefit of financial support, new gear, products, or services. If both organizations deliver the benefits needed by the other, a win-win situation is created (Shilbury et al., 2009).

## Sponsorship Selection

### Target Audience Variables

For most companies, the selection of which property to sponsor depends on opportunities for brand exposure to the target audience. Brand exposure is one of the most vital elements of success for the entire sponsorship and has to be the initially achieved objective. Other sponsorship objectives might not be achieved if the brand is not noticed by the target audience. Without the

brand being noticed, any audience reaction or changed behavior toward the brand is due to some other factor than the promotional communication effort in the sponsorship (Fortunato, 2013). Wenner (1989) explains that sport is sold just like any other entertainment commodity, adding "the content per se is not what is being sold; rather it is the audience for that content that is being sold to advertisers" (p. 22). Advertising and sponsorship with sports properties are desirable for companies because they consistently reach a certain target audience that might not be available through other kinds of advertising.

Brand exposure to the target audience is based on two dimensions: the size of the audience and the demographic profile of the audience. A demographic profile of the audience includes variables such as age, ethnicity, education level, income, gender, geography, and common interests. Often, property selection is based on multiple demographic variables. In other instances, the sponsor is using the property for brand exposure to a more specific target audience. Some companies transcend many demographic variables and might simply look to sponsor properties that have a large audience. Companies must clearly define who their target audience is prior to making property selection decisions (Fortunato, 2013).

Some sponsors try to attract a target audience based on the idea of common interest. Property selection based on a common interest relates to the individual's involvement or interest in a product category. The selection of a property is not always based on attracting the largest audience but attracting the right audience in terms of its interest in the product category. Fortunato (2013) notes that some companies have very niche-oriented sponsorships because of the audience having high involvement or common interest in that product category. Miloch & Lambrecht (2006) point out that niche sports, such as fishing, bowling, snow sports and cycling "allow sponsors to become involved with the activities that mean the most to their target consumer" (p. 147). They add that the participants and supporters are more passionate about these niche sports, making them more likely than the average consumer to be aware of the sponsors and purchase their products.

## **Brand Exposure through Media**

In terms of the size of the audience, sponsorship with sports properties give companies the opportunity to receive brand exposure to large audiences through the televising or streaming of games or events. Fortunato (2013) highlights two ways for sponsors to get exposure through the broadcast of the game, either through a sponsorship agreement with the league or a team or by being the sponsor of an element within the broadcast. Most television and streaming networks sell sponsorships for elements within the broadcast. Any location that offers extended camera coverage is an ideal location for brand exposure during the coverage of the game. The brand name could also get exposure by sponsoring a part of a segment of the broadcast, such as the half-time show or a sponsored element within the game such as 'player of the game' (Fortunato, 2013). Cameron (2009) points out that all brand exposure elements are not equal. The quality of the exposure location is important to achieving brand recall. Logically, sponsoring brands that are highly visible and regularly mentioned within and around the event, achieve better recall rates than brands that are not as prominent.

One sponsorship strategy that satisfies multiple brand exposure and audience selection variables is to acquire the naming rights to stadiums, arenas, or leagues. Brown (2011) explains, "stadium naming rights sponsorships represent the pinnacle of sports marketing, a rare opportunity to elevate a brand's identity by aligning with the nation's most visible and treasured venues, and the teams they host. After all, the supply is limited, given there are only so many venues that serve as home to pro sports teams. These partnerships are powerful marketing tools that can significantly accelerate brand awareness in an extremely efficient manner while delivering other key business objectives. In terms of sheer exposure, it is hard to find sponsorships that generate as many impressions" (p. 78).

## **Brand Congruence**

As well as brand exposure opportunities based on audience variables, the selection of a sponsorship property also relies on creating a brand association between the sponsor and the property. Dean (2002) explains that "for the payment of a fee (or other value) to the sponsee, the sponsor receives the right to associate itself with the sponsee or event". He adds, "by associating itself with the sponsee, the sponsoring firm/brand shares in the image of the sponsee" (p. 78).

According to Grohs and Reisinger (2005), "the aim is to evoke positive feelings and attitudes toward the sponsor, by closely linking the sponsor to an event the recipient values highly" (p. 44). The ideal result for sponsors is that the positive image of these sports players, teams, and leagues will evoke a similar positive feeling in fans and consumers towards their brand.

With regard to property selection, improved brand associations rely on the concept of brand fit, or brand congruence, between the sponsor and the property. Researchers argue that sponsorship may even be damaging to the company if it is not a suitable brand fit (Fortunato, 2013).

Prendergast, Poon, and West (2010) explain that congruence occurs on two parameters: (1) self-congruence: congruence between the individual and the property, and (2) sponsor congruence: congruence between the sponsor and the property. It is clear in this characterization that the property is the connecting component between the sponsor and the individual. Both forms of congruence can have a positive influence on consumers' relation to the sponsoring brand, but an ideal scenario for the sponsor would be if the property contributes to communicating the congruence between the sponsor and the individual (Prendergast et al., 2010).

### **Individual (Self) Congruence**

The sports audience and its passion toward the players, teams, and leagues is a great example of congruence between the individual and the property. Individual (self) congruence with a property can also have a positive effect on consumer brand loyalty (Fortunato, 2013). Sloan (1989) explains that the term fan, short for fanatic, is more descriptive for people who watch sports, rather than describing them merely as viewers or spectators. It has been shown that watching sports provide emotional satisfaction for fans. For that reason, the sports audience has been described as very loyal in their behavior. The emotional and loyalty characteristics of the sports fan can result in consistent behaviors such as watching and attending games, purchasing publications, and merchandise and using digital media to experience sports content (Fortunato, 2013).

Individual congruence with the property is fostered through group association. The best way to explain the concept of group association is with social identity theory. According to Tajfel (1982), social identity is "the individual's knowledge that he (or she) belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him (or her) of the group membership" (p. 31). He elaborates that if an individual identifies with the sport, the team, and the players, he or

she will desire to associate with the property and seek opportunities for the connection to be reinforced. Sponsors and sports properties can try to use this group association desire to develop approaches that enhance this emotional connection.

### **Sponsor Congruence**

To define congruence between the sponsor and the property, Prendergast et al. (2010) point out two components, (1) image congruence: when the sponsor and the property have similar brand images, and (2) functional congruence: when the sponsor's product is aligned with the event or has a participatory role in the event. Prendergast et al. (2010) highlight that image congruence and functional congruence are not mutually exclusive and should both be considered in selection decision making and communicated through the sponsorship. For the sponsor, the ideal scenario is to have both image and functional congruence with the property (Prendergast et al. 2010). That scenario, however, is not possible in all sponsorships. If a sponsor's products do not have a participatory role in the sponsored event, it would, of course, not disqualify the sponsor from establishing brand congruence on only the image component.

When selecting based on image congruence, sponsors look for a property that shares its brand image. This is favorable because the sponsoring brand is essentially buying an association to the property's brand. According to Fortunato (2013), the opportunity for image congruence will be stronger between brands and properties that have a relevant image connection and a common set of ideals. He adds that most properties are also consciously making decisions as to which companies they will allow to be their sponsors, and as to which product categories they are willing to offer sponsorships.

Functional congruence could be when the participants of the event use the products of the sponsor or if the athletes use their brand during the game, as a clear way to demonstrate a brand association. Ritchie (2011) gives another example where technology companies have their products provide all of the communication data and infrastructure support during major sports events. This demonstration of the brand serving a major sport event's technology needs indicates to both consumers and other organizations that they would definitely be able to handle their technology needs as well. The opportunity for these kinds of explicit functional congruence is not available for all types of product categories, though. If brand congruence is not overtly apparent,

companies should look for opportunities to explain to the audience more explicitly how their brand helps support the property. (Fortunato, 2013)

In regard to selecting on sponsor brand congruence, companies should also consider which other companies are sponsoring the same property and evaluate the congruence between their brands. Fortunato (2013) also refers to this as multiple sponsor congruence. Carrillat, Harris & Lafferty (2010) explains that sponsorships can have concurrent side effects where "brands are affected not only by the perceived image of the sponsored event but also by the perceived images of other brands concurrently sponsoring the event" (p. 109). Because the different sponsors of a property can share images, they have the opportunity to cooperate if they are not in the same product category (Carrillat et al., 2010). The ideal scenario for the sponsor is to have product category exclusivity, meaning that they are the only sponsor for that property in their specific product category, in order to avoid being associated with competing brands (Fortunato, 2013).

### **Uniform, Apparel and Equipment Sponsorship**

A uniform or equipment sponsorship can satisfy multiple brand congruence variables. Glenn (2011) explains that uniform sponsorship ensures more fan exposure during the game than stadium or arena naming rights. He argues: "[...] brands on jerseys are the focus of fans throughout the event, whether viewed live or televised. Given the active focus of fans on the players and the jersey, one might expect more effective brand recall and association from the jersey sponsor" (p. 22). Fortunato (2013) highlights two different types of uniform sponsorships: (1) the sponsor has its name or logo placed on the uniform, or (2) the sponsor is also the manufacturer of the uniform. For a company that manufactures apparel or equipment, becoming a sponsor in their product category for a team or league is very desirable, because they will not only receive brand exposure, but their product will be used by the players in the actual game which brings congruence on function, image and purchase dimensions. Players are interviewed before and after practice and games, and footage and pictures from those interviews are often used in different media, providing another uniform sponsorship opportunity for brand exposure.

Selecting a property will always primarily involve brand exposure to the target audience and brand association variables. However, brand exposure alone is often not enough to achieve the desired

behavior by the consumer. Activation of the sponsorship is necessary to harvest the fruits of the investment.

## **Sponsorship Activation**

Sponsorship activation refers to the methods used by sponsors to clearly associate their brand to the property and communicate the connection to consumers. Cornwell, Weeks and Roy (2005) formally define activation as "collateral communication of a brand's relationship with a property" (p. 36). Acquiring rights is only the first part of the investment that sponsors need to make; additional spending is required for a successful sponsorship (Cameron, 2009). Researchers are quite clear that the amount of investment in activation is a factor in the success of the sponsorship. Cornwell et al. (2005) state, "both the weight and the nature of leveraging activities are central to the communication effects achieved in sponsorship" (p. 36). Cornwell et al. (2005) highlight that for lesser-known brands, activating the sponsorship in meaningful ways is crucial to developing brand associations and gaining brand recall. Activation ideas can originate from people representing the sponsor or the property and are only limited by their imagination and creativity. Sponsorship activation ideas include additional brand exposure, sales promotions, giveaways, fan experiences, appearances with athletes, ticket discounts for employees, online or digital media interactions, fan contests, corporate social responsibility endeavors, hospitality for employees or clients, and product sampling (Fortunato, 2013). Fortunato (2013) explains that "activation ideas need to be thought out at the earliest stages of the sponsorship process, with sponsors having a clear idea of how they want to use the assets of the property to achieve their business goals, rather than signing a contract and then developing an activation plan." (p. 114) Activation programs need to be customized to address the sponsor's promotional communication goals properly, this is especially important for companies that want more than just brand exposure. It is not sufficient to simply place a company logo in various locations.

## **Brand Association**

Savary (2008) emphasizes the challenges in the current promotional communication environment and the importance of creating a brand association. She explains, "brands must now forge an emotional connection with the consumer. Marketing messages must show how a product is

relevant to a consumer. Campaigns need to evoke affinity and create a 'that brand is like me' sentiment. Brands need to show future customers, not just how a product meets their needs, but how the product integrates into their life and how the brand reflects their values and reinforces their self-image" (p. 212). She adds, "The discipline of sponsorship and engagement marketing is ideally and perhaps uniquely suited to this challenge. Engagement marketing professionals know that this discipline surpasses other forms of marketing in inspiring passion and loyalty, creating a sense of shared values and turning fans into brand advocates" (p. 212). Fortunato (2013) stresses the importance of using a variety of promotional communication methods to activate the sponsorship, specifically mentioning digital media and its countless possibilities. The sponsorship allows for the sponsor's logo to appear on the property's website and other digital platforms. For instance, in an interactive feature that is presented to visitors, often also providing the ability for the user to visit the sponsor's website simply by clicking on the logo. Likewise, the property's logo will probably have a presence on the sponsor's website. The sponsoring company will also have the opportunity to produce customized digital content using imagery of the property and use it on their digital media platforms.

### **Fan Experiences and Hospitality**

Sponsorship activation also offers the opportunity to provide fans with 'money can't buy' experiences that he or she will value and credit the brand for providing. One of the prominent types of sponsorship activation is fan giveaways. Miloch and Lambrecht (2006) found that companies that activated their sponsorship by providing product sampling or souvenir achieved better brand recall. Another great way to engage fans and create memorable experiences is through fan participation. A fan contest could be a typical way to allow for fan participation. Joachimsthaler and Aaker (1997) argue that "these experiences create a relationship that goes beyond the loyalty generated by any objective assessment of a brand's value" (p. 45).

Another aspect of a sponsorship activation program is hospitality for the sponsors' clients, employees, or any other important stakeholders. Sponsorship provides a wide range of opportunities for engagement with these groups (Fortunato, 2013). An example could be important clients or company executives and their families being invited to practices, games, or special events. Hospitality opportunities aimed specifically at the sponsor's employees could be

thought of as a way to increase employee morale (Rogan, 2008). An example of this could be employees of a sponsor being able to purchase game tickets at a discount. Rogan (2008) recommends that internal communication about the sponsorship and employee-related initiatives should begin immediately when the sponsorship agreement is made and continue throughout the sponsorship.

### **Conflict Repair Strategies**

The sponsor's efforts to clearly associate its brand to the property can suddenly be at risk of actually harming the sponsor's image if the property is involved in incidents that the sponsoring company does not want to be associated with. When athletes misbehave, for instance, it can put sponsors in precarious situations. Miller and Laczniak (2011) explain, "using an athlete to promote a brand can have unanticipated negative effects on that brand given the unpredictable nature of their off-the-field behavior" (p. 508). Solomon (2011) suggests that having an endorser, who has social media know-how and is a good citizen, could be a proactive step, stating "the last thing you want is to have an athlete spokesperson be a loose cannon and tweet comments that can cause discomfort for your clients" (p. 11). However, when these negative events do happen, there immediately falls a pressure on the sponsor to act or even drop the individual as a representative for their brand. Wilson, Stavros, and Westberg (2008) suggest that at the time of signing a sponsorship contract, companies should develop programs designed to prevent a crisis and a strategic plan of how a potential scandal will be handled.

If a crisis occurs as a result of offensive actions by the property, some of the responsibility could be attributed to the sponsor. In these incidents, communication strategies are necessary to explain not only what the facts of the situation are, but also to provide a feeling that the situation is being addressed and actions are undertaken to prevent it from happening again (Fortunato, 2013). Benson (1988) points out that if communication is managed properly, it could significantly diminish the harm. On the other hand, it could significantly increase the harm if it is mismanaged. Another way to counter some of the negative events that can occur is to develop and implement corporate social responsibility components to create a more positive aspect of the sponsorship. The thinking behind this strategy is that if the public sees the company engaging in activities that

benefit society, there is a positive story that will create a more detailed context in which the public can evaluate the brand if a negative event occurs.

## **Sponsorship Evaluation**

The goals of the sponsorship and the various strategies designed to achieve these goals can be clearly defined, but whether or not these goals are achieved because of the sponsorship can be difficult to evaluate. Sponsorship is rarely the only kind of promotional communication being used by a company, so it would be easier to evaluate the success of the entire promotional communication campaign, rather than identifying the effect of one specific strategy. The methods used to evaluate the effect of sponsorship often involve brand exposure metrics, sports performance, and digital technologies (Fortunato, 2013).

### **Brand Exposure and Digital Technologies**

One of the most common ways to evaluate the impact of sponsorship is by measuring simple brand exposure. One method where some estimated value of sponsorship can be assigned is by comparing the number of media impressions that the sponsor receives to the advertising cost for that particular time and space. The problem with using media impressions to measure and evaluate is that while they can be used to illustrate exposure of a message, impression numbers only report how many times the message has been displayed and do not measure audience engagement or impact (Fortunato, 2013). Other traditional methods of measurement include brand recall surveys, qualitative methods such as interviews, and economic measures such as sales. The evaluation methods must be specifically designed to measure the success of the company's specific brand goals. For example, brand exposure evaluations are not so important if the company's goals were not related to brand exposure. The measurement of brand exposure could be a suitable method for sponsorship goals such as building brand awareness, but it is probably not suitable for more advanced goals such as changing the brand image or enhanced relationships with stakeholders (Fortunato, 2013).

Russel (2011) notes the difference between "assumed engagement, in which the audience metrics count the number of people who could potentially pay attention to a message, and earned engagement, in which the audience engages with the message in a real or imagined way because

the message is perceived to merit interaction" (p. 125-126). Digital technologies offer great opportunities for conducting more precise measurements and evaluations of engagement, including features such as statistics on time spent viewing, viewers revisiting a site, registration or sign up at the website and conversion to sales. Digital technologies also offer the capability to automatically collect information about brand exposure, gather valuable personal information from customers, and adapt communication campaigns quickly. Researchers argue that companies should also use social media and online platforms to measure brand advocacy and recommendation (Russell, 2011).

Fortunato (2013) points out that coordinating brand goals, selecting a property, creating activation programs, and determining evaluative methods should all be considered in the initial negotiation of the sponsorship agreement. He further notes that the evaluative methods, for instance, could not be determined without knowing the brand goals.

## **Methodology**

In this chapter, the methodology is introduced. The methodology is the framework or design behind the research; this includes the choice of paradigm, research strategy, -design, and -methods applied to explore the research question and to gather new knowledge.

### **Methodological Orientation**

The research in this thesis is interpreted in a social constructivism approach. Social constructivism assumes that meaning and reality is constantly being constructed and renegotiated in an interpersonal and social context (Larsen, 2013). Larsen (2013) accounts for different paradigms within social constructivism. This thesis is arguably subscribed to the epistemological constructivist paradigm. The epistemological constructivist paradigm is characterized by knowledge about the physical and social reality being a social construction constantly renegotiated through social interaction (Larsen, 2013). In the most elementary sense, knowledge and reality appear "differently for different individuals [...] [as] individuals negotiate their individual understanding of the social reality with one another" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, as cited in Larsen, 2013, pp. 125-

126). Thus, this thesis is constructing and negotiating meaning based on existing theory and the collected data.

The researcher chose to employ a multiple case study for the research design. The case studies are supported by semi-structured telephone interviews and questionnaires, which were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the branding challenges in esports and to gather the information that was not available in the secondary literature. The motives for this particular choice are outlined later on in this chapter, see Research Design. However, this particular subjective approach proved to be the most effective for research on the chosen topic. The author of this thesis acknowledges that a different approach may have led to different results.

## **Research Strategy: Qualitative**

A qualitative approach was chosen for the empirical research of this thesis. Qualitative research is a particularly suitable approach when the goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of underlying reasons and motivations (Atlasti, n.d.). Accordingly, this thesis aims to gather detailed insights into how sponsors overcome branding challenges in esports by including specific views and perspectives of experts involved in this particular arena. More specifically, this means exploring the process of setting goals, selecting, activating, and evaluating sponsorships in its larger discourse rather than simply discussing the everyday challenges surrounding branding and sponsorships in esports. Bryman (2012) describes qualitative research as "a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification" (p. 380). Typically, in quantitative research, a theory is tested as a deductive approach. Oppositely, in qualitative research, a theory is usually generated through the use of an inductive approach. Referring to induction, Bryman (2012) describes that "theory is the outcome of research" (p. 26). In this research, an inductive stance is taken to obtain new information on the research topic and illuminate the phenomenon of branding challenges for sponsors in esports from different viewpoints.

### **Sampling in a Qualitative Research**

According to Bryman (2012), sampling in quantitative research often entails probability sampling, whereas sampling in qualitative research typically entails purposive sampling. Bryman (2012)

describes the goal of purposive sampling as "to sample cases/participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed" (p. 418). A non-probability or purposive sampling approach has been chosen for this particular research, as the object is not to generalize to a population, but rather to sample cases and participants that will allow for the research question to be answered. The sampled cases and participants are rather homogeneous, sharing many similarities linked to the research question. A profile of each participant (See Appendix 1) supports this statement, while also giving a better understanding and greater transparency of the research.

However, Bryman (2012) also states that "very often, the researcher will want to sample in order to ensure that there is a good deal of variety in the resulting sample, so that sample members differ from each other in terms of key characteristics relevant to the research question" (p. 418). Accordingly, three different sponsorship categories were included to create a representative picture of branding challenges for sponsors in Danish esports; sponsorship of players, sponsorship of teams, and sponsorship of events and leagues, each category represented by two cases. Also, the sponsorships are investigated from two perspectives, that of the sponsor and the sponsee.

The number of samples or the sample size is also a matter that needs to be addressed in qualitative research. According to Bryman (2012), "the decision about sample size is not a straightforward one: it depends on a number of considerations, and there is no definitive answer" (p. 197). In practice, the appropriate number of cases and respondents progresses naturally during the research. The optimal number of samples is automatically met with data saturation. The qualitative approach demands a flexible research design and continual reflection as to whether further data are required (Bryman, 2012).

In the course of the data collection process, approximately thirty experts involved in the Danish esports industry were contacted, of whom seven granted a telephone interview, and another five agreed to respond to the interview questions by filling out a questionnaire. As opposed to interviews, questionnaires have the disadvantage of not providing an opportunity for follow-up questions. The interview respondents are divided into two subcategorizations based on their position in the respective esports sponsorship: sponsor or sponsee. A total of six sponsors and six of their respective partners shared their experience and interpretation of branding challenges in

esports. The respondents from various companies and organizations were all directly linked to the sponsorship, and thus in a position to provide interesting insights on both sides of the sponsorship agreement. The findings from the various cases and the statements gathered from the respondents will be discussed in further detail throughout the thesis.

A notable limitation of qualitative sampling is a fundamentally subjective element that can never be completely ruled out (Yin, 2014). With respect to the cases, a certain level of partiality on the responses of the respondents can be expected. Likewise, the cases and the brands selected for this thesis and the choice of the interview partners are subject to the author's own subjective understanding of the research topic. For that reason, biases are, to some extent, unavoidable when conducting interviews (Yin, 2014).

## **Research Design: Multiple Case Study**

According to Bryman (2012), a research design offers a structure for the collection and analysis of data. Another way to think of a research design is as a "blueprint" for the research. In this thesis, the researcher has adopted a multiple case study design to analyze the six different cases. The six case studies are supported by primary data collected through telephone interviews and questionnaires, as well as secondary data, such as literature, articles, press releases, and websites.

According to Bryman (2012), a case study entails "the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case" (p. 66). However, since this thesis pilots six different cases, with every single case introducing its own unique take on sponsorship in esports and serving a different purpose within the general scope of the work, the concept of a multiple case study research seemed more appropriate for this thesis' approach. According to Yin (2014), collecting and analyzing data from multiple cases require considerably more effort. Simultaneously, the rewards can be greater, given the fact that the researcher can integrate variations into the cases. This corroboration from multiple case studies strengthens the study findings and provides further support for the propositions stated in this thesis. Continually, Holt (2004) believes the best approach is to search for patterns between the complexities of the cases, which he describes as a comparative process in which the investigator needs to make sense of existing data in order to develop a new theory. Hunt (1983) defines theory as "systematically related sets of statements, including some law-like

generalizations that are empirically testable" (p. 10). In this thesis, correlations are drawn between the case study findings and existing theory on sponsorship in traditional sports, especially the theoretical framework on how to approach and implement sports sponsorship developed by John A. Fortunato (2013). The literature on esports sponsorship has not been considered theory as yet. By categorizing the different characteristics of esports sponsorships, we provide an explanation of the phenomena, which, after all, is the purpose of theory.

According to Yin (2014), the case study research is a particularly suited approach, when 'how' or 'why' questions are being asked about a contemporary phenomenon (the case), while investigated in depth and within its real-world context. Yin (2014) contests that there are three different types of case studies used for research purposes: explanatory-, descriptive- and exploratory case studies. The purpose of a descriptive case study is to describe a phenomenon (the case) in its real-world context, exploratory case studies attempts to identify the research questions or procedures used in a subsequent research study, while explanatory case studies aim to explain how or why some conditions came to be. This case study is arguably explanatory in nature with its pivotal "how" question, as it focuses on a contemporary phenomenon: branding challenges for sponsors in esports. However, it also has traits of descriptive elements, i.e., when data are gathered to describe the esports sponsorships. Likewise, exploratory elements will undoubtedly surface later in the thesis, as further research is suggested.

### **Case Selection, Analysis, and Function**

When selecting the cases for this research, the researcher started out by identifying and selecting sponsorships in the Danish esports industry, which were considered as the most promising for this study. Naturally, sponsors, organizations, players, managers, and interview partners to which the researcher had good access for information had an impact on the considerations. To best represent the Danish sponsorship market in esports, the selected companies will, of course, share a common industry, namely esports, but they will differ in their strategic goals and approaches. From this, two important questions worth considering emerge: What makes these particular esports sponsorships unique, and what differentiates them from the others? What elements make them indispensable for my thesis and discussion? Besides selecting sponsorships from the three different categories, it was particularly interesting to select both nationally and internally

successful examples of Danish esports sponsorships, and also to select different kinds of companies in terms of both size and product categories, including both endemic and non-endemic brands in the industry.

According to Yin (2014), data analysis in case studies consists of examining, categorizing, testing, or otherwise combining evidence to draw empirically based conclusions. One of the most important strategies is to follow the theoretical propositions that directed the case study, as such propositions can help the researcher to focus on the most relevant data, as well as plan and organize the entire analysis. If there are no concrete propositions, an alternative is to develop a descriptive framework. Such a framework is designed to organize the case study, organize the data as well as be helpful for developing a storyline (Yin, 2014). In this thesis, the analysis will be structured according to the theoretical framework, and thus the proposition that; defining brand goals, selecting a property, creating activation programs, and determining evaluative methods should all be coordinated in the initial negotiation of a sponsorship agreement. This statement should not be considered a concrete proposition, but rather a theory-based framework for developing a structure and a storyline.

The following techniques will also be used to further analyze the case study evidence: pattern matching, explanation building, and cross-case analysis (Yin, 2014). Pattern matching is a desirable technique for multiple case studies because it involves the comparison of predicted or empirically observed patterns and the identification of any gaps or variances (GAO, 1990). A specific type of pattern matching is explanation building, where data is analyzed by building an explanation about the case. Yin (2014) states that "to explain a phenomenon is to stipulate a presumed set of causal links about it, or 'how' or 'why' something happened. The causal links may be complex and difficult to measure in any precise manner" (p. 147). The cross-case analysis applies to multiple cases and can involve a variety of techniques, like pattern matching and explanation building. In this thesis, each case will be analyzed separately, and then patterns of similarity or difference will be explored across the cases.

Yin (2014) claims that the theory development process is an essential part of the research design for multiple case studies. Appropriate case description and exploration is vital to guarantee that the explanation works equally well across these and other cases in the chosen field (Holt, 2004).

For this purpose, it was attempted to identify interconnections from the traditional sports marketing and sports sponsorship theory with data from the cases. The various ways of setting goals, selecting properties, activating, and evaluating sponsorships in esports are then compared in an effort to determine similarities and differences characterizing the different types of sponsorships. By adapting theory and combining data from the field, the findings will allow for more general conclusions to be drawn about sponsorships in esports. However, it should be noted that the focus in this thesis, is aimed at a contextual understanding of the phenomenon of sponsorships in esports, rather than proclaiming generalizations.

## **Research Method**

According to Bryman (2012), a research method is a technique of collecting data. Yin (2014) presents four principles of data collection, which are followed in this thesis to ensure the reliability and validity of the evidence. In relation to this, Yin (2014) describes reliability as “the consistency and repeatability of the research procedures used in the case study” (p. 240). In this thesis, consistency and reliability in the data findings are ensured by collecting various sources of both primary and secondary data for each individual case. The primary data will consist of qualitative interviews and questionnaires. Only trustworthy sources of secondary data are applied in the case studies. For example, using press releases and statistical information of companies to secure accurate background information, as well as to confirm and supplement data from other sources.

The first principle of data collection emphasizes the use of multiple sources of evidence, as triangulation of data strengthens the findings, making them more convincing and accurate. Triangulation is defined by Yin (2014) as “the convergence of data from different sources, to determine the consistency of a finding” (p. 241). The second principle is concerned with creating a study base, which is also created for this thesis, by recording the telephone interviews, writing notes while interviewing and transcribing most parts of the interviews for the data analysis. The third principle suggests that maintaining a chain of evidence will increase the reliability of the findings in the case studies. One way this thesis follows the third principle is by allowing the reader to follow the interview process by providing interview guidelines, transcriptions and questionnaires (See Appendix 2-4.5). The fourth principle is to exercise care when using data from electronic sources, as there is a chance the information may, at times, be interpretive and not fully

accurate. To avoid that pitfall, the electronic sources, as well as the evidence derived from these electronic sources, are cross-checked before implemented in the thesis.

## **Qualitative Interviews**

Yin (2014) claims that “one the most important sources of case study evidence is the interview” (p. 110). This thesis conducts its interviews through telephone calls or questionnaires when telephone interviews were not possible or granted. The target group for the respondents is branding and marketing experts from various organizations in different industries such as telecommunication and clothing, which are all involved with the esports industry. The interview partners are deliberately chosen to maximize insight into the research topic. Due to the time frame, the evidence is only collected once.

The primary difference in qualitative interviewing, in comparison to quantitative interviewing, can be found in its less structured and standardized methods. There are three main approaches to qualitative interviewing, structured-, semi-structured, and unstructured interviewing (Bryman, 2012). For this research, the semi-structured approach was applied. Bryman (2012) refers to the semi-structured approach as such “[...] the interviewer has a series of questions that is the general form of an interview schedule, but is able to vary in the sequence of questions [...]. Also, the interviewer usually has some latitude to ask further questions in response to what is seen as significant replies” (p. 212). In the same context, Yin (2014) explains that interviews used in case studies more commonly resemble guided conversations rather than structured inquiries. He adds, “although you will be pursuing a consistent line of inquiry, your actual stream of questions in a case study interview is likely to be fluid rather than rigid” (p. 110).

Four interview outlines (See Appendix 2-2.3) were prepared to help establish a clear focus and a common thread to follow: An outline for sponsors of players, one for sponsors of teams, another one for sponsors of leagues and events, and lastly, one for sponsees. These interview outlines, or guidelines, made it easier to concentrate on specific challenges with predetermined open-ended questions, as well as react and inquire further when necessary. Furthermore, the outlined questions create a higher degree of transparency and external reliability of the research. The difference in the first three interviews outlines simply lies in the phrasing of the questions. The questions are adapted and reworded according to the specific company and to the type of

sponsorship involved, i.e., sponsorship of players, teams, or leagues/events. The last interview guide is aimed at sponsees, asking questions relevant to their perspective of the sponsorship. Due to the limited time frame of the respondents, the first three interview guides concentrating on the sponsors were scheduled to take around 25-30 minutes. The interview guides focusing on the sponsees were scheduled to take approximately 10 minutes. Doing the interviews over the telephone was admittedly cost- and time-saving for the researcher. But more importantly, telephone interviewing is the most convenient method for the respondents, as business people are often time-restricted, difficult to reach, and accustomed to communicating by telephone. Furthermore, recording and transcribing the interviews are considered essential in this research. These methods will help to correct the natural restrictions of memories, making repetitive and more solid examination possible, and opening the data to further research and potential reuse in future studies (Bryman, 2012).

All of the interviews, whether by telephone or questionnaire, were conducted in Danish, despite the fact that the rest of this thesis is written in English. First and foremost, this is due to the scope of the study being the Danish esports market and sponsorships between Danish companies and Danish esports properties. Consequently, the chosen interview partners all live and work in Denmark, speak Danish on a daily level, and in most cases, Danish is their mother tongue. So naturally, establishing initial contact and conducting the interviews in a shared native tongue had several advantages. First, the native language may be important in gaining access to respondents and establishing trust (Andrews 1995; Tsang, 1998). Tsang (1998) adds that "being interviewed in a foreign language can have a negative impact on the ability of the interviewee to express herself or himself fully, as well as to feel comfortable and to open up to the researcher" (p. 79). Likewise, interviewing the respondents of this research in a shared native tongue allowed for a more relaxed setting for the respondents, as well as the researcher, to convey their opinions and views more accurately. Ultimately, conducting the interviews in Danish was expected to generate more rich and detailed data for the analysis. Andrews (1995) and Tsang (1998) advise that the native language of the interviewee should be used as long and as much as possible. The original language is also purposely kept during the transcribing of the interviews. Transcribing in the original language is done to reduce the loss of meaning or intention of what is said in the interviews. Quotations from the transcriptions, which are considered relevant to and are used in the study,

are translated into English, and only the English versions of the quotations are applied directly in the analysis. The original quotations from the transcriptions are available in the Appendix. When translating the findings, a very good understanding of subtle meaning differences is needed to come to the best English wordings. If translated incorrectly, the intended meaning of a respondent's term or phrasing can be lost. To avoid potential limitations in the later analysis, it was considered essential to stay in the original language throughout the data collection up until the initial analysis.

## **Methodological Limitations**

The researcher of this thesis believes that being aware of the limitations and constraints of one's research approach is as important as knowing about its advantages. First of all, the choice is very narrow when selecting which esports sponsorships and esports brands to use as cases. Esports in Denmark is still considered a niche industry, and the number of Danish esports sponsorships is still limited. Companies and organizations to which there was no access to detailed data or interview partners were eliminated. The number of brand representatives in esports was further reduced because some of them informed that it was not possible to give interviews, or they were not allowed to comment on certain aspects of their branding strategies in relation to their sponsorship. Had it been possible to include these brand representatives and their sponsorships as cases, they might have revealed elements that would have prompted different insights and perhaps a different interpretation of the analysis.

A limitation in the primary research becomes obvious in the fact that the researcher of this particular study is not trained in interviewing. Usually, interviewers are schooled in applying specific skills and tactics while conducting interviews. In this research, trust is placed on methodology books concerning the subject and on personal experiences. The interviews were conducted single-handedly by the researcher without any other researcher to support in terms of uncertainties, vague responses, or counter questions during the interviews. On the one hand, it increases the internal reliability of the study. On the other hand, it also has to be acknowledged that it might have influenced the quality of the interviews.

Lastly, the social environment also plays a key role. By conducting telephone interviews, it was impossible to control the situation and environment in which the interviewees were located when replying to the questions. Distractions and interferences from the immediate surroundings of the respondent may have had some influence on the interviews. Other factors, which may have influenced the interviewees' responses, could also be the simple fact that the interview was being recorded.

## Data Analysis

In this chapter, selected primary and secondary data will be translated, presented, and analyzed case by case. The chapter will be divided into three specified categories of sponsorship; individuals, teams, and events. Additionally, following the theoretical framework from chapter two will allow the analyst to focus on the most relevant and important data in each case.

### Sponsorship of Individuals

#### Hungry.dk

Hungry.dk is an online food takeaway portal. Hungry.dk is headquartered in Aarhus, Denmark, and was established in the beginning of 2013 (Hungry.dk, n.d.). Hungry.dk is a well-known brand in the Danish esports industry. They offer sponsorships to both streamers, teams, and events, as well as having created an online gaming forum called Hungry.gg and dedicated their Twitter account completely to the esports audience (Hungry.dk Twitter, n.d.). In this case, the category is sponsorship of individuals, and therefore, the focus will be on Hungry.dk's partnerships with esports streamers. Some of these streamers are appointed Hungry Ambassadors and are presented on Hungry.gg (Hungry.gg, n.d.). One of the Hungry Ambassadors is the streamer Phasekick, whose real name is Mads Larsen. Mads Larsen has been interviewed for this case study and will function as a representative for the Hungry Ambassadors. Phasekick streams and plays different games like CS:GO, FIFA, Hearthstone, and Call Of Duty.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Timmy Lind, Marketing Manager at Hungry.dk, describes that Hungry.dk's goals and objectives for their involvement in esports overall, including their sponsorships of streamers, "is to be a brand that supports and is associated with esports, since gamers and people interested in gaming are a big part of our target audience" (Questionnaire T.L., A2). He adds that Hungry.dk usually move in the social-gaming segment, where there are aspiring talents and amateurs. Timmy Lind also explains that "we believe that gamers will support our platform when we support gamers. We are top of mind and a positive part of the culture when they order take away" (Questionnaire T.L., A3). Hungry.dk's goal of being a brand that supports and is associated with esports will be satisfied with the benefit of receiving exposure through sponsored streamers like Phasekick, where their logo will be displayed on live streams and other digital media. Phasekick offers brand exposure for Hungry.dk through his streaming channel on Twitch and his social media accounts. In addition, Mads Larsen explained in our interview that, "I definitely think that it was attractive for Hungry that I stream as much as I do. I have a planned schedule, and they can see my growth within a given period, which is probably interesting for them. (...) Also, the fact that I attend a lot of events, and I am very visible at events around the country. That is the kind of thing that increases their exposure through me" (Interview M.P.L., 21:15).

In terms of what Hungry.dk has to offer the streamers, Timmy Lind says that "we give gift cards to streamers, which they can use as giveaways on their stream" (Questionnaire T.L., A1). In our interview with Mads Larsen, he explained his own ambitions for partnering with a sponsor, "back when I entered the partnership with Hungry, I had for a long time had the ambition to go full-time with my streaming at some point (...) I looked for sponsorships with economic benefits, just to get a better idea of whether it was realistic to go full-time with my streaming or not. You can say that a gift card to Hungry is not something that pays the bills, so that is something one must consider" (Interview M.P.L., 3:50). He elaborates that a sponsorship "has to be beneficial to me somehow, and if the partnership does not benefit the company, I am not interested either" (Interview M.P.L., 4:50).

Mads Larsen's ambition of being able to make a living out of his esports career is not immediately satisfied with the benefit of receiving Hungry.dk gift cards, but then again, that was not Mads

Larsen's specific goal when entering the partnership. The gift cards are still beneficial to Mads Larsen, and being a sponsee gave him experience with a sponsor and an idea of what kind of economic benefits he could expect from a sponsorship. Also, Mads Larsen clearly states that his goals are satisfied by the benefit of being associated with a brand like Hungry.dk. He explains that "to have a brand like Hungry.dk associated with one's name, that is a huge gain in itself, purely in terms of gaining trust and being able to attract some other sponsors as well" (Interview M.P.L., 13:20).

This particular case documents an exchange of benefits between the sponsor, Hungry.dk, and the sponsee, Mads Larsen, aka. Phasekick. Hungry.dk receives exposure to gamers and people interested in gaming, through sponsoring and supporting Phasekick, which ultimately allows for them to be associated with esports. Phasekick receives gift cards, experience, and the benefit of being associated with a brand like Hungry.dk. As both parties reap the benefits that will satisfy their overall goals, a win-win situation is created.

## **Selection**

In the questionnaire from Timmy Lind, he describes Hungry.dk's target audience as "broad in the sense of age groups and including both males and females between 14-35 years old with interest in gaming and esports" (Questionnaire T.L., A5). He further notes that when Hungry.dk selects a property, the size of the audience, as well as multiple variables of the streamer, are emphasized, "we select streamers to work with by looking at their Twitch-channel. Here we make use of the tool Social Blade, which can highlight statistics and show progressions of the individual streamer's number of views and followers. The numbers must be at a certain level and on a positive trajectory. (...) The team's and the player's use of social media is also important to us, as this is where we get online publicity" (Questionnaire T.L., A4). This statement also reveals how Hungry.dk receives brand exposure to the target audience through media, namely by showcasing their name or logo in some way on their streamers' respective social media and streaming-channels to all their viewers and followers.

In terms of congruence or brand fit with the selected property, Timmy Lind from Hungry.dk stresses the importance of the streamer's image, "it is important to us that our partners have a positive image, that we see value in being associated with. Therefore, it is important that they

keep a civilized tone and are trustworthy" (Questionnaire T.L., A10). This aligns perfectly with the values that Mads Larsen promotes himself, he says, "my set of values on the stream are simply, that I am very much in favor of a civil tone on the internet and that we should treat each other with decency" (Interview M.P.L., 16:05). Thus, the partnership between Phasekick and Hungry.dk communicates congruence between the sponsor and the property on the image congruence component.

When looking at congruence between the individual and the property, it is worth noting that Mads Larsen acknowledges that he has an influence on his audience, "I am a role model to some. There are people out there who look up to me. That is also the reason why it is interesting for companies to work with a streamer or another influencer because we are usually really close to our audience. The closer I am to my audience, the more trustworthy and more value my words have to my audience in relation to a corporate sponsorship" (Interview M.P.L., 23:40). For Hungry.dk, this is favorable because of the concept and theory of group association. Phasekick's fans will seek opportunities to reinforce their connection to him. This could be done by using a brand that he advocates or is associated with, such as Hungry.dk.

## **Activation**

Hungry.dk engage in several activities to clearly associate their brand to their streamers. They also include their partners in the process of customizing activation programs. Timmy Lind explains that "we involve them (the streamers) in the development of our partnership agreements so that they can contribute with ideas for improvements. We also follow and interact with the streamers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We want to be more active in the environment by being a source of esports and specific gaming content, which creates a synergy in our other activities."

(Questionnaire T.L., A9)

An example of a customized activation program featuring Phasekick, as explained by Mads Larsen: "I was going with them (Hungry.dk) to events, where I had to do some reporting and some events within the event, (...) There was an event called Dance for Pizza, where I was holding a sign saying, 'Dance for Pizza', then I had a tray of pizza slices in the other hand, and people could take a slice of pizza if they were willing to dance. Just small gimmicks, fun, and games" (Interview M.P.L., 5:45).

The Dance for Pizza initiative is a great example of a fan giveaway that also creates memorable experiences for the audience through fan participation.

In the questionnaire from Timmy Lind, he explains that Hungry.dk produce banners and posters with gamer-related graphics, which they only use at events. However, one of these graphics, an animated picture of two gamers playing on their PC's and the text "GLHF" and "Reload on Hungry.dk" (See Appendix 5), is also used on Hungry.dk/esport, on Hungry.gg, and on their Twitter account. "GLHF" is gamer-language, an abbreviation for 'Good Luck Have Fun'. On their esports website, the animation is followed by the headline "We support esports in Denmark – because we ourselves are gamers!" (Hungry.dk Esports, n.d.). These messages create a sense of shared values and thereby forge an emotional connection with the fans and gamers, increasing the likelihood of turning them into brand advocates.

Hungry.dk produce a lot of gaming-related content on their Twitter account. One post that features their sponsored streamers was considered very relevant for this particular case (See Appendix 5). The collage of pictures of their sponsored streamers, many of them displaying a Hungry.dk gift card giveaway was posted on their Twitter on January 1st, 2019, with the text "In 2018 we cooperated with 5 tons streamers. We love. every. single. one. of you! Here we have gathered some of the best moments, you are awesome! We loooove youuu! #StayDerpy". This again has an emotional appeal to gamers, while also portraying and communicating certain brand messages such as "we support gamers" and hereby emphasizing certain brand associations.

When it comes to negative associations and conflicts, Hungry.dk has a firm policy, Timmy Lind explains, "if a streamer fails to comply with our agreement or otherwise makes themselves noted in a negative way, then we take a look at the individual case and potentially shut down the collaboration" (Questionnaire T.L., A11). According to that, the choice of Phasekick as a partner is proactive and may be less risky, due to his specific rules and values on his Twitch channel, such as "behave nice and respect others on the stream" (Phasekick Twitch, n.d.), and his general social media know-how and civilized tone.

Another proactive step by Hungry.dk is the fact that there are corporate social responsibility elements in their sponsorship activities, for instance, when they are interacting with amateurs and the youth, supporting them with their sport and passion. These CSR elements create a positive

story that will create a more detailed context in which the public can evaluate the brand if a negative event arises.

## Evaluation

When asked how Hungry.dk evaluates their sponsorship of streamers, Timmy Lind answers that “we look at the progression of the streamer’s followers, viewers and activity on social media” (Questionnaire T.L., A12). This method is specifically designed by Hungry.dk to measure the success of their selected partners on brand exposure metrics. Receiving brand exposure through their sponsored streamers could help achieve their overall goal of being viewed as a brand that supports and is associated with esports.

## Red Bull

Red Bull was the first-ever manufacturer and distributor of energy drinks. Red Bull’s energy drink was released for sales in Denmark in 2009, and Red Bull Denmark is headquartered in Copenhagen (Red Bull, n.d.). Sponsorship of sports properties and athletes is a main strategy used by Red Bull on an international level, including sponsorships in the esports industry (Red Bull Athletes, n.d.). Red Bull is also a well-known brand in the Danish esports industry. Red Bull Denmark sponsors professional esports athletes, teams, and events. Furthermore, they have a webpage dedicated to producing esports related content (Red Bull Esports, n.d.), and they have also dedicated their Twitter account to the esports audience (Red Bull Twitter, n.d.). One of Red Bull Denmark’s sponsored esports athletes is the Counter-Strike player Michaela ‘mimi’ Lintrup, their partnership will be analyzed in this case.

## Goals and Objectives

Andreas Bjerrum Larsen, Esports Specialist at Red Bull Denmark, explains in our interview that Red Bull’s ambitions for using sponsorship in esports as a part of their strategy is to be a part of developing the Danish esports industry. He says, "the strategy for the program that we have planned for next year, is to take esports locally here in Denmark to a new level" (Interview A.B.L., 8:40). He adds, "(..) we have a lot of international players in Denmark, we have the Blast Pro Series, and we have ESL, and some of these big players that do amazing things on a global scale, where we want to try to keep up the level here locally" (Interview A.B.L., 8:40).

More specifically, they want to help their partners achieve their individual goals by developing their respective skills and supporting them in their careers. Andreas Bjerrum Larsen explains that Red Bull's vision is "to be part of this positive development and be part of pushing it further, and help these many great initiatives and ideas, and give their ideas wings. We like to say that a lot around here, that we want to give wings to people and ideas" (Interview A.B.L., 9:45). Andreas Bjerrum Larsen elaborates, "really, that is what I am trying to do by choosing someone as mimi. She wants to be the world's best Counter-Strike player, not just among women, but also among men. Our initial thought is, 'that sounds crazy, but it is awesome, let us try to invest some time, money and resources in this' (...) That is what we really want. To help, to give wings to people, to ideas" (Interview A.B.L., 9:45).

In terms of what benefits Red Bull is looking for in their partnership with Michaela 'mimi' Lintrup, Red Bull actually focus more on assisting Michaela in achieving her goals, rather than focusing on how she can assist them in achieving their goals. Martin Sahlertz, Digital Marketing and Communications Manager at Red Bull Denmark explains, "you could say that there are many who do sponsorship of athletes and influencers, only expecting to receive something from them and that it is more about achieving the goals of the company through the athletes. Whereas for us, it is actually about the opposite. If we can create a really good story by getting her (mimi) or some of our other athletes to achieve some of the goals they set, then we have created a better story about this athlete, and we have been part of developing this person's career and the ambitions they have within their sport" (Interview M.S., 3:50). Andreas Bjerrum Larsen finally adds that through their sponsorship activities, Red Bull wants their brand to grow and get a lot of love through the different efforts they make. To summarize this, you could say that Red Bull merely wants to support their athletes and be part of a positive story. This could encourage more favorable attitudes towards their brand.

To analyze Michaela 'Mimi' Lintrup's goals and objectives for her partnership with Red Bull, Martin Sahlertz, Digital Marketing and Communications Manager at Red Bull Denmark and Michaela's contact person at Red Bull, has been interviewed in Michaela's place because it was not possible to get an interview with her. In our interview, Martin Sahlertz says that Michaela has partnered up with sponsors before, but she was looking for a partnership that would allow her to improve her skills as a Counter-Strike player. He explains, "there are many who have previously worked with

her, such as eOddset and others, who have profited a lot from it. She has certainly also profited from it and gained exposure, but she has not improved as a Counter-Strike player from it" (Interview M.S., 3:50). Martin Sahlertz also suggests why partnering up with Red Bull could benefit Michaela in terms of reaching that goal, "one of the main reasons why she (mimi) thinks it is interesting to work with us, is the fact that we have the ability to team her up with other esports teams, such as G2, Cloud 9, Vitality, ENCE and a lot of other Counter-Strike teams. We can team up mimi with them all, send her to boot camp with them, send her on training sessions where she can improve her cognitive abilities, reaction skills, and all sort of things like that. That, in fact, is where we come in and invest, to ultimately try to get her to achieve her overall goal, to become pro. Not just be one of the best female players, but to play with the best across genders" (Interview M.S., 5:20).

The exchange of benefits in this case is somewhat complex, because of Red Bull's concentrated and almost philanthropic focus on their partner's goals rather than their own. Michaela 'mimi' Lintrup will benefit from the advantages of boot camps, training sessions, and the general investment in her by Red Bull. Whether or not Red Bull will benefit from the partnership, in terms of achieving the goal of being part of a positive story, will, of course, depend on the story they are able to create with mimi. Michaela's development and the success of Red Bull's efforts to assist her development will, in this case, determine the actual 'benefits' exchanged. Nevertheless, sponsoring Michaela 'mimi' Lintrup fulfills Red Bull's ambition to be a part of developing talents and athletes, and 'give wings' to them as they say, so it would still be considered a win-win situation.

### **Selection**

Andreas Bjerrum Larsen explains that Red Bull selected mimi as a partner because she can be used to reach their target audience, "by selecting an athlete as mimi, we have through an extended period of time figured out that she matches our brand and also fits our target audience. So, we know that if she is part of some of the content we create, then it should also reach the target audience we are interested in" (Interview A.B.L., 20:10). One important thing for Red Bull is to get their partners while they are at the beginning of their career. Andreas Bjerrum Larsen says, "we have a defined list of things that our athletes need to fulfill. I cannot reveal all of them, but it is

really important to us that we get a hold of athletes, this goes for both traditional sports and esports when they are in the early stages of their career, and there is a whole bunch of potential to trace in them" (Interview A.B.L., 15:10).

When asked how Red Bull get brand exposure through their sponsorships, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen explains that Red Bull want their product to be the focus, not their logos, so they use a lot of product placement. He says that "(..) we never slap our logo on all sorts of strange things. The logos are really something that is reserved for the products and the athletes we have signed. So, it is always the can that is in focus" (Interview A.B.L., 21:35). In terms of how Red Bull get exposure in their partnership with mimi, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen gives an example "the same goes with a Counter-Strike girl called mimi, who plays for Copenhagen Flames. We have the same product placement sponsorship with her, where we have a refrigerator in her stream when she is streaming at home. Obviously, she only drinks our products." (Interview A.B.L., 6:40) This kind of product placement communicates functional congruence, because mimi uses their brand during games or streams, as a clear way to demonstrate a brand association. Red Bull also has product category exclusivity, meaning that they are the only sponsor for mimi in their specific product category (energy drinks).

Looking further on brand associations and congruence, Red Bull also look for partners that share a certain image, namely up-coming talents and athletes with lots of potentials. Martin Sahlertz describes Mimi as one of the most ambitious talents he has ever met, also as super stubborn as she spends all of her waken hours getting better at what she does. He says, "for us, it was a case where we felt we could actually come in and make a difference. We would never enter a partnership with Astralis, for instance. Not because we do not like them, but simply because they are at such a high level already. We would not necessarily feel like we could make a difference. We would not be able to make them better by working together, because they are already the best in the world" (Interview M.S., 7:20). With mimi, Red Bull are dealing with a profile that wants to be the world's best and wants to do anything to get there but maybe does not have the means or the network to realize it. So, in that way, she is a profile that fits in very well with Red Bull's goal of wanting to be part of developing aspiring talents. Referring to image congruence between the sponsor and the property, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen states that the individual's profile needs to be a really good fit for Red Bull's brand. He says, "our athletes are the kind of people whom you would

like to have dinner with. They may be a little cocky and impertinent, but they also have to be charismatic and charming, sort of cheeky, but at the same time, they play by the rules, so it does not get too rowdy" (Interview, A.B.L., 16:00).

## **Activation**

In terms of how Red Bull activate their sponsorships of athletes, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen gives an example, "we also have August 'Agge' Rosenmeier, who is a FIFA-player. If we do a sales campaign with Bilka, then we always try to adapt it to the titles on which we concentrate. In that case, it would be 'FIFA', and then we try to activate our athletes as much as possible as front figures. Again, it is not our logo, but it is our logo through our products or athletes that is shown" (Interview A.B.L., 24:25). Andreas Bjerrum Larsen adds that "we also do training sessions and giveaways when we are attending at LAN-events" (Interview A.B.L., 24:25). Red Bull activate their sponsorships to a great extent, at both events and at all sorts of small marketing promotions and sales initiatives around the stores. By featuring elements of FIFA in their sales campaigns, or in the case with mimi; Counter-Strike, the brand associations can be further established, and the connection amplified.

One example of how Red Bull use digital media to activate their sponsorship of mimi, is excellently demonstrated in a series of videos on Red Bull's esports webpage called "Mimi's aiming guide (1-5)" (See Appendix 6), where mimi teaches the viewers how to aim better in Counter-Strike. The videos were produced in connection with Denmark's biggest 1v1 CS:GO-tournament, known as Aim King, where mimi will also attend to do an athlete-appearance and fan experiences. Fan experiences are great ways to increase brand loyalty.

Through their sponsorship with mimi, Red Bull also address some of the prejudices and negative associations that surround specifically esports players. Andreas Bjerrum Larsen explains, "what we have done for mimi, for instance, was to send her to some screenings and some health checks by a physical therapist with whom we have a collaboration. Some content was created from it (Red Bull Mimi, n.d.), to show that even though Michaela spends 50-60 hours in front of her computer every week, it is still vital for her to keep in good shape and eat healthy. Not because she wants to be healthy, she does, but because it has an impact on her performance on the server" (Interview A.B.L., 31:15). In that way, Red Bull try to improve mimi, while simultaneously trying to kill some of

the prejudices there are about esports. This initiative does not only counter some of the negative ideas about esports, but it is also a meaningful way to activate the sponsorship and develop brand associations between Red Bull and mimi.

Speaking of negative associations, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen also mentions some episodes of things like match-fixing, cheating, i.e., hacking, and some episodes with players using Adderall. To that he says, "anything like that, we stay far away from and it is something that we in no way tolerate like we do not in any other sports. If we had a traditional athlete, who was caught doing drugs, then, of course, there would also be consequences. We do not want to be associated with that" (Interview A.B.L., 26:50). When asked how Red Bull handle athlete misbehavior, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen says, "that would be a case by case. We have a close dialogue with our players and are very close with our athletes, and it will always come down a conversation with each individual" (Interview A.B.L., 29:05). To summarize, there is no set protocol for how Red Bull handle athletes facing adversity.

## **Evaluation**

In regard to evaluative methods, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen explains that the most important thing to Red Bull is the sports aspect. He states, "they (the sponsees) obviously have to deliver when they are out competing in whatever sport they compete in. Moreover, it is also about how the partnership is, how it functions, are we pleased with each other, as well as how their social platforms are performing" (Interview A.B.L., 30:10). Performance on social media could be everywhere the athletes are visible online, like YouTube, Twitch, Instagram, and Twitter. However, social media performance is not necessarily too important for Red Bull. Andreas Bjerrum Larsen explains, "if we have the coolest athlete in the world that we love to work with, who always delivers when he or she is at productions and delivers sports-wise, then we can easily look past it if he or she thinks social media is the lamest most boring thing in the world." (Interview A.B.L., 32:55). In contrast to this, Andreas Bjerrum Larsen also gives another example of the streamer Richard 'Ninja' Blevins, who has been signed by Red Bull's US office. He says, "he (Ninja) is not known for delivering insane results to Fortnite tournaments, he was not even in the world championship a few months ago. He is with us because he is a Red Bull athlete and because he is the biggest streamer in the world. He earns a lot of money because he is insanely entertaining.

Now, he has just switched from Twitch to Mixer, but there were 14 million followers on Twitch, so it does not really matter to us if he wins the world championship in Fortnite" (Interview A.B.L., 33:40) For Red Bull, evaluation is very much case by case, it depends on whom they are dealing with.

Overall, the athlete's game performance and brand exposure metrics are what Red Bull use to evaluate their sponsorship endeavors. However, they will purposely design the method to evaluate the specific goals of each specific partnership in question.

## **Sponsorship of Teams**

### **Capstore**

Capstore is owned by the Danish company Copenhagen Cap Company ApS, which was founded in 2018. Capstore sell caps, beanies, clothing, and accessories. They have a physical store Capstore at Fisketorvet, in Copenhagen and an online webshop, Capstore.dk (Capstore, n.d.). Capstore only have one partnership with an esports entity, namely Wicked Gaming. Wicked Gaming is an esports organization with teams competing in different games like CS:GO, LoL, FIFA, Hearthstone, and Overwatch League, among others. Their partnership will be analyzed in this case.

### **Goals and Objectives**

In our interview, Mads Kragh, CEO and Founder of Copenhagen Cap Company, explains that Capstore's goals and objectives for the partnership are not specific, but they are part of a larger marketing strategy with a lot of different projects. He says, "our goal was just to get our name out in some other environments" (Interview M.K., 4:25). Continuously, he says, "It is an overall marketing strategy I have, where I would like to create a ripple effect in all kinds of places, and here esports is one of them" (Interview M.K., 6:00). In terms of how sponsorship in esports fits with these goals, Mads Kragh explains that Capstore work with caps, and the players, whether it is in CS:GO or FIFA, often sit and play with caps on. He states, "there are a lot of fans and players in our target group. Thus we thought it was an exciting market to enter" (Interview M.K., 4:25). To summarize this, Capstore's ambitions for entering the partnership with Wicked Gaming were to gain brand exposure to the desired audience in a new market, without having any specific

expectations for the overall effect of the sponsorship. Accordingly, David M. Rasmussen, CEO and Founder of Wicked Gaming says that "we are in a market with many young people and here we helped Capstore get a lot of exposure in a new area at the time, but which today is huge and still a fantastic market for all companies. Esports is a huge market with an incredible number of followers in all ages, and therefore there is something for everyone; it does not just have to be about computer equipment and gaming when we talk about partners" (Questionnaire D.M.R., A3).

David M. Rasmussen also clarifies Wicked Gaming's goals for entering a partnership with a sponsor. He explains, "the goal is a partnership that makes sense. It can be about PR, economy, or something else which has a value in your development. Essentially, it comes down to strategic development with a focus on the next step in one's business plan" (Questionnaire D.M.R., A1). Specifically, in their partnership with Capstore, David M. Rasmussen explains that Capstore have been a partner right from the start, and in the beginning, it was important to get exposure, and it still is to this day. He explains, "especially in the beginning; we had to be visible so that people figured out who we were. We also had many giveaways with Capstore, which again helped create a lot of attention for both parties. So, our collaboration at the beginning was very much influenced by eyeballs" (Questionnaire D.M.R., A2). He finally adds that "here we have a brand that is not only about computer and gaming but also addresses a completely different segment than esports. There are a lot of 'eyeballs' to reach, in the sense that people who do not know us yet, but who might be a little curious about the phenomenon of esports and therefore are good access points for us to become more visible" (Questionnaire D.M.R., A4).

In this case, both parties in the partnership have goals related to brand exposure and brand awareness. They both benefit from exposure through each other in their sponsorship activities to each other's respective audience base and thus new segments. Thereby, this case details an exchange of benefits.

## **Selection**

In regard to Capstore's target audience, Mads Kragh says that Capstore's target audience in this sponsorship is the gamers and the esports fans. He says, "the esports audience, who are the ones I expect us to target, I think is a really exciting audience because it is people who are interested in, care about, or are nerds at something. And that is also our key business and idea with what we are

doing, that our customers care about what we can offer" (Interview M.K., 12:15). Mads Kragh elaborates that these people who are interested in esports are people who have something that they are passionate about and care about. He says, "I think those are some of the very best people you can come across. Not to say that most people do not have something to care about, but here it is such a mutual thing that you share with others. I think that has something to it" (Interview M.K., 12:55).

In terms of brand exposure to the target audience, Capstore have a uniform or apparel sponsorship, which means they receive exposure through the athletes at both streamed and live games and events, because their logo and name is on the team jerseys. Capstore also produce caps with Wicked Gaming's logo on, which the players can wear if they choose (See appendix 7). Footage and pictures from games and interviews are also often used in different media, providing another opportunity for brand exposure. In relation to this, Mads Kragh again mentions the ripple effect that is created by this kind of exposure, "the partnership has not been made because I can see that there is a profit to make here and now, but the ripple effect created will reach some more people who then become aware of us. It must also be said that over the years, there are many people who have noticed that the logo is placed on the jerseys and on the caps. We have been contacted by a few, including other sports organizations, teams, fans, and now you. So, you can say that there are people who have become aware that we are out there, and that is, after all, part of the ripple effect we would like to create" (Interview M.K., 17:00).

In terms of brand associations, Mads Kragh says that Capstore were looking for a partner with a certain image. When they went through the selection process, it was Wicked Gaming's way of working with their organization, which was a little more determined than the others. He says, "We also think they work professionally with their players and their organization. It was pretty important to us because we did not pick one or the other sports team just to pick something. So, we thought that since we are also professionals, it was a good match" (Interview M.K., 05:05). Mads Kragh also states that "(...) Wicked is an organization that is growing, and we are also an organization that is growing. In that way, you could say that those two things match each other really well" (Interview M.K., 08:05). This common set of ideals and relevant image connection communicates image congruence, which is important since they are essentially associating their brands with each other.

When the players wear caps from Capstore during the game, it communicates functional congruence. In relevance to that, however, Mads Kragh explains that some of the players do not want to play with a cap on, and some feel really good when playing with a cap on. He says, "(...) there was one player who told me that he actually felt like it gave him luck when playing with a cap on because he felt that he could shield himself from everything going on around him while playing. So, he liked playing with a cap on. However, then there was also someone who said, 'I do not usually wear a cap,' and that got me thinking that then we should not force it on the player" (Interview, M.K., 19:45). When communicating functional congruence, it is important that the brand shows how its products actually help support the property, so it would not make sense to force the players to wear caps if it does not benefit them in one way or another, as Mads Kragh also concludes.

## **Activation**

For lesser-known brands, activating the sponsorship in meaningful ways is crucial to developing brand associations and gaining brand recall. Mads Kragh gives one example of an activation initiative by Capstore, where they held a FIFA-event inside their store. He describes that "it was a FIFA tournament, where we had picked one of their (Wicked Gaming's) players, who was highly ranked in Denmark at that time. He is not with them anymore. Nevertheless, we said 'come into the store, and if you can beat him, then you can choose a cap of free choice' because after all, we sell caps" (Interview M.K., 13:55). Besides that, Capstore have not created any events that were related to esports. Mads Kragh says that Capstore lets Wicked Gaming handle that, and then they support Wicked when they need them for something in the different collaborations. Although this initiative was a one-time thing, it was a great way to engage some of the fans and create memorable experiences through fan participation and giveaways.

Capstore also use digital media to activate the sponsorship. For example, they share posts on social media from Wicked Gaming, like game announcements, and pictures of the specialized caps for the players (See Appendix 7). Mads Kragh comments on that, "some of our customers, who are not fans but still customers, can maybe sometimes think 'why do they post or share that?'. We want to show that we engage in something else. We do other things than purely sales" (Interview M.K., 26:30). Mads Kragh also has ideas for potential activation programs in the future, as he says

"but obviously, as Wicked also grows and sometimes do workshops and things like that, then it may very well be that in the future our customers will be able to win a training session with some of these players, meet & greets, come out and see something, a jersey and so on" (Interview M.K., 27:30). Another digital feature is Capstore's logo at the bottom of Wicked Gaming's homepage on their website, which directs the visitors to Capstore's website when they click on it.

Addressing the negative associations that surround esports, Mads Kragh says that it is not something Capstore are concerned about, as they are familiar with prejudices and negative associations in their own industry, "If anyone says that there are these prejudices about esports players being someone who sits inside all day, eating chips, drinking cola, energy drinks, doing nothing and being lazy or whatever prejudices there may be in society, such things do not really bother me. We work with caps, and caps have also been the unpopular one in the class. If you wore a cap in the 1990s, then you were not considered a particularly nice guy and all these things. So, we as well work in a world and a universe where many prejudices may be associated. We think that esports is really healthy in many aspects because it is quite social. Although many people think that sitting and staring at a screen is quite nonsocial, it is actually the opposite if you educate yourself on the subject" (Interview M.K., 31:15).

When asked how Capstore handle a scandal or a crisis, Mads Kragh says that their company is not a large corporation, so they do not have detailed strategies for handling potential conflicts. He does give an example of how Capstore approach problematic situations "(..) if there is a customer who is furious, calling us and saying 'What is going on?' Then I can pick up the phone, call her and say 'Hi, I am sorry on behalf of my company, what can we do for you to make this well again?' Then you already have a dialogue. And should there be something in esports, it would be my opportunity to have a dialogue with someone who would send criticism to us. That is how our company is" (Interview M.K., 36:20). He adds that Capstore would not necessarily welcome criticism or conflicts with open arms or be happy about it, but they would always have a dialogue. Having a simple communication 'strategy' like this will provide the impression that the problematic situation is being addressed, and some actions are undertaken to fix it.

## Evaluation

Capstore evaluate the sponsorship in dialogue with their partner Wicked Gaming, Mads Kragh explains that he and David M. Rasmussen talk about evaluation when they talk about renewing the contract. Mads Kragh informs, “then we review the partnership and always talk about if they expect more and if we expect more, back and forward. So really, we sit and balance our expectations with each other” (Interview M.K., 27:30). Mads Kragh also explains that Capstore actually do not necessarily evaluate on brand exposure metrics such as followers or views, but more on sports performance. He says, “I have decided that I think it is more fun to be part of a developing team, as Wicked is. Here, we do not necessarily care about how many followers there are. We obviously care about if they win some tournaments, and we can see that they do” (Interview M.K., 28:50). Considering the fact that Capstore’s goals were related to brand exposure, it would be somewhat atypical that measuring brand exposure is not an important evaluation method for them. Then again, Capstore's goals were more complex and part of a larger marketing strategy that involved creating a ripple effect, which might not be easily measured.

## Capgemini

Capgemini is a multinational corporation and global provider of consulting, technology services, and digital transformation. Capgemini Denmark has its headquarters in Copenhagen and also an office in Aarhus (Capgemini, n.d.). Each year Capgemini host internal esports tournaments in Denmark and Scandinavia. They are called the Capgemini eSports Championship (CEC) and are reserved for their employees. They compete in games such as CS:GO, League of Legends, Heart Stone, and more. They also have their own Twitch channels (Capgemini Esports, n.d.), and they have dedicated their Twitter account to the esports audience (Capgemini Twitter, n.d.). Capgemini is also the sponsor of the esports team North, owned by the Danish sports organization FC Copenhagen in collaboration with Nordisk Film. North is one of the world's leading esports teams, with high rankings in FIFA and CS:GO. Capgemini and North's partnership will be analyzed in this case.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Kasper Hemmingshøj, Head of Recruitment at Capgemini Denmark, explains that Capgemini's goals for their involvement in esports have always been focused on recruitment. He also says, "that it simultaneously means that our employees think that it is super awesome to work here, and they have something to be proud of, that is really just a side effect of the recruitment part. It has always been about recruitment" (Interview K.H., 5:10). Kasper Hemmingshøj also explains how recognizing the gamers among their employees is important to Capgemini, "we could sense on our own employees, IT people, that this is something they really care about. So, by recognizing that being a gamer is okay, we have made our employees happy, (...). Also, talking about esports, you do not strike up a conversation about it over lunch. Being asked, 'what did you do last night?' no one says 'well, I was gaming for four hours'. That is kind of embarrassing to say, and that is what we are trying to change" (Interview K.H., 5:10). That was really Capgemini's main purpose of going into esports, recruiting and recognizing gamers and gaming.

In an article on North's blog (2019), Anil Agarwal, President of Capgemini Scandinavia Business Unit, explains "we are delighted to partner up with one of the most professional esports organizations, which ultimately will strengthen our ties to a large community of potential like-minded employees and future employees. Capgemini is one of the leading IT consultant business in the world. But we are also gamers" (North Blog, 2019). By partnering up with North, Capgemini will benefit from being associated with a professional esports organization. This will strengthen their ties to a community of potential future employees, while also strengthening their relationship with the gamers among their existing employees. Christian Slot, Head of Media and Press at North, accordingly says that "a lot of these IT-specialists employed at Capgemini play CS:GO, FIFA, Apex and other games to a great extent when they get home from work. A lot of them follow esports. I see it as a brilliant move on their (Capgemini's) part to gain favor with their employees and to show that they understand this new space" (Questionnaire C.S., A3).

Christian Slot also explains what North's goals and objectives were for partnering up with a sponsor. He says, "We always call them 'partners' and not 'sponsors'. It is important to us that it is an equal relationship, where you do not simply receive money for a logo on a jersey, but where it actually makes sense for all parties. Naturally, economy also matters to us in order to make the

wheels keep turning, but it is more important to have a strong relationship with a partner who wants to stick around for many years. Therefore, we are always thinking of creating value – and seeking value (not necessarily just money) from potential partners” (Questionnaire C.S., A1). In terms of what benefits Capgemini had to offer North, Christian Slot explains that it makes perfect sense for North to have Capgemini that works with IT solutions. Capgemini have IT specialists employed, who, as an example, were able to help North with their website and develop analytic-, scouting- and marketing tools, to mention a few examples. Additionally, Capgemini is a huge, global company, where they potentially get a voice to lots of employees.

Capgemini benefits from their partnership with North by strengthening their ties to a community of potential future employees and existing employees, and North benefits from Capgemini's finances and IT expertise, for example. Both parties receive benefits that will satisfy their overall goals; therefore, this case documents an exchange of benefits.

## **Selection**

Capgemini's target audience is clearly defined by Kasper Hemmingshøj, “that (the esports audience) has been the most important part. We want to target IT people and people who are technically competent. They follow esports, among other things. We got many statistics showing how many people within the field of IT are actually watching this. We liked the numbers we saw. We are targeting IT people directly. There is not much more to say” (Interview K.H., 9:20).

Capgemini targets their audience based on a common interest in IT. Capgemini's partnership with North allows them to become involved in one of the activities that mean the most to their target audience. In this case, it is not about attracting the largest audience, but attracting the right audience in terms of its interest and competences in the product category, IT. You could say that Capgemini's audience, IT people, is a niche audience. Capgemini saw a unique way to reach that audience through esports and selected a sponsorship that was esports-oriented.

Capgemini have a uniform sponsorship. They receive brand exposure to their target audience through the athletes at both streamed and live games and events, because their logo and name are on the team jerseys. Footage and pictures from games and interviews are often used in different media and online, providing another opportunity for brand exposure.

In terms of brand associations and congruence, Kasper Hemmingshøj stresses the challenge of selecting an esports organization with a relevant brand fit. Since Capgemini is of a certain size, it entails some rules of approval internally. He says, “(...) it (Capgemini) has been the most ethical company for the last seven years. This means that things such as Counter-Strike and weapons are actually against all reason in regard to Capgemini. It is also incredibly important what other partners they have and who the business owners are. And, is it business owners who might change along the way? There is a lot of uncertainty associated with this” (Interview K.H., 7:15). Kasper Hemmingshøj recognizes that esports is new, and many of the esports organizations are still young, with no more than two or three years of experience. He explains, "for us, it was really important with some stable partners. We felt like we got that in Nordisk Film and, of course, also Parken (F.C. Copenhagen), who also has a winning culture, are used to sport and used to when doing something you want to do it well and be at the top. These two factors were really important to us, and I actually believe we found that in North" (Interview K.H., 8:00). Christian Slot also believes that North and Capgemini share a common set of values, "Capgemini is a serious brand. One of the worlds' most respected IT consultancies and even one of the most ethical. Also, it is a global company. It fits perfectly with our values" (Questionnaire D.M.R., A4). Additionally, North state on their website that "beyond the technological and innovation dimension that unites the world of Capgemini and the world of esports, the partnership with the North is based on the sharing of common values such as boldness, team spirit, and fun" (North, n.d.). Capgemini and North both selected their partnership based on image congruence and having a relevant image connection.

Kasper Hemmingshøj also stresses that Capgemini consider which other brands are sponsoring North. He says, "obviously, an organization like North could easily get some, for instance, erotic brands, written on their jerseys and then earn a lot of money from it. But of course, if they want to attract a company like us, then that would not work out." (Interview K.H., 20:10). Kasper Hemmingshøj adds that Capgemini have a great dialogue with North about what type of company they would like them to have on their jerseys and whom they get associated with. This is referred to as multiple sponsor congruence, where Capgemini's brand will also be affected by the perceived images of other brands concurrently sponsoring North.

## **Activation**

Speaking of activating the sponsorship, Kasper Hemmingshøj says that what you must keep in mind with sponsorship is that "(...) it is one thing to be on the jersey, but to get it activated, that is where the real challenge is" (Interview K.H., 11:30). Among other things, Capgemini use social media to activate their sponsorship. In relevance to this, Kasper Hemmingshøj says that "you need to speak a certain language when you speak to these gamers. They quickly know that something is up if there is too much 'corporate' about it" (Interview K.H., 11:30). Kasper Hemmingshøj says that Capgemini do a lot as a company to look at what kind of messages they are communicating, and adds that the communications need to have a little more fun and games to it than usual.

One example of an activation initiative is a video announcement of North and Capgemini's partnership, which was uploaded on North's YouTube-channel, titled "Announcement: Capgemini and North in ambitious partnership" (North Announcement, 2019). The video features North's CS:GO team standing in line in their uniforms, with the camera zooming in on Capgemini's logo on one of the athlete's shoulders, later followed by their logo displayed with the text "we are also gamers". This slogan, which is also used by Capgemini several places on their digital media, evokes a 'that brand is like me' sentiment and has an emotional appeal to gamers.

Kasper Hemmingshøj also explains that activating the sponsorship with fan experiences is a focus point for Capgemini, and when they do something with North, it needs to be something that adds value to North's fans. If they cannot do that, then it will just seem like a corporate business that 'sponsors' something. According to Kasper Hemmingshøj, "you need to connect with North's fan base, and we have done so by challenging the most hardcore fans of North to a match against our company team, for instance. It is on Twitter, where we send out the challenge and recap it (...) Then, of course, we have made jersey giveaways. Next week we are doing an 'ask me anything' with one of the players, where we walk around in Fælledparken and ask him many questions that the fans want us to ask him" (Interview K.H., 13:10). Fan experiences like these will be valued by North's fans, allowing for Capgemini to form a relationship with them that goes beyond the loyalty generated by any objective assessment of their brand's value.

Capgemini also do some employee-related initiatives, Kasper Hemmingshøj describes one specific, where they have a pampering day for their employees. He elaborates, "we take a day or two for

our employees, where they get to play against North" (Interview K.H., 17:35). It is not necessarily something that Capgemini communicate on their social media, but then again, it is also something that they are doing for their employees. Naturally, it is something that connects their employees to the company. Kasper Hemmingshøj states, "we have a lot of these retention events you can almost call them, which are based on esports. North do not always participate, it has to be a special occasion, but they sometimes participate" (Interview with K.H., 17:35). This kind of hospitality initiative could be thought of as a way to increase employee morale.

In terms of prejudices and negative associations that surround esports, Kasper Hemmingshøj explains that "we struggled a lot with our Swedish colleagues, especially, who are very conservative about the fact that the game Counter-Strike is violent. And they are right, it is. It involves terrorists, counter-terrorists, bombs, and all kinds of things. So, we have made the decision on our social media and our channels, that there we do not show any violent content" (Interview K.H., 22:20). Kasper Hemmingshøj also says, "it is always the topic nowadays, what it means for children to sit and look at these things, and if it is a good idea in terms of their logical senses and health. That is an ongoing debate. If we went out and said that it was bad for people to sit and look at a screen, it would not really make any sense in regard to what we do. Our employees sit and stare at a screen every day" (Interview K.H., 24:30). He also mentions another aspect of these negative associations, which Capgemini also write about on their website. It is about an initiative called #StopToxicity. Capgemini writes that, together with North, they actively work to tackle harmful behavior in the world of gaming. They are not going to change things from one day to another, but they believe that together with North, they can create a momentum for greater accountability. That is why they support the #StopToxicity initiative. It should create a dialogue and better experiences in the teams and tournaments that they support, and for everyone else (Capgemini Esports, n.d.).

In terms of how Capgemini will handle potential conflicts, Kasper Hemmingshøj makes it clear that even though they have an opinion about it, they do not have a direct procedure if some negative situation were to occur. Capgemini will face conflict as it comes and take it one day at a time (Interview K.H., 24:30).

## **Evaluation**

When asked how Capgemini evaluate their sponsorship with North, Kasper Hemmingshøj answers, “that is what is so great about doing something that is marketing-based, how the heck do you measure it? How do we measure if customers have viewed this as something positive? It is not like customers contact our company and say ‘Hi, can I place my next project at 200 million with you, because I saw that you have a sponsorship with someone’. That is never going to happen. So, what we have measured it by has primarily been on the recruitment part. How many unsolicited applicants have applied to us for work, and how many of our current employees have recommended people in their network to apply here?” (Interview K.H., 26:00). Kasper Hemmingshøj states that Capgemini has been able to see double-digit progress on both of the two parameters, i.e., unsolicited applicants and network recommendations. Moreover, they can see that the quality of the applicants has increased slightly. However, what is even more interesting, in the applications that they receive, there are many people who write that they play Counter-Strike or World of Warcraft, and that has sort of become acceptable to write when people apply at Capgemini. Kasper Hemmingshøj states, “it is actually really cool to see, because that was the idea from the beginning with this, that it is completely OK” (Interview K.H., 26:30). Capgemini’s evaluative method is designed to match with their goals for the sponsorship, namely recruiting and recognizing gamers.

## **Sponsorship of Events**

### **Waoo**

Waoo is owned by a number of Denmark's largest energy and fiber network companies. Waoo is headquartered in Tilst, near Aarhus, and delivers internet, streaming, television, and teleservices in collaboration with local partners across Denmark (Waoo, n.d.). Waoo was the first Danish broadcast network, which offered an esports-channel as part of their TV-channel package. The esports channel is called Pixel.tv and focuses on gaming and esports. Since then, they have become a sponsor of the esports team, Tricked Esports, and have created Waoo CS:GO Ligaen and Waoo Ligaen. Finally, they have been the main sponsor at Copenhagen Games for several years, which is one of the largest esports events on Danish soil. In this case, Waoo's involvement in major

esports events, specifically their partnership with eSport.dk, organizer of Copenhagen Games and Waoo CS:GO Ligaen, will be analyzed. eSport.dk creates and hosts esports tournaments and other online activities in a number of popular games on a competitive level. One example is Copenhagen Games, which is an annual esports and gaming festival that celebrates all kinds of esports, from professional tournaments to arcade games and cosplayers. It should be noted that Waoo CS:GO Ligaen and Waoo Ligaen ended in 2018 after two successful years.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Jørgen Stensgaard, CEO at Waoo, explains that Waoo's goals for their involvement in esports, in general, are to use esports to develop good TV and entertainment products for their target audience, and to help develop the esports industry in Denmark. He states, “(...) esports have become a universe of entertainment that appeals to and is in demand by a larger and wider audience. That is why it is developing into a good TV product that captures the interest of many – and when our customers are asking for a good product, we are happy to deliver it” (Questionnaire J.S., A2). He adds, “it is also important that there is someone who supports and promotes esports so that it can grow and develop, both as an elite international sport, but also as an entertainment product. There is a huge talent pool in Denmark, which is among the international elite, and it is important that this continues to develop” (Questionnaire J.S., A2). Accordingly, Zahid Butt, CEO and Founder of eSport.dk and Copenhagen Games, says that the benefits the events offered Waoo were “great interface with gamers, who are a part of the digital world, which are exactly the target audience of Waoo and other similar service providers” (Questionnaire Z.B., A3).

Zahid Butt explains that for them as event organizers, “it is about finances and relevance with all of our partners. Just as well as the finances are important, it is also important that there is some relevance to partners and products” (Questionnaire Z.B., A1). Zahid Butt also mentioned mutual benefits from getting Waoo onboard as a sponsor for Waoo CS:GO Ligaen. In an article from 2016 on eSport.dk, he stated that for esports and Livestream production, internet connection is one of the most important tools, and therefore he was pleased that it was precisely Waoo, who had chosen to support the league. For eSport.dk, it meant that not only could they develop and streamline their league with tournaments and streams even further, but they could also focus more on other content on eSport.dk and, in that way, develop joint activities that will benefit all

interested in Danish esports (Esport.dk, 2016). Likewise, in a press release from 2018 by Waoo, Zahid Butt said that because Waoo has been such an important player in the world of esports, he is pleased that they have chosen to sign as the main sponsor for Copenhagen Games. He also claimed that high-speed fiber broadband provides the best conditions for optimal performance at such an event, and there, Waoo's product is ideal (Waoo Press Release, 2018). Conclusively, Jørgen Stensgaard says that "in short, esports are cultivated and experienced through our products – fiber broadband and TV. Thus, it becomes a full circle when we help elevate esports, develop talents and spread awareness about it" (Questionnaire J.S., A3).

Waoo will benefit from interacting and connecting with their target audience, and the event organizers will benefit from Waoo's products, services, and resources to support their events. Accordingly, Waoo and their partners engage in an exchange of benefits.

## **Selection**

Jørgen Stensgaard says that in relation to marketing, Waoo, of course, have some segments they are focusing on, and the esports audience is definitely one of them. He further elaborates that "it is both a younger, tech-interested target audience and at the same time often the first mover, who wants the best and the latest on the market" (Questionnaire J.S., A5). Jørgen Stensgaard also explains that the target audience has an interest in their product category, "our core product, fiber broadband, is the perfect match for esports with its high speed, stability, and low latency – within the intersection of these lies the ultimate esports experience – and that is delivered by the fiber" (Questionnaire J.S., A2). Because fiber internet is perfect for esports, it also means that the target group for esports is Waoo's present and future customers. Waoo attract their audience based on a common interest in fiber broadband, which they state is also a prerequisite for gaming and esports. As the esports audience has an interest in fiber broadband and is passionate about their sport, they will be more likely than the average consumer to be aware of the sponsors and purchase their products.

In terms of exposure to the target audience, Waoo have had different kinds of event sponsorships with different methods of reaching the audience. In Waoo's sponsorship with Copenhagen Games, Waoo will, as the main sponsor, receive exposure at the actual event with their logo on banners, posters, and screens (See Appendix 8). Footage and pictures from the event are often used in

different media, providing another opportunity for brand exposure. In Waoo CS:GO Ligaen, Waoo had league naming rights. Partnerships with naming rights are powerful marketing tools that can significantly accelerate brand awareness in a very efficient manner while delivering other key business objectives. In terms of exposure, it is hard to find sponsorships that generate as many impressions.

Regarding brand fit and brand associations, Jørgen Stensgaard states that Waoo are looking for some specific qualities when selecting partners, "first of all, it is about determination, spirit, and ambitions – it takes hard work to be among the best. We know this at Waoo, as we have been scored as Denmark's best internet for eight consecutive years – even though we are not the biggest player on the market" (Questionnaire J.S., A4). Likewise, Zahid Butt says, "it is about the values that every company or brand works with. In that regard, Waoo have some values that fit really well with our way of thinking and what we want" (Questionnaire Z.B., A4). Since both parties are looking for a partner that has a certain brand image and certain values, and apparently, they share a common set of ideals, image congruence is communicated through the sponsorship.

In a press release from 2017 by Waoo concerning Waoo CS:GO Ligaen, it is described that the local Waoo partner, the energy and fiber internet company Energi Fyn, had delivered fiber internet to DOK5000 (the event location), so there would not be any problems with the capacity and speed for the competing teams. Both Energi Fyn and nef Fondet would be present during the event, so those interested could have a chat about the benefits and opportunities with Waoo Fibre (Waoo Press Release #1, 2017). When Waoo deliver the fiber internet to major esports events, it demonstrates the capabilities of their products and services and indicates to both consumers and other organizations, that they would definitely be able to handle their internet needs as well. This kind of sponsorship communicates functional congruence.

## **Activation**

In terms of activating their event sponsorships, Jørgen Stensgaard says, "naturally, this (activation) is included throughout our marketing on social media, contests, etc." (Questionnaire J.S., A9). An example of an event activation program by Waoo was the Waoo Lounge present at Waoo CS:GO Ligaen finals and semi-finals. In the Waoo Lounge people could play Counter-Strike on a professional gaming computer that was top-tuned and tailor-made for CS:GO, have a talk with

instructors from eSport.dk about tips and tricks, participate in contests for giveaways and gift cards and attend meet and greets with professional esports athletes, among other things. (Waoo Press Release #2 (2017). The activities in the Waoo Lounge were great ways to engage fans by creating memorable experiences and allowing for fan participation. Experiences like fan contests, giveaways, and meet and greets will be valued by participants and esports fans, and they will credit Waoo for providing them, thereby generating brand loyalty.

Waoo also use digital media to activate their sponsorships. In connection to Copenhagen Games, Waoo have posted content on Facebook. One post was from Copenhagen Games 2018, with a link to an interview with someone who attended the event, inviting him and everyone else welcome at the booth, where they could also watch Pixel.tv, make Live TV, play RB6 and Far Cry 5 with Ubisoft and participate in Waoo competitions (See Appendix 8). Another Facebook post, also in relation to Copenhagen Games, was a contest for a Chromecast ultra 4K from Waoo and a 'Rainbow Six' goodie bag from Ubisoft, plus consolation prizes (See Appendix 8). These Facebook posts also demonstrate how Waoo use both social media and fan experiences to activate their sponsorship and generate brand association and brand loyalty.

In regard to negative associations and potential conflicts, Jørgen Stensgaard says, "obviously, we would not sign sponsorships in a sport, where there were elements that we did not wish to be associated with. In this case, it has to be something that can happen in all sports – cheating, bad sportsmanship, or the like" (Questionnaire J.S., A10). If something negative like that were to happen, potentially damaging to Waoo's image, Jørgen Stensgaard adds that "there is a possibility to get out of the agreements, depending on how serious it is". (Questionnaire J.S., A11).

## Evaluation

When asked how Waoo evaluate their sponsorships, Jørgen Stensgaard answers that "sponsorships are long-term investments and therefore cannot be measured here and now. However, at bigger events, we look at media coverage, exposure, etc." (Questionnaire J.S., A12). Measuring brand exposure and media impressions can provide some estimated value of a sponsorship, by comparing the numbers to advertising costs for a similar time and space.

## YouSee

YouSee is a part of TDC Group, a Danish telecommunication company with roots dating back to 1882 (TDC Group, n.d.). YouSee offer television, broadband, and teleservices via cable and mobile. YouSee's involvement in esports is primarily through YouSee eSportligaen (the YouSee Esports League), a partnership with eSportligaen. Esportligaen is Denmark's official esports league, a collaboration between DGI, Esport Danmark, Ungdomsringen, Efterskoleforeningen, and Dansk Firmaidræt (Esportligaen, n.d.). Moreover, YouSee have added the channel eSportsTV, which shows gaming and esports content as part of their TV-channel package. YouSee eSportligaen have also had a partnership with the major esports event Odincon (Esportligaen & Odincon, n.d.). These partnerships will be analyzed in this case.

### Goals and Objectives

YouSee have deliberately not set any specific goals for the particular partnerships, but Emil Pedersen, Brand Activation Manager at YouSee, explains that "we do have some pretty big ambitions for gaming and esports in general. However, these are soft objectives which are about being the brand in telco, i.e., internet, mobile, and TV, that is associated more and better with esports in the long run" (Interview E.P., 3:40). Emil Pedersen also explains that YouSee's entire focus on esports and gaming is related to branding. He says "... this is also why we do not have any specific goals in terms of broadband sales or the like. We have a long-term strategy to focus on esports, and in that way, reinforce our brand over time" (Interview E.P., 16:10). Moreover, Emil Pedersen explains that one of the reasons why YouSee entered esports and why it was interesting to them, was because of "the huge target audience of young people who play computer games, and who we otherwise find difficult to reach through traditional marketing channels" (Interview E.P., 4:15).

Thomas Koed, Chairman of the board at Esport Danmark, also says that he thinks YouSee realized that it was mostly the older segments who still watch regular TV and that the young people today do not watch a lot of TV. He says, "... so how are they (YouSee) going to reach these young people, to get them to watch regular TV again, or how can they keep them in a YouSee universe?" (Interview with T.K., 7:10). Thomas Koed adds that if YouSee can establish their brand in esports,

then they can be visible where the youth are. That is, for example, in an esports league, such as YouSee eSportligaen.

In a press release from TDC Group (2018), it is described that the agreement between eSportligaen and YouSee, will among other things support the ongoing work of getting esports recognized as a sport, and also in a short time ensure that interested Danes will be able to spectate esports matches and follow their favorite team on YouSee's TV-channels (TDC Group Press Release, 2018). On eSportligaen's website, they also write that YouSee and eSportligaen have teamed up to make esports a great and well-organized sport, focusing on community and community life (Esportligaen, n.d.). Thomas Koed states that for eSportligaen, it is about giving the players the opportunity to compete against others, and that is what all the partners want. He states, "(...) every time we practice for something, it is because we want to improve at it, and we always want to test ourselves compared to others. And that is what YouSee eSportligaen offers. There, you have the opportunity to gain a level of width and to test your skills against other teams" (Interview T.K., 1:25). Finally, Thomas Koed adds that in relation to YouSee, there, of course, is also a financial perspective, as it costs money to run a league.

Through the partnership, YouSee benefits from being associated with esports and esports content, and from the resulting exposure to the esports audience. Esportligaen will benefit from YouSee's support to run their league and to fulfill their objectives of giving the gamers a place to compete. This is an exchange of benefits, and ultimately a win-win situation.

## **Selection**

YouSee's target audience, in this case, is the youth and gamers. According to Emil Pedersen, YouSee's usual customer base is significantly older than the average gamer. However, as he says, "(...) it might be the teenage boy who plays, but it is his parents who buy the internet" (Interview E.P., 9:10). Emil Pedersen also explains how many gamers also study further educations such as IT, for instance. In relevance to that, YouSee also have an interest in attracting employees to TDC because they need many people who are skilled in that field. Emil Pedersen says, "(...) it just so happens that a lot of those who play computer, usually also turns out to be those who end up being really good at coding, programming and such. In that way, there are clearly many areas to address" (Interview E.P., 11:00). YouSee's goal of developing their brand over time and thinking

about the long-haul aligns well with their selection of the youth and teenage audience. By forging a connection with the youth of the gaming universe, they have made a relationship with a potential future key customer or employee. As YouSee's products and services are related to IT, a large part of the esports audience would have a common interest in their product category. Even though YouSee do not focus on broadband sales, their sponsorships with esports properties will make their target audience more likely to both be aware of the YouSee brand and purchase their products.

In terms of exposure to the target audience, in YouSee eSportligaen, YouSee have league naming rights. It is hard to find sponsorships that generate as many impressions as those with naming rights. YouSee's name will be mentioned constantly in relation to the league, as well as be printed on posters, signs, and banners at events and on all the digital media content. Additionally, footage and pictures from events are often used in different media, providing another opportunity for brand exposure. This is a marketing tool that can drastically accelerate brand awareness.

In regard to congruence and brand fit, YouSee mainly use individual congruence with the property to communicate brand associations through their partnership with eSportligaen. If an individual identifies with the sport, he or she will desire to associate with the property and seek opportunities for the connection to be reinforced. YouSee use this group association desire to develop approaches that enhance this emotional connection. One specific example is YouSee recommending parents to send their children or teenagers down to the local esports club to practice esports. Here, their kid will meet a lot of like-minded young people with the same interest. And last but not least, in the club they can play in all of Denmark's esports league, YouSee eSportligaen, whether they play for the trophy or the fellowship (YouSee, n.d.). The idea is to evoke positive feelings and attitudes toward the sponsor, by closely linking the sponsor to an event the recipient values highly.

Since YouSee deliver internet and broadband, which is an essential part of gaming, they could very well use their partnership with eSportligaen to communicate functional congruence. However, as their goals were more related to developing their brand over time, rather than immediate sales, YouSee have chosen not to focus on specific brand features and functional congruence. Emil Pedersen says, “(...) obviously, in the long run, there must be a link to our broadband. However,

you also have to be cautious that you do not force it down people's throats every time you try to say something" (Interview E.P., 16:10). Emil Pedersen claims that there are several ways to integrate gaming into the broadband product in campaigns, but as such, it has no direct link to what they would like to do with their esports league.

### **Activation**

Emil Pedersen states that YouSee eSportsligaen is an ongoing partnership that is always active, 365 days a year, and therefore it is continuously activated. Besides the league, YouSee also sponsor smaller esports events, which of course, also needs activation. He explains, "over the course of a year there are important days where we have more intense campaign programs, for example, with Odincon. Typically, this takes place at the end of the year, in December, and then our focus is on Odincon in that period" (Interview E.P., 23:45). Emil Pedersen elaborates that in relation to Odincon, YouSee run a campaign, create some content, and are physically present at the event. Specifically, when it comes to the event, Odincon, he explains, "we do not just set up a booth with a big logo, and then that is it. We set up a lot of gaming stations, arcade machines, i.e., retro machines, to address this generation gap between parents and children as well. We made sure there were cool activities and ways to activate these people who stopped by and, at the same time, draw attention to both what YouSee wants, but also the league itself" (Interview E.P., 22:25).

Emil Pedersen explains that YouSee also had a bit of a challenge in regard to parents of gamers, because if they only communicate to the gamers, then it is too far from the decision-maker who buys the internet, TV and so on. Therefore, they decided to approach their activation ideas by taking on a slightly more responsible role and make something that could interest both the parents and the children. An example of how YouSee activate their sponsorship with Odincon is shown in a video from YouSee's own YouTube channel (YouSee, 2019). In the video YouSee did an experiment, where a very ordinary Danish family moved the gaming station into the living room and played together every day for a week, to see what it takes to create a better understanding between parents and children in relation to gaming. Another great example of activation by YouSee is from a Facebook post with a competition to win a VIP gaming experience for the ESL tournament at Odincon, Odense, for you and your family (See Appendix 9). In the Facebook post, YouSee invited parents to come and learn about their child's gaming at Odincon. YouSee were also

present at the event to promote understanding between children and adults in gaming and esports. Initiatives like these are great ways to activate the partnership while simultaneously countering some of the preconceptions that may exist between parents and children about esports and gaming.

Emil Pedersen gives a few other examples of activation programs for YouSee eSportligaen, “in connection with the finals in YouSee eSportligaen, we have an unofficial Danish championship, which we make a lot of noise around. It is the same thing when a new season starts in the league; then we have to bring in a bunch of new teams. So, we make a campaign to draw attention to the league and sign-ups, and then along the way, there may be some random impacts on social media with giveaways.” (Interview E.P., 23:45). These giveaways can be tickets to the ESL tournament or player jerseys and the like. Giveaways are a great way to increase brand loyalty.

Speaking of the negative associations that surround esports, Emil Pedersen says that YouSee want to take on a role where they help eradicate many of these prejudices and help nuance the big picture. However, they also recognize that there are some challenges in gaming and esports. Emil Pedersen comments, “we would like to highlight the positive things about gaming, and we would like to address the importance of eating healthy and sleeping regularly. So, we want to promote healthy gaming and have a voice and a part in the debate. Surely, there are some pitfalls, but I also think that it is exaggerated by many who are a bit skeptical. We would like to defend esports and gaming and help eliminate the many prejudices that exist, especially between parents and children” (Interview E.P., 26:40).

If any conflicts or negative associations should arise related to YouSee eSportligaen, Emil Pedersen explains, “we do not have a contingency plan lying around in drawer number two, but of course, we would try just to be as open and honest as possible. When you try out something new, such as esports, you will always meet resistance, and you will always receive negative comments on social media or the like” (Interview E.P., 28:50). YouSee’s stance on prejudices and negative associations in esports is about having a dialogue, rather than simply ignoring or hiding from the problem.

YouSee’s sponsorships and involvement in esports have traits of corporate social responsibility. For instance, when they are interacting with the youth and supporting them with their sport and

passion. This can have a number of different advantages, such as generating a more positive image, increased media coverage, attracting partners, and more for YouSee.

## **Evaluation**

YouSee evaluate the success of their partnership based on how well they achieve their goals, and also on their own internal performance and output. Emil Pedersen explains that "we have some goals about growing the league. We want more people playing, and then we obviously have to raise the bar for what we do, by being present at many different events and by creating even more content than the previous year. Constantly adding more compared to what we have done so far" (Interview E.P., 30:50).

## **Findings**

In this chapter, the data and findings from the cases in each category of sponsorship will be compared and discussed. Patterns of similarity and difference will be explored across the different cases in a cross-case analysis, to enable the researcher to interpret the results and draw conclusions on the overall subject of research: branding challenges in esports sponsorships. The findings will then lay the groundwork for a model that will constitute the framework of an esports sponsorship strategy for brands. That model will be presented at the end of this chapter.

### **Cross-case Analysis**

#### **Category 1: Individuals**

Hungry.dk and Red Bull Denmark were the representatives for this specific category of sponsorship. Their goals and objectives for sponsoring individuals have some significant differences and similarities. Both brands share the objective of wanting to support the esports industry in Denmark by supporting and developing aspiring talents. However, Hungry.dk focus on amateurs and streamers, while Red Bull focus on professional athletes. Hungry.dk recognize that their sponsorships with individuals will help them achieve important brand goals such as exposure to the desired target audience and developing brand associations. In contrast, Red Bull focus more

on their spонees development rather than directly achieving any of their own branding objectives. Nonetheless, Red Bull, of course, also have branding related objectives that will be achieved through the sponsorships. This difference in how clearly the two brands define their goals is further demonstrated with Hungry.dk having a clear definition of their target audience, while Red Bull does not.

Both brands have their logo or products exposed with their spонees to get brand exposure. Hungry.dk receives exposure to the audience by showcasing their logo on their spонees social media and streaming platforms, whereas Red Bull mainly receives brand exposure through product placement and actually reserve their logo for their products and athletes. Footage of Red Bull's product with the athletes will then be shared in different media. This difference makes sense as Hungry.dk is an online service provider, and Red Bull sells a physical product.

In terms of congruence, both Red Bull and Hungry.dk values a relevant fit between their brand's and their spонees' images, thus communicating image congruence. Red Bull also communicates functional congruence by having their athletes use their products doing games, but Hungry.dk does not have this opportunity.

Red Bull and Hungry.dk use similar methods to activate their sponsorships of individuals, for instance, they both use digital media for activation, both have webpages dedicated to producing esports and gaming related content, both have dedicated their Twitter accounts entirely to the esports audience, and they both create customized digital content featuring their individual spонees. Lastly, both brands have their spонees do athlete appearances at events, and they both use fan experiences and giveaways to activate their sponsorships.

With regard to the negative associations that surround esports and gaming, we see a difference in how Red Bull and Hungry.dk handle these in their sponsorships. Hungry.dk focusses on keeping a civilized tone on the internet, and they have made some proactive choices in terms of selecting individuals that comply with this. Presumably, Red Bull consider this as well, but they have also created activation programs that directly counter and disprove some of the prejudices that exist about gaming. However, neither Red Bull or Hungry.dk has any set protocol for handling potential conflicts or negative occurrences, as both explain that it depends on the specific situation and individual in question.

In relation to evaluative methods, Hungry.dk evaluate and measure the success of their sponsored streamers through brand exposure metrics on social media, including Twitch. Red Bull also evaluate and measure on brand exposure metrics with some of their sponees, but mainly they evaluate on the athlete's sports performance. This difference in evaluative methods is likely due to the fact that Red Bull's athletes compete in professional leagues and competitions, while Hungry.dk's streamers provide online entertainment.

### **Category 2: Teams**

Capstore and Capgemini were the representatives for this category of sponsorship. Both brands sponsor an esports organization with teams competing in different games. However, the two brands have different goals and objectives for sponsoring esports teams. Capstore's goals were somewhat loose and about general brand exposure, while Capgemini's goals were specifically about recruitment. However, both brands expressed that the esports audience was part of their target audience, and thus they wanted to strengthen their ties to this community. There is a difference to be noted in the way that Capstore and Capgemini view their target audiences. For Capstore, it is about targeting gamers in general, and potentially sell them caps, whereas Capgemini wants to target IT people and hopefully recruit them as employees.

Both brands have uniform/apparel sponsorships, and this is the main way that both brands ensure exposure to their target audience. Another similarity is that both brands want to select a partner that has a relevant brand fit and thus communicate image congruence. A notable difference in terms of congruence is that Capstore has the opportunity to communicate functional congruence when the players benefit from wearing their caps during games. Capgemini does not have this opportunity as they do not have a product for the players to wear or use doing games. Capgemini mention that multiple sponsor congruence is something they are aware of and consider.

In terms of activating their partnerships, Capstore and Capgemini share several similar methods. However, there is a significant difference in the scale of their respective activation initiatives. The difference in the scale of their activation initiatives could be attributed to the size of their respective companies, with Capgemini being a global competitor and Capstore having a more national focus. Among the similarities are that both brands activate their partnerships by posting and sharing content on social media, but only Capgemini produce customized content featuring

their partners. Both brands have also used fan-experiences as part of their activation programs, with Capstore targeting customers, while Capgemini address future employees. In addition, Capgemini have also had hospitality initiatives targeted at their current employees.

A difference worth noting is in relation to negative associations. Capstore does not address any of the prejudices or negative associations concerning esports, nor are they particularly concerned about them. Capgemini does both address and consider the negative associations; they also actively work to tackle harmful behavior in the world of gaming. However, neither of the two brands have any specific strategies or procedures in case of a conflict.

The two brands' evaluative methods differ, as well. Capgemini's evaluative methods are designed to match their goals for the sponsorship, namely recruiting. Cap Store's evaluative methods are not directly linked to their goals for the sponsorship but are again more general, as they were about the teams' game performance.

### **Category 3: Events**

Waoo and YouSee were the two representatives for this category of sponsorship. The two brands both had the goal of reaching and engaging with the esports audience and also to help support and develop the esports industry. Besides this, YouSee's goals were somewhat broad as they were simply about being associated with esports in the long haul, while Waoo had some more specific goals, for instance, using esports to develop TV and entertainment products for their target audience.

Waoo and YouSee are brands that belong to the same product category, and so it makes sense that they have similar target audiences. Both brands wish to target a young and gaming or tech interested audience, as they are potential future customers. However, the two brands have a different outlook on this target audience. Waoo focus mostly on the audiences' common interest in their product category, more specifically, their fiber broadband. YouSee do not focus on the audiences' here-and-now interest in their product, but more on their potential as future customers or employees.

Both brands have naming rights sponsorships, and they have also both sponsored other major esports events in Denmark, which means they have very similar methods as of how to get

exposure to the target audience. But in terms of brand associations, Waoo and YouSee use quite different methods to communicate congruence. Waoo communicate both image and functional congruence, while YouSee mainly communicate individual congruence.

Both Waoo and YouSee activate their sponsorships by doing activities and fan experiences at the events. Both brands also use social media to activate their sponsorships, for instance, with contests and giveaways. One difference to be noted in the two brands' respective activation initiatives is that YouSee focus a lot on including the parents of gamers in their event activities and also their digital content. This can also be noticed in the way YouSee use their activation programs to promote healthy gaming and try to eliminate some of the prejudices that exist between parents and children who are gamers. Waoo does not actively address or try to counter some of the negative associations and prejudices that exist in the same way.

There is also a difference in the evaluative methods used by the two brands. Waoo will sometimes measure on media coverage and exposure, while YouSee will focus more on growing the league and evaluate on how well they are achieving that.

## **Discussion of Findings**

All of the brands in this case study have, of course, entered the esports ecosystem because they wish to engage with the esports fans. However, the brands' specific goals or ambitions for sponsoring an esports property depend on their company's overall strategic or commercial goals. In this multiple case study, several different examples of sponsorship objectives have been documented, ranging from general brand exposure to recruitment. The analytical approach in the case studies was to analyze whether or not these brands achieved an exchange of benefits with their respective partners, which all of the cases examined in this thesis did. In fact, many of the respondents from both sides of the sponsorship contracts emphasized their focus on either assisting their partners in achieving their goals or ensuring that the sponsorship agreement was mutually beneficial. One example could be Red Bull's desire to "help these many great initiatives and ideas, and give their ideas wings" (Interview ABL, 9:45) or the streamer Phasekick who said the sponsorship "has to be beneficial to me somehow, and if the partnership does not benefit the

company, I am not interested either" (Interview MPL, 4:50). It could be concluded that creating an exchange of benefits is part of the foundation for a good partnership.

Another key takeaway in terms of sponsorship objectives was the respondents' desire to be a part of developing and supporting the esports industry. Most of the brands in the case studies stated that this was a main objective of theirs. As Jørgen Stensgaard from Waoo says, "it is also important that there is someone who supports and promotes esports so that it can grow and develop" (Questionnaire JS, A2). Correspondingly, it was indicated in the introduction that esports fans would reward brands that help the industry grow, so this could be viewed as a deliberate strategy by the brands who actively focus on supporting the industry.

In addition to targeting the esports audience in general, half of the brands in the case studies specifically targeted people with skills and an interest in IT. The brands that targeted people interested in IT were all the endemic ones, i.e., Capgemini, Waoo, and YouSee, which makes sense as their products and services are related to IT. The endemic brands could also select sponsorships based on a common interest, as their products are often used by gamers and thus a majority of the esports audience. The non-endemic brands, however, i.e., Hungry.dk, Red Bull, and Capstore, all target audiences that transcend many demographic variables as these brands simply look to reach the esports audience in general. It could be argued that when sponsoring esports properties, it is not always necessary to define specific demographic variables of one's target audience, as the esports audience in itself usually is the target audience.

The first branding challenge asked **how sponsoring brands in esports reach the audience and gain exposure**. To answer this question, it is relevant to look at the data on how the different brands from the case studies received exposure to their target audiences through media. The data shows that brands within the same category of sponsorship had similar ways of receiving brand exposure to their target audiences through media. The brands in category one who sponsor individuals have their logo and products exposed with their spонсеes, for instance, during games or on streams. The brands in category two who sponsor teams have uniform or apparel sponsorships and thus have their logo and brand exposed in footage and pictures from games, practices, and interviews. The brands in category three who sponsor leagues and events both have naming rights sponsorships, which means their logo and brand will be exposed and mentioned repeatedly in

relation to the events. These findings provide insight into how different types of esports sponsorships provide different opportunities for brand exposure through media.

The first branding challenge revolved around the fact that in esports, there is still a lack of mainstream media coverage like television and newspapers. Several of the brands in the case studies have found creative ways to try to solve this challenge by becoming a source of esports news, both televised and digital esports content. Red Bull and Hungry.dk have both created their own websites with esports related news and content to be enjoyed by anyone. Hungry .dk said that "we want to be more active in the environment by being a source of esports and specific gaming content" (Questionnaire TL, A9). Likewise, Waoo and YouSee have both added TV-channels which focus on gaming and esports as an option in their TV-channel packages.

The second branding challenge asked **how sponsoring brands in esports form meaningful associations to esports and the fans**. To answer this question, it is relevant to first look at the findings on how the different brands in the case studies communicate brand congruence. One could argue that most sponsorships in esports, if not all, communicate individual (self) congruence with the property. The argument is that the esports audience are often very passionate about the teams and the players because most of them are gamers themselves. The value of this is well explained by the streamer Pheskick, "the closer I am to my audience, the more trustworthy and more value my words have to my audience in relation to a corporate sponsorship" (Interview MPL, 23:40). We know that individual congruence with the property is fostered through group association; the question is how the sponsors use this group association desire to develop approaches that enhance the consumers' emotional connection to their property. YouSee demonstrate how to use the concept of group association to foster individual congruence with their league, namely by recommending parents to send their children down to the local esports club to practice e-sports, where they can meet like-minded young people, be part of a community and of course play in YouSee eSportligaen.

Apart from individual congruence, it is up to the brands themselves to figure out what types of sponsor congruence they not only can but also want to communicate, image, and/or functional. According to Fortunato (2013), the ideal scenario is to have both image and functional congruence with the property. But according to the data in this thesis, just because a brand has the

opportunity to communicate a certain type of congruence, it does not mean it aligns with the brand's overall goals for its esports sponsorships. A great example is the case with YouSee, who have the opportunity to communicate functional congruence, but deliberately choose not to, because it has no direct link to what they would like to do with their esports league. In contrast, Waoo provides a textbook example of how an internet company could communicate functional congruence with an esports property when they delivered the internet for the Waoo CS: GO Liga events.

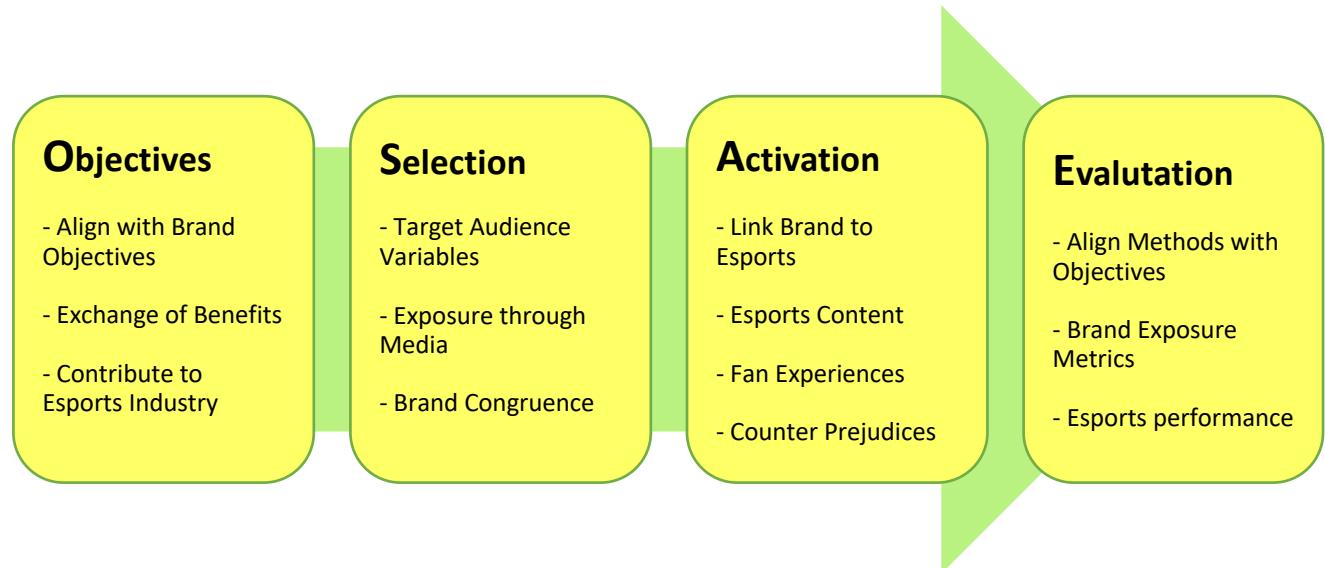
These examples were all with endemic brands, but the second branding challenge actually focused a lot on how non-endemic brands could form relevant associations to the esports audience. To answer this, it is useful to look at how the different brands in the case studies used activation programs to clearly associate their brand to the property. The activation programs used by the non-endemic brands include using social media and producing digital content featuring their sponsees. Several of the brands have even dedicated their Twitter accounts completely to sharing and posting esports content as well as launching the previously mentioned websites for esports news. This does not only generate additional brand exposure, but it also creates a link between these brands and the world of esports. Another important way to create brand associations is by forging an emotional connection to the audience and evoking affinity. Hungry.dk provides a great example of how to create a 'that brand is like me' sentiment by communicating that "we ourselves are gamers" (Hungry.dk Esports, n.d.). Another kind of sponsorship activation that all the brands used was fan experiences, fan participation, and fan giveaways. A few examples among the non-endemic brands were, for instance, Hungry.dk who had their sponsee Mads Larsen aka. Phasekick do an initiative called "Dance for Pizza," where the visitors at an esports event could get a slice of pizza if they had a dance with Phasekick. With the pizza served in Hungry.dk pizza trays, they establish an association between their brand and Phasekick while also allowing for fan participation. Similarly, Capstore held an event in their store where fans and visitors could compete in FIFA against one of the athletes from the team they sponsor and win a cap. To conclude, customized activation programs are necessary for all brands sponsoring esports properties, but they can be especially beneficial for non-endemic brands who are not otherwise associated with gaming and esports.

The third branding challenge asked **how sponsoring brands in esports protect their image from negative associations**. In the case studies, some of the brands created activation programs specifically designed to counter the negative associations that surround esports. For instance, YouSee use their activation programs to promote healthy gaming and try to eliminate some of the prejudices that exist between parents and children who are gamers. They stated that "we would like to defend esports and gaming and help eliminate the many prejudices that exist, especially between parents and children" (Interview EP, 26:40). Or Capgemini, who actively work to tackle harmful behavior and language in the world of gaming and support the #StopToxicity initiative. Red Bull have also created activation programs that directly counter and disprove some of the prejudices that exist about gamers and their health. These examples provide great insight into what kind of prejudices, negative associations, or harmful behaviors sponsors in esports face and how to potentially overcome them.

None of the brands in the case studies had any specific conflict repair strategies in the event of an esports related conflict, as almost all respondents explained that any conflicts would be handled individually, and any potential strategies would be decided case by case. However, Waoo does explain that "there is a possibility to get out of the agreements, depending on how serious it is". (Questionnaire JS, A11). These brands most likely do have communication strategies for handling different kinds of crises in their companies, but to get a more detailed look at how they implement these, it could be necessary to investigate a specific crisis and look at how the brand communicates in that situation.

In terms of evaluative methods, the data shows that each brand's evaluative methods are more or less customized according to their specific goals for the sponsorship. An example could be Capgemini, whose goals were related to recruitment and so they evaluate on how many unsolicited applicants and network recommendations they receive. Another evaluative method is documented in the cases with Red Bull and Capstore, whom both evaluated on the athletes' or teams' sports performance. From these findings, it could be concluded that in esports sponsorships, there are two main ways to provide some evaluative measures; customizing them according to the brand goals and looking at sports performance if possible.

## Theoretical Contribution – The OSAE-model



<u>Sponsorship theory</u>	<u>Esports sponsorships</u>	<u>Practical examples</u>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>  Determining the goals and objectives for the sponsorship will provide a vision to pursue purposefully throughout the rest of the sponsorship strategy planning.	<p>Esports sponsorships are overall about reaching the esports audience, but objectives can range from mere brand exposure to specific strategic or commercial goals.</p> <p>For sponsors in esports, assisting your partners in achieving their goals or ensuring that the sponsorship agreement is mutually beneficial is an important objective.</p> <p>Sponsors in esports should also have an overall goal of supporting and contributing to developing the esports industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The esports audience</li> <li>- Align with brand objectives</li> <li>- Exchange of benefits</li> <li>- Contribution to esports</li> </ul>

<b>SELECTION</b>		
Selecting a property to sponsor involves considering your target audience, brand exposure opportunities, and brand associations.	<p>When sponsoring esports properties, you can target the esports audience in general, but you can also target more specific segments within the esports audience.</p> <p>In esports, different types of properties like individuals, teams, events, etc., provide different opportunities for brand exposure.</p> <p>Sponsors in esports have the opportunity to use the fans' group association desire to reinforce the emotional connection between the fans and their properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target audience variables</li> <li>- Exposure through media</li> <li>- Uniform sponsorship</li> <li>- Naming rights</li> <li>- Individual congruence</li> <li>- Sponsor congruence (image and/or functional)</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVATION</b>		
Activating the sponsorship is about clearly associating your brand to the property as well as generating additional brand exposure.	<p>In esports, clearly associating your brand to the property is especially important for non-endemics. Activation programs should be thought of as a way to link your brand to the world of esports as well as creating an emotional connection to the esports audience, the fans, and the gamers.</p> <p>Sponsors in esports should also consider using their activation programs to tackle some of the negative associations in esports and try to eliminate prejudices about gamers' health or behaviors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Esports content (Websites, Social Media or TV)</li> <li>- Fan experiences (Participation, contests, and giveaways)</li> <li>- Hospitality initiatives</li> <li>- Conflict repair strategies</li> </ul>

EVALUATION		
Evaluating the sponsorship can be difficult as it is often a long-term investment and part of a bigger strategy, but it should be attempted in order to provide some estimated value of the sponsorship.	<p>Sponsors in esports should align their evaluative methods according to their specific goals for their sponsorship.</p> <p>For brands that sponsor athletes or teams, it could also be relevant to evaluate on their property's esports performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Customize evaluative methods</li> <li>- Brand exposure metrics</li> <li>- Esports performance</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

By analyzing six different brands and their approaches to sponsorship in the Danish esports industry, this thesis has shown how companies can plan and implement esports sponsorships and overcome the branding challenges that exist in the industry.

The research subject was chosen because sponsorships are a vital part of the esports ecosystem, and Danish esports professionals are among the best in the world. While investigating only the Danish esports market limits the generalizability of the results, this approach provided an insightful representation of the esports industry for sponsors.

Applying theory and literature about the key parts of a sponsorship process, i.e., goals and objectives, selection, activation, and evaluation, allowed the researcher to pinpoint where in the sponsorship process brands can actively tackle the branding challenges under investigation in this thesis.

Designing the research as a multiple case study made it possible to acquire a broad and detailed overview of different types of sponsorships. Different perspectives allowed for a fairer representation of the market for sponsors, and the research showcased the differences and

similarities of the different sponsorships and sponsorship categories under research. Using semi-structured interviews proved to be beneficial in terms of being able to gather more complex answers, ask follow-up questions, receive additional information, and discover new insights. When the replies were handed in as a questionnaire, this, of course, eliminated the opportunity to ask follow-up questions and reduced the opportunity to gather additional information.

By structuring the analysis according to the theoretical framework, the data revealed where the traditional sports literature matched the results and where it had gaps. Doing a cross-case analysis was helpful to discover patterns in the findings and ultimately led to the ability to draw interesting conclusions on the subject. The findings were overall satisfying as they clearly illustrate how sponsors can tackle some of the branding challenges in the esports industry, but they also raise the question of how the consumer reacts to these sponsorship initiatives and what effects the sponsorships have on the audience.

Further research is needed to determine the actual effects of any particular sponsorship. Future studies could address the consumers' change in attitudes or behavior towards the sponsoring brands. One suggestion could be consumer behavior theories, or, more specifically, persuasion theory.

The contributions presented in the last chapter will help marketers and brands interested in entering the esports ecosystem plan a sponsorship strategy with the OSAE model. The OSAE model can assist esports sponsors in proactively solving branding related challenges. Among the most important takeaways is the importance for non-endemics to clearly associate their brand to the property through activation programs, and that sponsors should also consider using their activation programs to tackle some of the negative associations in esports and try to eliminate prejudices about gamers' health or behaviors. The model also contributes with some important arguments for brands, for instance, that sponsors in esports should have an overall goal of supporting and contributing to developing the esports industry. Several of these findings address a gap in existing knowledge and literature, but the research also confirmed the relevance of existing sponsorship theory, for instance that an exchange of benefits is the foundation of a good partnership.

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## **Appendix**

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9. YouSee Sponsorship Activation

## **Appendix 1 – Profile of respondents**

### **Sponsor representatives**

Name:	<b>Timmy Lind</b>
Initials:	T.L.
Organization:	<i>Hungry.dk</i>
Position:	Marketing Manager
Contact:	Contacted through email
Questionnaire return:	20-08-2019

Name:	<b>Andreas Bjerrum Larsen</b>
Initials:	A.B.L.
Organization:	<i>Red Bull</i>
Position:	Esport Specialist
Contact:	Contacted through email
Interview date:	29-08-2019

Name:	<b>Mads Kragh</b>
Initials:	M.K.
Organization:	<i>Capstore</i>
Position:	CEO and Founder
Contact:	Contacted through email
Interview date:	06-09-2019

Name:	<b>Kasper Hemmingshøj</b>
Initials:	K.H.
Organization:	<i>Capgemini</i>
Position:	Head of Recruitment
Contact:	Contacted through email
Interview date:	18-09-2019

Name:	<b>Jørgen Steensgaard</b>
Initials:	J.S.
Organization:	<i>Waoo</i>
Position:	CEO
Contact:	Contacted through email
Questionnaire return:	26-09-2019

Name:	<b>Emil Pedersen</b>
Initials:	E.P.
Organization:	<i>YouSee</i>
Position:	Brand Activation Manager
Contact:	Contacted through email
Interview date:	16-08-2019

## Sponsee representatives

Name:	<b>Mads 'Phasekick' Larsen</b>
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Initials:	M.P.L.
Organization:	
Partner with:	Hungry.dk
Position:	Professional Esports Streamer
Contact:	Contacted through email
Interview date:	11-10-2019

Name:	<b>Martin Sahlertz</b>
Initials:	M.S.
Organization:	<i>Red Bull</i>
Partner with:	Red Bull
Position:	Digital Communication Manager and contact person for sponsee (Michaela 'Mimi' Lintrup)
Contact:	Contacted through email
Interview date:	08-10-2019

Name:	<b>David M. Rasmussen</b>
Initials:	D.M.R.
Organization:	<i>Wicked Gaming</i>
Partner with:	Capstore
Position:	CEO and Founder
Contact:	Contacted through email
Questionnaire return:	08-10-2019

Name:	<b>Christian Slot</b>
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Initials:	C.S.
Organization:	<i>North</i>
Partner with:	Capgemini
Position:	Head of Media and Press
Contact:	Referred by K.H. at Capgemini, contacted through e-mail
Questionnaire return:	09-10-2019

Name:	<b>Zahid Butt</b>
Initials:	Z.B.
Organization:	<i>Esport.dk</i>
Partner with:	Waoo
Position:	CEO and Founder
Contact:	Contacted through email
Questionnaire return:	27-09-2019

Name:	<b>Thomas Koed</b>
Initials:	T.K.
Organization:	<i>Esport Danmark (ESD)</i>
Partner with:	YouSee
Position:	Chairman of the board
Contact:	Contacted through email
Interview date:	04-10-2019

## **Appendix 2 – Interview Guideline for Sponsors of Individual Players**

1. Can you give me a brief overview of the esports campaigns or collaborations you are currently involved with?
2. What are the goals and aspirations for your involvement in esports?
3. How do you think sponsoring esports can help you achieve these goals?
4. What criteria do you set for your potential partners? How did you select which esports player to sponsor?
5. How would you describe the audience you are trying to reach?
6. Do you design or customize the content in your sponsorship with individuals in a way that relates to the esports audience?
7. How do you ensure brand exposure to the desired audience through your collaboration with esports talents?
8. Have you taken any initiatives to target people who do not necessarily watch esports?
9. What do you do to maintain or ‘activate’ your sponsorship with your individual esports players?
10. Are there anything associated with esports, which you do not want to be associated with?
11. Do you have any protocol or strategy for protecting your brand or image in the event that one of your esports players loses popularity or is otherwise associated with something negative?
12. How do you evaluate your collaboration with individual esports talents?

## **Appendix 2.1 – Interview Guideline for Sponsors of Teams**

1. Can you give me a brief overview of the esports campaigns or collaborations you are currently involved with?
2. What are the goals and aspirations for your involvement in esports?
3. How do you think sponsoring esports can help you achieve these goals?
4. What criteria do you set for your potential partners? How did you select which esports team to sponsor?
5. How would you describe the audience you are trying to reach?
6. Do you design or customize the content in your sponsorship with the esports team in a way that relates to the esports audience?
7. How do you ensure brand exposure to the desired audience through your collaboration with the esports team?
8. Have you taken any initiatives to target people who do not necessarily watch esports?
9. What do you do to maintain or ‘activate’ your sponsorship with your esports team?
10. Are there anything associated with esports, which you do not want to be associated with?
11. Do you have any protocol or strategy for protecting your brand or image in the event that your esports team loses popularity or is otherwise associated with something negative?
12. How do you evaluate your collaboration with the esports team?

## **Appendix 2.2 – Interview Guideline for Sponsors of Events**

1. Can you give me a brief overview of the esports campaigns or collaborations you are currently involved with?
2. What are the goals and aspirations for your involvement in esports?
3. How do you think sponsoring esports can help you achieve these goals?
4. What criteria do you set for your potential partners? How did you select which esports event to sponsor?
5. How would you describe the audience you are trying to reach?
6. Do you design or customize the content in your sponsorship with esports events in a way that relates to the esports audience?
7. How do you ensure brand exposure to the desired audience through your collaboration with the esports events?
8. Have you taken any initiatives to target people who do not necessarily watch esports?
9. What do you do to maintain or ‘activate’ your sponsorship with your esports events?
10. Are there anything associated with esports, which you do not want to be associated with?
11. Do you have any protocol or strategy for protecting your brand or image in the event that your esports events loses popularity or is otherwise associated with something negative?
12. How do you evaluate your collaboration with esports events?

### **Appendix 2.3 – Interview Guideline for Sponsees**

1. What are your goals and aspirations for partnering with a sponsor?
2. What benefits could (name of the specific sponsor) offer you that would help you reach these goals?
3. What benefits could you offer (name of the specific sponsor)?
4. Why do you think that (name of the specific sponsor) as a brand would be a good collaboration for you?

### **Appendix 3 – Transcription: Interview with A.B.L.**

Interviewee: *Andreas Bjerrum Larsen, Esport Specialist at Red Bull Denmark*

Interviewer = A

Interviewee = B

4:25

**A: Kan du give mig et kort overblik over hvilke esport projekter eller samarbejde I er involveret i?**

B: Red Bull Danmark, vi koncentrerer os om to grene. Vi har en event gren og en atlet gren, eller atlet/hold. I events, der ligger så tredje part events, som er de her store LAN events vi har. Der er noget hedder NPF, Dansk Esport Festival, Copenhagen Games, Geeks Gone Wild, for at nævne de fire største vi har i Danmark. Der er vi inde over som treerde part, hvor vi leverer et eller andet til eventsene. Det vil aldrig bare være en pose penge, så vi kommer med som eksklusiv på en salgsaftale. Det er vi selvfølgelig også interesseret i, vi vil gerne sælge nogle dåser, men ideen er altid at være med til at give til eventet i form af at bygge et Red Bull område eller bygge eventets hovedscene. Så bære de omkostninger og så sørge for, at vi har en rigtig høj kvalitet og lidt hjælpe eventet med at lave content, da vi er et ret stort mediehus herinde, og har nogle store muskler hvad det angår. Så det er én ting, det er det vi kigget meget på her i efteråret, hvordan vi kan hjælpe de her tredje part events

5:55

Så har vi vores egne events, som er Red Bull ejet events, ligesom du kender fx Red Bull Cliff Dive eller Red Bull Cope'n'Waken. Så det er os der ejer dem. Så går vi ligesom ud og finder vores eget venue. Det står vi selv for og der er ikke nogen andre inden over, vi bruger i hvert fald ikke nogen andres venue til ligesom at afvikle eventsne. I år der har vi faktisk brugt Copenhagen Games til at afvikle det der hedder Ready Player One, men til næste år er det meningen, at vi så med vores Red Bull ejet esport event sådan vil stable det på benene selv og afvikle det venue, lave et tv-koncept eller lignende. Så der er de sådan de to, tredje parts og så vores egne

6:40

Og så har vi rigtig mange projekter med atleter, bl.a. har vi et sponsorat med North, som er et professionelt Counter-Strike hold. Der har vi en aftale om at vi ligesom indgår med produkter, i deres, i alt hvad de ligesom laver når de er ude til turneringer, hvis de laver noget content selv, hvis vi laver noget content sammen, så er vi ligesom produkterne eller produktligaen. Og det samme har vi med en Counter-Strike pige der hedder mimi, som spiller for Copenhagen Flames. Hende har vi det samme product placement sponsorat, hvor vi har et køleskab i hendes stream når hun sidder og streamer derhjemme, og hun drikker selvfølgelig kun vores produkter.

Så det er så de to grene der er og så handler det også om at hjælpe de her esports initiativer med at blive endnu federe til det de gør, det som vi tror vi kan hjælpe med, og så hjælpe atleter til at nå nye højder, og helst de atleter som er helt friske og nye, og så hjælpe dem til top ligesom vi har gjort med Mimi og North.

8:20

**A: Hvad er jeres mål og ambitioner for jeres involvering i esport?**

8:40

B: Min strategi for det program vi fx har lagt til næste år, det er at tage esport lokalt her i Danmark et nyt niveau. Altså hjælpe både via vores egne events, men også hjælpe de her tredje part events med at gøre det hele meget mere professionelt, få nogle større stjerner med ind over og gøre alt for at hæve niveauet. Ikke fordi at vi synes at niveauet er lavt herhjemme, men vi kan ligesom se et potentiale i esport og det er også derfor jeg er blevet ansat her hos Red Bull. Det er lidt uforløseligt nu, der er mange lavt hængende frugter og der er rigtig mange ting man kan gøre for at få esport til at se noget bedre ud end det gør lige nu. Vi har mange internationale aktører i Danmark, vi har noget Blast Pro Series og vi har ESL, og nogle af de her kæmpe store aktører som gør fantastiske ting på globalt plan, hvor vi gerne vil prøve at holde niveauet her lokalt, for jeg har kun med Danmark at gøre.

9:45

Så at være med til den her positive udvikling og være med til at skubbe endnu mere med på den, og hjælpe de her mange fantastiske intiativer og ideer, og give deres ideer vinger. Det siger vi jo gerne meget herinde, at vi vil gerne give vinger til personer og ideer. Og det er virkelig det jeg prøver på i at tage sådan en som mimi. Hun vil gerne være verdens bedste Counter-Strike spiller, ikke kun for piger, men også for drengene. Så tænker vi ”det lyder helt sindsygt, men fuck hvor fedt”. Lad os prøve at bruge noget tid, nogle penge og nogle kræfter på det. Og også det samme med de her events, folk har lidt skøre event ideer, normale mennesker vil måske tænke ”det lyder sindsygt åndsvagt, hvor skulle folk synes det var fedt?”. Det er det vi rigtig gerne vil, hjælpe, give vinger til folk, til ideer.

10:40

Det vi meget gerne ikke vil, det er at plastre os på fx Blast Pro Series, og sige ”okay, nu bruger jeg hele mit budget på at blive hovedsponsor på Blast Pro, så får de så mange dåser de overhovedet kan drikke, og så står der Red Bull over det hele”. Det vil sikkert give rigtig godt afkast og et godt impact, men vi vil meget hellere være med i de lidt mindre kredse.

11:10

Vi vil gerne være med så meget vi kan, også med sparring, også når vi er ude ved North. Jeg prøver også selv at hjælpe til hvor jeg nogengange kan. Vi ligger ikke bare en masse penge, fx sender 50.000 til et eller andet event og siger ”fint, det var det, nu må I hygge jer, og så sender I nogle billeder når I er færdige”. Vi vil rigtig gerne være med hele vejen igennem, som partner.

12:00

**A: Hvordan tror I sponsorering af esport kan hjælpe med at opfylde disse mål?**

B: Vi vil egentlig gerne lade vær at sige ’sponsorering’, vi vil meget hellere sige partnerskab. For at kunne skabe denne her positive og sunde udvikling, så for mig at se, så giver det rigtig god mening at man involverer sig så meget som man kan til de ting man nu går ind i, de projekter man er med i. Ligesom jeg sagde før, at man ikke bare ligger en helveds masse penge og siger ”ses”, nu har vi gjort det vi skulle og nu kan I bruge vores penge som I har lyst til. Vi tager enormt meget ejerskab, uden at overtage eventets udtryk eller det værdisæt de nu engang har. Vi prøver at lave en eller anden balance og tage noget ejerskab på en god måde, og så på den måde med de her partnerskaber, eller sponsorering hvis du gerne vil kalde det det, så være med til at udvikle esport.

13:50

Vi er jo også på mange måder et mediehus og en marketing maskine, lige så meget som vi er en salgsvirksomhed. Vi sælger jo dåser, det er jo det der gør at jeg kan sidde og bruge penge på esport, det er jo fordi at vi har nogle fantastisk dygtige sælgere, der sælger produkter ud til festivaler, netto-butikker, bilka og sådan noget. Men vi vil gerne have at vores brand gror og får en masse kærlighed gennem de her marketings tiltag vi laver. Så på den måde synes jeg, at vi er unikke i forhold til så mange andre salgsvirksomheder.

14:30

**A: Hvordan udvælger I hvilken spiller eller atlet I vil arbejde sammen med? Hvilke krav sætter I til jeres potentielle partnere?**

15:10

B: Vi har sådan en defineret liste over ting som vores atleter skal udfylde. Jeg kan ikke rigtig afsløre dem alle sammen, men det er rigtig vigtig for os, at vi får fat i atleter, det her gælder både i traditionel sport og esport, når de er tidlige i deres karriere, og der er en helveds massive potentielle at spore i dem. For ikke så længe tid siden, der signede vi Therese Taabel og Ida Mathilde Steensgard, som er henholdsvis kitesurfer og OCR-atlet. Therese er start tyverne, og Ida er midt tyverne, og de har taget de her niche-sportsgrene, og så vil de gerne være verdens bedste til dem og brænder så meget for det at man tror det er løgn. De har potentielle til at gå hele vejen. Så har de et rigtigt godt fit i forhold til vores brand.

16:00

Vores atleter det er sådan nogen, at man skal have lyst til at sætte sig ned og spise middag med. De må godt være lidt cocky og lidt flabede, men de skal også være karismatiske og lidt charmerende. Sådan lidt frække, men også sådan at de kan finde ud af at holde sig inden for reglerne, sådan så det ikke bliver alt for rowdy. Det er sådan nogle af de ting vi leder efter. Og så det her med at vi tager ikke atleter eller hold ind som har ligget i toppen af deres karriere de sidste par år. Hvis jeg skal komme med et godt eksempel, fx Travis Pastrana, en af de der har ligget i toppen for evigt, dem vil vi aldrig prøve at vinde over fra Monster Energy, bare for at få ham. Det giver ikke nogen mening for os.

17:30

Profilen skal have et rigtig godt fit til vores brand, så det også bliver et samarbejde. Vi ville aldrig vælge en sportsgren der var interessant, tage den bedste ud i hele verden, og så signe ham eller hende, uafhængigt af hvordan de fx var på sociale medier eller i pressen. Man kan lave mange upassende ting, man kan ligge op på Instagram, som Instagram tillader, men som vi måske ikke synes er specielt interessant.

18:35

**A: Hvordan vil I beskrive det publikum, som I forsøger at ramme gennem jeres samarbejde med individuelle esport spillere?**

19:00

B: Nu bliver det desværre sådan ret intern strategi, hvis jeg skal gå for meget i dybden med det her. Men man kan sige, at for det første så er der lavet aftale med Dansk Bryggeriforening, at hverken os, Monster Energy, Faxe Kondi Booster, Cult Energy eller andre, markedsfører til børn under 16 år. Der er mange af de her målgrupper der er interessante i forhold til om vi arbejder med motorsport, esport eller dune sport, så er der nogen målgrupper vi sigter efter, men det kan jeg ikke rigtig snakke om.

19:50

**A: Designer i indholdet i jeres kampagne, således at det henvender sig til esport publikummet? Hvis ja, kan du så give mig et eksempel?**

20:10

B: Ja. Det vi tit gør hvis vi er ude til events, det er at selvfølgelig sørge for, at vi smider en masse af vores branding i de her medieproduktioner, og vores atleter, sørger for at de ligesom er til stede. I det af vi har valgt en atlet som mimi, hende har vi jo gennem en lang periode fundet ud af passer godt til vores brand, og vores fit, og derfor også vores målgruppe. Så vi ved at hvis hun er med i noget af det content vi laver, så bør det også ramme den målgruppe vi er interesserede i.

Det er primært vores kommunikationsafdeling der sidder med det her, jeg sidder i sportsafdeling, men så er det ligesom dem der prøver at skræddersy det til målgruppen. Så ja, det er meget bevidst, hvad vi laver af content.

21:10

**A: Hvordan forsikrer I jer, at jeres brand bliver eksponeret/vist til det ønskede publikum igennem jeres samarbejde med esport talenter? Fx Mimi**

21:35

B: Vi vil altid gerne have at det er vores produkt som er i fokus, og ikke vores logoer. Så rigtig meget product placement, som hvis vi indgår et samarbejde med et LAN event, hvor hvis vi fx bygger scenen, så vil du ofte se at vi har en cooler eller et køleskab på scenen, og der er produkter til alle spillerne. Det samme vil du se, hvis fx North laver en eller anden dokumentar og du ser dem sidde ved et af mødebordene, så vil der også altid stå vores produkter. Vi plastrer aldrig vores logo på alle mulige mærkelige ting. Logoerne er noget egentlig er forbeholdt produkterne og så på de atleter vi har signet. Så det er altid dåsen der er i fokus.

22:40

**A: Har I taget nogle initiativer for at ramme folk der ikke nødvendigvis ser esport?**

23:25

B: Vi havde fx et Red Bull showrun, som var det her Formel 1 event ude foran Parken på Østerbro. Det havde vi tilbage tidligere på året. Der havde vi partner med i form af nogen konsol-partnere, som stillede nogle konsoler op med noget Formel 1 Racing. Det var jo esport, som havde en god synergি til det event. Så ja på den måde, det der samarbejde mellem vores forskellige afdelinger, det er helt klart noget vi prøver at gøre os meget i.

24:10

**A: Gør I noget for at vedligeholde eller aktivere jeres samarbejde med jeres esport talenter?**

24:25

B: Ja. Vi har jo også August 'Agge' Rosenmeier, som er FIFA-spiller. Hvis vi laver en salgskampagne med Bilka fx, så prøver vi altid at tilpasse den til de titler vi koncentrerer os om. I det her tilfælde vil det så være FIFA, og så prøver vi at bruge vores atleter så meget som muligt som frontfigurer. Så igen, så det ikke er vores logo, men det er vores logo igennem vores produkter eller atleter der bliver vist. Så dem aktiverer vi i høj grad, på både vores events og på alle mulige små marketing gimmicks og salgsinitiativer rundt omkring i butikkerne. Vi laver også training sessions og givewaways når vi er ude til LAN-events.

25:50

**A: Er der nogen bestemte ting forbundet med esport, som I ikke ønsker at blive associeret med?**

26:50

B: Ja, altså jeg vil sige, det er ikke noget vi ser så meget mere, men der er nogle rigtig kedelige episoder tilbage i 2014-2015 i Counter-Strike, som er en af de titler vi godt kan lide at arbejde med, hvor der var rigtig meget match-fixing. Man kan købe skins i Counter-Strike, og dengang var det totalt cowboyderland, der var ikke nogle regler for hvordan man byttede de her skins på kryds og tværs. De her skins var flere tusinde dollars værd nogle af dem. Så der blev match-fixed i det. Så var der et hold der lod sig tabe og så fik de for hundrede tusinde kroners skins som de kunne sælge. Så det her match-fixing og så har der også været nogle episoder med noget Adderall, som folk har taget. Det har mest været i Nordamerikanske Counter-Strike scener, at det har været. Alt sådan noget, det holder vi os langt fra og det er jo noget som vi på ingen tænkelig måde tolererer, ligesom vi ikke gør det i alt andet sport. Hvis vi havde en almindelig atlet der blevet taget for doping, så ville der selvfølgelig også være konsekvenser. Så det vil vi jo ikke ret gerne associeres med.

28:00

I esport i og med at det foregår ved en computer, så er det også muligt at snyde, altså hacke. Det er også noget vi tager voldsom afstand fra. Alt hvad der foregår inden for match-fixing og cheat, det bryder vi os ikke om.

28:45

**A: Har I nogen protokol for at beskytte jeres brand eller image, i tilfælde af at en spiller eller et esport talent mister popularitet eller på anden vis bliver associeret med noget negativt?**

29:05

B: Det kan jeg ikke rigtig svare på. Det ville være en case by case. Vi har en intens dialog med vores spillere og er meget tæt på vores atleter, og det vil altid være en snak med hver enkel. Der er ikke nogen fast protokol for hvordan vi håndterer modgang mod de enkelte atleter.

29:40

**A: Hvordan evaluerer I jeres samarbejde med individuelle esport talenter?**

30:10

B: For os, der er det vigtigste det sportslige. De skal selvfølgelig leve når de ude og dyrker hvad end sportsgren de dyrker. Og så er det også hvordan sådan generelt samarbejdet er, hvordan fungerer vi, har vi det godt med hinanden, og så hvordan performer deres sociale platform, for det er jo også en vigtig ting i den tid vi lever i.

30:40

Esport bliver associeret med chips og sodavand, det kan jeg skrive under på at det ikke er. Nu har jeg arbejdet sammen med mange top 10 hold i verden inden for Counter-Strike og de var mere interesseret i, at der var adgang til fitness end at de kunne få slik og chips til deres practice rooms. Så sådan er det ikke længere. Rigtig mange steder, også på de efterskoler der er rundt omkring i landet, er de begyndt at gå op i at de lever og spiser sundt selvom de koncentrer sig meget om esport.

31:15

Det vi så fx har gjort for mimi, det er at sende hende til nogle screenings og nogle sundhedstjek, og ved fysioterapeut, som vi har et samarbejde med. Og lavet noget content på det, også for at vise, at selvom Michaela bruger 50-60 timer foran sin computer om ugen, så er det stadigvæk enormt vigtig for hende at holde sig i god form og spise sundt. Ikke fordi at hun bare gerne vil være det, det er det også, men fordi det har en indflydelse på hendes præstationer på serveren. Så der prøver vi at gøre hende bedre, samtidigt med at vi prøver at slå nogle af de der lidt kedelig fordomme ihjel der er om esport.

32:30

**A: Nu nævnte du performance på sociale medier, snakker vi her om visninger på streams, følgere, seertal?**

32:55

B: Jo, det er jo sådan set overalt hvor de er synlige henne online. Så hvis vi nu snakker esport, så er det meget på Youtube, Twitch.tv, men også på deres Instagram, og selvfølgelig på Twitter. Så hvordan de performer, det er ikke det vigtigste for os. Hvis vi har verdens fedeste atlet som vi elsker at arbejde med, som altid leverer når han eller hun er til produktioner og leverer sportsligt, så kan vi jo sagtens se igennem fingre med hvis vedkommende synes at sociale medier er det mest røvsghe i verden. Så det igen en meget case by case. Det kommer an på hvem vi har med at gøre.

33:40

Vi har jo også Ninja.Streamer Ninja, som er blevet signet af vores amerikanske kontor. Han er jo ikke kendt for at levere sindsyge resultater til Fortnite turneringer, han var jo ikke engang med til VM der var for nogle måneder siden. Han er jo med fordi at han er jo Red Bull atlet i anførselstegn, fordi han er den største streamer i verden. For ham får han rigtig mange penge fordi, at han er sindsygt underholdende. Nu er han lige flyttet fra Twitch til Mixer, men der var 14 millioner followers på Twitch, så er det ikke så vigtig for os om han lige vinder VM i Fortnite.

## **Appendix 3.1 – Transcription: Interview with M.K.**

Interviewee: *Mads Kragh, CEO and Founder of Capstore*

Interviewer = A

Interviewee = B

2:15

**A: Kan du give mig et kort overblik over hvilke esport projekter eller samarbejde I er involveret i?**

2:30

B: Vi har lavet et samarbejde med Wicked Gaming. Det har vi lavet egentlig, fordi jeg selv havde en interesse for FIFA og så på det tidspunkt syntes jeg at det var et spændende projekt de havde gang i. Det er dem vi har valgt at alliere os med, fordi at vi tog en samtale og det førte til, at jeg synes deres projekt var spændende. Altså hjælpe de her talenter og prøve at få dem op. De har jo haft mange talenter, som er kommet videre fra dem, men også som spiller for deres hold og vinder en masse turneringer i de forskellige spil de nu har under fanen.

3:20

Vi er også blevet kontaktet af nogle forskellige andre esports organisationer, flere forskellige hold, spillere osv. Men vi har så valgt at sige, at vores stjerne forretning er, at vi er jo selv iværksættere der er i gang med at få vores virksomhed større. Så vi har heller ikke mere tid end det til at vi skulle begynde at engagere os med flere esports hold. Så det er egentlig meget fint at vi har ét samarbejde, som er det vi koncentrerer os om og arbejder ud fra.

4:05

**A: Hvad er jeres mål og ambitioner for jeres involvering i esport?**

4:25

B: Vores målsætning er ikke så stor igen, fordi jeg tog det også lidt som en test. Jeg laver en masse forskellige projekter hvor jeg ser hvad det kan føre til, så vores målsætning var egentlig bare at få vores navn lidt ud i nogle andre miljøer. Vi arbejder jo med kasketter, men det er jo spillerne uanset om det er CS:GO eller FIFA, som sidder og spiller med kasketter. Så der er jo en masse både fans og spillere i vores målgruppe. Så vi synes at det var et spændende marked at komme ind på.

5:05

Og så har vi jo også bare fuldt udviklingen de sidste mange år og kan se at esport har vækstet og forsætter med at vækste og blive en ting.

Hvor folk lige pludselig er begyndt at tage det seriøst også. Fordi i starten, der tror jeg ikke at folk tog det helt seriøst, det var jo bare computerspil og alt det her.

Målsætningen er at blive mere udbredt, men stadig så ved vi jo også godt, at det er jo ikke Astralis vi har været ude og lavet et samarbejde med. Så man kan sige, vi har taget det i et niveau, hvor vi synes at vi finder nogle spillere som har potentielle til at blive nogen af de aller bedste inden for de her spil, uanset om det er CS:GO, FIFA eller noget tredje eller fjerde.

Så synes vi de arbejder også professionelt med deres spillere og deres organisation. Det var ret vigtigt for os, fordi at vi har heller ikke bare valgt et eller andet esports hold for at vælge et eller andet. Så vi synes at I og med at vi også er professionelle, at det var et godt match.

6.00

Men målsætningen fra vores side af er måske, at lære lidt og snuse lidt til den verden og se hvad det egentlig er for noget, hvis man kan sige det sådan. Men jeg har ikke en dybere målsætning med at jeg forventer, så sælger vi helt vildt meget eller så gør vi et eller andet. Det er en overordnet marketing strategi jeg har, hvor jeg godt kan tænke mig at skabe nogle ringe i vandet, alle mulige steder i alle mulige søger, og der er esport en af dem.

7:20

**A: Hvordan tror I sponsorering af esport kan hjælpe med at opfylde disse mål?**

08.05

B: Det gør vi, fordi at vi er der hvor jeg vil betegne os som virksomhed, som en mindre virksomhed, som er på vej til på sigt at blive en mellemstor virksomhed. Og i det lag de arbejder i lige nu, det er jo nede på et niveau hvor vi stadig møder kunderne og samarbejdspartnerne i øjenhøjde. Og når man er ude og se esport events eller arrangementer, fx Copenhagen Games eller hvad det hedder, så er man stadig nede på et niveau hvor esport heller ikke endnu er større end det er. Så derfor så synes jeg at matchet af de to ting, er rigtig fin. Fordi at man kan sige, at i og med at Wicked også er en organisation som er i vækst, så er vi også en organisation som er i vækst, og på den måde så kan man ligesom sige at de to ting de matcher hinanden rigtig godt.

9:20

**A: Hvordan udvalgte I hvilket esport hold eller team I vil sponsorere? Altså fx, hvordan valgte I at det var lige præcis Wicked Gaming i ville sponsorere. Hvilke krav satte i på forhånd?**

9:40

B: I bund og grund kan man sige, at det faktisk var Wicked Gaming der rakte ud til os. Men de var en del af 3-4 andre forskellige organisationer, hvor man så kan sige, der der skulle vi så igennem den her udvælgelsesprocess, og sige 'hvorfor skulle vi lige vælge dem?'.

Og der var det jo netop deres måde at arbejde med det på, jeg synes der var lidt mere målrettet end nogen af de andre. Det var lidt ligesom med musik i 00'erne, hvor lige pludselig så kunne alle få en computer og alle kunne blive musikere. Lige pludselig så er vi et sted nu her, hvor alle kan lave en esports organisation, fordi at alle der har en xbox, playstation, computer eller smartphone for den sags skyld og et netværk og nogle gode ideer, kan måske også starte et eller andet op.

Nogen er jo så mere professionelle og mere målrettet, og David fra Wicked Gaming var rimelig målrettet og professionel, og det kunne jeg spejle mig selv i fra nogen af de projekter jeg selv har været igennem i livet. Og der synes jeg bare, jamen det havde jeg en god fornemmelse med. Og så tog vi selvfølgelig et møde og havde en god snak. Vi snakkede lidt om ambitionerne for hvad de gerne ville og jeg synes deres planer var rigtig fine. Jeg har ikke normalvis tid til at engagere mig alt for meget med det. Jeg har heller ikke tid til at følge med i alle deres turneringer. Jeg følger med så godt jeg nu kan på deres sociale medier, når jeg snakker med David og når nogen af spillerne har været forbi butikken. For det er klart, spillerne kommer også nogengange forbi og henter nogle kasketter og sådan nogle forskelle ting.

Så man kan sige, jeg synes bare at det virkede som det rigtige. Og så synes jeg også at det har været meget med, at så er der nogen der prøver, så lukker de ned igen fordi de ikke lige gik. Det har så vist sig at Wicked Gaming har været ret stabile. De er der endnu og de forsætter derud af. De tror på deres planer. Så har vi jo en masse målsætninger, hvor nogen af dem bliver indfriet, og nogen af dem stadig venter på sig, det er jo en del af den process man nu er i.

12:00

**A: Hvordan vil I beskrive det publikum, som I forsøger at ramme gennem jeres samarbejde med individuelle esport spillere?**

12:15

B: Esportspublikummet, som jo er dem jeg forventer at vi går ud og rammer, synes jeg er et rigtigt spændende publikum, fordi det er nogle mennesker der interesserer sig for noget, går op i et eller andet eller nørder et eller andet. Og det er også vores stjerne-forretning og ide med det vi laver, det er jo også, at vores kunder skulle jo gerne gå op i det som vi kan tilbyde.

12:35

Det er jo alle dem, hvis vi sælger sport caps eller team caps, så er det jo bare nogle store kæmpe sports hold i verden, men et esport hold kan på sigt jo også blive et hold der får fans. Det ser man jo også til de store turneringer, hvor fans køber trøjerne og merchandise

12:55

Så man kan sige, de her mennesker som interesserer sig for esport og de forskellige games, LANs og sådan nogle ting. Det er nogle mennesker som har et eller andet de går op i, som de interesserer sig for, og det synes jeg er nogen af de aller bedste mennesker at komme ud til. Ikke dermed sagt, at de fleste mennesker ikke har et eller andet de går op i, men her der er det sådan en fælles ting som man er fælles om med nogle andre. Det synes jeg har noget på sig.

13:35

**A: Designer i indholdet i jeres kampagne, således at det henvender sig til esport publikummet? Hvis ja, kan du så give mig et eksempel?**

13:55

B: Vi har holdt FIFA-event inde i vores butik. Men det var jo ikke bare til esports publikummet, men det var et esport event som ikke havde noget med vores normale hverdag at gøre. Det var en FIFA-turnering, hvor vi tog en af deres spillere, som på det tidspunkt lå riktig højt rangeret i Danmark. Han er ikke hos dem længere, men hvor vi sagde kom ind i butikken og hvis I kan vinde over ham, så kan I vælge en valgfri kasket. Fordi vi sælger kasketter jo. Det var ret sjovt, sådan en eftermiddag hvor der ikke skete noget. Men derudover har vi ikke lavet et event, hvor man kan sige, vi har lavet et eller andet, hvor det kun har været henvendt til esport. Det lader vi Wicked om, og så supporter vi når Wicked kommer og spørger os om et eller andet i de forskellige samarbejder.

14:45

Vi har selvfølgelig lavet kasketter til Wicked, som jo kun er henvendt til dem og til hvad de nu bruger det til i esport. Om de giver dem væk til spillerne eller om de sælger dem, eller hvad de gør med dem, det kan så være forskelligt. Men vi har ikke prøvet at lave et event nu, hvor vi siger nu laver VI et esport event. Vi har været i dialog med det shoppingcenter, hvor en af vores butikker ligger, Capstore på Fisketorvet. Hvor vi har snakket med dem om man skulle lave et esport event derude, men de laver noget i forvejen, så det har ikke riktig været aktuelt endnu.

16:10

**A: Hvordan forsikrer I jer, at jeres brand bliver eksponeret/vist til det ønskede publikum igennem jeres samarbejde med Wicked Gaming?**

16:25

B: Nu har vi jo lavet nogle kasketter for Wicked, med deres logo, som er den her ørn. Det er jo et fedt logo og det minder tildels om nogen af de forskellige sport teams vi også kunne have fra nogle amerikanske sportsgrene. Så vi synes jo vi har sat vores præg, altså det her er vores eksempel på fed en esports cap. Det kunne have været bare en normal sports cap, men det her er en esports cap, hvor man kan sige at det er så vores take på det.

17:00

Det er rigtig nok at det er lidt atypisk, men det er jo her hvor vi har den her størrelse virksomhed som vi har. Der er det ikke længere ude end at mange af dem der er i vores virksomhed, de jo selv følger lidt med i esport på hobby-plan og selv spiller lidt og synes det er fedt. Ikke esport spillere, men bare gamere, og de synes at det er et interessant univers. Så det er klart, at der vil vi jo gerne ind i det univers.

Rent salgsmæssigt, der er samarbejdet ikke lavet, fordi at jeg kan se at det giver profit her og nu, men det giver måske nogle ringe i vandet til nogle flere mennesker der bliver bevidste om os. Det må man også sige, at gennem årene, så er der folk der har lagt mærke til at logoet sidder på trøjerne og logoet sidder på kasketterne. Vi er blevet kontaktet af en masse, også af andre esports organisationer, hold, fans, og nu i dag dig. Så man kan sige, at der er nogen der er blevet bevidste om at vi er derude og det er jo en del af de her ringe vi gerne vil skabe i vandet. Det er en strategi vi faktisk arbejder med på rigtig mange områder. Jeg var lidt inde på det før, hvor vi skaber en masse ringe alle mulige steder, og de her ringe kan så på et eller andet tidspunkt føre til bevidstheden om at folk ved vi eksisterer. Og det er mere vigtigt, end at vi fx laver et eller andet agenda, som hvis det havde været et keyboard sponsorat, at folk ved 'nu skal alle købe det her keyboard, fordi det er det alle gamerne bruger' eller et eller andet. På den måde der kan vi ikke gå ud og ramme det.

Men det kan jo godt være at der kommet et eller andet esport hold og spørger om vi kan producere deres kasketter. Det kan vi jo godt gøre, uden at få vores logo på, så har det ikke noget med det at gøre, så er det bare rent forretning, hvor vi sælger nogle kasketter til et esport hold, så de får nogle kasketter i høj kvalitet. Men det har ikke rigtig været helt målsætningen endnu, men alligevel så er den der lidt, at forhåbentlig er der nogen der ligger mærke til de her Wicked Gaming Caps og tænker at de er ret fede og sådan nogle vil vi også gerne have. Og så er det jo der at der kan være noget forretning i det for os.

19:30

**A: Er der et krav i jeres samarbejde om, at spillerne skal have kasket på når de er ude og spille eller er det frivilligt?**

19:45

B: Vi har snakket om det og vi havde også overvejet at gøre det til et krav, men det er det ikke. Og det er der ikke af den årsag, at vi også er nede på det her personlige niveau, hvor vi jo gerne vil spillerne det bedste. Vi har jo snakket med nogle af spillerne også, nogen har ikke lyst til at spille med cap på og så er der nogen der har det rigtig godt når de spiller med cap på. Der var én der sagde til mig, at han følte faktisk at det gav lykke når han spillede med cap på, fordi at han følte at han kunne afskærme lidt alt det der foregår rundt om ham når han sidder og spiller, så faktisk så kunne han godt lide at sidde og spille med cap på.

Men så var der også en der sagde, 'jeg går normalt ikke med cap' og der tænker jeg, så skal vi heller ikke presse den ned over hovedet på en spiller. Jeg ved jo selv, at når jeg fx selv har siddet og spillet, så har man et ur på og så føler man at det sidder og irriterer. Så sidder man og tænker mere på det, end man koncentrer sig om spillet. Så på den måde så har jeg sagt, at det er lidt frivilligt.

20:40

Men derfor har vi også logoet på trøjerne. Hvis logoet ikke var på trøjerne, så ville vi sige, så skulle vi have det på capsne og så skulle vi måske have det når vi tager billeder inden eller efter. Ligesom i fx i Speedway, der får spillerne eller kørerne altid cappen på når de har kørt løbet. Så står de med sponsor caps på. Så der var sådan nogle måder at arbejde med det på. Men ja, det er det vi har overvejet, men lige på det niveau der kan jeg godt lide dialogen om det også og spillernes bedste.

21:25

Og så kan man også sige, at de er jo også en organisation på vej op. Og vi skal ikke sætte alle mulige restriktioner for nogen der er ude og prøve at bygge noget op. Det kan være en dag når de er kæmpe store, at man så kan sige 'Nu er I så store, nu kan det være vi skal tage en dialog om en anden måde at arbejde på'. Så kan man stille større krav. Jeg ved jo også godt hvordan det er at bygge en virksomhed op, det er jeg jo selv i gang med. Så vi skal ikke prøve på at besværliggøre et samarbejde som vi synes fungerer. Det er der mange sponsorer der har det med, at der så er der en eller anden regel og det er kun derfor de siger ja til sponsoratet. Og det er også fair nok, det er jo én måde at arbejde på. Men hvis man kan nå til enighed via en god snak og en god dialog og sådan nogle ting, det er jeg mere tilhænger af. Og det er jo igen sikkert forskelligt fra case til case.

22:35

Man kan jo vende den lidt om som sponsor og sige, at vi bliver jo kontaktet af rigtig mange. Så hvis vi bare var interesseret i at malke det, så kunne vi jo bare gå til nogen af dem der har kontaktet os, og sige 'prøv og hør, vi har allerede et samarbejde, det kan i se, men vi vil gerne hoppe over til jer, hvis i vil gøre det og det for os'. Så bliver det lige pludselig sponsoren der får magten og det er ikke den måde at jeg har lyst til at arbejde på. Men det kunne vi jo nemt have gjort, fordi der er mange der har spurgt os, mange dygtige og mange jeg også kan se har success. Der er følgere der har skrevet til os og kontaktet os gennem årene. Jeg har også vendt det med Wicked, og sagt at dem og dem har kontaktet os.

23:45

**A: Har I taget nogle initiativer for at ramme folk der ikke nødvendigvis ser esport?**

**Du nævnte et eksempel før, med det event her i havde haft i jeres butik, hvor i hev folk ind fra gaden der kunne komme ind og blive introduceret til esport.**

24:10

Vi har så travlt i vores hverdag med vores egent forretning. Når vi laver noget, så bliver det i samarbejde med Wicked og så er det et event vi holder med dem og så bliver det en del af vores hverdag.

25:30

Vi har også snakket med Wicked om at vi skal lave noget igen, men vi vil gerne gøre det lidt større næste gang og flytte det ud på Fisketorvet hvor vi har butik. Og så ud af centret og væk fra butikkken og lave et eller andet larm. Men der er vi heller ikke kommet til endnu. Men nej, vi har ikke engageret os så meget endnu. Det er også derfor at vi godt kan lide samarbejdet med Wicked, fordi at vi kan følge sådan lidt med og vi kan tage det i det tempo vi også føler at der er tid til.

26:10

**A: Gør I noget for at vedligeholde eller aktivere jeres samarbejde med Wicked Gaming?**

26:30

B: Vi har postet kasketten og vi har postet nogen gange når de vinder nogle turneringer, så deler vi de post til vores følgere. Og det er jo der hvor man kan sige, at der kommer lidt et touch ind, hvor nogen af vores kunder, det er jo ikke fans, det er jo kunder. De kan måske nogen gange tænke 'hvorfor deler de det?'. Vi gerne vil vise at vi engagerer os også med noget andet. Og vi laver også noget andet end bare ren salg.

27:30

Men det er klart at i og med at Wicked også vokser, og de nogle gange laver nogle workshops og sådan nogle ting. Så kan det jo sagtens være at der i fremtiden vil blive at nogen af vores kunder de kan vinde et træningskursus med nogle af de her spillere, meet & greet, komme ud og se noget, en trøje eller sådan nogle ting. Det snakker mig og David også om når vi sidder og snakker opdatering af kontrakt osv. Når den udløber. Så sidder vi og gennemgår samarbejdet og snakker altid om forventer i noget mere, forventer vi noget mere, og frem og tilbage. Så sidder vi egentlig og forventningsafstemmer over for hinanden.

28:25

**A: Hvordan evaluerer I jeres samarbejde med Wicked Gaming? Anvender I nogen specifikke metoder? Eksempelvis seertal, følgere eller andet?**

28:50

B: Det er jo det helt normale at kigge på som sponsor, men jeg er også meget atypisk, tror jeg, i min tankegang. Jeg har jo arbejdet med så mange ting inden for salg og marketing, så jeg ved godt at når der kommer et hold og siger vi har så mange følgere på vores kanal eller vi har så meget og så meget, så er det jo det de skal bruge for at sælge.

Der har jeg valgt at sige, at jeg synes det er sjovere at vi er med på sådan et, man kan sige udviklings-hold, som Wicked jo er. Der går vi ikke nødvendigvis op i hvor mange følgere der er. Vi går selvfølgelig op i at de vinder nogle turneringer, og det kan vi se at det gør de.

Da de havde ham PrimoTurbo, FIFA-spilleren, der vandt han jo nærmest alle Elgiganten turneringerne hele vejen rundt i Danmark, og vi kunne se at uge efter uge der vandt han jo. Sådan noget der ligger vi jo mærke til og følger med i også, når de bliver nr 1, 2 og 3 osv. Og hvis de slet ikke vandt, så tror jeg jo at, så ville jeg jo også tage fat i David når det var at vi havde et møde og sige 'hvaaa'.

Vi vil selvfølgelig gerne være ved nogen hvor vi også kan se at de vinder nogle turneringer og gør det godt, eller hvert fald hvor væksten er der, ikke fordi vi forventer at de skal vinde hver uge eller hver måned. Men altså vi følger jo med og ser det, og det er jo også det der ligesom er med til at vi siger vi gerne vil forsætte samarbejdet, fordi at vi kan se at de faktisk gør det godt i rigtig mange turneringer. Så det er jo også den positive tanke man har med sig til møderne, at man lige som godt kan se at det går godt, og det vil vi gerne støtte op om. For hvis det er sådan at næste gang man mødes, så kan se, 'okay det længe siden at I har vundet eller været i top 3 eller et eller andet, hvad sker der?'. Så er det noget andet jo, fordi at vi har jo heller ikke lyst til at være sponsor på nogen der kun taber og det er heldvis ikke tilfældet. Men det har selvfølgelig også noget at sige.

31:05

**A: Er der nogen bestemte ting forbundet med esport, som I ikke ønsker at blive associeret med?**

31:15

B: Det ligger meget til sind for mig, at folk skal have deres rationelle tankegang med når de udtales sig om noget og når de gør noget. Så hvis man kan sige at der er de her fordomme om at esport spillere det er bare sådan nogen der sidder dagen lang og spiser chips og drikker cola eller energidrik og ikke laver noget og bare er sådan nogle dovne nogen eller hvilke fordomme der nu måtte være ude i samfundet. Sådan nogle ting praler lidt af på mig. Vi arbejder med kasketter og kasketter har jo selv været den der klassens lidt upopulære. Hvis du gik med kasket i 90'erne så var du ikke en særlig fin fyr og alle de her ting. Så vi arbejder selv ud for en verden og et univers hvor der kan være mange fordomme forbundet med. Vi synes jo at esport er rigtig sundt i rigtig mange henseender, fordi at det er ret socialt. Selvom mange mener at det er ret asociale at sidde og stirre ind i en skærm, så er det faktisk tværtimod det hvis du sætter dig ind i tingene.

32:40

Der hvor der kan være en gråzone, det er i stadiet op til at du måske bliver professionel. Hvor du måske er ung og sidder på dit værelse og sidder og gamer og ikke får struktur på dit liv og lige som bare kører igennem hele natten. Nu læste jeg om en der vandt noget her den anden dag, hvor han sagde han havde sovet måske 12 timer på 3-4 dage, han vandt en masse millioner med sine

holdkammerater.

Men man kan sige, når du er nede på et niveau hvor du er i folkeskole niveau, der bliver du nødt til at være struktureret og passe dine ting og din skole og udvikle dig og nogle sociale egenskaber også. Og der kan være en lille gråzone, men det er ikke noget som fylder så meget for os eller som vi sådan er bekymret for.

34:20

Vi har nogle klare principper og holdninger, som vi tager afstand fra. Der er man ude i sådan nogle lidt mere voldsomme ting, som vold og pædofili. Sådan nogle ekstreme ting, det tager vi afstand fra. Og hvis der er noget inde i esport der bliver rodet ud i sådan noget og det har noget med vores hold at gøre, jamen så ville vi selvfølgelig tage afstand derfra. Men esport som genre, der har vi ingen bekymringer for noget negativt overhovedet.

35:05

**A: Har I nogen protokol for at beskytte jeres brand eller image, i tilfælde af at Wicked Gaming mister popularitet eller på anden vis bliver associeret med noget negativt?**

35:35

Jeg vil skynde mig at sige, at vi er meget atypisk i vores sponsorat, fordi snakkede du med en eller anden større virksomhed som havde en kommunikations- og presseafdeling, så ville de sikkert have en masse andet og sige end det jeg vil sige her til det her.

36:20

Jeg elsker faktisk hvis der er en i min forretning eller et eller andet der har begået en fejl, fordi det er en vanvittig god øjenåbner for at prøve at rette den her fejl op. Lad os sige vi har lavet en pakkefejl, vi har sendt den forkerte pakke og der er en kunde der er rasende og ringer til os 'hvad foregår der?'. Og så jeg kan tage telefonen og ringe og sige 'Hey, det er jeg ked af på min virksomheds vegne, hvad kan vi gøre for dig, for at gøre det her godt igen?' Så har du allerede en dialog. Og skulle der være et eller andet i esport, det ville være min mulighed for at tage en dialog med en eller anden der ville sende kritik til os. Det er sådan vores virksomhed er.

39:35

Ikke at sige at vi ville tage det med åbne arme eller være glade for det, men vi vil altid tage en dialog. Vi ved også at mennesker de fejler.

40:20

Vi tror jo selvfølgelig på at David og Wicked Gaming de er fornuftige og en god organisation. Vi har arbejdet med dem i nogle år efterhånden og det virker meget fornuftigt. Så det skulle overraske mig meget at der kom noget internt.

41:15

Hvis der var en eller anden der kontaktede os en dag, og sagde 'ham der fra Wicked Gaming han har gjort sådan og sådan', så tror jeg jo bare at jeg ville kigge på det og vende det med David. Jeg tror ikke det var noget der ville påvirke så meget. Hvis det var hele deres hold og du kunne se at der var en rød tråd fra det ene spil til det næste spil til det tredje spil, så var det noget jeg ville slå ned på.

## **Appendix 3.2 – Transcription: Interview with K.H.**

Interviewee: *Kasper Hemmingshøj, Head of Recruitment at Capgemini*

Interviewer = A

Interviewee = B

2:55

**A: Kan du give mig et kort overblik over hvilke esport projekter eller samarbejde I er involveret i?**

B: Der er lidt forskellige ting. Der er selvfølgelig North, som du selv har set, som vi er engagerede i. Vi er en af hovedpartnere af North. Og der laver vi selvfølgelig en masse forskellige aktiviteter som starter og slutter med North, alt fra employer branding til rekruttering til alt muligt.

3.45

Vi har holdt en skandinavisk turnering for Danmark, Sverige og Norge. Det var sådan det hele startede, det var ligesom en test for at se hvor stor interessen var interessen for Counter Strike, for Esport, i det hele taget, bare i skandinavien.

Vi ville gerne lige mærke interessen. Så vi lavede en turnering for Danmark, Sverige og Norge. Vi spillede 8-10 hold mod hinanden. Tilmeldingerne, det var det vi skulle bruge, altså hvor mange ville tilmelde sig, og der var flere 100. Så vi måtte faktisk sige nej til rigtig mange.

5:00

**A: Hvad er jeres mål og ambitioner for jeres involvering i esport?**

5:10

B: Det har hele tiden været rekruttering der har været i fokus. At det så samtidigt betyder, at vores medarbejdere synes at det er super fedt at være her og de har noget at være stolte over, det er egentlig bare en side-effect på rekruttering. Det har altid været rekruttering.

Og det er jo det der er med esport, der er ingen der rigtig har knækket koden på hvordan man skal bruge det endnu. Alle synes det er fantastisk, der er massere penge i det, der er høje seertal, men der er ingen firmaer som sådan for alvor har knækket koden på hvad kan man egentlig bruge det til. Og der har vi sådan hele tiden haft den ide, at rekruttering kunne være noget. Vi kunne mærke på vores egne ansatte, IT folk, det her er noget de går rigtig rigtig meget op i. Så ved at gå ind og blåstempelet det at være gamer, så har vi gjort vores medarbejdere glade, men vi har samtidigt prikket til en masse folk som sidder derude.

Og når man taler om esport, så taler man jo ikke henover frokostbordet, "hvad har du lavet i går aftes?", "jamen jeg sad og gamede i 4 timer", det er der jo ingen der siger. Det er sådan lidt pinligt på en eller anden måde, og det vil vi gerne have vendt til at det ikke skal være længere. Så det var sådan egentlig hovedformål med at gå ind i esport, rekruttering og det at blåstemple at være gamer.

7:00

**A: Hvordan udvalgte I hvilket esport hold eller team I vil sponsorere? Altså fx, hvordan valgte I at det var lige præcis North i ville sponsorere. Hvilke krav satte i på forhånd?**

7:15

B: Altså jeg tror jeg startede for 2 år siden, med at have snakket med forskellige esports hold. Og uden at det skal lyde som om at man har for meget ananas i egen juice, så er Capgemini en størrelse som gør at der er nogle godkendelsesregler i huset. Det er nok verdens mest etiske virksomhed de sidste 7 år. Det vil sige at sådan noget med Counter Strike og våben er stik mod alt fornuft i forhold til Capgemini. Men også er det utroligt vigtigt, hvilke andre partnere de har, og hvem er ejerne. Og er det en ejerkreds som evt. vil skifte undervejs? Der er en masse usikkerhed forbundet med det. Man skal huske hele tiden på, at esport er så nyt, og mange af de her organisationer, de er jo enormt umodne, fordi at de ikke har meget en 2-3 år på bagen.

8:00

Så for os var det rigtig vigtigt med nogle stabile partnere. Det følte vi at vi fik i Nordisk Film, og selvfølgelig også Parken, som også har noget vinder-kultur, og er vant til sport, er vant til at når man gør noget så vil man gerne gøre det ordentligt og ligge i toppen. Så de to ting var rigtig vigtige for os. Og det synes jeg egentlig at vi fandt hos North.

9:10

**A: Hvordan vil I beskrive det publikum, som I forsøger at ramme gennem jeres samarbejde med esport hold?**

9:20

B: Det har været det aller vigtigste. Vi vil gerne jo ramme IT-folk og vi vil gerne ramme folk der er teknisk dygtige. Og de sidder bl.a. og følger med i esport. Vi har selvfølgelig fået en masse statistik på som viser hvor mange folk der ser det her er egentlig inden for IT. Der har vi kunne lide de tal vi har set. Så vi går benhårdt efter IT folk. Den er ikke så meget længere.

11:20

**A: Designer i indholdet i jeres kampagne eller samarbejde, således at det henvender sig til esport publikummet?**

11:30

B: Bestemt. Det er noget vi tænker rigtig rigtig meget over. Vi har dedikeret vores twitter-kanal til esport. Vinklen er måske ikke så meget, det vil være mere sådan lidt corporate. Men på twitter der er der fuld knald på, og ping pong med North og alle deres fans, der er konkurrencer, og der er alle mulige forskellige ting. Det man selvfølgelig skal huske på med sådan et sponsorat, en ting er at stå på trøjen, men at få det aktiveret, det er der hele øvelsen ligger.

Og det er sociale medier jo bl.a med til. Man skal tale et specielt sprog når man skal tale med de her gamere. De lugter hurtigt lunten hvis der er for meget corporate over det. Så vi gør da også virkelig meget som virksomhed, for at se hvad for nogen budskaber vi kommunikerer ud. Det skal have lidt mere sjov og ballade, hvis man kan sige det sådan.

13:00

**A: Hvordan forsikrer I jer, at jeres brand bliver eksponeret/vist til det ønskede publikum igennem jeres samarbejde med esport hold?**

13:10

B: Min tilgang til det her sponsorat har hele tiden været, at det er fint nok at vi står på trøjen, men det er det mindst vigtige. Hvis vi skal have noget eksponering ud af det her, sådan for alvor. Hvor mange mennesker ligger ærligt talt mærke til hvad der står på trøjen under en kamp? Det er jo de færeste, medmindre man er hardcore fan og man skal ud og have alle de nyeste trøjer. Så vi har jo gjort rigtig mange ting omkring.

Det handler hele tiden om at vi som virksomhed, at hvis vi skal lave noget sammen med North, så skal det være noget der giver North's fans værdi. Og kan man ikke det, så bliver man bare sådan en corporate virksomhed der "sponsorerer". Så man bliver nødt til at connecte med North's fanbase. Og det har vi gjort bl.a ved at udfordre de mest hardcore North tilhængere til en kamp imod vores firma-hold. Det er sådan noget der kører på Twitter, hvor vi sender en udfordring ud og så samler vi op. Vi har ikke planlagt noget, vi har ikke kontaktet dem, den kører egentlig sådan bare lidt derudaf. Så har man selvfølgelig lavet trøje-konkurrencer. I næste uge skal vi ud og lave en "ask me anything" med en af spillerne, hvor vi skal rende rundt inde i fælledparken og stille ham en masse spørgsmål, som fansene gerne ville have at vi stiller ham.

14:35

Det handler jo hele tiden om, at det content du laver skal der være noget i for den her fanbase. Man skal ikke lave det for sig selv og for sit logos skyld. Du skal give fansene en viden, som de måske ikke havde i forvejen, så synes de at det er fedt. Det er jo fedt når man kommer lidt behind the scenes.

17:10

**A: Gør I noget for at vedligeholde eller aktivere jeres samarbejde med de esport hold i støtter?**

17:35

B: Vi har sådan en forkælelsesdag for vores ansatte. Hvor at vi holder en dag eller to for vores ansatte hvor de får lov til at spille mod North. Det er ikke nødvendigvis noget vi kommunikerer på sociale medier. Men det er jo også noget man giver til ens medarbejder. Og det er jo klart at det er noget der tilknytter dem til virksomheden. Så vi har en masse af de her retention events, kan man næsten kalde dem, som er baseret på esport. Det er ikke altid North deltager, det skal være noget specielt, men de deltager. De rejser også rigtig meget. Så den vinkel er der også.

18:15

Og så prøver vi jo at knække den her kode på at gøre det kommersielt. Og det er jo det at alle kræfter er sat ind på i hele esports verdenen. Hvordan gør man det kommersielt? Hvordan kan du bruge det til at sælge dine produkter? Udover at være Red Bull og alle mulige andre, som kan måle på den måde. Det kan vi jo ikke, vi er et konsulenthus. Så hvordan pokker måler vi det? Så det er jo sådan en kode der skal knækkes, og det prøver vi at gøre sammen med North.

18:45

Samarbejdet med North, da vi lancerede det, der var det direkte i TV2 News om morgenens, der blev vi interviewet direkte, så var det i både 18- og 19-nyhederne og det var i sådan en paneldebat på TV2 news kl. 16, tror jeg. Så det kørte hele dagen og man tænker for pokker hvor stort er det lige? Men det er bare rigtig rigtig stort.

19:05

Men det der er med den historie, det er jo, at det er også os som virksomhed som løfter North op til noget globalt. Og det er jo derfor at det samarbejde er så perfekt, fordi vi hjælper jo hinanden. Det er jo ret fedt for North at kunne skrive Capgemini på trøjen, det er en global virksomhed, en af verdens største, som lige pludselig går ind og anerkender esport. Det er noget de kan bruge til noget når de skal sælge andre partnerskaber.

19:55

**A: Har det betydning for jer hvilke andre virksomheder eller brands der også støtter holdet, North?**

20:10

B: Ja. Det har vi sådan en, jeg vil kalde det en meget positiv dialog omkring. Det er jo klart at en virksomhed som North, de ville sagtens kunne få skrevet lad os sige, nogle sådan lidt lettere erotiske sider på deres trøjer og så få en masse penge for det. Men det er jo klart, at hvis de gerne vil trække en virksomhed som os, så går det ikke.

Så ja, vi har en god dialog med North omkring hvad vi godt kunne tænke os, eller hvilken type virksomhed vi godt kunne tænke os de har på deres trøjer, og hvem vi ligesom bliver set sammen med.

20:50

Når det så er sagt, så skal man også passe på at man ikke bliver alt for firkantet. Så kunne man sige at de her betting-sider som de har i øjeblikket på deres trøjer, hvordan har vi det med det? Sådan er det jo en gang imellem, det er jo ikke det aller bedste, men altså vi løser også opgaver for Danske Spil og alt muligt andet. Så man skal også passe på den dobbeltmoralske side af det.

21:20

**A: Hvis en konkurrent også støttede North, ville det så afskrække jer for at støtte North også?**

21:30

B: Ja det ville være helt udelukket. Fordi at så ryger den ligesom. Så ville vi rykke videre til noget andet. Altså vi har været glade for det, jeg tror vi er en af de første sådan rigtigt globale spillere, der går ind i esport. Jeg tror at det er derfor at den har fået så meget medieomtale, som den har den her aftale. Fordi at North, det er jo ikke nr. 1 i verden eller på den måde, men altså det er jo fordi at vi har den størrelse som vi har. Så ja, altså en konkurrent det ville ikke gå.

22:10

**A: Er der nogen bestemte ting forbundet med esport, som I ikke ønsker at blive associeret med?**

22:20

B: Vi kæmpede specielt meget med vores svenske kollegaer, som er meget konservative omkring det her med at spillet Counter Strike er voldeligt. Og det må man jo give dem ret i, at det er det. Der bliver jo brugt terrotister, counter terrorister, bomber og alt muligt forskelligt. Så vi har taget den beslutning på vores sociale medier og vores kanaler, der viser vi ikke noget violent content.

22:50

At North gør det, det kan vi jo selvfølgelig ikke stoppe dem i. Men det bliver ikke os der liker og deler lige præcis det klip. Det er der vi er landet og det er det der er spiselig for alle. Og vi har selvfølgelig tænkt, hvad sker der med vores kunder når de ser vi går ind i det her? Jeg er glad for at sige at der er ikke sket noget som helst overhovedet, altså i negativ forstand i hvert fald. Vi er også bare meget vant til det i Danmark, at det kører på tv, at de viser klips fra det i morgennyhederne. Sådan er det altså ikke i andre lande.

24:15

**A: Har I nogen protokol for at beskytte jeres brand eller image, i tilfælde af at jeres esport hold mister popularitet eller på anden vis bliver associeret med noget negativt?**

24:30

B: Vi har en holdning til gaming, som vi skriver om inde på vores hjemmeside. Det er jo altid oppe i tiden, hvad det betyder for børn at de sidder og kigger på sådan nogen her ting, er det godt for deres logiske sanse og helbred. Den debat den kører hele tiden. Men altså hvis vi gik ud og sagde at det var dårligt for folk at sidde og kigge ind i en skærm, så ville det ikke rigtig give nogen mening i forhold til det vi laver. Fordi vores ansatte sidder og kigger ind i en skærm hver dag. Så det er sådan lidt. Vi har en holdning til det, men ikke nogen protokol direkte for hvis der skulle ske opstå en negativ situation. Det må vi tage som det kommer, vi tager én dag ad gangen.

25:50

**A: Hvordan evaluerer I jeres samarbejde med North?**

26:00

B: Det er jo altid det der er så fantastisk når man laver noget der er marketingsbaseret, det er hvordan pokker måler man det? Hvordan måler vi om vores kunder har syntes at det her var noget positivt? Der er jo ingen kunder der kommer ind i vores forretning og siger "Hej, må jeg ligge mit næste projekt til 200 millioner hos jer, fordi at jeg har set i har et sponsorat med nogen". Det kommer jo aldrig til at ske.

Så det vi har målt det på, det har primært været på rekrutteringsdelen. Hvor mange uopfordrede ansøgere har vi søgt arbejde hos os og hvor mange af vores nuværende ansatte anbefaler folkude i deres netværk til at ansøge her.

26:30

Noget af det bedste du kan få inden for rekrutteringsverdenen, er når dine kollegaer anbefaler andre i deres netværk. Det rammer som regel plet. Så der har vi kunne se en to-cifret fremgang på begge af de to parametre. Og så kan vi se at kvaliteten af ansøgere steget en smule. Men endnu mere interessant, i de her ansøgninger som vi modtager, der er der rigtig mange der er begyndt at skrive at de spiller Counter Strike, de spiller World of Warcraft, og det er ligesom blevet OK at skrive når man søger hos os. Og det er faktisk meget fedt at se, fordi det var lidt det der var mening fra starten af, at det er helt OK.

27:10

**A: Evaluerer i også i forhold til jeres nuværende medarbejdere? Du nævnte retention tidligere.**

27:20

B: Ja, retention den ligger på det laveste den har ligget på 2 år. Det kan vi jo ikke direkte måle op mod North eller esport generelt. Men det er da en indikator på, at vi har i hvert fald har gjort noget positivt.

Og en af de ting vi har gjort, det er et sponsorat med North. Vi har kunne se interessen, for når vi har lavet nogle events med dem, så har det jo været ung og gammel der har taget med på det her og siddet og haft det vildt skægt. Så jeg er blevet meget overrasket over, hvor mange der rent faktisk sidder og følger med i det her. Det vil jeg sige, det er ikke kun unge mennesker, eller folk der er mellem 15 og 25. Bestemt ikke. Jeg er blevet meget overrasket over hvor mange af vores ansatte og hvor mange sådan eksterne der synes det her er vildt spændende. Og hvor mange autografter North kan nå at skrive til folk der er over 30. Det har så meget potentiale, det her esport, jeg håber virkelig vi kan være med til at knække koden på det.

### **Appendix 3.3 - Transcription: Interview with E.P.**

Interviewee: *Emil Pedersen, Brand Activation Manager at YouSee*

Interviewer = A

Interviewee = B

01:30

**A: Kan du give mig et kort overblik over hvilke esport projekter eller samarbejde I er involveret i?**

1:45

B: YouSee gik ind i esport for 1½ års tid siden, knap og nap. Det har været primært igennem YouSee Esportsligaen, som er det her samarbejde med de forskellige parter i ligaen, som er DGI, Esport Danmark, Ungdomsringen og Dansk Firmaidræt. Man kan sige at det er platformen for det alt vores esport udspringer af. I forlængelse af det så har vi lavet en masse ting, herunder har vi lavet nogen lidt mere content drevne ting til vores sociale medier og vi har været tilstede på nogen af de store fysiske events rundt om i landet, altså esport events.

2:50

Det hele skal gerne kunne linkes tilbage til ligaen, fordi det er ligaen der er vores langsigtede samarbejde. Vi er jo ikke kun sponsor, vi er partnere, vi sidder med i bestyrelsen og vi vil gerne sammen med vores venner i ligaen løfte det hele op. Så det er klart at hver gang vi laver et eller andet, så skal det ligesom pege til ligan og de værdier der ligger i ligaen.

3:25

**A: Hvad er jeres mål og ambitioner for jeres involvering i esport?**

3:40

B: Vi har med vilje ikke sat nogle hardcore mål op for samarbejdet. Men vi har nogle ret store ambitioner for gaming og esport generelt. Men det er lidt mere bløde målsætninger som handler om at vi skal være det brand inden for telco, altså internet, mobil og TV, som bliver associeret bedst og mest med gaming og esport på den lange bane.

4:15

Og så handler det også om at få aktiveret den kæmpe store målgruppe af unge mennesker, som spiller computerspil og som vi ellers igennem vores traditionelle marketings kanaler har lidt svært ved at nå. Og det var også en af grundende til at vi gik ind i det og en af grundende til at det var interessant for os. Det kan godt være at en teenager ikke nødvendigvis køber internet fra YouSee,

men det der med at bygge et forhold op, som så om nogle år når vedkommende skal flytte hjemmefra eller skal til at stifte familie selv, så vil vi gerne have en stemme indenfor den verden og tænker også at vi kan skabe nogle gode kunderelationer på den lange bane der.

5:25

Vik gik også ind i det på grund af, at vi kunne se hvor kæmpe stor vækst der var i det her. Og hvordan det bare lige pludselig blev rigtig mainstream. Det begyndte at blive noget nærmest hele Danmark forholdte sig til og det blev noget man kunne se på TV2, DR og Viasat. De begyndte at købe rettigheder til højre og venstre. Så det var også en udvikling hvor vi tænkte, at hvis ikke vi var med fra starten af, hvis ikke vi gjorde noget, så ville det også lige pludseligt være forsent. Så det er også det der med at man better lidt på den her kæmpe store vækst og så høster man frugterne senere.

6:25

**A: Hvordan udvalgte i hvilke esport events eller turneringer i ville sponsorere? Hvilke kriterier var vigtige for jeres valg?**

6:50

B: Nu har jeg selv arbejdet med det her i 2 års tid ca. og fra nærmest dag 1 af har det været en målsætning at vi skulle gå ind i esport og vi skulle være tilstede indenfor esport og gaming som brand. Jeg tror, at jeg har været til utallige møder med hold, spillere og aktører i markedet, omkring hvordan vi bedst kunne lave et partnerskab som gav mening for os. Det som vi også har kunne se er, at YouSee har ingen kunder uden for Danmarks grænser. Vi er totalt domestic på den front. Så derfor ville et sponsorat af et hold som dyster ved internationale turneringer ikke give mening. Derfor ville vi gerne kigge på noget, hvor vi kunne tale ned i noget der var lokalt, men samtidigt også noget der var ambitiøst.

8:00

Og så var det jo at vi så, at det er ikke nødvendigvis toppen af kransekagen og eliten, det er ikke nødvendigvis der at de bedste investeringer ligger. Selvom at det er der mange af øjnene er rettet hen imod nu. Det er lige så meget om alle dem der spiller computer. Hvis vi kunne prøve og være med til at organisere noget som på sigt kan blive stedet hvor man dyster i esport i Danmark, så tænker vi at så er det en god investering. Nu tænker jeg især lige i forhold til ligaen.

8:35

Eventsne er jo en måde hvorpå vi løbende kan komme ud og møde målgruppen og kan få en tilstedeværelse som er meget koncentreret omkring de her events. For eksempel Odincon, hvor der er ca. 20.000 over en weekend, som alle sammen på en eller anden måde har noget med gaming at gøre, eller i hvert fald er i eller omkring målgruppen.

9.10

Kundebasen i YouSee er jo væsentlig ældrere end den gennemsnitlige gamer. Det er måske teenagedrenge der gamer, men det er deres forældre der køber internettet. Så vi havde også lidt en udfordring, for hvis du kun snakker til selve gamerne, hvis du kun adresserer dem som spiller computerspil, så er der lidt for langt hen til beslutningstageren, som skal have noget med brandet at gøre, som skal købe internettet, TV og mobil. Så derfor så var det også lidt en måde hvor vi så, at vi kunne gå ind og tage en lidt mere ansvarlig rolle og gå ind og lave noget som kunne interesserere både forældrene og børnene.

10:10

**A: Hvordan vil I beskrive det publikum, som I forsøger at ramme gennem jeres samarbejde med esport events og turneringer?**

11:00

B: Mange gamere læser også længere videregående uddannelser inden for fx IT. Der har vi jo så også en interesse, som er lidt mere på sådan HR-delen, hvor vi gerne vil tiltrække arbejdskraft til TDC, fordi der har vi brug for rigtig mange som er dygtige indenfor det her felt. Og der ser vi jo at der er rigtig mange af dem som spiller rigtig meget computer, det bliver også ofte dem som ender med at være rigtig gode til at kode, programmere og lignende. På den måde er der helt klart en masse områder man kan tage fat i det på.

11:45

Helt grundlæggende er det jo en mande-domineret verden, men vi ser flere og flere piger der kommer ind og er en del af det her. Generelt set, bruger de jo sindsygt meget tid på det her. Så hvis man kan have en tilstedeværelse inden for det, hvad enten det er når de sidder på Twitch og ser en masse kampe, spiller med deres venner, når de er nede i klubben eller er ude til events, så bruger de rigtig meget tid på det. De er super passioneret og det er også bare potentielt en meget købestærk målgruppe her i fremtiden.

13:35

**A: Designer i indholdet i jeres kampagne eller samarbejde, således at det henvender sig til esport publikummet? Fx i YouSee Ligaen eller Odincon.**

13:50

B: Ja, helt sikkert. Det er jo klart, at når vi skal være der, så handler det om at adressere dem på en gode måde. Det er jo også den balancegang som vi skulle gå, fordi vi er jo et gammelt, stort brand, som ikke nødvendigvis taler til den her målgruppe. Så det er klart, at så skal man gøre det på en ordentlig måde. Især med Odincon, der havde vi en todelt målsætning, fordi at vi vidste at til Odincon der kommer rigtig mange gamere, men der kommer også rigtig mange forældre. Så vil vi jo gerne prøve at ramme dem begge to.

Og det gjorde vi igennem noget content, hvor vi satte børn, altså gamere, og deres forældre sammen. Og så prøvede vi at iscenesætte det her generations gap der kan være. Og på den måde lave noget som var relevant for både forældre og for børn og prøve at bygge bro imellem dem, i stedet for kun at fokusere på gamerne eller kun at fokusere på forældrene.

15:00

Når vi går ud og kommunikere og når vi går ud og laver noget indhold, så vil vi gerne lave noget godt content som på en eller anden måde kan sætte et ansigt på esporten. Fordi der er rigtig mange fordomme og misforståelser omkring det, og så tror jeg bare for mange som ikke er en del er det og som ikke selv spiller, der er det sådan lidt en lukket verden, som man ikke rigtig ved hvad der foregår i. Man har måske nogle antagelser, men det er stadig lidt i det uvisse. Der er det en rigtig fin platform for os som brand, at gå ind og belyse det, lave noget indhold som giver mening og lærerigt for dem som ser med.

16:10

Hele vores fokus på esport og gaming, det er jo brandmæssigt. Det er også derfor at vi har ikke nogen hårde mål omkring salg af bredbånd eller lignende. Vi har en langsigtet strategi om at vi skal have fokus på esport og på den måde styrke vores brand på den lange bane. Det er klart at på sigt, at så skal der selvfølgelig være et link over til vores bredbånd. Men man skal også passe på, at man ikke bare fører det ned i halsen på folk hver gang man siger noget. Bredbåndskampagnerne er jo også begyndt at bruge ord som fx 'bedste gamer internet' eller fletter det ind i kommunikationen 'Er du også træt af at dit internet er langsomt lige når du har ham på sigtekornet?' for eksempel. Det er en måde hvorpå man stille og roligt kan begynde og tale gaming ind i bredbåndsproduktet. Men som sådan har det ikke noget direkte link til det som vi gerne vil på den lange bane med esportsligaen, for det er lidt mere på brand-delen og det lange seje træk.

17:50

**A: Har I taget nogle initiativer for at ramme folk der ikke nødvendigvis ser esport?**

18:15

B: Ja, det er helt klart forældrene, fordi at vi ser jo at rigtig mange forældre de ved slet ikke hvad det handler om. Der er bare et kæmpe gap mellem børn og forældre når det kommer til gaming og esport.

Så på måde så ja, så bruger vi det til at italesætte forældrene, fordi at det er jo også dem der er vores kunder. Men vi kan ikke påtage os den rolle, at vi vil gerne gøre esport endnu mere populært eller udbredt, det tror vi sker meget at sig selv. Men vi skal bare være der til at sætte det i relation til vores brand og prøve at promovere ligaen i takt med at esporten vokser. I Danmark der vil vi gerne være med til at organisere den, hvor man som ung eller gammel kan komme ned i klubben og spille, ligesom hvis det var fodbold eller håndbold.

Så på den måde vil vi gerne udbrede esporten, men vi tror også bare at det handler om at positionere sig og så kommer væksten helt af sig selv. Men der er jo også bare nogen, som aldrig nogensinde kommer til at forstå det her eller kommer til at være en del af det.

19:50

**A: Hvordan forsikrer I jer, at jeres brand bliver eksponeret/vist til det ønskede publikum igennem jeres samarbejde?**

21:10

B: Vi vil gerne gøre det ved at lave nogle fede aktivitioner, for dem som kommer der. Og lige præcis med Odincon, der gjorde vi det, at vi fik lavet en Winter Cup i Esportsligaen, hvor man kunne spille med og så fik vi lov af ESL til at sende finalekampen af vores Vinter Cup på den store scene lige inden selve finalekampen med Astralis. Så sad der 4-5000 mennesker og gik helt amok over de her to amatørhold fra vores liga. Det var jo en måde at gøre opmærksom på ligaen på en fed måde, uden at det bare blev logo eksponering for eksempel. Men hvor det ligesom bliver talt ind i en aktivitet, som folk synes er fedt.

22:25

Vi har ikke bare en stand hvor vi har et stort logo og så er det bare det. Vi havde sat en masse gaming-stationer op, vi havde en masse arkade-maskiner, altså retro-maskiner, for også at tale til det her generations gap mellem forældre og børn. Vi sørgede for at der var nogle fede aktiviteter og måder hvorpå vi kunne aktivere de her folk der kom forbi og samtidigt gøre opmærksom på både det YouSee gerne vil, men også selve ligaen.

23:10

**A: Gør I noget for at vedligeholde eller aktivere jeres samarbejde med esports events i er involveret i?**

23:45

B: Det gør vi helt klart. Hvis man skal se det lidt oppe fra, så har vi YouSee Esportsligaen, som er det her partnerskab som er ongoing. Det er jo hele tiden, det er 365 dage om året. I løbet af året, så har vi nogle nyhedsdage, hvor vi har nogle lidt mere intensive kampagneryk, og det kan fx være Odincon. Det er jo typisk i slutningen af året, i december, så har vi fokus på Odincon i den periode. Så kører vi en kampagne eller laver noget content og er tilstede på selve Odincon.

Og så kan der for eksempel være i forbindelse med finalerne i Esportligaen, så har vi et uofficielt danmarksmesterskab, hvor vi går ind og laver en masse larm omkring det. Det samme når vi kommer til fx en ny sæson af Esportligaen, så skal vi jo have en masse nye hold ind. Så laver vi kampagne for at gøre opmærksom på ligaen og tilmeldinger, og så undervejs kan der være nogle tilfældige nedslag på de sociale medier, med nogle give-aways.

Det kan være billetter til ESL turnering, spillertrøjer med tryk på og lignende. Der er mange ting hvor man hele tiden kan gå ned og snakke esport på en naturlig måde, fordi man har det her partnerskab som er løbende. Hvis ikke vi havde det, så ville det også virke lidt underligt, hvis man lige pludselig gik ind og snakkede esport ud af det blå. Så det skal hele tiden føre tilbage til den her platform, som er ligaen. Og så ud af den, så kan man så lave en masse forskellige nedslag i løbet af året, og på den måde hele tiden aktivere det partnerskab man har.

26:25

**A: Er der nogen bestemte ting forbundet med esport, som I ikke ønsker at blive associeret med?**

26:40

B: Vi vil jo gerne gå ind og tage en rolle, hvor vi er med til at aflare mange af de her fordomme og med til at nuancere billedet. Men vi skal jo også anerkende at der selvfølgelig er nogle udfordringer ved gaming og esport. Noget af det som rigtig mange snakker om, det er jo sådan noget som skin-betting eller folk som dyrker usund gaming ved at sidde 12 timer om dagen, ikke har nogen sociale relation, bliver mere og mere ensomme og måske ikke gør det på en sund måde. Og det er jo også derfor at vi gerne vil have folk ned i klubberne.

Vi vil gerne fremhæve de positive ting der er omkring gaming og vi vil gerne gå ind og snakke om vigtigheden af at spise sundt og sove regelmæssigt. Så vi vil gerne promovere sund gaming og være med til at tage en stemme og en rolle i debatten.. Fordi der er selvfølgelig nogle faldgrupper, men jeg tror også at det bliver overdrivet af mange som er lidt skeptiske. Der vil vi gerne gå ind og tage esport og gaming i forsvar og være med til at aflare mange af de fordomme som især eksisterer mellem forældre og børn.

28:30

**A: Har I nogen protokol for at beskytte jeres brand eller image, i tilfælde af at jeres esport event mister popularitet eller på anden vis bliver associeret med noget negativt?**

28:50

B: Vi har ikke en contingency plan liggende nede i skuffe 2, men det er klart at vi prøver bare at være så åbne og ærlige som muligt. Når du går ind i noget nyt som fx esport, så vil du altid møde modstand, du vil altid møde negative kommentarer på de sociale medier eller lignende. Det handler om ikke at gemme sig, men om at gå ind og tage dialogen.

30:20

**A: Hvordan evaluerer I jeres samarbejde i esport?**

30:50

B: Vi har nogle mere bløde mål på den lange bane, som er brandingmæssigt. Vi vil gerne associeres med gaming og esport. Vi vil gerne tage en stemme og en rolle i debatten og være tilstede.

Så har vi selvfølgelig også nogle mål omkring at vi gerne vil have vækstet ligaen. Vi skal have endnu flere til at spille med og så skal vi selvfølgelig hele tiden hæve baren for det vi gør, ved at være tilstede på en masse forskellige events og ved at lave endnu mere indhold end sidste år. Hele tiden ligge på i forhold til det vi har gjort indtil nu. Det er ligesom målsætningen med det. Det er den rejse vi er taget ud på, men det er jo også en rejse der kun lige er begyndt og noget som vi skal være en del af i rigtig mange år. Så på den måde, så handler det om hele tiden at ligge på på en eller anden måde, hele tiden vækste og hele tiden hæve ambitionsniveauet. Og hele tiden lære af de fejl man begår undervejs, fordi det kommer man jo også til når det er noget nyt man kaster sig ud i. Så vil det hele tiden være noget hvor man bliver klogere undervejs.

## **Appendix 3.4 – Transcription: Interview with M.P.L.**

Interviewee: *Mads ‘Phasekick’ Larsen, Professional Esports Streamer and partner with Hungry.dk*

Interviewer = A

Interviewee = B

3:35

**A: Hvad er dine mål eller ambitioner for at indgå i et samarbejde med en sponsor?**

3:50

B: Det skal være noget der kan gavne mig på en eller anden måde. Tilbage dengang hvor jeg indgik i et samarbejde med Hungry, der havde jeg i lang tid ambitionerne om at skulle gå fuld tid med mit streaming på et eller andet tidspunkt. Det har jeg stadigvæk drømmen om, men det er ikke et decideret mål som sådan. Det er meget svært at gøre i Danmark. Hvis man tænker at det skal erstatte et almindeligt fuldtidsjob, hvor du tjener et sted mellem 25.000 og 32.000. Så er der rigtig lang vej og så er det meget få mennesker i Danmark der kan gøre det.

Da jeg søgte sponsorater til at starte med, der gik jeg også lidt efter økonomiske sponsorater, netop for at bedre at få en bedre ide om det var realistisk at spille på deltid eller fuldtid og streame på sigt.

4:50

Man kan sige, gavekortet til eksempelvis Hungry er ikke noget der er med til at betale mine regninger. Det er sådan noget man skal tage højde for med sponsorater. Det skal gavne mig og så hvis ikke jeg føler at samarbejdet det gavner virksomheden som jeg henvender mig til, så er jeg heller ikke interesseret. Jeg skal føle at jeg tilføjer værdi til den virksomhed som jeg vælger at arbejde sammen med. Ellers så mister jeg selv interessen for samarbejdet, hvis ikke jeg føler at jeg bidrager med noget.

5.45

Det indledende sponsorat eller samarbejdsaftale jeg havde med Hungry, det var den her standard-aftale, som de lavede med mange streamere på daværende tidspunkt. Det gik ud på at man fik en tre måneders prøve periode, hvor begge parter ligesom skulle se samarbejdet an, og i løbet af de her tre måneder der fik jeg så X antal gavekort til give-aways på streamen, og så fik jeg et gavekort til mig selv hver måned. Da de her tre måneder var gået, ramte Hungry også en periode eller et tidspunkt hvor de valgte at skære ned på samarbejdet med streamere, fordi de gerne ville flytte deres fokus fra online-delen, altså streaming på Twitch, og så til LAN events, altså de fysiske events. For at gøre sig mere bemærket og synlige der.

Det de valgte at gøre der, det var at de skar meget ned på antallet af streamere de arbejde sammen med. Jeg vil skyde på at de arbejde sammen med 20-25 stykker, uden at kende antallet. Man så i hvert fald Hungry på rigtig mange streams som samarbejdspartner. Så skar de det ned til omkring 10 udvalgte streamers, som så skulle være ambassadører for Hungry. Det blev jeg så valgt til at være én af. Og ligesom intensivere vores samarbejde. Og det gik ud på, at jeg skulle med dem ud til events, hvor jeg skulle være med til at lave noget rapportage, og vi skulle lave nogle events i eventet, hvis man kan sige det sådan. Der var et event de kalder "Dans for pizza", hvor jeg fx skulle stå med et skilt i hånden hvor der stod "Dans for pizza". Så stod jeg med en bakke pizza slices i den anden hånd og kunne folk tage et stykke pizza, hvis de var villige til at danse. Lidt gimiks, sjov og ballade.

9:20

Jeg startede med at streame i starten af marts måned i 2018, og frem til midten af oktober måned 2018, der havde jeg bare streamet sådan lidt et par gange i løbet af ugen og når jeg lige havde tid og lyst, der var ikke noget struktur i det.

10:05

Uden at jeg lige har nogen statistisk på det, så tør jeg næsten godt sige, at jeg er den streamer i Danmark der kommer ud til aller flest events. I løbet af september, oktober, november, december, ca 3½ måneds tid af 2018, der var jeg ude til 5 events. Og i 2019, har jeg været ude til 13 events, pr dags dato, og har 2 tilbage i kalenderen.

12:30

Jeg ved ikke rigtig hvad en virksomhed skal kunne tilbyde for mig, for at det blev attraktivt for mig. Det var måske at opgradere noget af mit udstyr, hvis jeg kunne tænke mig at få opgraderet min mikrofon, eller jeg skulle have et eksternt lydkort. Men i forhold til mine muligheder som streamer, så var det et økonomisk sponsorat der så skulle tage over for et deltids- eller fuldtidsjob, så jeg ligesom har mulighed for at gøre det på den måde.

13:10

**A: Hvad kunne Hungry tilbyde, som ville hjælpe dig med at opfylde disse mål?**

13:20

B: Jamen for mit vedkommende i forhold til hungry, for det første så var det et brand eller en virksomhed som jeg kunne stå indenfor, altså deres produkt, og det er jo noget jeg har brugt i forvejen selv, og har været rigtig glad for at bruge. Og så kan man sige, at det der sådan var den største gevinst for mig, det var eksponeringen i forhold til at have Hungry som brand tilknyttet en så lille stream som min er. Så beskeden en stream som min den er.

Da jeg lavede det oprindelige samarbejde med Hungry, der var jeg også uden sammenligning den mindste streamer der var med i det her samarbejde med Hungry. Men de har jo kunne se et eller andet i mig, og har set de værdier der kommer til udtryk gennem min stream, og det har været noget de gerne ville have forbundet med deres brand. Og på samme måde, så at kunne have et brand som Hungry tilknyttet sit navn, det er jo i sig selv en kæmpe gevinst sådan rent tillidsmæssigt og i forhold til at kunne tiltrække måske nogle andre sponsorer også. Ja, så det var eksponeringen primært der gjorde det for mig.

15:00

**A: Hvad kunne du tilbyde Hungry?**

15:10

B: Altså oprindeligt set så den måde jeg kom ind på Hungry, det var at jeg så et opslag på en eller anden Facebook-gruppe. Jeg tror det var en artikel, der var nogle der havde interviewet en af dem der står for esport marketing delen hos Hungry, omkring det her med esport. Vedkommende nævnte i det her interview med den her artikel her, at vi ville gerne arbejde sammen med flere, og det man skulle gøre, det var at skrive en ansøgning, og så var det en god ide lige at inkludere de og de informationer.

Så jeg skrev en ansøgning til dem som om at jeg skulle skrive en jobansøgning. Jeg skrev ikke bare "Hej, min stream er er twitch.tv/phasekick, og vil i ikke godt sponsorere mig?" agtigt. Når man ansøger om sponsorater eller henvender sig til virksomheder, så bliver man også nødt til at give udtryk for hvad man kan tilbyde. Når alt kommer til alt, så er det jo business.

16:05

Jeg kan ikke huske at jeg har hørt om det før, at der er nogen virksomheder der bare sponsorerer nogen bare fordi at de lige synes det kunne være sjovt agitgt. Altså der skal være et eller andet, hvor de også føler at det giver dem værdi, og det er jo typisk kroner og ører, eksponering, sådan nogle ting.

Mit værdisæt på streamen, det er simpelthen bare, altså jeg går meget ind for den her gode tone på internettet, og vi skal være ordentlige ved hinanden. Jeg går også rigtig meget op i, at når man vælger at blive streamer eller på anden vis offentlig person, influencer, kald det hvad du vil. Der er rigtig mange der har lidt det mindset, uden at det måske kommer til det talte ord, men altså jeg føler lidt at mange der udtrykker, at så længe jeg holder mig inden for Twitch's terms and services, altså de retningslinjer der er for at være på Twitch og så længe jeg holder mig inden for den danske lovgivning, så har jeg egentligt frit lejde til at gøre hvad det passer mig. Og det kan

man sige, det har du jo i princippet også, fordi så længe du holder dig inden for banens streger, så er du jo med i spillet. Det er jo fair nok at tænke sådan.

17.30

Men så føler jeg lidt at det går over til det moralske kompas. Nu er det bare lige for at stille det på spidsen, men jeg går jo heller ikke hen og kalder en tilfældig person for en idiot, bare fordi at jeg kan. Der er nogle værdier i mig, der fortæller mig, at det gør man ikke. Og jeg føler bare at man bør tage ansvar for det content man sender ud. Med respekt, kan man jo lave en indstilling inde på sin Twitch, hvor det er en +18 stream. Det kommer også an på hvordan man har kørt sin stream fra starten af. Fordi min stream har jeg altid kørt meget åben, og kørt meget med viewer games, og alle skal være velkomne og sådan noget. Jeg har ikke rigtig segmenteret i forhold til hvem jeg ønsker at have på min stream. Det har jeg nok heller ikke rigtig følt at jeg har kunne tillade mig. I og med, da jeg startede der var ikke rigtig nogen der så med, så der blev man lidt nødt til at tage det man kunne få, for at kunne vækste.

18:25

Det jeg så har lært igennem min stream's væksts, det er at jeg er blevet klogere på min målgruppe, hvem er mit publikum, hvem er mine faste seere og alt det her. Der er også nogle streamere der har et helt andet segment end jeg har, som hvor at +18 content det ville være mere egnet.

21:15

Da jeg indgik det orindelig samarbejde, inden at jeg skulle lave noget content til dem ude ved events og sådan noget. Der tror jeg da helt sikkert også at det har været attraktivt for Hungry, at jeg streamede/streamer så meget som jeg gør. Jeg har fast skema og de kan jo se hvor meget jeg havde vækstet inden for en given periode, sådan noget har nok også været interessant for dem. Antal visninger om måneden, antal unikke besøgende, og det at jeg kommer rigtig meget ud til events, er meget synlig ude til events rundt omkring i landet. Det er jo også sådan noget der er med til at øge deres synlighed igennem mig.

22:15

**A: Hvorfor ville Hungry's brand ville være et godt samarbejde for dig?**

22:25

B: Jeg kunne aldrig nogensinde drømme om at indgå i et samarbejde med en virksomhed, som jeg ikke kunnestå inden for.

22:40

**A: For at give et eksempel, tit så ser man også betting-sider sponsore inden for esport, hvordan ville du have det med at arbejde sammen med virksomheder af den type?**

22:55

B: Det ville jeg have det meget stramt med. Men man kan også sige, hvis man fra start har bygget sin stream op med +18 content.

Jeg har set mange streamers med et lille +18 logo oppe i hjørnet af streamen. Der er rigtig mange der gör hvad alt hvad de overhovedet kan, for at fortælle at det her det er en +18 stream. Og hvis ikke du er 18, så er det her ikke et sted der er egnet for dig. Men det kan du aldrig nogensinde hel-garderer dig imod, fordi der er mange inde på twitch, som er under 13 år, som er den alder du skal have, i henhold til terms and service, for overhovedet at have en profil på Twitch.

23:40

Lige nøjagtigt med gambling, det har jeg det rigtig svært ved. Jeg kommer aldrig nogensinde til at have det på min stream. Heller ikke sådan noget som lootboxes og alt sådan noget. Jeg er jo et forbillede for nogen, der er nogle mennesker der sidder derude og ser op til mig. Og det er jo også derfor at det interessant for virksomheder at arbejde sammen med en streamer eller en anden influencer, fordi at vi er typisk rigtig tætte på vores publikum. Og jo tættere man er på sit publikum, jo mere troværdig og jo mere værdi har mine ord til mit publikum i forhold til et sponsorat for en virksomhed.

Så hvis jeg sidder og fortæller at jeg sidder og gambler på liv og løs, så kan det være at lille Emil på 12 han tænker "Fuck man, Phasekick han sidder og gambler og det ser bare mega sejt ud". Jeg tror at problemet er med gambling og sådan noget, når man streamer det, er at det bare er tal på skærmen. Jeg tror at det er svært for specielt det yngre publikum at forholde sig til hvad det er der egentlig sker, fordi det er bare tal på en skærm. De ser ikke at der ryger penge ud af deres børneopsparing eller nemkonto, som det gør for os der er ældre. Folk de må gamble og gøre lige hvad pokker de vil, men jeg synes ikke det har noget at gøre i en streaming-sammenhæng.

25:40

Hvis man så virkelig skal køre det helt ud, ville jeg så opfodre lille Emil på 12 til at spise pizza hver dag. Det kan man jo også godt mene at det er måske det jeg signalerer igennem et samarbejde med Hungry. Altså hvis du tager den lidt til ekstremerne. Alt du laver på din stream, kan vendes til noget negativt. Så det handler om at kunne forsvare det og have sine værdier på plads.

27:00

Vi spiser jo alle sammen en pizza eller en burger engang imellem, og det er jo forskelligt fra person til person hvor ofte det er. Det er jo hver enkelt persons egen frie vilje hvornår og hvor ofte og hvor meget det skal foregå. Det jeg prøver at signalere med mit samarbejde med Hungry, der er så bare at når jeg vælger at spise den pizza eller spise den burger, så kan jeg stå inden for det som Hungry de tilbyder. Jeg spiser jo heller ikke pizza og burger hver dag bare fordi at jeg har et samarbejde med Hungry.

## **Appendix 3.5 – Transcription: Interview with M.S.**

Interviewee: Martin Sahlertz, Digital Marketing and Communications Manager and Contact Person for Sponsee (Michaela ‘Mimi’ Lintrup) at Red Bull Denmark

Interviewer = A

Interviewee = B

3:40

**A: Hvad er Michaela’s mål eller ambitioner for at indgå i et samarbejde med en sponsor?**

3:50

B: Det er meget vigtigt for os, at hver gang vi indgår i et samarbejde med en atlet, at vi arbejder for nogle gensidige mål. Hvor man kan sige at der er mange der laver sponsorater af atleter eller influencers, imod at man kun regner med at skulle få noget fra dem. At det handler mere om at opnå virksomhedens mål igennem atleterne.

Hvorimod for os, der handler det faktisk lidt om det modsatte. At hvis vi kan skabe en rigtig god historie, ved at få hende (mimi), eller nogen af vores andre atleter til at opnå nogen af de mål de gerne vil. Så har vi skabt en stærkere historie omkring den her atlet, og har været med til at videreudvikle den her persons karriere og de ambitioner de ligesom har inden for deres sport.

Det har også været en af de store drivers med lige præcis den her case med mimi, at ligesom møde hende, fordi at hun er en stor profil i forvejen i Counter-Strike, og der er mange der har brugt hende allerede, eOddset og andre. Som har fået rigtig meget ud af det. Det har hun helt sikkert også tjent penge på og fået eksponering af, men hun er ikke blevet en bedre Counter-Strike spiller af det.

5:20

En af hovedårsagerne til at hun synes at det er interessant at arbejde sammen med os, er netop at vi har mulighed for at teame hende op med andre esports hold, såsom G2, C9, Vitality, ENCE og alle mulige andre CS-hold. Vi kan teame mimi op med dem alle, sende hende på bootcamp med dem, sende hende på træningsforløb hvor hun kan forbedre sine kognitive evner, reaktionsevner og alle sådan nogle ting. Som faktisk er noget hvor vi går ind og bruger penge på det, for at i sidste ende at være med til at prøve at få hende til at opnå hendes helt overordnede mål, at blive pro. Ikke bare at blive en af de bedste kvindelige spillere, men spille med de bedste på tværs af køn. Og hvis det kan lade sig gøre, så står vi jo bare sådan rent kommunikativt super stærkt, fordi at vi har været med til at tage hende det skridt.

6:30

Og det er jo netop derfor at jeg også tror, at hun synes det er interessant, at skulle lave noget med os. Og derudover, så kan man sige, at det også en blå-stempling af, at der er kun lige knap 800 Red Bull atleter i hele verden. Og man får ikke lov til at bære Red Bull branding, altså vi sælger ikke Red Bull merchandise. Så man kan kun få fat i Red Bull branding, hvis man er Red Bull atlet.

Så det signalerer ligesom også at man er blandt de absolut bedste i verden til det man laver, hvis man er Red Bull atlet. Så det er jo også på den måde en blå-stempling af hvor dygtig hun er.

7:20

**A: Hvilke fordele kunne mimi tilbyde Red Bull?**

7:30

B: Først og fremmest, så er hun et af de mest ambitiøse talenter jeg nogensinde har mødt. Hun er super stædig og bruger alle sine vågne timer på at blive bedre til det hun laver. Så for os, var det ligesom en case, hvor vi følte at vi rent faktisk kunne gå ind og gøre en forskel. Vi ville fx aldrig gå ind og arbejde sammen med Astralis. Ikke fordi at vi ikke kan lide det, men simpelthen fordi at de er på så højt et niveau allerede. Der ville vi ikke føle at vi kunne gå ind og gøre en forskel nødvendigvis. Vi ville ikke kunne gå ind og gøre dem bedre af at vi arbejdede sammen med dem, fordi de allerede er verdens bedste. Hvorimod med mimi, der har vi med en profil at gøre, der vil være verdens bedste og vil gøre alt hvad det kræver at komme dertil. Men har måske ikke lige midlerne eller netværket til at realisere det. Så på den måde var hun bare en profil der passede rigtig godt ind.

8:30

I modsætning til mange andre kvindelige CS:GO spillere, så er hun faktisk en virkelig dårlig streamer. Fordi at hun er ikke særlig interessant at kigge på, fordi at hun er så koncentreret om at spille. Men alligevel er der så mange der følger med i hvad hun laver, fordi at hun er så ambitiøs omkring det hun laver. Så de følger udelukkende med for at blive bedre, ved at kigge på hende, fremfor at kigge på nogen der måske er sjovere at kigge på. Det gør hun ikke på nogen som helst måde, hun er bare en rigtig dygtig counter strike spiller.

Så for os var det selvfølgelig en kombination af at hun i forvejen er et navn og en profil, men også at hun har den attitude og det gå-på-mod det kræver at tage kampen op mod noget der er så svært.

9:40

**A: Hvorfor ville Red Bull's brand være et godt samarbejde for MIMI?**

9:50

B: For rigtig mange atleter er det en stor blå-stempling at kunne arbejde sammen med Red Bull, fordi at der er så få der gør det. Og ved at man gør det, så bliver man ligesom sat i en bås, der hedder at man er blandt de absolutte bedste i verden til det man laver. Så på den måde, er det jo noget hvor folk indenfor ens sportsgren drejer hovedet og tænker "Okay, den her person den kan noget, fordi at de har den her kasket med vores brand på".

Men derudover, så også fordi at vi er så stort et mediehus som vi er. Så vi har også en vis mængde power til når vi laver medieprojekter. Nu er mimi i forvejen en stor profil, men for andre atleter har det også rigtig stor værdi at man i niche sportsgrene, fx inden for OCR løb, kitesurfing eller andet, kan arbejde sammen med et mediehus, der rent faktisk gør at man kan vækste som profil også.

11:00

Det at lave et sponsorat eller atlet-samarbejde med os, er selvfølgelig én ting. Men det voucher også for andre sponsorer. Det har vi i hvert fald set rigtig mange gange. At hvis man først har et samarbejde med os, så er det også nemmere at få andre sponsorer på, fordi at man godt ved hvilket mediehus der følger med Red Bull.

## **Appendix 3.6 – Transcription: Interview with T.K.**

Interviewee: *Thomas Koed, Chairman of the board at Esport Danmark*

Interviewer = A

Interviewee = B

1:15

**A: Hvad er jeres mål eller ambitioner for at indgå i et samarbejde med en sponsor?**

1:25

B: Det er ligesom hvis du spiller fodbold og træner til at blive en god fodboldspiller. Om det så er mini-put eller hvor du er henne i aldersskalaen. Så vil du jo gerne ud og teste dine kompetencer i fodbold. Det er jo præcis det samme her. Altså hvis du ikke har mulighed for at spille mod nogen andre i en eller anden formaliserede turnering, så er det jo svært af at finde ud af om du er god eller dårlig, eller hvor henne du skal blive bedre, eller udvikle dig.

Det handler om at give spillerne mulighed for at spille mod andre. Det er jo det vi alle sammen gerne vil. Hver gang vi træner til noget, så er det jo fordi vi gerne vil blive bedre til det og vi vil jo altid gerne selv teste os i forhold til andre. Og det er jo det YouSee Esportliga kan gøre. Der er det jo at man har mulighed for at få bredde-niveau vel og mærke, og prøve sine egenskaber i forhold til andre hold.

2:30

**A: Hvilke fordele kunne YouSee tilbyde, som ville hjælpe jer med at opfylde disse mål?**

2:40

B: Det koster jo penge at drive en liga. Det er ikke gratis. Og jeg tror for YouSee's vedkommende, så var det jo et spørgsmål om at de kunne lave noget CSR arbejde, samtidigt med at de kunne få noget eksponering for de CSR penge de vælger at investere i en liga.

3:20

**A: Hvilke fordele kunne Esport Danmark tilbyde YouSee?**

3:30

B: Jeg synes jo kun at det er godt at der er nogen der ser perspektivet i at understøtte esporten. Og her med YouSee igennem en esportsturnering, det synes jeg er super. Det er lige præcis det der skal til ellers så vokser esporten ikke på nogen måde. Så forbliver den bare ved med at være den lille tykke dreng ned i kælderen med colaan og pizzaen. Det er jo de fordomme der eksisterer.

Og det er jo fordi at forældrene ikke ved hvad det er de unge mennesker de laver. Og når man ikke ved hvad de unge mennesker laver, så kan man ikke forholde sig til det. Og den evolution der er sket inden for esport, det er jo bare at de unge mennesker de leger på en ny måde i forhold til hvordan jeg legede dengang jeg var ung og i samme aldersgruppe. Der løb jeg måske rundt ude og vejen og legede røver og soldater. Nu sidder de unge mennesker på computeren og leger røver og soldater i stedet for.

4:40

Det er der mange politikere og mange forældre generelt der ikke forstår. Og det er et kæmpe stort problem. Og de er først begyndt at forstå at man kan blive til noget som esporter, fordi at Astralis vandt der for 2½ års tiden siden. Så har de fundet ud af at man kan tjene penge på det. Og når forældre finder ud af at der er noget man kan tjene penge på, så bliver det pludseligt interessant for dem. Og så er der selvfølgelig en modningsfase i evolutionen også. Evolutionen gør jo, at dem der var børn for 10 år siden, er også blevet ældre og er måske ved at få børn, og derfor bliver deres forståelsesramme bedre, end den tidligere generationer's har været.

5:20

Det bedste eksempel er jo, at hvis du møder forældre, så er der jo aftensmad kl. 18. Og når lille Per han ikke kommer ud til aftensmaden og siger "amen, jeg skal lige spille færdig", så bliver mor eller far eller begge to sure og siger "Ej, nu skal du komme ud og spise" og logge ud af selve spillet han sidder og spiller, og det har en stor konsekvens for dem han sidder og spiller med, men han skal fanden galme ud og spise sin aftensmad. Havde lille Per løbet rundt på en fodboldbane, og der havde været 10 min tilbage af fodboldkampen, så ville du aldrig nogensinde have set forældrene hive lille Per ud af fodboldkampen, 10 min før tid, fordi han skulle hjem og spise aftensmad.

7:10

**A: Hvorfor ville YouSee's brand være et godt samarbejde for ESD og de andre aktører?**

7:20

B: Dem der kan se lyset i esporten, er også dem der vil komme til at støtte op under det. Jeg tror at YouSee så et potentiale i det her. De havde en anden ejerkonstalation da de indgik i esporten, hvor de netop ville fokusere mere på content i stedet for kabler. Det har såændret sig siden. Men jeg tror, at YouSee kunne se at deres segment, det var 45+ der sad og så TV, fordi de unge mennesker i dag, de sidder jo ikke og ser TV. Så hvordan søgeren skal de komme ud og få fat i de her unge mennesker, så de får dem til at se noget almindelig TV igen, eller hvordan kan vi fastholde dem i et YouSee univers. Fordi de er ikke eksisterende i deres univers. De gider ikke sidde og se almindelig TV. Så sidder de og ser det på alle mulige andre platforme i stedet for. Så det er jo derfor de siger, at hvis vi kan slå vores brand fast i ungdommen, så bliver vi også nødt til at være synlige der hvor ungdommen er. Og det er jo f.eks. i en esportsliga, som nu hedder YouSee Esportsligaen.

## **Appendix 4: Questionnaire – T.L.**

Respondent: *Timmy Lind, Marketing Manager at Hungry.dk*

### **Q1. Hvilke esport projekter eller samarbejde er I involveret i?**

A1: Vi har samarbejder med individuelle danske streamere på Twitch, hvor vi giver gavekort til streamerne, som de kan lave giveaways med på deres stream. Vi giver gavekort til LAN events rundt omkring i Danmark, som de kan bruge til præmiepulje til de turneringer, som de afholder. Til gengæld sætter vi plakater, bannere og diverse merchandise op i hallen. Vi samarbejder også med forskellige eSport organisationer og events, hvor vi oftest bidrager med gavekort til præmier eller giveaways imod at de promoverer Hungry.dk på deres sociale medier og sender billeder/video content fra eventet retur, som vi selv kan bruge på de sociale medier.

### **Q2. Hvad er jeres mål og ambitioner for jeres involvering i esport?**

A2: Vores mål er at være et brand, som støtter og er associeret med eSport, da gamere og gaming interessererde er en stor del af vores målgruppe. Vi bevæger os primært i social-gaming segmentet, hvor det er aspirerende talenter og amartører.

### **Q3. Hvordan tror I sponsorering af esport kan hjælpe med at opfylde disse mål?**

A3: Vi tror på, at gamere vil støtte op om vores platform, når vi støtter op om gamere. Vi er top of mind og en positiv del af kulturen når de bestiller take away.

### **Q4. Hvordan udvælger I hvilken spiller eller streamer I vil sponsorere? Hvilke krav sætter I til jeres potentielle partnere og streamers?**

A4: Vi udvælger streamere at samarbejde med ved at kigge på deres Twitch kanal, her gør vi brug af værktøjet SocialBlade, som kan vise statistikker af udviklingen af den enkelte streamers antal views og antal followers. Tallene skal gerne være på et vist niveau og i postiv udvikling. Når vi samarbejder med hold, kigger vi meget på organisationen bagved og på deres level af professionalisme. Holdet og spillernes brug af sociale medier er også vigtige for os, da det er her vi får online omtale.

### **Q5. Hvordan vil I beskrive det publikum, som I forsøger at ramme gennem jeres samarbejde med individuelle esport spillere?**

A5: Målgruppen er bred aldersmæssigt og rammer både m/k fra 14-35 årige med interesse for gaming og eSport.

### **Q6. Designer I indholdet i jeres kampagne, således at det henvender sig til esport publikummet?**

#### **Hvis ja, kan I så give mig et eksempel?**

A6: Vi har bl.a. fået lavet bannere, roll-ups og plakater med gamer-relateret grafik, som vi kun bruger, når vi samarbejder med LAN og esport events. Jeg har vedhæftet et eksempel.

**Q7. Hvordan forsikrer I jer, at jeres brand bliver eksponeret/vist til det ønskede publikum igennem jeres samarbejde med esport streamers?**

A7: Vi sørger for at vores samarbejdspartnere har vores logo til online initiativer og ovennævnte merchandise til offline aktiviteter. Derudover er vores mål at modtage stemningsbilleder og video'er fra events, som vi selv kan dele på vores platforme.

**Q8. Har I taget nogle initiativer for at ramme folk der ikke nødvendigvis ser esport?**

A8: Ja bestemt. Folk med interesse for eSport er kun en af vores målgrupper. Vi stræber også efter at lave indhold til vores sociale medier, som rammer en bredere målgruppe. For eksempel gør vi også brug af mikro-influencers. Vi er meget bevidst om konteksten vores brand indgår i. eks. har vi én visuel identitet overfor gamere og en anden til 'traditionelle' marketingtiltag.

**Q9. Gør I noget for at vedligeholde eller aktivere jeres samarbejde med individuelle streamere?**

**- Fx fan-oplevelser, sociale medier, give-aways eller lignende?**

A9: Vi involverer dem i udviklingen af vores samarbejdsavtaler, så de kan komme med idéer til forbedringer. Vi følger og interagerer også med streamerne på Facebook, Instagram og Twitter. Vi ønsker i højere grad at tage en aktiv del af miljøet ved at være afsender på esport og gaming specifikt indhold, som skaber en synergি i vores andre aktiviteter.

**Q10. Er der nogen bestemte ting forbundet med esport, som I ikke ønsker at blive associeret med?**

A10: Det er vigtigt for os at vores samarbejdspartnere har et positivt image, som man ser værdi i at blive associeret med. Derfor er det vigtigt at de holder en god tone og er troværdige.

**Q11. Har I nogen protokol for at beskytte jeres brand eller image, i tilfælde af en streamer opfører sig negativt, bliver skadet eller på nogen måde mister popularitet?**

A11: Hvis streameren ikke overholder vores aftale eller på anden måde gør sig negativt bemærket, så ser vi på den individuelle sag og potentielt lukker samarbejdet ned.

**Q12. Hvordan evaluerer I jeres sponsorater af individuelle streamers? Anvender I nogen specifikke metoder, eksempelvis ROO, ROI, visninger på stream, følgere, seertal, salgstal eller andet?**

A12: Vi kigger på udviklingen af streamerens følgere, seertal og aktivitet på de sociale medier.

## **Appendix 4.1: Questionnaire – D.M.R.**

Respondent: *David M. Rasmussen, CEO and Founder of Wicked Gaming*

### **Q1. Hvad er jeres mål eller ambitioner for at indgå i et samarbejde med en sponsor?**

A1: Målet er et samarbejde som giver mening, det kan handle om PR, Økonomi eller andet som har en værdi for din udvikling. Det handler i bund og grund om strategisk udvikling med fokus på næste skridt i ens forretnings plan.

### **Q2. Hvilke fordele kunne Capstore tilbyde, som ville hjælpe jer med at opfylde disse mål?**

A2: Capstore har været en partner helt fra vores begyndelse af, her har vi fx afholdt FIFA event i deres butik på fisketorvet. I starten var det vigtigt at komme ud og blive set (det er det stadig den dag idag), men især i starten skulle vi være synlige, så folk fandt ud af hvem vi var. Vi havde også mange giveaways sammen med Capstore, som igen var med til at skabe en masse opmærksomhed for begge parter. Så vores samarbejde i starten var meget præget af "eyeballs" (synlighed).

### **Q3. Hvilke fordele kunne I tilbyde Capstore?**

A3: Der vender vi tilbage til punkt 2, vi er i et marked med mange unge og der hjalp vi Capstore med at få en masse synlighed på et "daværende" nyt område, men som idag er kæmpe stort og forsæt et fantastisk marked for alle virksomheder. Esport er et stort marked med utrolig mange følgere i alle aldre, og derfor er der noget for alle, det behøver ikke kun at handle om computer udstyr og gaming når vi snakker om partnere. Alle dem som gamer er også folk med alm arbejde i hverdagen, det kan være alt fra håndværkere til advokater og de har også interesse til andet end gaming. Derfor er der kæmpe muligheder for virksomheder i helt andre fag, til at komme ind på dette marked. Dog er der ikke så mange af dem endnu, men det skal nok komme, de skal blot få øjnende op for det. Mulighederne er uendelige!

### **Q4. Hvorfor synes I at Capstore som brand ville være et godt samarbejde for jer?**

A4: Capstore henvender sig også til mange unge, selvom deres mål er folk i alle aldre, men her har vi et brand som ikke kun er computer og gaming, men som også henvender sig til et helt andet segment end esport. Der er en masse "eyeballs" at hente, i form af folk som endnu ikke kender til os, men måske er en smule nysgerrige på fænomenet esport og derfor en god indgangsvinkel for os til at blive mere synlige.

## **Appendix 4.2: Questionnaire - C.S.**

Respondent: *Christian Slot, Head of Media and Press at ES North A/S*

### **Q1. Hvad er jeres mål eller ambitioner for at indgå i et samarbejde med en sponsor?**

A1: Vi kalder dem altid "partnere" og ikke "sponsorer". Det er vigtigt for os, at det er en slags ligeværdig forhold, hvor man ikke bare får penge for et logo på en trøje, men at det rent faktisk giver mere mening for alle parter. Naturligvis betyder økonomien noget for os for at få butikken kører rundt, men det er endnu vigtigere at have en god relation til en partner, som har lyst til at være i mange år. Så vi tænker altid på at skabe værdi – og søge værdi (ikke nødvendigvis bare i penge) fra potentielle partnere.

### **Q2. Hvilke fordele kunne Capgemini tilbyde, som ville hjælpe jer med at opfylde disse mål?**

A2: Det giver så god mening for os at have Capgemini, der arbejder med IT-løsninger. De har it-specialister ansat, der eksempelvis vil kunne hjælpe os med vores hjemmeside, udvikle analyseværktøjer, scouting-tools, marketing-værktøjer for at nævne nogle ideer. Derudover er Capgemini en enorm global virksomhed, hvor vi potentielt får talerør til masser af medarbejdere.

### **Q3. Hvilke fordele kunne I tilbyde Capgemini?**

A3: Mange af de it-specialister, der er ansat hos Capgemini, spiller i høj grad CS:GO, FIFA, Apex og andre spil, når de kommer hjem. Mange af dem følger med i esport. Jeg ser det som et genialt træk fra deres side for at gøre hoserne grønne over for medarbejderne, og for at vise, at de forstår det her nye space.

### **Q4. Hvorfor synes I at Capgemini som brand ville være et godt samarbejde for jer?**

A4: Capgemini er et seriøst brand. Et af verdens mest respekterede it-konsulentvirksomheder, der ovenikøbet er et af de mest etiske. Og så er det en global virksomhed. Det passer perfekt med vores værdier.

## **Appendix 4.3: Questionnaire – J.S.**

Respondent: *Jørgen Stensgaard, CEO at Waoo*

### **Q1. Hvilke esport projekter eller samarbejde er I involveret i?**

A1: Esport har længe været et særligt fokusområde for os - tilbage i 2016 var vi den første TV-distributør, der tilbød en esport-kanal, som hurtigt viste sig at være en kæmpe succes. Sidenhen er vi blevet sponsor for esport-holdet Tricked, som blandt andet har hentet to verdensmesterskabet i FIFA hjem til Danmark. Vi har skabt Waoo CS:GO Liga og Waoo Ligaen. Derudover har vi tilføjet Pixel.tv, der har fokus på gaming og esport, som en del af vores TV-kanaludbud. Sluteligt har vi været hovedsponsor på Copenhagen Games et par år, som er et af de største danske esportsevents.

### **Q2. Hvad er jeres mål og ambitioner for jeres involvering i esport?**

A2: Vores kerneprodukt fiberbredbånd er det perfekte match til esporten med sin høje hastighed, stabilitet og lave latency – inde i krydsfeltet mellem disse ligger den ultimative esportsoplevelse – og dét leverer fiberen. I og med at fiberen er perfekt til esport, betyder det naturligvis også, at målgruppen for esport er vores nutidige og fremtidige kunder. Men derudover er esport også gået hen og blevet et underholdningsunivers, som appellerer til og efterspørges af et større og brede publikum. Det er derfor ved at udvikle sig til et godt TV-produkt, som fanger fleres interesse – og når vores kunder efterspørge et godt produkt, er vi glade for at kunne levere det. Men det er vigtigt, at der er nogen, der støtter op om og løfter sporten, for at den kan fortsætte med at vækste og udvikle, både som en international elitesport, men også som underholdningsprodukt. Der er en kæmpe talentmasse i Danmark, som befinner sig i den internationale elite, og det er vigtigt, at denne fortsat udvikles.

### **Q3. Hvordan tror I sponsorering af esport kan hjælpe med at opfylde disse mål?**

A3: Kort sagt dyrkes og opleves esport igennem vores produkter – fiberbredbånd og TV. Dermed bliver det en full circle, når vi er med til at løfte esporten, udvikle talenter og sprede kendskabet til det.

### **Q4. Hvordan udvælger I hvilken esport organisation som i vil samarbejde med? Hvilke krav sætter I til jeres potentielle partnere?**

Q4: Først og fremmest handler det om vilje, gejst og ambitioner – det kræver hårdt arbejde at være blandt de bedste. Det ved vi hos Waoo, da vi er kåret som Danmarks bedste internet for 8 år i træk – selvom vi ikke er den største spiller på markedet.

### **Q5. Hvordan vil I beskrive det publikum, som I forsøger at ramme gennem jeres samarbejde med esport hold?**

A5: Det er både en yngre, techinteresseret målgruppe og på samme tid også ofte firstmoveren, som vil have det bedste og det nyeste på markedet.

**Q6. Designer I indholdet i jeres kampagne, således at det henvender sig til esport publikummet?**

**Hvis ja, kan I så give mig et eksempel?**

A6: Hvis du tænker ift. markedsføring, har vi naturligvis nogle segmenter, vi arbejder ud fra – og her er dette klart et af dem.

**Q7. Hvordan forsikrer I jer, at jeres brand bliver eksponeret/vist til det ønskede publikum igennem jeres samarbejde med esport hold?**

A7: Dette handler naturligvis meget om logoer på trøjer mm., men også ved at sørge for, at fiberen er tilgængelig for holdene.

**Q8. Har I taget nogle initiativer for at ramme folk der ikke nødvendigvis ser esport?**

A8: Tænker du her på, at få folk, der ikke i forvejen er interesseret i at se esport, til at blive det? I så fald kan man sige, at jo mere sporten løftes, des større bliver kendskabet og blot indenfor den årrække vi har været med, er antallet af hold og events boomet og interessen blandt sponsorerer og medier fuldt med – det samme blandt den brede danske befolkning. Esport er blevet et fast element i den nationale nyhedsdækning, og man har blandt andet kunne følge nogle af de nye turneringer på DR's kanaler, og ofte ser man nyheder om esportsresultater i nyhedsdækningen på TV.

**Q9. Gør I noget for at vedligeholde eller aktivere jeres samarbejde med de esport hold I støtter?**

**- Fx fan-oplevelser, sociale medier, give-aways eller lignende?**

A9: Dette er naturligvis med hele vejen rundt i vores markedsføring på SoMe, konkurrencer osv.

**Q10. Er der nogen bestemte ting forbundet med esport, som I ikke ønsker at blive associeret med?**

A10: Vi ville naturligvis ikke indgå sponsorater med en sport, hvor der var dele, vi ikke ønskede at blive associeret med. I så fald skal det være noget, der kan ske indenfor alle sportsgrene – snyd, dårligt sportsmanship eller lign.

**Q11. Har I nogen protokol for at beskytte jeres brand eller image, i tilfælde af et esport hold mister popularitet eller på anden vis bliver associeret med noget negativt?**

A11: Ja, der er mulighed for at komme ud af aftalerne, afhængigt af hvor alvorligt det er.

**Q12. Hvordan evaluerer I jeres samarbejde med esport hold? Anvender I nogen specifikke metoder? Eksempelvis ROO, ROI, følgere, seertal, salgstal eller andet?**

A12: Sponsorater er en langtidsinvestering, og kan derfor ikke måles her og nu. Men ved større events mm. holder vi naturligvis øje med medieomtale, eksponering mm.

## **Appendix 4.4: Questionnaire – Z.B.**

Respondent: Zahid Butt, CEO and Founder of Esport.dk, Copenhagen Games, Esport-service.dk, Cph-esport.dk

### **Q1. Hvad var jeres mål eller ambitioner for at indgå i et samarbejde med en sponsor?**

A1: For os handler det om økonomi og en relevans til alle vore partnere. Ligesåvel som økonomien er vigtigt for os, er det også vigtigt at der er noget relevans til partnere og produkter

### **Q2. Hvilke fordele kunne Waootilbyde, som ville hjælpe jer med at opfylde disse mål?**

A2: Som skrevet tidligere så handler det om økonomi for at kunne udvikle vores projekt, men det handler også om stærke relevans til at arbejde med digitale virksomheder.

### **Q3. Hvilke fordele kunne I tilbyde Waoo?**

A3: Stor kontaktflade til gamere som er en del af den digitale verden, hvilket netop er målgruppen for Waoo og andre lign. Serviceproviders

### **Q4. Hvorfor synes I at Waoo som brand ville være et godt samarbejde for jer?**

A4: Det handler om de værdier, som enhver virksomhed eller brand arbejder med. I den henseende så har Waoo nogle værdier som egentlig passer meget godt til vores egen tankegang og det vi gerne vil.

## Appendix 5 – Hungry.dk

### Hungry.dk Sponsorship Activation (Gamer-related Graphics and Content)



(Hungry.dk Esports, n.d.).



(Email from Timmy Lind, Marketing Manager, Hungry.dk)

## Hungry.dk Sponsorship Activation (Social Media Content, 2018)



**Hungry.dk @Hungrydk • 1. jan.**

I 2018 har vi samarbejdet med 5 tons streamere. Vi elsker. hver. eneste. af jer!

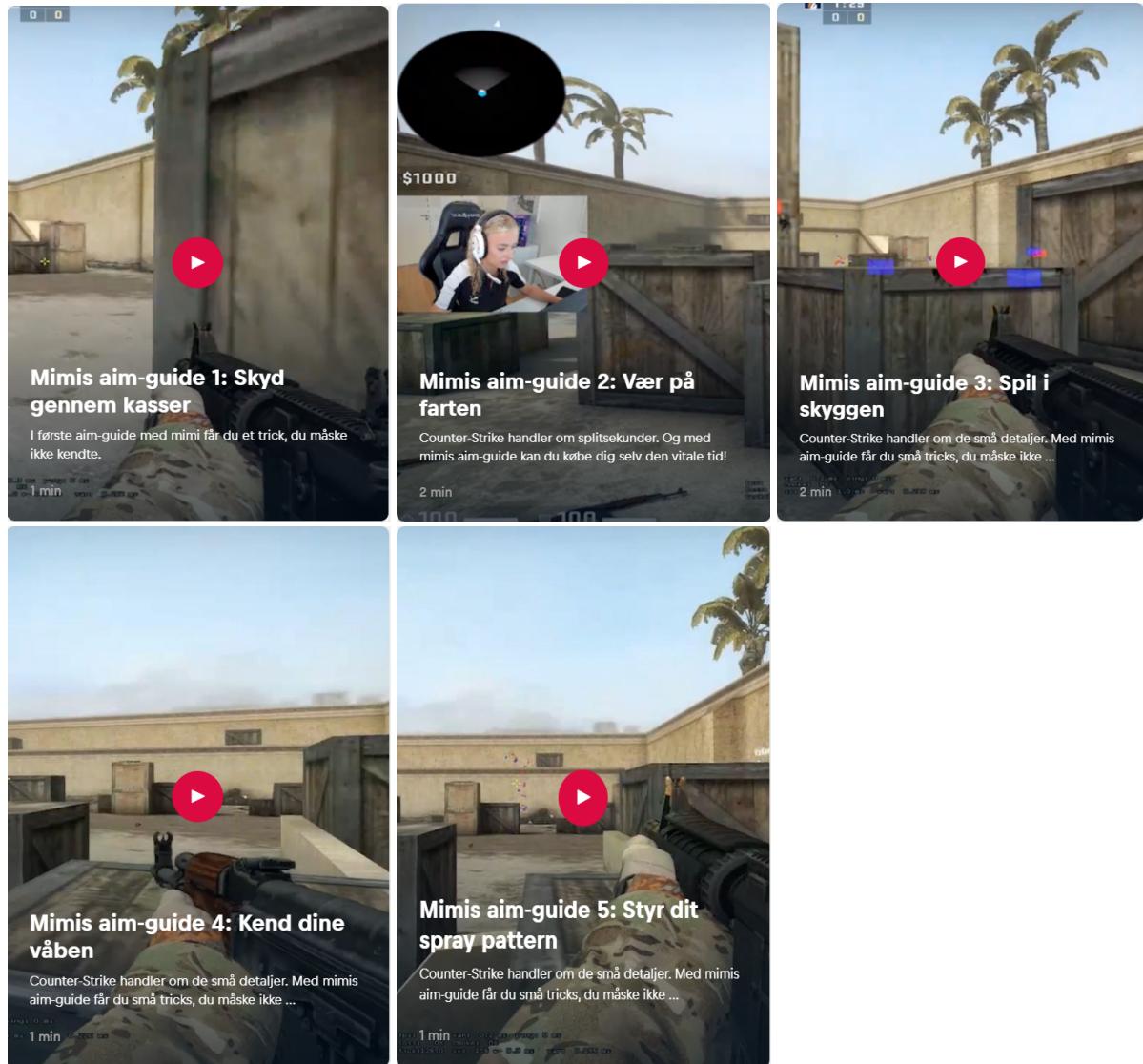
Her har vi samlet nogle af jeres bedste øjeblikke, I er awesome! We loooove youuuu! #StayDerpy



(Hungry.dk Twitter Post, 2018)

## Appendix 6 – Red Bull

### Red Bull Sponsorship Activation (Esports Content, Mimi's aim guide 1-5)



(Red Bull Esports, n.d.).

## Appendix 7 – Capstore

### Capstore Sponsorship Selection, Uniform/Apparel Sponsorship (Wicked Gaming Caps, 2019)



Følg



The Making of "custom made" by  
@capstoredk

#Cap #Caps #Capstore #Esport #Wicked  
#Gaming #WickedGaming



07.06 - 17. apr. 2019

(Wicked Gaming, 2019)

## Capstore Sponsorship Activation (Social Media Content, Game Announcements shared from Wicked, 2017)

 Capstore.dk  
22. februar 2017 ·

I aften træder vores sponsor klub, Wicked Gaming's 2 ud af 3, Fifa spillere ind i den danske Fifa superliga Waoa ligaen. Held og lykke til Lars 'PrimeTurbo' Korreborg og Malthe "KontraDørge" Dørge!  
#capstoredk #esport #fifa17

\*\*\*



Wicked Gaming  
22. februar 2017 ·

Synes godt om side

(Capstore, 2017)

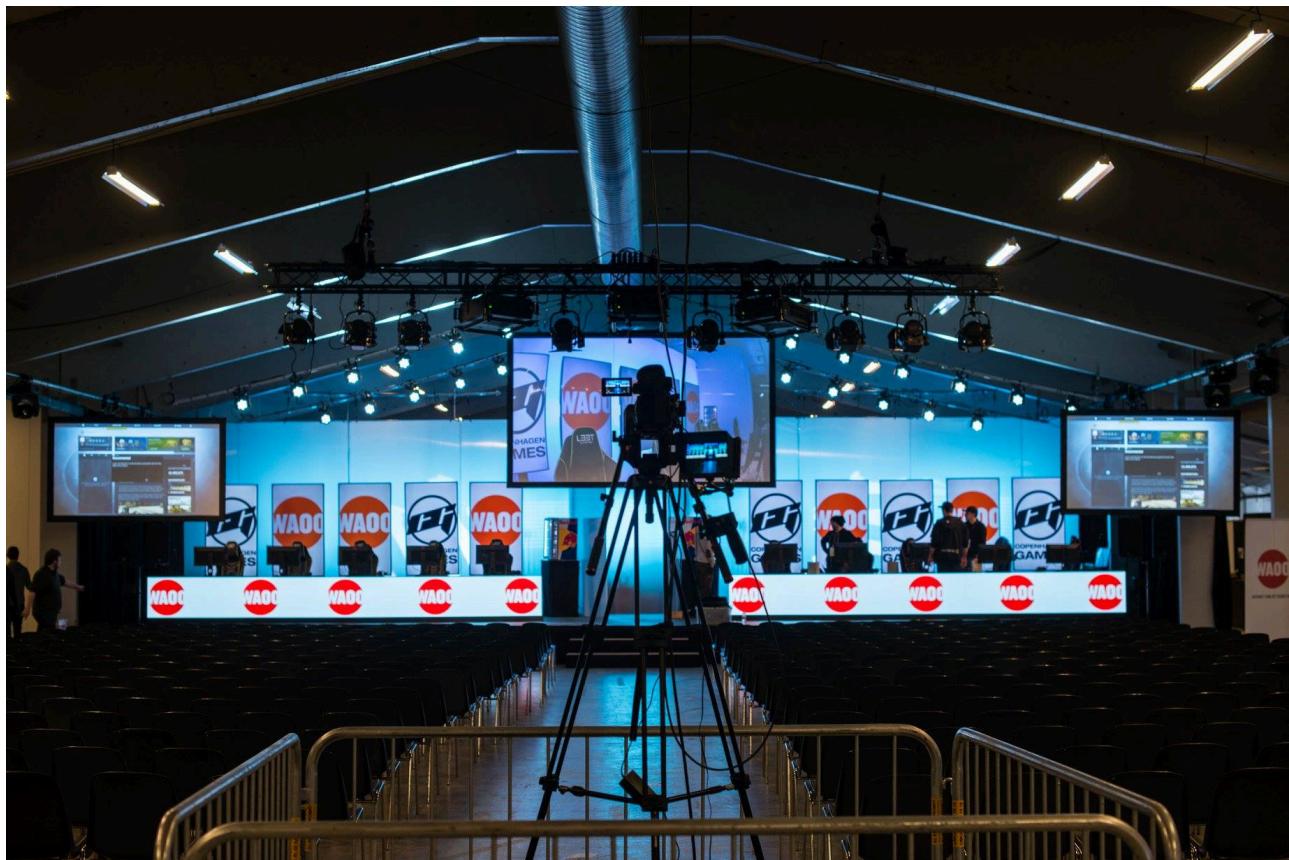
## Capstore Sponsorship Activation (Social Media Content, Wicked Gaming Cap, 2019)



(Capstore, 2019)

## Appendix 8 – Waoo

**Waoo Sponsorship Selection, Brand Exposure (Banners, Posters, Screens at Copenhagen Games, 2019)**



(Waoo 1, 2019)

## Waoo Sponsorship Activation (Activities for Fans and Non-Fans, Copenhagen Games, 2019)

WAOO Waoo  
30. marts 2018 ·

...

Så starter endnu en dejlig dag på Copenhagen Games, men er du ikke gamer er der alligevel meget at opleve.

Læs en lille anbefaling fra en ikke-gamer (Bemærk artiklen er på engelsk). Det lader til at han har haft en fed oplevelse og at han nyder at slappe af på Waoo's stand under eventen.

<https://bit.ly/2uuxtex>

Han og alle i andre gamere eller ikke-gamere skal være så velkomne på standen, hvor I også kan se Pixel.tv lave Live TV, spille RB6 og Far Cry 5 med Ubisoft og deltage i fede Waoo konkurrencer.

Vi lægger an til en fantastisk langfredag her i Bella Center.



(Waoo 2, 2019)

## Waoo Sponsorship Activation (Giveaways on Social Media, Copenhagen Games 2019)

WAOO Waoo  
27. marts 2018 · Redigeret ·

...

VIND EN CHROMECAST ULTRA 4K FRA WAOO OG EN LÆKKER RAINBOW SIX GOODIEBAG FRA UBISOFT.

I forbindelse med Copenhagen Games 2018 udlodder Waoo og Ubisoft en lækker esport præmie. Den præmie synes vi også at du skal have mulighed for at få fingrene i.

Det eneste du skal gøre er:

Udfyld vores konkurrenceformular her:  
[www.waoo.dk/cphgames2018](http://www.waoo.dk/cphgames2018) via PC eller Mac.

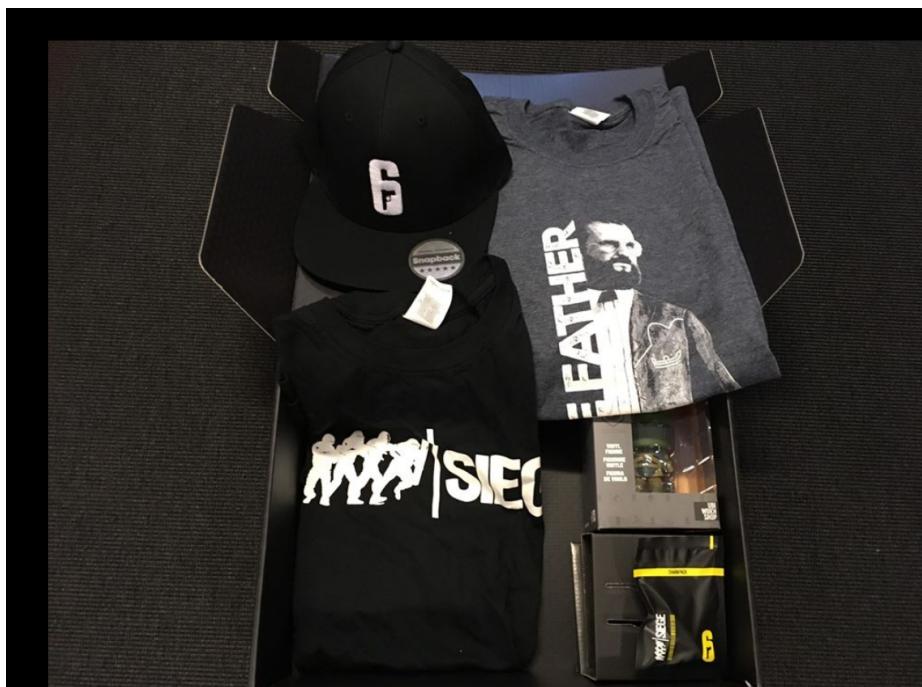
Skrive i svæfletten i formularen - Hvilke to esport brands er eksponert på Waoo's stand under Copenhagen Games 2018?  
- HTH og Superbrugsen?  
- Shell og Coca Cola?  
- Pixel tv og Ubisoft?

Lige opslaget på Facebook og gerne vores Facebook-side

Er du ikke så heldig at vinde hovedpræmien, så trækker vi også lod om 20 stk. fede 'keyboard bags' fra Steelseries blandt de øvrige deltagere der har varet rigtigt.

Opsluget må gerne deles. Held og lykke! Sidste frist for deltagelse er den 2/4 og vinderne trækkes den 3/4 2018.  
Denne konkurrence er hverken sponsoreret, støttet af eller på anden vis associeret med Facebook.

Se mere om Copenhagen Games her:  
[www.copenhagengames.com](http://www.copenhagengames.com)  
#waoo #copenhagengames #esportdk #ubisoft  
#pixeltv



(Waoo 3, 2019)

## Appendix 9 – YouSee

### YouSee Sponsorship Activation (Social Media Contest, 2019)

 **YouSee** •••  
22. november 2019 · 

🎉 VIND EN VIP ESPORT-OPLEVELSE TIL ESL PRO LEAGUE FOR DIG OG DIN FAMILIE 🎉

Bor der en gamer hjemme ved dig? Så ved du sikkert, hvor svært det kan være at forstå, hvad de snakker om. Kom og bliv klogere på dit barns gaming til ESL Pro League i Odense.

YouSee er igen i år tilstede på ODINCON, hvor vi vil fremme forståelsen mellem børn og voksne indenfor gaming. Vi udlodder i den forbindelse en VIP familieoplevelse til ESL Pro League og ODINCON fra 6.-8. december 🎉

Skriv i kommentarfeltet, hvilket "gamerord" du hører oftest derhjemme, så deltager du i lodtrækningen om en VIP-oplevelse for 4 personer fra 6.-8. december i Odense, når de bedste Counter-Strike hold i verden mødes på dansk grund til ESL Pro League. Vi trækker én heldig vinder af en familietur onsdag d.27/11 💥



(YouSee 1, 2019)