

# Commercial Sponsorships as Source of Competitive Advantage

*- from the perspective of a non-profit organisation*

Master Thesis

MSc in Economics and Business Administration  
Management of Innovation & Business Development



Mathias Nylev Vestergaard  
Student no.: 45793  
Supervisor: Sven Junghagen  
Date of submission: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020  
Number of characters: 181.575  
Number of pages: 77



## **Abstract**

Sponsorship has become a highly prominent element of today's marketing communication in which firms seek out to gain strategic benefits in return for a sponsorship investment. Likewise, an increased attention has been towards sponsorship in non-profit organisations as a mean to obtain strategic value. The development has caused increased demands to non-profit sport properties who shall demonstrate the strategic value their organisation may be able to provide. Yet, scholars have tended to overlook the role of the sport property in the sponsorship relation which has caused this area to be under-researched. Thus, this thesis takes the stance of the non-profit sport property, DGI, and aims to explore how a sponsorship may be perceived a strategic resource that holds the potential to become a source of competitive advantage for the sponsor.

The study was conducted as a deductive single case study with an interpretivism stance to the subject. Selected representatives from both DGI and their partners were interviewed during the research process in order to collect insights and personal perceptions of the subject.

Two conceptual perspectives of sources of competitive advantage, the Resource Based View and Relational View, constituted the theoretical framework of the study. The findings indicated that DGI holds a unique set of resources and capabilities which collectively constitutes the sponsorship as a strategic resource. In addition, the findings indicated that close collaboration between the parties involved becomes value enhancing drivers of the sponsorship relation. Concludingly, the study provides a discussion on the empirical findings in relation to the theoretical framework and suggests a set of managerial implications for other sport managers. The study is limited by its single case study and lack of empirical data. Hence, the findings should be validated in future studies. Finally, due to the lack of previous focus on the topic, directions for future research is proposed to expand the field of knowledge.

**Keywords:** Sponsorship, Competitive Advantage, Intra- and Inter-Organisational Perspective

## Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
PROBLEM FORMULATION.....	7
DELINEATION .....	7
CONTRIBUTION TO THE CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE.....	8
SCHEMATIC STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS .....	9
<b>CASE DESCRIPTION .....</b>	<b>10</b>
STRATEGY .....	12
REVITALISATION OF THE DGI BRAND.....	12
APPROACH TO SPONSORSHIPS .....	13
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>15</b>
SPONSORSHIP OBJECTIVES .....	15
<i>Showcase Corporate Social Responsibility.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Increased Sales.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Maintain External Relations and Employee Engagement .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Image Enhancement &amp; Brand Loyalty.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Awareness and Visibility.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Objectives altering into a Competitive Advantage.....</i>	<i>20</i>
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF STRATEGIC COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE.....	20
THE RBV PARADIGM - AN INTRA-ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE .....	22
<i>Value.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Rareness.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Imperfectly Imitability .....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Non-Substitutability.....</i>	<i>26</i>
SUMMING UP THE RBV PARADIGM.....	27
ADDING AN INTER-ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.....	28
THE RELATIONAL PARADIGM – AN INTER-ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE .....	29
<i>Complementary Resources &amp; Capabilities .....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Relation-Specific Assets.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Knowledge-Sharing Routines.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Effective Governance.....</i>	<i>33</i>
SUMMING UP THE RELATIONAL PARADIGM.....	34
CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER.....	34
<b>METHODOLOGY &amp; METHODS.....</b>	<b>35</b>
REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS .....	35
PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE .....	37
A DEDUCTIVE RESEARCH APPROACH.....	40
A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY .....	41
CASE STUDY DESIGN .....	41
METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES.....	43
TIME HORIZON .....	43

DATA COLLECTION.....	44
<i>Primary Data</i> .....	44
<i>Secondary Data</i> .....	46
ANALYSING DATA .....	47
RESEARCH QUALITY .....	47
<i>Reliability</i> .....	48
<i>External Validity</i> .....	48
<i>Internal Validity</i> .....	49
<b>ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>50</b>
SPONSORSHIP – A STRATEGIC RESOURCE.....	50
THE RBV PARADIGM: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS .....	50
<i>Valuable</i> .....	52
<i>Rareness</i> .....	54
<i>Imperfect Imitability</i> .....	56
<i>Non-Substitutability</i> .....	58
SUBCONCLUSION .....	59
THE RELATIONAL PARADIGM: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS.....	61
<i>Complementary Resources &amp; Capabilities</i> .....	62
<i>Relation-Specific Assets</i> .....	65
<i>Knowledge-Sharing Routines</i> .....	67
<i>Effective Governance</i> .....	69
SUBCONCLUSION .....	71
<b>DISCUSSION &amp; MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS.....</b>	<b>72</b>
THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RBV AND THE RELATIONAL PARADIGM .....	72
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>75</b>
CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	75
LIMITATIONS .....	77
DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH .....	77
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>83</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Sponsorship Objectives.....	16
Figure 2: Theoretical Framework Overview.....	34

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Planned Interviews.....	36
Table 2: Empirical Findings: RBV Paradigm.....	51
Table 3: Empirical Findings: Relational Paradigm.....	62

## **Introduction**

Today, commercial sponsorship has evolved into a highly prominent element of the company's marketing communications mix. This becomes evident from the size and scale of the sponsorship industry in which the total global spending reached a remarkable US\$65.8 billion in 2018 from nearly US\$35.4 billion in 2007 (IEG, 2018b). With the definition of commercial sponsorships as being "the provision of assistance either financial or in kind to an activity by a commercial organisation for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives" (Meenaghan, 1983, p. 9), sponsorships have been perceived to be an appealing and engaging way to communicate to its end-consumers in order to achieve commercial objectives (Fahy, Farrelly, & Quester, 2004). Likewise, sponsorships have been recognized to hold greater potential than traditional advertising approaches in order to influence consumer engagement as it connects with an individual's passion for something – be it sport, art, entertainment or charity (Cornwell, 2019). Hence, the increasing phenomenon surrounding the field of sponsorships continues to attract scholars and have received intense academic interest in recent years.

The exponential growth of the sponsorship industry and the increased importance for companies to include sponsorships into the marketing communications mix originated from a philanthropic approach which was characterized by no formal property selection or evaluation of the effectiveness (Ryan & Fahy, 2012). Today, the practice of sponsorships has elevated to a more strategic level where firms are more focused to gain strategic competitive benefits in return for a sponsorship investment (Farrelly, Quester, & Burton, 2006). Likewise, sponsorship relations are moving away from the donor-recipient position to act more as a mutual relationship in which sponsors expect their counterpart, the sponsored entity, to act as genuine producers of value beyond the mere provision of access to intellectual property and brand association opportunities (Farrelly et al., 2006). Consequently, with the development of sponsorships to be viewed through a strategic lens and with firm's increased demands to expect strategic competitive benefits in return for a sponsorship investment, sport properties are expected to demonstrate the potential value that sponsorships of their organisation may provide.

In addition to the evolvement of perceiving sponsorships as a strategic resource and the potential of gaining strategic competitive benefits, an increased focus has been to engage in non-profit organisations and the opportunities to showcase corporate social responsibility through the

sponsorship. As customers seek out brands that deliver both great societal value and great corporate values, firms that explicitly link the reason for engaging in a sponsorship with the cause property are more likely to experience an amplified return on their investment (Ukman, 2014). The increasing tendency of purpose-driven sponsorships is also evident in the annual numbers of sponsorship spending. According to IEG research (2018), sponsorship spending in non-profit organisations is a growing category and is expected to increase by 4.6 % in 2019 and, consequently, outpace the general industry of sponsorships. Thus, in order to gain strategic competitive benefits and showcase corporate social responsibility, the tendency to place sponsorship investments in non-profit organisations tends to be a profitable way to leverage the sponsorship as a strategic resource for the sponsoring firm.

Based on the notion that a sponsorship is appreciated as a strategic resource in the marketing mix for the sponsoring firm as well as increased demands to expect strategic value in return for a sponsorship investment (Ryan & Fahy, 2012) and perceiving the sponsorship arrangement as a mutual relationship where the sport property is expected to act as genuine producer of strategic value (Farrelly et al., 2006), a larger emphasis has been placed on the sport properties in order to understand how they can provide this value. Although, an enhanced focus to place sponsorship investments in non-profit properties, selecting the right entity is still an ongoing challenge for firms engaging in sponsorships (Stotlar, 2004). Hence, it becomes increasingly important to understand how sport properties demonstrate the potential value their organisation may provide in order to attract sponsors.

As previous literature has tended to focus on the sponsoring companies in order to understand how they obtain strategic value in return for a sponsorship investment, less research has focused on the role of the sport property in order to understand how they are able to contribute in the value generation of the sponsorship. This has further been acknowledged by several scholars within the field of sponsorships who have emphasized the need to gain a better understanding of the sport property's role in the sponsorship relation as this perspective has been widely neglected in previous research (Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Ryan & Fahy, 2012). Consequently, due to the lack of empirical evidence and limited insights of the sport property's role in the sponsorship relation, I aim with this thesis to provide new insights and perspectives into this part of the academic area of sponsorships. Moreover, based on the increased attention to sponsor non-profit properties, the thesis

explores how a sponsorship within a non-profit organisation may be able to generate strategic value to its sponsors.

## **Problem Formulation**

Based on the above introduction, I choose for this research paper to take the stance of the sport property to explore how they contribute to the value generation of a sponsorship arrangement. More specifically, I aim with this thesis to explore how DGI, a national non-profit organisation within the sport industry in Denmark, may be able to provide strategic competitive benefits to its sponsors in return for a sponsorship investment. The interest of exploring DGI stems from the nature of the organisation. As DGI is operating as a non-profit organisation with the purpose to support the society through sports, I find it interesting to explore how their approach to sponsorships impact the outcome of a sponsorship arrangement with a sponsor and potentially be a source of competitive advantage. Therefore, the research question of this study is:

*RQ: How can a sponsorship with DGI be a source of strategic competitive advantage?*

The notion used to approach this specific sponsorship context will be based on strategic management literature. The primary objective is therefore to explore how a sponsorship with DGI, as a Danish non-profit organisation, contains accessible resources, rights and opportunities which hold the potential to become a source of competitive advantage for their sponsors.

## **Delineation**

As the field of sponsorships possesses an ample field of knowledge and perspectives, a delineation is presented in order to concentrate this thesis on the specific subject under study.

The primary delineation of this thesis is focused around the term *strategic competitive advantage*. The objective of this study is not to declare or conclude if sponsors obtain a strategic competitive advantage through their sponsorship with the DGI. As value and content of any strategic competitive advantage is subjective to the partner gaining the benefit, nor is it relevant for this study to clarify the nature of the benefit gained by the single partner.

Instead, the focal interest of this study is to explore how DGI's approach to sponsorships may contribute to the potential outcome of a strategic competitive advantage. Perspectives and perceptions from both DGI and their partners will, therefore, be used to clarify and evaluate if

DGI's approach may convert a sponsorship into a source of strategic competitive advantage for their partners. Thus, the term strategic competitive advantage shall be perceived as the ultimate outcome of successful sponsorship relation between DGI and their partner.

## **Contribution to the current state of knowledge**

As this master thesis aims to study the role of the sport property in the sponsorship setting and explore how value is generated for the benefit of the sponsor, I aim to contribute to the current state of knowledge in several ways.

Firstly, as previous academic research within sponsorships has tended to neglect the role of the sport property in the sponsorship setting, I aim with this thesis to shed some light on the subject. Based on the nature of the research question, I will throughout this thesis take the stance of the sport property to explore how their role and approach to sponsorships may be an important element in the creation of generating strategic competitive advantage for the sponsors. Thus, I aim to provide a broader understanding of the sport property's role in the sponsorship relation.

Secondly, through a theoretical combination of two distinct perspectives focused around sources of competitive advantage, this thesis aims to illustrate how sport properties demonstrate the potential value their organisation may provide their sponsors and how elements within the intra- and inter-organisational environment may be essential enablers of value generation in the sponsorship setting. Hence, a redefined conceptual framework will be proposed to illustrate how the distinct theoretical perspectives may be used in conjunction for a better understanding of the potential value of the sport property.

Finally, with a non-profit organisation (DGI) as the focal point of interest, I aim to contribute with advanced perspectives of how sponsorships within these kinds of organisations may be leveraged as a strategic resource for the sponsoring firm and potentially become a source of strategic competitive advantage. Thus, the research aims to provide deeper insights into the field of sponsorships focusing specifically on non-profit organisations.



## Schematic structure of the thesis

The following section will provide the reader with an overview of the chapters included in this research paper and highlight the main content of each chapter. This thesis is split into seven chapters.

The thesis starts with a thorough **(1) case description** of DGI including the organisational background and their approach to sponsorships which will be presented in this chapter. Hereafter, the **(2) literature review** will scrutinize the current literature within the field of sponsorships in relation to two distinct perspectives of source of competitive advantage, namely the Resource Based View and the Relational View. In combination, the two different views will, hereafter, constitute the theoretical framework used to explore the research question.

The following chapter will present the **(3) methodological** considerations including the selected research philosophy, research strategy, research design and data collection methods used in this thesis. The reasoning behind choosing an interpretivist stance will be elaborated along with the choice of conducting a single case study research.

Subsequently, the analysis chapter is presented. The first part of the **(4) analysis** examines DGI's internal resources and capabilities based on the intra-organisational paradigm, the Resource-Based View. The second part adopts an inter-organisational perspective in order to explore how the interfirm elements of the sponsorship relation are value-enhancing enablers. Consequently, the analysis shows that both perspectives conjointly contribute to the understanding of how DGI is able to provide strategic value to its sponsors through a sponsorship arrangement.

A **(5) discussion** of the empirical findings in relation to the theoretical framework used in the analysis is presented in the following chapter. Subsequently, a set of **(6) managerial implications** will be presented in order to advise how sponsorship managers of other sport properties can demonstrate the value potential of their organisation.

Concluding the paper, the main points derived from this thesis will be summed up in the **(7) conclusion** chapter. Finally, the limitations of the study will be reflected upon while directions for future research will be suggested.

With the end of the schematic outline of this thesis, the following chapter will present the case organisation DGI.

## Case Description

Danske Gymnastik & Idrætsforeninger (DGI) is the second largest non-profit sport organisation in Denmark and has worked closely with the local associations for more than 150 years to make the Danes more active. DGI got its name in November 1992 when the former sport organisations ‘The Danish Gymnastics and Youth Associations’ (DDGU) and ‘The Danish Shooting, Gymnastics and Sports Associations’ (DDSG & I) were brought together (DGI, 2020d). Today, DGI consists of more than 6,300 local associations, engage 100,000 volunteers and counts more than 1,5 million athletes (DGI, 2020f). The primary purpose of DGI is to support the local sport associations, with the main objective to engage more Danes in sports. DGI works purposefully to strengthen grassroots sports and together with the local sports associations, they develop concepts and activities that are based on the needs of the society. The purpose is further stated in DGI’s articles of association as:

*DGI will strengthen the voluntary associations as framework for sports with an emphasis on community, challenges and health in order to promote the quality of public educational information. With the association as a starting point, DGI will engage as many people as possible in sports. (DGI, 2020b)*

The organisation behind DGI covers all of Denmark, as well as a small part of northern Germany, and is spread out over 15 regions, each with their own local departments. Although the local departments operate autonomously, they still share a common set of values and strive towards a common goal: “to create a setting which encourages future members to join the local clubs and associations, and in which the individual athlete can thrive” (DGI, 2020e). In addition, DGI is based on four core values which constitutes their foundational eligibility. Each value constitutes the cornerstones of DGI and contribute to the creation of a healthy, challenging and community-based sports environment where individuals can accomplish both personal and shared victories. The four values are each stated as:

***A Sense of Community:*** By recognizing the value of the individual, as well as the importance of the community, DGI promotes not just results on the court, but off the courts as well. The sports associations do not just strengthen the community they have brought together, but society as a whole.

***Spirit:*** The very core of DGI is powered by the spirit of the volunteers in the clubs and associations, the athletes duking it out on the field, or willing themselves through another practice session. It is through their display of character and devotion that the individual may find the inspiration to continue their progress, steadily increasing his or her skills.

***Determination:*** The finest mission of the organization is not just to help others obtain their goals, but also becoming better at doing so. No matter the skill level, no matter the task, the focus is not just on the results, but the development shown by the individual, as well.

***Strength:*** It is through the community the individual will find that extra strength to persevere. Alone it is only possible to make it so far, but a strong community can make a world of difference. A strong community is the first step towards accomplishment.  
(DGI, 2020a)

As a national non-profit organisation, DGI can be described as an egalitarian sport organisation (Bradbury, 2017) whose main purpose is to engage as many people as possible, irrespective of their abilities. Egalitarian sports is fundamentally concerned with gregarious activities for the pleasure of each individual and the motto ‘the more the merrier’ is a core characteristic of such organisations (Bradbury, 2017). When it comes to participation in sports, DGI believes that level and skills should not be an issue and all athletes should have equal opportunities. They want to make sure that all levels of competence are available and that any personal goals can be achieved within an association supported by DGI (DGI, 2020e).

Currently, DGI counts more than 30 different sport activities with gymnastics as the largest activity including more than 300.000 active members followed by soccer with more than 260.000 members. Other sports and activities offered through the various associations include (but is not limited to) badminton, basketball, handball, shooting, swimming, tennis, various martial arts and volleyball (DGI, 2020f). Despite the differences in the sport activities, they all share the same values as DGI which benefits not only the community and the local association but also the individual. And as emphasized by DGI “whether it be playing volleyball or handball, practicing

taekwondo or table tennis, the emphasis lies on the individual, as part of a greater whole” (DGI, 2020e).

## **Strategy**

The main strategy of DGI is named ‘Strategy 2020’ and the primary focus of the strategy is to engage more people in sports and motivate more people to become volunteers in the various sport activities in the local sport associations (DGI, 2020h). And through a shared vision with DIF, which is the official supporter of the 62 national sport associations (DIF, 2020), the aim is to have 50 % of the population in Denmark actively engaged in a local sport association and 75 % of the total population engaged in sports before 2025 (DGI, 2020h). DGI has set up four prime objectives in order to work actively to achieve the goal of making the Danes more active. The four objectives are mentioned as 1) strengthen the sport association’s position in the fight for the Danes’ time and attention, 2) prioritize efforts and services which the sport associations perceive as useful and valuable, 3) strengthen the participation in sports through all stages of life with children and young people as prioritised target groups and 4) support sports association’s contributions to an active local community (DGI, 2020h).

Despite the shared vision with DIF, a clear distinction between the two organisations can be drawn. According to Jan Nielsen, Head of partnerships in DGI, the biggest difference between the two organisations lies in their approach to sports. As DIF actively aims to find and engage the best athletes within each sports category, DGI aims to include and engage anyone, despite their abilities, in any kind of sports club. Further, a main difference lies in the emphasis towards the sports and the associations. As DIF places a large emphasis on to developing the sports, DGI aims to develop and support the sport associations and believe the continually development will positively impact the engagement of the locals in the clubs (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Hence, DGI’s primary focus is to support and develop the sport associations in order to attract and engage more people in sports.

## **Revitalisation of the DGI brand**

The core values are highly reflected in the brand of DGI which was revitalised back in 2013 (Kontrapunkt, 2013). With the revitalisation of the brand, DGI changed focus from solely communicating to the athletes through the local sport associations, but instead they created a direct communication link exemplified by own social media channels and newsletters (Kontrapunkt,

2013). As a result, the increased focus on reaching the athletes directly through their own channels has enabled DGI to expose their brand and values not only through the intermediating link, the sport associations, but to a larger extent through direct communication<sup>1</sup>.

The new brand strategy has further enabled DGI to address campaigns and advertisement directly to the athletes which also cause a greater exposure of their brand. Jan Nielsen, Head of partnerships in DGI, emphasizes that the values are brought to life by a consistent approach in which the values are an integrated part of everything they do (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). And with the perception among the local sport associations and individual athletes who perceive DGI as value driven<sup>2</sup> and a relevant supporter of sport activities in the local community, the brand image is highly valued in the external environment (DGI, 2020c). Thus, a consistent approach to actively promote and live the values within the organisation, DGI aims to develop and mature its brand in order to create a positive brand perception among the local sport associations and athletes in the communities.

## **Approach to Sponsorships**

As DGI places a great emphasis on community, challenges and health, they strive to establish sustainable and effective sponsorships with new partners who share the same value set. In addition, sponsorships must contribute to the revenue base which means that DGI can launch activities and events in collaboration with their partners. Hence, DGI considers sponsorships as an opportunity to disseminate and reinforce important values through activities and projects created conjointly with the partner. Conversely, DGI consciously deselect partners who do not match their organisational values or do not support a healthy society (DGI, 2020g).

DGI's approach to sponsorships can be defined as 'purpose driven' in which any sponsorship agreement is based on a mutual interest to solve or elucidate a certain challenge in the society (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Therefore, any sponsorship is initiated on the foundation of a shared ambition to support the society through sports. A purpose driven approach to sponsorships ensures that DGI engages with the right partners and conduct purposeful projects which aims to ultimately benefit both parties in the relationship.

---

<sup>1</sup> An illustration of the new brand position strategy is found in appendix 5.

<sup>2</sup> An illustration of how DGI is perceived in the society is found in appendix 6

Consequently, DGI's approach to sponsorships can be considered a partnership in which they share a mutual vision and agenda with a partner in order to shed light on certain community-based issues or challenges through various forms of projects and programs (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Thus, the overall purpose of sponsorships is to initiate projects and programmes with a community-based purpose which concurrently promote both DGI and the partner in an attractive way.

In order to address the common objective, sponsorships are built on projects and programmes which are developed and initiated from the beginning of each agreement with new partners. Through these specific projects and initiatives, DGI ensures to involve their partners in all aspects of the project in order to establish a common ground for the sponsorship to grow. This way, DGI aims to ensure sponsorships of high quality which ultimately benefit both the partner and DGI in the end. More specifically, the success of a sponsorship with DGI is based on four key criteria which are stated as: *when your brand gets pulse, when your customers get overwhelmed, when your employees get excited, when your CSR strategy comes alive* (DGI, 2020c). Hence, through tailored projects and programmes developed conjointly, DGI aims to provide specific value to their partners based on the four success criteria.

In conclusion, DGI performs a selective and purpose driven approach to sponsorships with the primary focus to solve or illuminate a community-based challenge through various projects and programmes jointly developed with their partners. Based on that, DGI considers sponsorships more as an equal partnership where both parties involved aims to benefit from the relationship and actively participate and contribute to the successful achievement of the shared objectives (DGI, 2020g).

## **Literature Review**

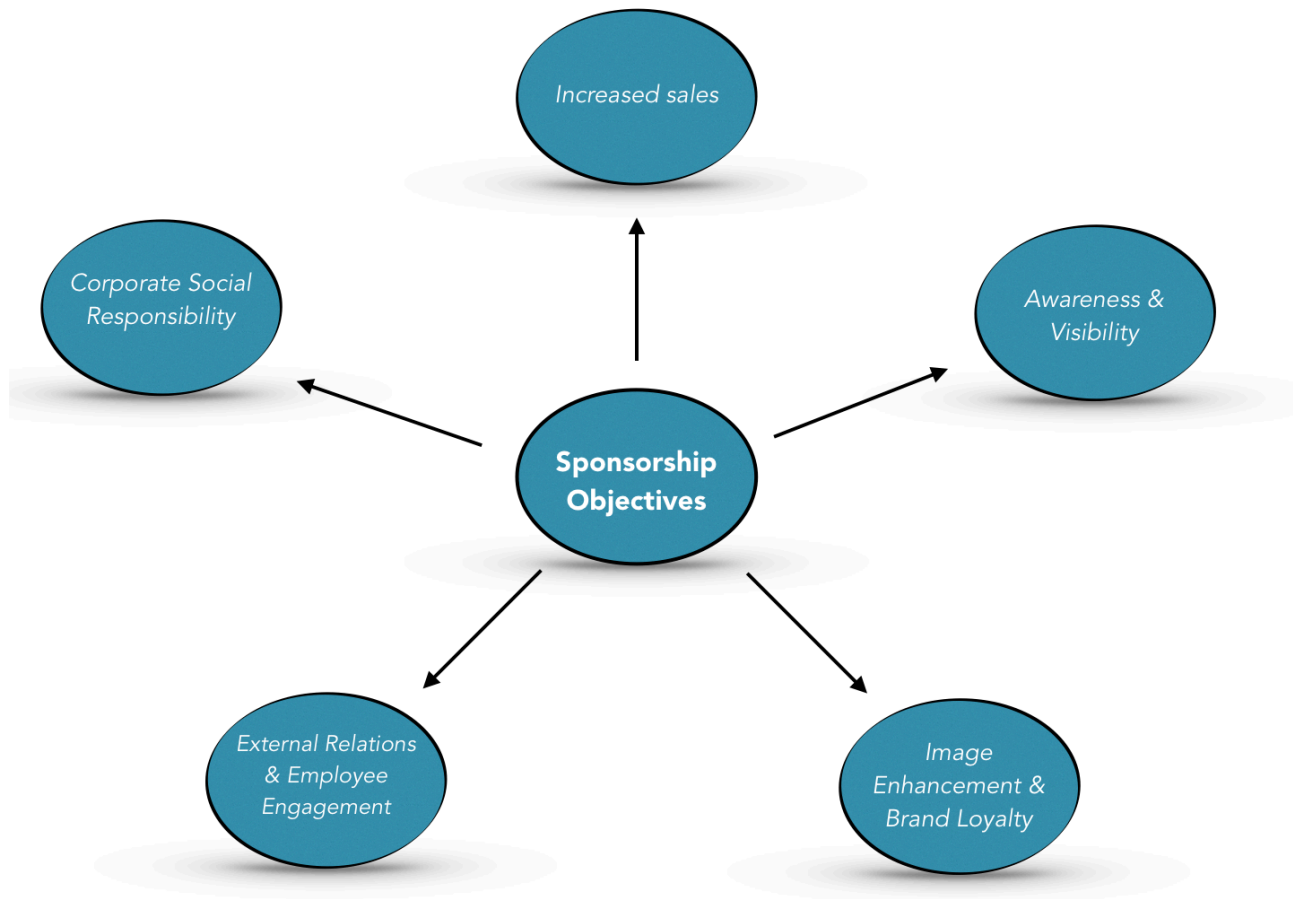
The following chapter is dedicated to outline and discuss the theories and models used to frame this research paper. The intention is to discuss relevant theoretical concepts in order to frame the theoretical foundation. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section will begin with a discussion centred around sponsorship objectives and how demands have increased towards the sport properties in order to deliver strategic value in return for a sponsorship investment. Following the outline of sponsorship objectives, the theoretical considerations will be presented. Section two will present and discuss the first theoretical paradigm, represented by the Resource Based View. Subsequently, the third section will present the second theoretical paradigm represented by the Relational View and discuss the theoretical stance. The two paradigms will hereafter serve as the theoretical foundation of this research paper. The fourth and final section concludes the theoretical considerations and present a visual representation of the theoretical framework applied in this dissertation.

### **Sponsorship Objectives**

As corporate sponsorships have evolved from being largely concerned with simple brand awareness, exemplified by physical logo signage in stadiums, venue or at an event, to a sophisticated branding platform (Bradbury, 2017) have caused the sport properties to get a better understanding of why sponsors invest money with them. And as companies are increasingly focused to demand strategic benefits and maximized returns from their sponsorship investment (Amis, Pant, & Slack, 1997; Fahy et al., 2004), sport properties must recognize and understand how they provide value that meet the demands of the sponsors.

In order to get a better understanding of how sport properties are able to provide strategic value, it becomes necessary to recognise the most prominent and common objectives set by the companies. Consequently, the purpose of the following section is to outline and discuss the most significant and common corporate objectives for companies engaging in a sponsorship today. The objectives are based on IEG's annual sponsorship report for decision-makers (2018) who define the most prominent objectives for evaluating sport properties when investing in a sponsorship and include the following objectives: *brand awareness and visibility, image enhancement, external relations and employee engagement, increased sales and social responsibility enhancement.*

The mentioned objectives are depicted in figure 1 below. Each objective will be discussed in turn in the following subsections.



*Figure 1: Sponsorship objectives*

### **Showcase Corporate Social Responsibility**

Finally, showcase corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the community through a sponsorship is another objective in which a company aims to attain in return for a sponsorship investment. According to IEG (2018), the objective of showcasing social responsibility in the community is ranked sixth by importance of objectives worth striving for. However, sponsorship holds great potential to build and showcase the CSR image of a company given its reputation as a powerful means for “publicizing and highlighting a transparent, consistent and socially responsible corporate image” (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009, p. 111).

In order to successfully achieve the objective of showcasing CSR, companies may either engage with sports associations or sports clubs anchored directly in the local community or sponsor a national property with a strong focus on substantial CSR initiatives as a part of the sponsorship



activation plan (Plewa, Carrillat, Mazodier, & Quester, 2016). Therefore, the right selection of property is a prerequisite for companies to be able to reap the benefits from the sponsored property's activities and eventually gain a strengthened corporate social image. Thus, sponsorships are recognised to be capable of strengthen the CSR image of the sponsor and create positive reputation around the brand.

### **Increased Sales**

Increased sales are characterised as both a direct and indirect objective for a company entering a sponsorship arrangement with a sport property. Direct objectives may be for the achievement of short-term impact on consumption behaviour and the increasing of sales, whereas indirect objectives would be benefits gained over a longer period of time, which eventually would lead to increased sales (Masterman, 2007). However, according to IEG annual sponsorship survey (IEG, 2018b) increased sales are ranked as the fifth most important objective for companies engaging in sponsorship arrangements. As increased sales may stem from different sources and marketing activities, it can be difficult to determine if increased sales are a consequence of the sponsorship arrangement or other sources of marketing activities. Thus, if sales do not stem from direct on-site activities where instant measures are possible, increased sales as a direct outcome for a sponsorship is hard to measure and consequently are being neglected as a primary objective for the companies (Masterman, 2007). Consequently, increased sales may be considered a truism objective when investing in a sponsorship, however, due to the lack of tools to measure the effect of the sponsorship investment increased sales are not evaluated as the most important objective among sponsoring firms.

### **Maintain External Relations and Employee Engagement**

Developing and maintaining relationships with external customers and stakeholders are another objective for companies engaging in sponsorship activities. According to IEG (2018), companies evaluate relation-building opportunities as the fourth most important objective when investing in a sponsorship. This is particular important for companies operating in the business-to-business industry, where retainment of key customers and stakeholders may lead to increased sales for the company (Bradbury, 2017). Furthermore, companies aim to leverage the sponsorship investment to increase engagement and motivation among its employees. Employee pride in the company and motivation for more effective and efficient performance may be achieved if the

company manage to inspire employees to follow and support the sponsorship (Masterman, 2007). A mean to achieve this objective is through corporate hospitality services in which the companies are able to leverage a platform to develop and enhance both external and internal relations. Bennett (2003) proclaims that retaining profitable customers, building relationships with existing clients and developing loyalty and trust among customers, are perceived as the most important benefits attributable to corporate hospitality. Hence, attaining external relations and motivate internal employees are a central objective for companies investing in a sponsorship.

### **Image Enhancement & Brand Loyalty**

Sponsorship can be an effective vehicle for image enhancement and loyalty for a sponsoring company. According to IEG (2018), image enhancement and loyalty is ranked as the second and third most important objective when engaging in a sponsorship. Through the right selection of sponsored property, the firm can exploit this association and potentially enhance the company's own image. Hence, sponsorship allows the sponsored brand to live in the reflection of the sponsored property (T. Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). Brand image is widely defined as "the set of beliefs held about a particular brand" (Kotler, 1988) whereas a corporate image is defined as "a composite of knowledge, feelings, ideals and beliefs associated with a company as a result of the totality of its activities" (Gunther, 1959 as cited in T. Meenaghan, 1995). In contrast to awareness and visibility discussed above, which aim to increase the size of the target audiences or markets, enhancement of a brand or corporate image is centered around a particular perception among the company's customers and stakeholders. Further, image association and image transfer opportunities may result in public perception which can be influenced and enhanced through the sponsorship (Masterman, 2007) which potentially has a positive impact on the brand loyalty and the perception among the firm's key customers and external environment.

Yet, it is not given that an investment in a sponsorship results in a positive image enhancement for the sponsoring company. Meenaghan & Shipley (1999) claim that the critical element of achieving an enhanced image through a sponsorship lies in the selection of the sponsored entity, as it already has a personality, a set of values and attributes, which collectively constitutes the image. Hence, when a sponsor is investing in a property with an existing brand and image linked to the

right owner's activities, they aim to gain a rub-off effect of the association<sup>3</sup> (T. Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). Consequently, enhanced image is highly dependent on the right selection and positive association to the sponsored property and its activities. On the contrary, if the sponsored property receives negative publicity due to e.g. internal or external scandals, it may have a negative effect on the association and thereby results in a negative effect to the company image (Masterman, 2007).

Concludingly, enhancing the corporate image through sponsorships is reflected in the association of the sponsored property and is a central objective for companies when they are to evaluate their sponsorship investment. Therefore, it becomes an essential prerequisite for companies to evaluate and understand property's values and attributes in order to achieve rub-off effects through the sponsorship arrangement.

### **Awareness and Visibility**

According to IEG's annual sponsorship survey (2018), brand awareness and visibility is ranked as the single most important objective for companies engaging in sponsorships. *Awareness* can be characterised as the extent to which a sponsor is recognized by potential consumers and accurately associated with a sponsored property (Bennett, 1999). Since the movement from the philanthropic approach to a more market- and consumer-centred approach to sponsorships, which originated during the 1980's and is characterised by its shift towards a professionalised approach and with an increased focus on return on investment (Ryan & Fahy, 2012), brand awareness has become a key objective for companies to expect in return for a sponsorship investment. Further, Cornwell (2019) emphasizes that a large part of sponsorship research to date still orients to the market-centred and consumer-centred approaches where sponsorships are seen as a communications tool with awareness as the primary goal.

Despite the intangible nature of awareness and visibility, sponsorships can be used to increase the recognising of a brand within existing target markets in order to help develop greater sales to existing and new customers (Masterman, 2007). Further, sponsorships have been acknowledged for its function as a strategic tool for market development for companies, which help them develop brand awareness in new target markets and thereby extend its brand equity (Masterman, 2007). This

---

<sup>3</sup> "If a quality or characteristic that someone has rubs off, others begin to have it because they have been with that person or entity and learned it from them" (Cambridge University Press, 2020b).

is comparable with the IEG's annual sponsorship survey where presence in the sponsored property's digital, social and mobile media is rated one of the most valuable tools for companies (IEG, 2018b) to leverage from the sponsorship. Concludingly, companies continue to value brand awareness and visibility as significant important benefits they aim to derive from their sponsorship investment.

### **Objectives altering into a Competitive Advantage**

With the commercial evolution and increased popularity of sponsorships, objectives are no longer centred around simple brand exposure but include brand awareness and visibility, image enhancement, external relations and employee engagement, increased sales and social responsibility enhancement as the most prominent objectives to achieve (IEG, 2018b). Likewise, it has been emphasized that the achievement of any or all of the objectives may provide the firm with a competitive advantage (Masterman, 2007). And with the recognising that sponsorships hold the potential to be a source of competitive advantage (Amis et al., 1997; Amis, Slack, & Berrett, 1999), firms place higher demands on the sport properties to provide strategic value in return for a sponsorship investment.

Hence, the evolvement of sponsorships has caused firms to place higher demands to the sport properties in order to achieve their commercial objectives and leverage the sponsorship as a strategic resource. Moreover, the evolvement of perceiving sponsorships as a purchase of an exploitable property to one in which the value of sponsorship is seen as generated and developed at the organisational and inter-organisational levels (Ryan & Fahy, 2012), sport properties should be able to demonstrate the potential value and opportunities that sponsorships of their organisation may provide in order to unlock the potential for their partners to enjoy a strategic competitive advantage.

### **Theoretical Perspectives of Strategic Competitive Advantage**

With sponsorships as "the provision of assistance either financial or in kind to an activity by a commercial organisation for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives" (Meenaghan, 1983, p. 9), firms are increasingly concerned with how they can gain maximum returns from their sponsorship investment. Hence, by evaluating the various sponsorship opportunities and what rights and resources that can be exploited helps to picture the attractiveness of a certain sport property and the likelihood of attaining strategic benefits. Therefore, an assessment of what constitutes the

uniqueness of DGI as a sponsored property becomes relevant in order to evaluate how sponsors may be able to gain strategic benefits in return for their investment. An evaluation of the internal conditions may therefore lay the foundation for an understanding of which resources and capabilities that sponsors may be able to leverage in the sponsorship arrangement with DGI.

Additionally, based on the purpose driven approach to sponsorships in which DGI focuses to initiate community-based projects developed conjointly with their partners, the relational aspects are an essential part of the sponsorship. Moreover, as sponsorships are primarily based on a reciprocal commitment and interest between the parties to solve specific dilemmas or challenges in the society, a close collaboration is required to activate and promote the projects. Therefore, by acknowledging sponsorships as a dyadic function between two entities (Fahy et al., 2004) and based on the collaborative nature of DGI's approach to sponsorships, a further exploration of the interfirm aspects of the sponsorship becomes relevant to study in order to gain a broader understanding of how value occur in the interfirm space between the partners.

Consequently, to understand how DGI may be able to provide strategic benefits to their sponsors through a sponsorship, I suggest including both an intra-organisational and inter-organisational perspective of sources of competitive advantage. As scholars of the intra-organisational perspective focus primarily on the internal level of the firm and how competitiveness arises from leveraging valuable resources and capabilities obtained in the firm (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993), proponents of the inter-organisational perspective (Dyer & Singh, 1998) focus primarily on the interfirm field as the unit of analysis to explain how sources of competitive advantage stem from the relationship between firms. Consequently, while the intra-organisational perspective helps to establish a fundamental perspective on the DGI's internal valuable resources and capabilities, the inter-organisational perspective suggests how parts of those advantages are interlocked within the particular symbiotic relationship between the sport property and the sponsor.

In order to explore how DGI is able to meet the increased demands set by the sponsors and provide strategic value which may be subject to become sources of competitive advantages, the following section is dedicated to outline and discuss two distinct streams of theories of competitive advantages, namely the *Resource Based View* and the *Relational View*. Both perspectives have been perceived as influential theoretical frameworks to explain how sources of competitive advantages

are generated from the intra-organisational and inter-organisational field respectively (Mesquita, Anand, & Brush, 2008).

The following sections are dedicated to outline both streams of theories and highlight how their different perspectives explain sources of competitive advantages. The intention is to discuss how sources of competitive advantages may stem from both the intra-organisational and inter-organisational level in order to explore how strategic value can be generated in a sponsorship arrangement. The two distinct perspectives will serve as the foundation for the analysis of the case organisation, DGI, to explore how their approach to sponsorships may provide strategic value to their sponsors and potentially be subject to be a source of competitive advantage. Following this section, a review of the intra-organisational perspective will be discussed in detail.

As the two views acknowledge sources of competitive advantages in different ways, I will refer to each stream of theories as ‘paradigms’. A paradigm is referred to as “a set of theories that explain the way a particular subject is understood at a particular time” (Cambridge University Press, 2020a). Each paradigm will determine the criteria and content of what I attend to achieve, and thereby determine what I notice, understand and enact as sources of competitive advantage.

### **The RBV paradigm - an intra-organisational perspective**

The following section is dedicated to review the literature on the first paradigm used in the research paper, namely the Resource Based View. The intention is to provide the reader with an intra-organisational perspective of how sources of competitive advantage stem from the resources inside the firm. The section is relevant as it will represent the first stream of theory used in this research paper.

The Resource Based View (RBV) is based on the notion that potential sources of competitive advantage should be found inside the firm’s resources and capabilities. Initial work on RBV was developed by Wernerfelt (1984) who theorized that a competitive advantage stems from the firm’s ability to implement a value-creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitor (Wernerfelt, 1984 as cited in Jensen, Cobbs, & Turner, 2016).

Later, Barney (1991) examined the various types of resources within the firm that are capable of providing a firm with a competitive advantage. He builds on the assumption that firms cannot

expect to obtain competitive advantages when strategic resources are evenly distributed and/or mobile across all competing firms in the industry. Thus, before strategic resources can be sources of competitive advantages they necessarily need to be heterogenous and immobile for the firm to exploit.

Firm resources are defined as “strengths that firms can use to conceive of and implement their strategies” (Barney, 1991, p. 101). Hofer & Schendel (1978) suggested to focus on six major classifications of tangible and intangible resources from which a competitive advantage may be derived. The six classifications include *financial resources*, *physical resources*, *human resources*, *technological resources*, *organisational resources* and *the resource of reputation*. Barney (1991) states that resources should be valuable to be a source of competitive advantage for the firm. “Resources are valuable when they enable a firm to conceive or implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness” (Barney, 1991, p. 106). Any resources may be considered a source of competitive advantage, however, as tangible, nontacit resources tend to depreciate over time or become obsolete in the market, Wright (1994) argues that the more tacit and intangible a resource tend to be, the longer it prolongs its duration as a source of competitive advantage for the firm. Hence, resources that are not articulable, not observable in use or not apprehensible tend to depreciate relatively slowly in contrast to tangible resources and assets of the firm (Wright, 1994).

Consequently, Barney (1991) suggests a theoretical framework that underlie competitive advantage based on the internal resources and capabilities of the organisation. He suggests that resources holding the potential to be sources of competitive advantages must meet four conditions, namely: (1) it must be *valuable* to be able to neutralize threats in a firm’s environment, (2) it must be *rare* among a firm’s current and potential competition, (3) it must be *imperfectly imitable*, and (4) it must be *non-substitutable* (Barney, 1991).

Through the adoption of the intra-organisational theoretical framework, the following four sections will discuss each theoretical indicator in turn and relate it to the current sponsorship literature. The intention is to explore how sport properties can manage its internal resource base in order to establish a unique foundation for providing strategic value to its sponsors.

## **Value**

*Value* is defined as the first indicator of the RBV paradigm. Barney argues that firm resources can only be a source of competitive advantage “when they enable a firm to conceive of or implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness” (1991, p. 106). Through a unique combination of valuable resources and routines, a firm is likely to enjoy heterogeneous resources which will be hard to replicate by competitors. These unique combinations of resources and capabilities which are heterogeneous across firms are a fundamental assumption in the RBV paradigm (Barney, 1991). Firms cannot expect to gain competitive advantages when strategic resources are evenly distributed across all competing firms or are highly mobile. It is built on the notion that if all competing firms in an industry possess the same resources and capabilities it will be easy to replicate the same strategy and therefore will develop in the same way, and to the same extent (Barney, 1991). Thus, the combination of a distinctive set of valuable resources and capabilities will enable the firm to gain resource heterogeneity.

Scholars within the field of sponsorships emphasize that successful sponsorship agreements appear to represent a valuable and heterogeneous distribution of resources (Amis et al., 1997, 1999). An exploitation of firm image through a complementary sponsorship arrangement can result in a unique resource which is valuable and cannot be imitated by competitors. Therefore, as sponsorships encompass the ability to act as a complementary resource for the firm, it enables the firm to gain a heterogeneous set of resources which is valuable to the firm and become difficult to replicate by competitors (Amis et al., 1997). Also, firms entering into a sponsorship agreement should treat its sponsorship as a resource which, either singly or in combination with other resources, can be developed into an unique distinctive competence for the organisation which, in turn, can assist the firm to gain a superior position in the industry (Amis et al., 1999). Thus, sponsorship arrangements are more likely to be successful if the sport property is able to provide valuable resources which, in the right combination, can be leveraged by the sponsor.

## **Rareness**

*Rareness* is defined as the second indicator of the RBV paradigm. Valuable resources can only be considered a source of competitive advantage if they at the same time are rare and can be preserved by the incumbent firm. If a particular valuable firm resource is possessed by a large number of firms, then each of these firms have the capability of exploiting the resources in the same



way. As a result, all firms will be able to leverage the valuable resource and therefore no firm will be able to gain a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Instead, resources must be rare in order to maintain its value to be eligible of being a source of competitive advantage. Following the argument of resource heterogeneity, any advantages stemming from these resources would only be temporary if such resources could be easily replicated or imitated by any competitors in the market (Barney, 1991).

Moreover, in order to ensure long term benefits for the firm, resources also need to be durable to add this value. According to Peteraf (1993), a prerequisite to maintain a resource's durability depends on a firm's ability to limit the competition in the market after gaining the benefits of the resource. Consequently, for a firm to leverage a valuable resource for a longer period of time and potentially enjoy a competitive advantage, depends on the rareness of the resource and the firm's ability to prevent competitors to imitate or replicate the resource.

Rare resources gained through a sponsorship must be preserved in order to avoid the resource to quickly decay and become obsolete for the sponsoring firm. Amis et al., (1997) emphasized that it is important that any sponsorship undertaken ties in with other facets of the firm's image to produce a resource capable of discouraging industry competition from directly competing with the resource. Any sponsorship undertaken should therefore produce an image which is so superior that it clearly differentiates the firm from its competitors and thus discourages other firms from directly competing with it (Amis et al., 1999). Consequently, sport properties that enable the sponsoring firm to generate a superior image that clearly distinguish its image from the one of its competitors is more likely to maintain the competitive advantage achieved through the sponsorship.

### **Imperfectly Imitability**

As the third indicator, resources must be *imperfect imitable*. Resources are subject to be imperfect imitable if they are untradeable between firms. Or if resources are tradable, they must be of greater value to the firm that currently possesses the resources. If resources are subject to perfect imitability, all competing firms would be able to acquire the resources and employ it into their own firm. As a result, it will cause opportunities of first-mover advantages to be nullified and make the resource obsolete for firms aiming for competitive advantages (Barney, 1991).

Additionally, resources must be imperfect mobile between firms to ensure its validity and rents remain bounded to the firm over a prolonged period of time. Peteraf (1993) proposes that

resources may be imperfect mobile when the resources are somewhat specialized to firm-specific needs. Thus, when resources are imperfectly imitable, immobile or firm-specific they remain bound to the firm and available to use over the long run. And by successfully preventing or restricting other firms of employing the same resources, and thereby retain the resources inside the firm, will increase the opportunities for the sponsoring firm to gain a competitive advantage.

Sponsors who effectively manage to employ and activate the sponsorship into their organisation are more likely to make the resources firm-specific and, thereby, make the resources imperfect imitable for other firms to obtain. This is exemplified when a strong image association generated through the sponsorship arrangement become a resource that remains of greater value within the firm that currently employs it than with a competitor (Amis et al., 1997).

However, a strong image association may also depend on the commitment of the sport property to actively promote the sponsorship as the sponsor will have little recourse if the sport property decides to devote fewer resources and energy to the sponsorship (Amis et al., 1997). Thus, in order to leverage the resources constituting the sponsorship arrangement, which are characterised as imperfectly imitable and immobile, a high level of commitment between both parties involved is a prerequisite for successfully make the resources firm-specific for the sponsor to exploit (Farrelly et al., 2006).

### **Non-Substitutability**

The last indicator is defined as *non-substitutability*. For a firm resource to be a source of competitive advantage there must be no strategically equivalent valuable resources, or bundles of resources that are themselves either not rare or imitable (Barney, 1991). Substitutability can take two forms, 1) it may not be possible for a firm to imitate another firm's resources exactly, however, a firm may be able to substitute similar resources that enables it to conceive of and implement the same strategies, and 2) very different resources can also be strategic substitutes as resources in different forms can be used to achieve the same objectives. E.g. firms share the same objectives but use different resources to achieve the objective (Barney, 1991). Thus, if competing firms are able to obtain alternative resources which are strategically equivalent to the resources in the incumbent firm, then none of the firms can expect to obtain a competitive advantage.

Further, Peteraf (1993) emphasizes that ex ante limits to competition must be present in order to create a beneficial resource position in the market. Prior to any firm's establishment of a superior resource position there must be limited competition for that position. In order for firms to establish an advantageous resource position, it must aim to prevent competitors to acquire the same resources of the firm holding the particular resource. However, the challenge is to identify, ex ante, a set of strategic assets as ground for establishing the firm's competitive advantage (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). When a resource has been recognized as valuable by other firms in the market, it will most likely be acquired or imitated by these firms and thereby remove any potential for individual advantage (Amis et al., 1997). Consequently, firms may consider the current competition of the certain resource position in order to ensure exclusivity and, at the same time, prevent other firms from obtaining the same or similar valuable resources. A successful resource position, with non-substitutability and ex ante limits to competition, may therefore enable the firm to leverage the resource exclusively and increase the likelihood of gaining a competitive advantage.

Ex ante investment risk is omnipresent in all types of sponsorships and potential benefits may be difficult to anticipate (Amis et al., 1997). In order to mitigate the risks and minimize ex ante limits to competition, a sponsor can demand exclusivity from their sponsorship counterpart. By demanding exclusivity, a sponsor may preclude any other firms from the same industry, thus, limit the competition of the same valuable resources (Amis et al., 1999). Although, a sponsor gets exclusive rights from the certain sponsorship agreement, the sponsor will still be exposed to uncontrollable risks including negative association, sponsorship clutter and over-commodification, and ambush marketing (Masterman, 2007). And as stated by Amis et al. (1997) "there will always be risk associated with investing in any sporting event, team or individual athlete, because the reputation and image of the sponsor are, to some degree, tied up with that of the entity being sponsored" (p. 93). Hence, ex ante limits to competition may be difficult to predict, however, by demanding exclusivity may eliminate the risk for competitors to directly engaging in the sponsored property and, thereby, lower the risk to substitute the same resources.

### **Summing up the RBV paradigm**

As it has been explained above, the RBV paradigm is fundamentally concerned with the accumulation of resources and capabilities that lies within the intra-organisational space of the firm. It builds on the assumption that before strategic resources can be sources of competitive advantages

they necessarily need to be heterogenous and immobile for the firm to exploit. Consequently, following the notion of the RBV paradigm, resources are subject to become sources of competitive advantage when they adhere the four indicators proposed by Barney (1991) including value, rare, imperfect imitable and non-substitutable. And sport properties in possession of such internal resources are more likely to provide strategic value to its sponsors in return for a sponsorship investment which potentially becomes a source of competitive advantage.

### **Adding an inter-organisational perspective**

As DGI's approach to sponsorships is built on developing community-based projects in conjunction with their partners, the intangible collaborative elements embedded in the relationship between the parties become important indicators of how the sponsorship progresses and eventually generate a beneficial outcome of the sponsorship. Also, with DGI's approach to action sponsorships as a dyadic partnership and expect their partners to actively contribute in the various promotional projects, the relational aspect of the sponsorship can be considered of high importance. The interfirm relationships between DGI and their partners and their ability to establish a firm foundation for collaboration constitute, therefore, an essential part of the sponsorship arrangement and the likelihood of making the sponsorship a success. Consequently, an understanding of how sources of competitive advantages, based solely on the intra-organisational perspective and the internal resources of DGI, may be insufficient to explore the full picture of subject.

As proponents of the RBV paradigm emphasized that competitive advantage stems from those resources and capabilities that are owned and controlled by the firm, other scholars suggest that critical resources may extend beyond firm boundaries (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Oliver, 1997). They argue that the RBV has not looked beyond the resources within the properties and resource markets to explain enduring firm heterogeneity. Further, they criticize the RBV for having overlooked the fact that the (dis)advantages of an individual firm are often linked to the (dis)advantages of the network of relationships in which the firm is embedded (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Moreover, it has been suggested that firms who combine resources in unique ways may realize an advantage over competing firms who are unable or unwilling to do so. Thus, those idiosyncratic interfirm linkages may also be a source of competitive advantage (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

Based on DGI's collaborative approach to sponsorships, a broader understanding of the relational and interfirm aspects may provide further insights into how value is generated in the sponsorship. And with the acknowledgement of sponsorships as a virtuous cycle between two firms (Fahy et al., 2004), it also becomes relevant to understand how value generating mechanisms are embedded in the interfirm space between DGI and their sponsors. Therefore, the following section is dedicated to outline the inter-organisational perspective of sources of competitive advantage based on the Relational paradigm. The intention of the section is to highlight and discuss the different aspects of this perspective to gain a broader understanding of how sources of competitive advantages may stem from the inter-organisational relationship between DGI and their sponsors. The section is relevant as it will constitute the second stream of theory used for this research paper.

### **The Relational paradigm – an inter-organisational perspective**

Dyer & Singh (1998) provide a theoretical basis to improve the understanding of how sources, emerged in the inter-organisational space, may be subject to be leveraged and, potentially, generate positive competitive advantages for a firm. Their theoretical idea has been labelled the 'Relational view' and is based on the notion that a firm's critical resources may span firm boundaries and may be embedded in interfirm routines and processes (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

According to literature of strategic management, a strategic alliance is "a close, long-term, mutually beneficial agreement in which resources, knowledge, and skills are shared with the objective of enhancing the competitive position of each partner" (Spekman, Forbes, Isabella, & MacAvoy, 1998). Further, Oliver (1997) states that strategic alliances allow firms to procure assets, competencies, or capabilities that are not readily available in competitive factor markets, particularly specialized expertise and intangible assets, such as reputation. And through the perception that another firm possesses complementary resources is what motivates a firm to initiate and engage in an alliance relationship (Dyer, Singh, & Hesterly, 2018).

Thus, with the Relational paradigm of competitive advantage, Dyer & Singh (1998) propose four indicators for how strategic resources and capabilities are sourced in the inter-organisational space. The four indicators include: (1) complementary resources or capabilities, (2) investment in interfirm relation-specific assets, (3) substantial knowledge-sharing routines and (4) effective governance mechanisms (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Based on the four indicators, the following sections will discuss each condition in turn and relate it to the current literature in the field of sponsorships.

### **Complementary Resources & Capabilities**

The first indicator is defined as *complementary resources and capabilities*. Through actively leveraging complementary resources and capabilities may generate a unique set of resources for the firm to realize gains. According to Dyer & Singh (1998) complementary resource endowments are defined as “distinctive resources of alliance partners that collectively generate greater rents than the sum of those obtained from the individual endowments of each partner” (p. 666-667). Further, they emphasize that a firm's ability to generate rents from its resources may require that the resources are utilized in conjunction with the complementary resources of another firm. Amit & Schoemaker (1993) suggest that the strategic value of each resource's relative magnitude may increase with a raise in the relative magnitude of other resources. Thus, through the combination and utilization of complementary resources of the alliance partner will more likely increase the value of those specific resources.

Also, complementarities of strategic resources may only be sources of competitive advantage if the firms in the partnership also share organisational complementarities. As the complementarity of strategic resources creates the potential for relational rents, the rents can only be realized if the firms have information systems and organisational cultures that are compatible enough to facilitate coordinated actions (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Thus, uniformed organisational cultures and information systems between the alliance partners become a prerequisite for leveraging the complementary strategic resources and generate greater rents.

Strategic compatibility between partners in the sponsorship relation is a prerequisite to successfully leverage the full value potential of the sponsorship arrangement. According to Farrelly et al. (2006) partners need to understand the issues of image complementarity and target market fit of each partner to establish a firm foundation to collaborate. And by understanding and accepting roles and requirements of each party in relation to the necessary activation of the investment will enable the partners to provide the necessary resources into the sponsorship (Farrelly et al., 2006). Goal convergence is another aspect of a successful sponsorship, however, it may develop over time. Hence, partners must present a detailed picture of where they wish to take their respective brands and how the sponsorship will contribute to this (Farrelly & Quester, 2005). Thus, it is evident from the literature that resource complementarities must be accompanied by a high level of

strategic compatibility, and goal convergence of the partners must be aligned in order to successfully leverage the sponsorship arrangement.

### **Relation-Specific Assets**

The second indicator is characterized as *relation-specific assets* and focuses on co-specialized resources between firms. Creation of resources and capabilities in collaboration with an alliance partner can result in value enhancing resources for the firm (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Further, Amit & Schoemaker (1993) noted that the more firm-specific, durable and scarce strategic assets are, the more valuable to the firm can be their deployment. Therefore, firms may choose to seek advantages by creating assets that are specialized in conjunction with the assets of an alliance partner (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

Relation-specific assets emerge through the right combination of scarce and durable resources between firms which may enable the firm to obtain a unique set of valuable resources. More specifically, valuable relation-specific assets may stem from both tangible and intangible resources such as physical resources and knowledge shared between humans. As physical resources can be considered as the exchange of tangible resources, human assets is better defined as “transaction-specific know-how accumulated by transactors through longstanding relationships” (Dyer & Singh, 1998, p. 662). However, based on the intangible nature of human interactions and knowledge exchange, human resources may be difficult to imitate for competitors and can, thereby, provide a firm with a more unique co-specialized relation-specific asset.

Quester and Thompson (2001) found that commercial rights obtained through a sponsorship arrangement are likely to be ineffective unless they are accompanied by the commitment of significant additional resources beyond those that can be classified as strictly financial. Therefore, to maximize value of sponsorships, partners should be willing to invest in relation-specific assets in order to activate the partnership. Further, additional resources have to be allocated to leverage activities which typically involve promotion of the association between the sponsor and the sponsored property in order to achieve any real degree of success (Quester & Thompson, 2001). In addition, successful sponsorship relationships are possible if both parties appreciate the need to contribute at the strategic and operational level including investing in the relationship which create additional value and motivates the parties to work together (Farrelly et al., 2006). Thus, the

potential to successfully leverage the sponsorship arrangement depends on the partners willingness to contribute with additional resources in order to activate and promote the sponsorship.

### **Knowledge-Sharing Routines**

*Knowledge-sharing routines* is characterised as the third indicator. Through an alliance partner, a firm can generate rents by developing superior interfirm knowledge-sharing routines (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Inter-organisational knowledge-sharing routines are characterized as “a regular pattern of interfirm interactions that permits the transfer, recombination, or creations of specialized knowledge” (Grant, 1996 as cited in Dyer & Singh, 1998, p. 665). However, transparency and openness in the knowledge-sharing process between firms is a prerequisite for successfully realizing valuable knowledge from the alliance partner (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Further, they state that “the ability of alliance partners to generate rents through knowledge sharing is dependent on an alignment of incentives that encourages the partners to be transparent, to transfer knowledge and not to free ride on the knowledge acquired from the partner” (Dyer & Singh, 1998, p. 666). Thus, firms that are particularly transparent and effective at transferring know-how are more likely to outperform competitors and will eventually enjoy a competitive advantage.

Knowledge-sharing routines are found to be of great importance to successfully leverage the sponsorship. Urriolagoitia & Planellas (2007) found that intensive interactions among the employees in the sponsored property and the sponsor enable the two parties to discover ways to both strengthen the sponsorship relationship and satisfy their own organisational needs. Also, Ryan & Fahy (2003) noted that these interactions are likely to incentivise employees to share information and communicate effectively which may lead to internalised learning and willingness to employ the information into their own organisation. Thus, knowledge-sharing routines are dependent on the partner’s willingness to interact and establish a trustworthy relationship that allows information to flow from one partner to the other. This interaction will enable the partners to share tacit and sticky knowledge that lies within each individual and provide valuable know-how which is difficult to imitate and, therefore, are more likely to be sources of competitive advantage (Dyer & Singh, 1998).



## Effective Governance

The fourth and final indicator refers to how an *effective governance* structure is nurtured in the partnership. The underlying governance structure influences transaction costs as well as the motivation of alliance partners to engage in value-creation initiatives (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Two types of governance structures can be nurtured in the partnership and is characterised as *formal* and *informal*. A formal governance structure relies on contracts and enforcement of agreements through third-party actors whereas informal governance structures are based on self-enforcing agreements with no involvement of third-party actors. Hence, informal governance structure is built merely upon trust and embeddedness between the alliance partners. Further, informal governance potentially lowers contracting, monitoring, adaptation, and recontracting costs and moreover it may also provide superior incentives for value creation initiatives (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

Although informal governance structures have been argued to be a beneficial governance structure, Granovetter (1985) emphasizes that it requires time and a history of interactions and personal ties to develop trust between alliance partners and, as a result, establish an effective informal governance structure. Therefore, formal governance structures are often used in the beginning of a partnership and often rely on formal contracts. But when partners clarify expectations, develop norms, and prove their reliability, the informal governance structure is more likely to emerge and be the main governance structure in the partnership (Dyer et al., 2018). Thus, the choice of governance structure may often be a mix of the formal and informal structure, however, through a successful development of an informal governance structure, based on trust and commitment between the partners, will enable the firm to minimize transaction costs and enhance the efficiency and performance of the partnership.

As interactions among employees are likely to result in a higher degree of knowledge sharing, it also has an impact on the reciprocal commitment and trust between the partners which may enable an informal governance structure to be established. However, Farrelly et al. (2006) noted that the commitment of a sponsor is contingent on the sport property's efforts to also contribute directly to the performance of the relationship. A high level of commitment has likewise been found to have a positive impact on the economic satisfaction defined as "the positive affective response to economic rewards that flow from the relationship" (Farrelly & Quester, 2005, p. 213). Thus, reciprocal commitment is achieved when both parties invest in the partnership and show dedication

and a high level of involvement to reach the shared goals set in the beginning of the partnership agreement.

## Summing up the Relational paradigm

As it has been discussed above, the Relational paradigm provides an alternative way to understand sources of competitive advantage. In contrast to the RBV perspective, the Relational paradigm is focused on the inter-organisational field and suggests that sources of competitive advantages should be found within the interrelationship between firms. Specifically, Dyer & Singh (1998) suggest that sources of competitive advantages stem from complementary resources and capabilities, relation-specific assets, knowledge sharing routines and effective governance structures. Consequently, following the notion of the Relational paradigm, sources of competitive advantages are found in the interfirm sponsorship relation between a sport property and the sponsor.

## Concluding the chapter

This section completes the literature review. Based on the above discussion of theories, the theoretical framework of this research is based on two distinct paradigms, namely the *Resource Based* paradigm and the *Relational* paradigm. By marrying the two different paradigms, I aim to explore how sources of competitive advantages stem from both the intra- and inter-organisational space in order to understand how a sponsorship in DGI constitutes a strategic resource for the sponsoring firm and potentially become a source of competitive advantage. A visual representation of the two distinct paradigms are depicted in figure 2 below.

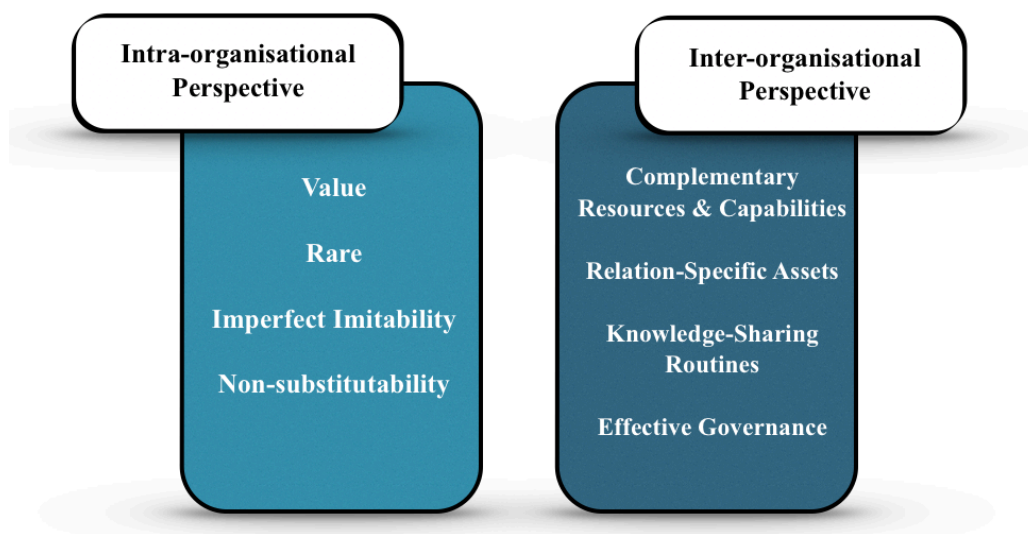


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework Overview

## Methodology & Methods

The following chapter is dedicated to highlight the methodological considerations and describe the methods applied in this research paper. Moreover, the methodological considerations and the methods used to answer the research question will be discussed.

The chapter follows the ‘*research onion*’ framework proposed by Saunders et al. (2016) and will methodically walkthrough each layer of the model, namely *philosophy of science*, *research approach*, *research strategy*, *research choices*, *time horizon*, *techniques and procedures*, and *research quality*. However, the chapter starts with a personal reflection of the research process and how the changing circumstances caused by the worldwide pandemic of COVID 19 has impacted the research process and, eventually, the final results.

### Reflections and Implications of the Research Process

The process of working with this thesis project and the research into the academic field of sponsorships has been an interesting and engaging journey. However, the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic has caused some immediate challenges to my thesis project and, inevitably, impacted the whole research process which had to be adapted to this new reality. In order to address the challenges this outbreak caused to the thesis project, I aim with this section to provide the reader with an understanding of how I intended to approach the research question before the unfortunate incident occurred.

To answer the stated research question and explore how the role of DGI in the sponsorship setting is impacting the generation of strategic value to the sponsors which potentially become subject to be a source of competitive advantage, I planned to collect insights from several partners to ensure a great variety of empirical perspectives on the subject. Each perspective was intended to provide useful insights about their experiences and perceptions of their sponsorship with DGI. And through the various perspectives and insights from the different partners, I intended to get a broad understanding of their initial reasons for engaging in a sponsorship with DGI in order to conduct a more compelling analysis of the value-generating mechanisms from the stance of the sport property.

In order to conduct a comprehensive research of how sport properties approach the sponsorship relation and generate value from a longitudinal perspective, I intended to follow

Urriolagoitia & Planellas' (2007) sponsorship relationship life cycle model, in which they argue that sponsorship relations change and behavioral patterns develop over time. Based on that framework, I planned to include partners from three different stages of the sponsorship arrangement - more specifically the *formation*, *operation*, and *outcome* stage - in order to explore how the various elements within the intra- and inter-organisational perspectives were expected at different stages in the sponsorship life cycle. This would have caused the research to include a broader perspective on how DGI's approach to sponsorships could be understood and, consequently, provide a more in-depth understanding of the dynamic nature of sponsorships. Furthermore, by including the various partners would also have caused the research to explore the more longitudinal aspects of sponsorships and offered a more dynamic perspective of the value generation.

Consequently, to follow the initial plan for the thesis, I planned interviews with four different partners engaging in a sponsorship with DGI. The planned interviews and their current status in the sponsorship life cycle are listed in table 1.

Partner	Sponsorship life cycle stage	Interview Status
De Blaa Rederier	Formation	Completed
Cykel Partner	Formation	Cancelled
Profil Optik	Operation	Cancelled
Coca Cola	Outcome	Cancelled

*Table 1: Overview interview plan with sponsors*

However, due to the occurrence of the worldwide outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic caused the circumstances to change immediately. As a consequence, the three out of four planned interviews got cancelled with immediate effect and only one partner allowed me to conduct an interview over the phone. I had no longer access to the empirical data which I initial planned to collect and this implicated the data collection process negatively. The intention of gaining a broad empirical set of data that covered all stages of the sponsorship life cycle became impracticable.

Consequently, the empirical data for this research paper is, unarguably, limited as only a single interview with a partner constitutes the general perspective of the partners. Therefore, based on the changing circumstances affected by the virus outbreak, the empirical foundation used for the analysis and subsequent findings can be considered rudimentary.

Nevertheless, I have aimed throughout this research process to elucidate the phenomenon in the best way possible under the changing circumstances and with the empirical data which I had to my disposition. Although, I acknowledge that further research with a broader set of empirical data is needed to elucidate the research area, I propose that the findings of this research paper should be viewed as indicative measures for how non-profit sport properties are able to provide their sponsors with value which potentially alters into a competitive advantage. Nevertheless, with my reflections on the research process and its implications caused by the changing circumstances, the rest of the chapter will present the methodological considerations and elaborate on the methods used to address the research question.

## **Philosophy of Science**

According to Saunders et al. (2016) research philosophy refers to “a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge” (p. 124). The term encompasses a researcher’s ability to reflect of his/her philosophical position and a thorough and consistent set of assumptions will constitute a credible research philosophy, which will further underpin the methodological choices, research strategy and data collection techniques and analysis procedures. Five major research philosophies are characterized by Saunders et al. (2016), namely *positivism*, *critical realism*, *interpretivism*, *postmodernism* and *pragmatism*. This thesis follows an interpretivism research philosophy.

The purpose of an interpretivist research approach is to create a new and richer understanding and interpretation of social worlds and contexts, and is based on the assumption that humans are different from physical phenomena because they create meanings (Saunders et al., 2016). According to Saunders et al. (2016) interpretivists believe that “different people of different cultural backgrounds, under different circumstances and a different times make different meanings, and therefore create and experience different social realities” (p. 140). Also, Bryman (2012) noted that a interpretivist researcher “respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural

sciences” (p. 30). In contrast to e.g. the positivist approach, the primary aim of this thesis is not to find reasons for human action and to explain it. Instead, based on an interpretivism research approach, the focus in this thesis is to make sense and interpret various meanings and experiences of people based on their specific context and social constructed realities (Bryman, 2012). Thus, by conducting interviews with employees from both DGI and their sponsors, my goal is to gain personal insights and perceptions from both parties to understand how the value generation process in the sponsorship relation is impacted by DGI.

The interpretivist philosophy portrays three different strands to capture the complex meaningfulness of research participants. The three strands are characterized as *phenomenology*, *hermeneutic* and *symbolic interaction* (Bryman, 2012). Each strand places a slightly different emphasis on how to capture research participant’s perception of meaningfulness (Saunders et al., 2016). As I intend to understand how each research participant perceives and experiences the value that is generated in the sponsorship relation, it becomes relevant to capture and interpret the meanings of each participant and understand the world from their point of view. This is aligned with the *phenomenological* approach which focus on the lived experiences and interpretations of each participant and attempts to see things from their point of view (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2016). Also, I am keen to understand how value is constructed in the interaction between participants and dynamically evolves over time. Thus, the common understanding of meaning among the participants shaped by their environments becomes a relevant constitute of new knowledge. This can be referred to as the *symbolic interactionist* approach that place emphasis on how individuals are continually interpreting the symbolic meaning of his or her environment which includes the actions of others, and acts on the basis of this imputed meaning (Bryman, 2012).

The choice of an interpretivist research approach can also be supported by the *ontological*, *epistemological* and *axiological* considerations (Saunders et al., 2016) in which I understand the research process and perceive the research philosophy. Each of the three dimensions will be discussed in turn in the following subsections in order to motivate the choice of taking an interpretivist stance for this research paper.

**Ontology** is concerned with the ‘*nature of reality or being*’ (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 136). The central point of the ontology orientation within the interpretivist philosophy is that social entities can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions

of social actors (Bryman, 2012). The position can be referred to as '*constructivism*' which asserts that "social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors and are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). Consequently, it becomes necessary as a researcher to study a situation in detail in order to understand what is happening or how realities are being experienced. Thus, the ontological considerations are based on the belief that the reality of the world is a social construct between individuals and shaped by their perceptions and experiences (Saunders et al., 2016). By taking the stance as an interpretivist with the understanding of the world as a social construct built up from actions, I investigate the phenomenon based on subjective perspectives. As the primary focus of this research paper is to understand how a sponsorship can be leveraged as a strategic resource, it becomes relevant for me to understand how value is perceived and experienced among the individuals studied. Consequently, with a constructivist position I am able to perceive and interpret the realities of the phenomenon I aim to study.

**Epistemology** is largely concerned with '*what constitutes acceptable knowledge*' (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 136). The epistemology of interpretivism assumes that knowledge from theories and concepts are too simplistic and instead acceptable knowledge stems from individual's perceptions and interpretations. Hence, new understandings and worldviews within individuals become important contributors of generating new and acceptable knowledge within the interpretivist philosophy (Saunders et al., 2016). In contrast to positivists, I do not expect to gather objective data to explore one truth about the value of the sponsorship. On the contrary, I believe that the value of the sponsorship can vary depending on context, scope and firms involved in the relationship with DGI. Hence, in this research I aim to get in direct contact with various individuals in order to collect subjective evidence to illuminate the subject.

**Axiology** refers to the '*role of values*' and is concerned with the researcher's role in the research process (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 136). More specifically, axiology is concerned with the assessment of researcher's own values and the researcher's involvement in what is being researched. An important axiological implication of the interpretivist philosophy is that the values and beliefs of researchers play a significant role in the research process. Hence, researchers should adopt an empathetic position in order to enter the social world of the research participants and understand the world from their point of view and further aim to limit bias and pre-interpreted conceptions in the knowledge generation process (Saunders et al., 2016). By following an interpretivist approach, I acknowledge that my role as researcher cannot be separated from the field

of research and, therefore, recognize that my values and beliefs become a part of the research process and the outcome. However, by recognizing my stance as an interpretivist and the inseparable position to the research, I aimed to limit my biases and pre-interpreted conceptions towards the research participants in order to minimize the impact of my own values and beliefs in the knowledge generation process.

**Methods and techniques** constitute the means of collecting knowledge within the chosen research philosophy (Saunders et al., 2016). With an interpretivist research approach follows a set of typical methods and techniques for data collection which is used to get valuable insights and knowledge into the studied phenomenon. Typical methods within this philosophy include small sample sizes and in-depth investigations in order to gather a large range of data to be interpreted by the researcher (Saunders et al., 2016). These methods and techniques usually emphasize words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and embodies a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation (Bryman, 2012). The data collection methods and techniques used in this thesis are centered around small sample sizes and in-depth interviews with selected participants involved in the value exchange between the parties in the sponsorship arrangement. The reasons for choosing this method, as well as its advantages and disadvantages, will be further discussed in the following sections.

## **A deductive research approach**

Various authors within research theory (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2017) portray three distinct research approaches to theory development namely *deductive*, *inductive* and *abductive*. This thesis follows a *deductive* approach. The deductive approach explores a known theory or phenomenon to test if that theory is valid in given circumstances (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, the deductive approach focus to move from the general to the specific (Saunders et al., 2016). As the research question for this project predominantly originates from current literature within the field of strategic management and sponsorships, I aim with this thesis to apply the theoretical assumptions and concepts from the theoretical framework of Barney (1991) and Dyer & Singh (1998) to explore and analyze how a sponsorship with DGI may be perceived and understood as a source of competitive advantage.



## **A qualitative research strategy**

The research question of this thesis is explored based on a qualitative research strategy. A qualitative research strategy is primarily concerned with participants' meanings and the relationship between them (Saunders et al., 2016). Denzin & Lincoln (2008) define the field of qualitative research as a "complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions" (p. 3). Likewise, they note that qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Thus, researchers within the qualitative research strategy aim to make sense of the phenomena studied through meanings and interpretations of individuals in the study. A qualitative research strategy is adopted for this research paper, as the aim is to understand the relationship in a sponsorship arrangement and value generation. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the complexity in sponsorship value and the dyadic relationship between a sport property and their partners, it becomes relevant for me to encourage the participants in the study to share their experiences and their thoughts on the subject. Consequently, with the adoption of a qualitative research strategy allows me, as a researcher, to gain in-depth insights and a detailed understanding of the complex phenomenon, which is the case for sponsorship value (Farrelly et al., 2006) and collaborative relationships between people.

While a qualitative research strategy may be beneficial and appropriate for studying complex phenomena it also implies a set of limitations. According to Bryman (2012) qualitative research easily becomes too subjective and rely too much on the researcher's personal objectives. Secondly, qualitative research may be difficult to replicate by others which cause generalization problems as the findings may be constrained within the scope of the research project. Finally, lack of transparency of the research process and how the researcher arrived at the conclusions can be hard to explicitly understand by others (Bryman, 2012). In consideration of each critique point noted above, I recognize the limitations a qualitative research strategy implies. Nevertheless, during the following sections I will consider and explain how I intend to mitigate the noted limitations in order to improve the quality of this research.

## **Case Study Design**

The qualitative analysis is built on a case study design. A case study research strategy is defined as an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not

be clearly evident (Yin, 2018). The purpose of a case study is to understand the complexity and dynamics of the topic being studied within its setting or context. Likewise, the case study approach is claimed to have the capacity to generate insights from in-depth research of a phenomenon in its real-life context (Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007 as cited in Saunders et al., 2016) and allow complex social phenomena to be understood (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Consequently, choosing a case study becomes a favorable research strategy when 1) the main research questions starts with “how” or “why”, 2) the researcher has limited or no control of behavioral events and 3) the focus of the study can be defined as a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2018). For this thesis, a case study approach has been chosen for several reasons. Firstly, as the research for this thesis is focused on the complex subject of sponsorship value and social relationship, the case study approach allows me to investigate the phenomenon more in-depth and provide key insights into the specific area of study. Secondly, due to the contemporary nature of sponsorships, the phenomenon can also be characterized as a contemporary subject. Thus, by choosing a case study approach for this thesis allows me to study the complexity of the phenomenon and gain an in-depth understanding of the subject.

The case study strategy has been widely criticized for its lack of abilities to produce generalizable, reliable and valid contributions to new knowledge (Saunders et al., 2016). Hence, Yin (2017) suggests to define the case you are studying and set some limitations, which then can be evaluated up against the research quality measures; generalizability, reliability and validity. He distinguishes between five different types of cases: *the critical*, *the extreme or unusual*, *the common*, *the revelatory* or *the longitudinal* case. The critical case is chosen to allow for a better understanding of an already developed theory whereas the common case may be chosen because of its ability to represent a broader category of cases (Yin, 2018). The choice of DGI as case organisation for this thesis has elements from both the critical and common case category. As I work deductively and have based the research question on a theoretical idea, I use DGI as case to get a deeper understanding of how the existing literature may be fitting this kind of organisation. Additionally, based on the nature of DGI as being a non-profit organisation with a community-based purpose, I consider DGI to be representative for the broader category of non-profit organisations sharing the same community-based purpose. Thus, DGI can be considered a combination of a critical and common case organisation.

## Methodological choices

With the choice of following a case study strategy, it becomes relevant to consider how the data should be collected in order to respond to the research question. These data collection methods are also referred to as the *methodological choices* (Saunders et al., 2016).

Within the qualitative research design, the authors distinguish between two methods of collection data namely *mono-method* or *multi-method* (Saunders et al., 2016). A mono-method qualitative study rely on a single data collection technique whereas a multi-method qualitative study rely on various means of data collection techniques (Saunders et al., 2016). It has been stated by several authors (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2018) that a multi-method data collection approach positively impact the research as multiple sources of evidence improve the reliability and validity. However, using a multi-method technique may also imply a greater workload to the researcher as various data is to be collected through various techniques (Yin, 2018). Based on the limited scope of this study and the changing external circumstances caused by the COVID 19 virus, I follow a mono-method approach to data collection. More specifically, interviews with individuals from both DGI and their partners are conducted in order to gain deeper insights and understanding of the research field. Likewise, the representative from the DGI was interviewed twice during the data collection process to gain broader and deeper insights of the subject.

## Time Horizon

The time horizon of the research refers to the time frame in which the study is conducted. According to Saunders et al. (2016) the time horizon can either be characterized as a “snapshot” taken at a particular time or act more like a diary which represent a longer period of time. The two time horizons are labelled *cross-sectional* and *longitudinal* studies respectively (Saunders et al., 2016). The time horizon for this thesis has been cross-sectional as the phenomenon has been studied at a particular point in time. Although, a longitudinal study had been beneficial for the research as I would have been able to study the dynamic nature of sponsorship value and potential changes in relationship between the parties involved, the limited scope of this thesis process neglected the opportunity to conduct a longitudinal study. Consequently, a cross-sectional time horizon has been chosen for this research.

## **Data Collection**

Following the chosen time horizon for the research, a detailed description of the selected data collection techniques used to gather the empirical data are presented. Typical data collection methods within the interpretivist philosophy include small sample sizes and in-depth investigations (Saunders et al., 2016) and usually emphasize words over quantifications (Bryman, 2012). Hence, in order to answer the research question of this thesis, the data collection consists of multiple sources including both primary and secondary data. A more specific description of both sources follows below.

### **Primary Data**

Several basic methods can be used to collect primary data. These methods include interviews, observation, immersing oneself in a situation or doing experiments (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Interviews are described by authors as “a highly efficient way to gather rich, empirical data, especially when the phenomenon of interest is highly episodic and infrequent” (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Interviews allow the researcher to attain rich and personalized information directly through the research participant about the specific subject (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Hence, interview is an ideal method when the subject under study is complex and valuable knowledge stems from personal insights within individuals. In order to understand the dynamics in the sponsorship relationship and how value is generated across partners, I found it necessary to investigate and understand how this was perceived from both sides of the table. Consequently, I chose to conduct personal interviews in order to gain a deeper understanding of the subject.

In order to conduct a successful interview in which the researcher obtain rich and valuable knowledge from the participants, Hancock & Algozzine (2006) suggest to follow certain guiding principles. First, the researcher should identify key participants in the situation whose knowledge and opinions may provide important insights regarding the research questions. In order to get relevant insights of the case organisation and their value generating approach to sponsorships, I chose to contact employees responsible for the sponsorship from both the case organisation itself and their sponsors. In total, I conducted three interviews with Jan Nielsen, Head of Partnerships in DGI (two interviews) and Anne Bay Riisager, Campaign Manager at De Blaa Rederier (one interview). The purpose of conducting the interviews was to get a better understanding of DGI’s approach to sponsorships and a partner’s perception being involved in a sponsorship with DGI.

Thus, both participants were able to provide important and valuable insights in regard to the research subject.

Second, the research should develop and prepare an appropriate interview guide with questions that allow the researcher to gain insights into the study's fundamental research question (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Various types of interviews can be conducted which, consequently, impacts the development of the interview guide. A common typology to describe the levels of formality and structure of the interview include *structured interviews*, *semi-structured interviews* and *unstructured or in-depth interviews* (Saunders et al., 2016). The interviews conducted during the research process followed the semi-structured approach as it enabled me to conduct the interviews based on a predetermined set of theoretical themes. Also, the flexible nature with open-ended questions allowed the interviews to investigate unforeseen topics and dig deeper into specific areas of the predetermined themes. This way I managed to both get planned themes covered and simultaneously allowed new discoveries and interesting areas to arise. Moreover, the semi-structured approach offers possibilities to ask follow-up questions to the interviewees. This is ideal as the central themes of this thesis including value creation, trust and interpersonal relationship are complex and can be hard to express and capture. Consequently, through the follow-up questions I aimed to ensure the validity and a common understanding of the interviewees' answers.

The interview guide was structured based on specific theoretical themes which I aimed to cover during the interview sessions. Moreover, the interview guide was made to ensure some level of consistency between the different interviews (Saunders et al., 2016). Nevertheless, each interview began with a brief presentation of the research project and an introduction to the research area. Hereafter, a set of soft questions were asked to warm up the interviewees including their position, background and presentation of their organisation. Subsequently, the questions surrounding the more complex areas of the subject were asked and the conversations moved in various directions along the session. Despite the fluttering approach, all themes were covered during the interviews and with a set of open questions about the future, the interviews ended. The interview guides appear in the appendices 3 and 4.

Finally, researchers should consider the setting in which the interview is conducted and ensure that the interview data is properly recorded. In order to increase the likelihood of attaining

high-quality information and insights from the participants involved in the study, researchers may seek a private, neutral and distraction free interview location to conduct the interview. Furthermore, the researcher should aim to audiotape the interview and, subsequently, transcribe the recording for closer scrutiny and comparison (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In order to increase the probability of attaining quality information, the two interviews with Jan Nielsen, Head of Sponsorships in DGI, were conducted at a neutral and distraction free location in Copenhagen. The interviews lasted 60 minutes and were audio recorded with the permission of the participant. The third interview was planned to take place at the same location as the interviews with Jan Nielsen, but due to the close down of Denmark, caused by the COVID 19 virus, the third interview was conducted through telephone and subsequently transcribed for the ease of analysing the data. The transcriptions of the interviews can be found in appendices 1 and 2.

Despite the possibilities of attaining rich and valuable information when conducting semi-structured interviews, researchers should also consider the limitations of the specific method. First, lack of standardisation in the interview guides may lead to concerns about the reliability of the data attained through the interview. Secondly, the interviewer and the interviewee may be biased towards one another which potentially impact the answers attained from the interview (Saunders et al., 2016). I acknowledge that conducting semi-structured interviews comes with a set of limitations which I had to consider. Throughout the interview process I ensured to have all the predetermined themes covered to a certain extent. Hence, by having all the themes covered in each interview can be considered to increase the reliability of the answers. Finally, I was conscious about my potential bias in the interview setting and aimed through the interaction to maintain an objective stance. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that my biases as researcher and biases of the interviewees were present and may have impacted the collected data.

## **Secondary Data**

In addition to the primary data and its collection methods, secondary data are often used in research projects in conjunction with primary data and is defined as data that endure physical evidence (Saunders et al., 2016). Secondary data includes various types of written documents such as email correspondences, company reports and leaflets, administrative and public records as well as webpages (Saunders et al., 2016). The use of secondary data comes, however, with a set of advantages and disadvantages which should be considered by the researcher. Secondary data has

the advantage of being comparative to data obtained through other means. Additionally, it can lead to new discoveries and information that would have been difficult to foresee in the research process otherwise. On the other hand, secondary data may not be of high quality and often data are made for another specific purpose which demand a thorough evaluation before using it in the research (Saunders et al., 2016).

Various types of secondary data have been used throughout this research project. Official webpages from both the case organisation and their partner were used to gather useful insights and information. Additionally, several news articles and consultancy reports were consulted to get a better and broader understanding of specific elements of the case organisations, their approach and their partnership projects. Throughout the data collection process, I have carefully aimed to only use trusted and official web pages and reports to mitigate the risk of quality issues. Consequently, the use of secondary data enabled me to get additional insights into the subject of study.

## **Analysing Data**

The three interviews were all audio recorded and transcribed subsequently. The transcript can be perceived as the interpretation process where the written presentation becomes an interpretation of it. In relation to my process, I acknowledge that my interpretation of the data already starts in the transcription process of the collected empirical data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). To increase the validity of the empirical data, I have chosen to transcribe the interviews myself. All words in the interviews are transcribed, however, I did not include words such as “øh” or breathing breaks. As the main focus has been to gain insights into the participant’s lived experiences and perceptions, these wordings are not necessary for the understanding of their answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The coding approach is primarily based on a closed deductive approach as the coding has been guided by central themes derived from the theoretical literature (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015). More specifically, the coding has been based on the same central themes, stemming from the theoretical framework of this thesis, to ensure a uniformed coding process which also amplify the measurement validity of the empirical data.

## **Research Quality**

Various measures are used to evaluate the quality of the research and the research findings. A variety of authors have noted two main quality measures being *reliability* and *validity* (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). Reliability refers to replication and consistency of the

research whereas validity refers to the appropriateness of the measures used, accuracy of the analysis of the results and generalisability of the findings (Saunders et al., 2016). Based on the two measurement factors, the quality of this research will be assessed in the sections below.

### **Reliability**

Reliability refers to “replication and consistency” (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 202). Reliability is attained if any researcher is able to replicate the same study and come up with the same findings. However, as qualitative research may be concerned with social settings and circumstances that are dynamic in nature, it is impossible to ‘freeze’ and therefore becomes difficult to make an exact replication of the same study (Bryman, 2012). As the phenomenon under study in this thesis has been focused around the social aspects of the relationship between partners and the intangible nature of value creation, reliability can be a difficult criterion to successfully meet.

Nevertheless, with a qualitative approach to this research, a strategy to increase the possibility of obtaining reliability is to ensure that the research process is clearly thought through and presented in a transparent way. This will allow others to replicate the same study if they wish to do so (Saunders et al., 2016). Hence, by acknowledging that qualitative nature of this study and the limitations of replicating the exact same research, I have aimed throughout the whole process to conduct an open and transparent research by explicitly stating the chosen course of action and associated techniques as well as attaching the interview guides and transcriptions of the interviews. Moreover, through the use of a coding manual, I have been cautious to ensure that I used the same definitions of the theoretical concepts when coding the empirical data. Also, by being aware of my biases towards the collected data and minimizing my biases when interpreting it can be considered a mean to gain reliability (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, despite the difficulties in meeting the reliability criterion in this qualitative study, I have aimed to increase the level of reliability as much as possible.

### **External Validity**

External validity concerns with “the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings” (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). Hence, findings from the research should be largely applicable to other social settings in order to increase the external validity. However, as noted earlier in this chapter, a major limitation of the case study approach is the low level of generalisability as most



studies concerns a specific organisation and the findings may be constrained within the scope of the research project (Bryman, 2012). As the research strategy for this thesis has been based on a single case organisation, the generalization of the research findings may therefore be considered limited due to its specific context and scope.

Instead, *analytic generalization* can be used as an appropriate way for generalizing the findings from a case study. According to Yin (2013), this form of generalization is based on the theoretical ideas and propositions of the research and aim to understand and compare the empirical findings in relation to these theories of other research results.

Despite the low level of generalization when conducting a case study research, I aimed throughout this study to follow the theoretical prescriptions accurately. Based on that, I consider the empirical findings to be generalizable to similar studies applying the same theoretical frameworks. Thus, through an analytical consistency in the research process, I have aimed to increase the external validity of this study.

### **Internal Validity**

Internal validity refers to “*whether there is a good match between researchers’ observations and the theoretical ideas they develop*” (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). Internal validity is established through a research when the study accurately demonstrates a causal relationship between two variables (Saunders et al., 2016).

It can be argued that the internal validity of the data in this research is limited as the data primarily is based on the initial phase of the sponsorship relationship. Consequently, the match between my proposed theoretical ideas and the collected empirical data is based on a thin empirical foundation. Instead, a longitudinal study and broader collection of data including a greater variety of partners would have caused the internal validity to be improved as more empirical data may have supported the relationship between the theoretical proposals and ideas.

Nevertheless, some strategies can be used to assure the internal validity of the study such as triangulation and respondent validation (Bryman, 2012). I have throughout the research process been in contact with the representative from DGI several times in order to discuss certain issues and have the findings verified along the way. Additionally, through the application of multiple theoretical perspectives and various sources of data, I have aimed to elucidate the phenomenon from various angles to improve the internal validity of the study.

## **Analysis**

This chapter includes the empirical analysis of the research paper. In the first section, an analysis of DGI's internal resources and capabilities will be analysed based on the first theoretical perspective constituting this thesis, namely the RBV paradigm. The section aims to analyse that internal resources and capabilities in DGI that constitutes the sponsorship arrangement as a strategic resource. Following this section, the Relational paradigm is applied to analyse the inter-organisational perspective of the sponsorship arrangement and explore how the interfirm relationship between DGI and their sponsors impacts the value generation of the sponsorship.

### **Sponsorship – a strategic resource**

With the definition of sponsorships as being an investment in cash or kind in order to secure sponsors' accessible rights to exploit resources and capabilities of the sponsored property for the purpose to achieve commercial ends (Meenaghan, 1983), the internal resources and capabilities in which DGI is able to bring into the sponsorship and allow sponsors to exploit becomes a relevant area to explore. And following the argument from Barney (1991) that in order to understand sources of competitive advantage then internal resources and capabilities of a firm must be subject to heterogeneity and immobile between firms. Hence, an assessment of the internal resources and capabilities which constitute the uniqueness of DGI is relevant to explore in order to demonstrate the potential value DGI is able to provide to their sponsors.

And based on the notion that a sponsorship is perceived as a strategic resource for the sponsoring firm (Ryan & Fahy, 2012) which may be subject to become a source of competitive advantage, it becomes relevant to understand and examine the internal resources and capabilities in DGI that constitutes the value of the sponsorship as a strategic resource. Therefore, the empirical findings in the following section shall be perceived as the bundle of resources that constitute the accessible rights and resources included in a sponsorship with DGI.

### **The RBV Paradigm: Empirical Findings**

The intention with the first part of the analysis is to examine the internal resources and capabilities that constitutes the uniqueness of DGI based on an intra-organisational perspective. The analysis will discuss the internal resources and capabilities in DGI that are perceived as valuable to their sponsors in order to evaluate the likelihood of providing strategic value in return for the

sponsorship investment. The analysis is based on the first theoretical perspective, represented by the RBV paradigm, and is centred around the four theoretical indicators proposed by Barney (1991) namely *value*, *rareness*, *imperfect imitability* and *non-substitutability*. The below table presents the main empirical findings of the first part of the analysis constituting the intra-organisational perspective. The findings are explained in detail and discussed in relation to relevant theories in the following sections.

RBV Indicators	Empirical Findings
<i>Value</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The brand image is a valuable resource to DGI.</li> </ul>
<i>Rareness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisational structure and extensive reach constitute the rareness of DGI.</li> </ul>
<i>Imperfect Imitability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The collective network of sport associations and the strong social ties are imperfect imitable.</li> </ul>
<i>Non-substitutability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The collective bundle of the valuable, rare and imperfect imitable resources constitutes the non-substitutability of DGI.</li> <li>• Partner exclusivity ensures ex ante limits to competition.</li> </ul>

Table 2: Empirical findings based on the RBV paradigm

## Valuable

Firm resources can only be a source of competitive advantage when they are valuable to the firm who holds the resource. Moreover, an unique combination of valuable resources and routines will enable the firm to leverage a heterogeneous set of valuable resources and potentially enjoy a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

### **Finding 1: *The brand image is a valuable resource to DGI.***

With the organisational purpose to contribute to a stronger community through the support and development of the local sport associations and positive recognition from their partners make the brand image a valuable resource to DGI.

It becomes evident from the empirical data, that DGI's organisational purpose to engage more people in sports through the active support of the local sports associations is highly reflected in their brand image. Moreover, a positive recognition and perception among their sponsors makes the brand image a valuable resource to DGI.

As DGI's main purpose is to "develop and support the local sport associations to create a healthy, challenging and community-based sports environment where individuals can accomplish both personal and shared victories" (DGI, 2020h), DGI can be considered to have a unique focus on how sport can contribute to a stronger local community through the support of the local sport associations. On the contrary, their main counterpart DIF has a greater focus on the sport itself and the development of each athlete. Jan Nielsen, head of partnerships, also describes the differences between DGI and DIF and emphasizes the differentiation between the two entities:

We [DGI] are really good to work with the local sport associations whereas the various sport federations under DIF are even better at working with the individual sports, the development of trainers and the individual athletes. On the contrary, we believe in developing the whole sport association. (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

Thus, with DGI's focal point of interest in promoting and engaging more people through the active support of the local sport association, the organisational purpose can be considered idiosyncratic and consequently unique to DGI.

Also, DGI's core values, which are integrated into the organisational and operational routines through a consistent approach, are also positively reflecting the brand. As DGI consciously aims to live their values and integrate it into the operational work becomes a key element in achieving a valuable brand. 'A sense of community, spirit, determination and strength' are the four core values in DGI and they aim to live the values through any project that is being launched. The fact that a consistent approach to live and integrate the values in any aspect of the operational routines is also what potential partners are investing in says Jan Nielsen (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Further, he emphasizes that DGI has shown a consistency to integrate the values into all aspects of the organisation: "I believe that we throughout the past many years have shown that this is the way we work" (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Thus, the active promotion of the core values can be considered to reflect the brand image positively.

The brand image is considered to be a valuable asset among their current partners. According to campaign manager, Anne Bay Riisager, Campaign Manager at De Blaa Rederier, the strong brand and core values were some of the main reasons why they invested in a sponsorship with DGI. Consequently, the opportunity for the partners to associate with DGI's brand is being perceived as a valuable right. Anne Bay Riisager highlights:

Well, they have a great brand which is also the reason why we chose them [DGI]. I believe it sends a strong signal that we collaborate with them. [...] and again, it is also the whole mentality around the voluntariness and the fact that you are doing something good for others on a voluntary basis that we like. (Interview, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

It becomes evident from the quotes above, that the organisational purpose and the active integration of the core values into the operational work are key elements in making the brand image a valuable resource. With the purpose to 'develop and support the local sport associations to create a healthy, challenging and community-based sports environment' (DGI, 2020e), DGI can be considered to have a unique focus to engage and include as many people in sports, regardless of level, through the active support and development of the local sport associations. And with a conscious mind to integrate the core values into every aspect of the organisation, DGI aims to mature a strong brand image.

Finally, the collected data shows that the organisational purpose, core values and their brand image are highly valued and recognized among their partners and reason why they invest in a sponsorship with them (A. Bay Riisager, Interview, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020). According to Barney (1991) a positive firm reputation among customers and stakeholders is also to be considered a valuable resource to a firm. Thus, based on the recognition from their partners and the unique organisational purpose, the brand image can be considered a valuable resource to DGI.

### **Rareness**

Valuable resources can only be considered a source of competitive advantage if they also can be defined as rare. If a particular valuable firm resource is possessed by a large number of firms, then each of these firms have the capability of exploiting the resources in the same way. Consequently, all firms will be able to leverage the valuable resource and therefore no firm will be able to enjoy a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

### ***Finding 2: The organisational structure and extensive reach constitute the rareness of DGI.***

Based on the organisational structure DGI is able to involve and engage multiple levels in the organisation in order to activate a sponsorship. And the ability to reach more than 1,5 million athletes through the sport associations constitutes the rareness of DGI.

With a national and local anchorage in the Danish community, DGI has an extensive reach which becomes a rare asset for a sponsoring firm to exploit. With more than 1,5 million athletes engaged in 6,300 local sport associations, DGI holds the possibilities to reach a large target group with communicative messages on a national scale. Moreover, DGI's local presence is anchored in each local sport associations around Denmark which gives DGI the opportunities to target certain messages directly to local communities if necessary. Consequently, the organisational structure, with both a national and local anchorage in the Danish community can be considered a rare resource to DGI. Also, Jan Nielsen emphasizes that one of the core competences in DGI is their ability to engage and activate the different departments at the different levels in the organisation:

We work a lot in DGI to understand the whole organisational chain, i.e. from a nation-wide perspective and down to the individual member in the associations. [...] So, the mindset that we need to help the next level to be successful with those things. I think that is actually one of our strengths because there are many levels we can bring into it (sponsorships). (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

Additionally, Jan Nielsen emphasizes that the local presence is a unique competence which makes DGI able to activate a sponsorship at all levels in the organisation and thereby reach target groups through sport communities in all parts of Denmark. The core competence lies in the organisational structure of the DGI as the organisation is dispersed to all parts of Denmark. Thus, the rareness lies in the ability to operate both nationally and locally to ensure that projects are activated and exposed in the relevant parts of Denmark.

That we are present locally. If we look at the partnership department, then we are not just located in Vingsted. We are not only present in Copenhagen. We are present in 14 local associations as well as regional associations, which can help to activate the partnership throughout Denmark. As we have so many departments who can help to carry the message forward is probably our greatest competence [...]. (Jan Nielsen, Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

The organisational structure and huge network of sport associations are also elements which are acknowledged and valued by their partners. The mix of different sport associations offers great value to the partners who appreciate the different opportunities to get their message across and leverage the extensive network of sport associations.

They have a huge network because it is such a large organisation with so many associations. There are many opportunities because there are both large resource-rich associations and there are smaller ones, so it consists of so many contact points. (A. Bay Riisager, Interview, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020).

It becomes evident from the empirical observations above, that the organisational structure and the extensive reach is rare to DGI. With a platform to reach an extensive number of people and

the particular organisational structure allows DGI to operate both at a national and local level through the sport associations which conjointly can be considered unique to DGI. According to Barney (1991) a particular valuable firm resource need to be rare and specific to the firm holding it in order to exploit and leverage the full potential of the resource. Thus, the ability to operate both nationally and locally through the sport associations and the opportunity to reach an extensive number of athletes constitutes the rareness of DGI.

### **Imperfect Imitability**

Resources are subject to be imperfect imitable if they are untradeable between firms. Or if resources are tradable, they must be of greater value to the firm that currently possesses the resources. Thus, resources are subject to imperfect imitability when competitors cannot obtain or leverage the same resources (Barney, 1991).

### ***Finding 3: The collective network of sport associations and the strong social ties are imperfect imitable.***

Access to a network of 6,400 sport associations can be considered as unique physical resources to DGI. Moreover, the close collaboration with the local sport associations relies on firm-specific social capital within the organisation. Hence, physical and social capital become imperfect imitable to DGI.

Following the argument in the above section of rare resources, the extensive network of sport associations and the social capital resources can also be argued to be imperfect imitable resources to DGI. As DGI consists of 6,400 physical sport associations widely dispersed in all parts of Denmark, they can be considered to possess strong physical capital resources (Hofer & Schendel, 1978). As any local sport association is free to collaborate with any other organisations or firms on an individual basis, the single sport association may not be considered an imperfect imitable resource to DGI. Conversely, seen as a collective network of sport associations, interrelated across the various sports, constitutes a unique resource to DGI. Through this interrelated network DGI is able to tailor projects to specific needs and able to leverage the various resources hold by the individual sport associations. The exploitation of the collective network of associations are exemplified in the promotional activities where projects is tailored the to reach specific target audience in specific



parts of the society and thereby accommodate the various needs of the sponsors. Thus, the collective network of sport associations can be considered an imperfect imitable resource to DGI.

Organisational and social capabilities used to exploit and engage the collective network of sport associations are core competences of the organisation. “We are strong when we start the ‘organisational machine’, because we can involve and touch so many different people through our network”, Jan Nielsen emphasizes (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). The ability to engage the whole network of sport associations and activate the ‘organisational machine’ are therefore to be considered unique competencies to DGI. Consequently, social competencies which lies within their internal workforce become a key element in order to navigate and activate the organisational chain and network of sport associations.

Moreover, DGI possesses strong social capital as people with various competences constitute the workforce that enables the ‘organisational machine’ to deliver successful results. More importantly, the ability to establish a truthful relationship to the various associations, which have been developed and matured through many years, become prerequisites to leverage the network. Jan Nielsen states that an important focus to DGI is to include the relevant people from the organisation which has the right competences to ensure a successful outcome when projects are initiated in cooperation with the local associations. Hence, the social ties to the sport associations become a key element in delivering a successful project (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). As social capabilities and competencies can be defined as intangible in nature (Grant, 1991), they become more difficult to imitate by other firms. Therefore, the close relationship with the sport associations based on social ties between employees in DGI and employees in the sport associations become subject to imperfect imitability.

As it appears from the empirical data above, DGI possesses physical and social resources which can be considered non-tradeable and firm-specific to the organisation. According to Barney (1991) resources are subject to be imperfect imitable if they are untradeable between firms, or if resources are tradable, they must be of greater value to the firm that currently possesses the resources. As the close social ties to the sport associations can be considered intangible, it can be argued to non-tradable for other firms to acquire. Likewise, the extensive network of sport associations, constituting the physical resources, can be considered unique to DGI and non-tradeable to other firms. In accordance to Peteraf (1993) then resources may be imperfect mobile

when the resources are somewhat specialized to a firm. Thus, the collective network of sport associations (physical resources) and the close relational ties with them (social resources) can be argued to be imperfect imitable to DGI.

### **Non-Substitutability**

For a resource to be a source of competitive advantage there must be no strategically equivalent valuable resources, or bundles of resources, that are themselves either not rare or imitable (Barney, 1991). Moreover, ex ante limits to competitions must be present in order to prevent competitors to acquire the same or similar valuable resources. By successfully preventing competitors substituting similar valuable resources may enable the firm to enjoy a superior resource position which potentially alters into a competitive advantage for the firm (Peteraf, 1993).

***Finding 4: The collective bundle of the valuable, rare and imperfect imitable resources constitutes the non-substitutability of DGI. Additionally, partner exclusivity ensures ex ante limits to competition.***

Through a collective bundle of resources including a strong brand image, network of sport associations and extensive reach to a large number of athletes, DGI becomes subject to non-substitutability. In addition, through partner exclusivity DGI mitigates ex ante limits to competition and ensures exclusive rights to the sponsors.

With a valuable brand image based on four core values, an organisational structure consisting of a collective network of sport associations widely spread all over Denmark and with the ability to reach an extensive number of athletes, DGI can be considered to possess a wide collection of resources which collectively becomes non-substitutable for competitors to acquire or copy. The various elements highlighted above can be considered unique to DGI and therefore provides a superior resource position to the organisation (Peteraf, 1993). Collectively, the bundle of resources can further be considered to be difficult to obtain for competitors through other channels, as the unique network of sport associations and extensive reach to a large target group can be considered specific to DGI. Due to the resources' close affiliation to DGI and its egalitarian purpose to actively engage more people in sports and promote sport associations in the local community, it can be argued that the collective bundle of resources is difficult to obtain for competitors through other

channels and therefore can be characterised as non-substitutable. Thus, based on the valuable, rare and imperfect imitable resources, the collective bundle of resources constitutes the non-substitutability of DGI.

In addition, through partner exclusivity, DGI ensures their partners exclusive rights to exploit the resources obtained in the sponsorship arrangement. Partner exclusivity inherent in a sponsorship agreement provide sponsors with an assurance that only the specific partner is eligible to exploit the rights and resources provided by the firm (Masterman, 2007). According to Jan Nielsen, DGI offers partner exclusivity to each of their partners on a national level in order to prevent any potential competitor to leverage the same rights and resources they provide through the sponsorship arrangement (E-mail correspondence, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020). Hence, DGI prevents direct competitors to the partner to get access to the same pool of valuable resources and, thereby, ensure their partners exclusive rights to leverage the resources.

Moreover, the sponsorship department makes sure that potential competitors to their partners do not profit from their partner's association with DGI (E-mail correspondence, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020). By offering exclusive rights to their partners limit the competition of the same resources (Peteraf, 1993). Thus, by reassuring partners through exclusivity makes the sponsorship arrangement non-substitutable (Barney, 1991) and sponsors will be able to enjoy and leverage the resources without worrying about their competitors will imitate or obtain the same resources. And due to the valuable, rare and imperfect imitable resources in DGI, it can be considered difficult to competitors to obtain or acquire any strategic equivalent resources which can challenge the superior resource position DGI currently enjoy.

## **Subconclusion**

With this section ends the first part of the analysis. The section focused on the intra-organisational perspective, exhibiting Barney's (1991) four theoretical indicators, and discussed the internal resources and capabilities in order to understand and determine the value proposition of DGI. The analysis showed that DGI possesses a unique set of resources and capabilities which collectively constitutes the rights and opportunities accessible for their sponsors to exploit.

Firstly, the analysis showed that DGI possesses a strong brand image which is based on their core community-based purpose to engage more people in sports. Thus, the brand image was argued

to be a valuable resource to DGI. Secondly, the unique organisational structure and the extensive reach to more than 1,5 million athletes were argued to constitute the rareness of DGI. Thirdly, DGI's access to 6,400 sport associations and the intangible social ties to the network are difficult to imitate by competitors. Hence, it was argued that these physical and social resources are imperfectly imitable to DGI. Fourthly, it was argued that the interdependence of the collective resources causes the resources to be non-substitutable and, therefore, allow DGI to enjoy a superior resource position. In addition, partner exclusivity is used as a mean to ensure a partner unique access and exploitative rights to the internal resources of DGI.

Concludingly, based on the findings from the analysis, it can be acknowledged that DGI possesses a unique bundle of internal resources and capabilities within the organisation which collectively constitutes the accessible rights and opportunities offered to their sponsors through a sponsorship. Subsequently, the resources and capabilities abide the four theoretical indicators of the RBV paradigm and can therefore be considered a strategic resource which hold the potential to be a source of competitive advantage. Consequently, based on the intra-organisational perspective, DGI is likely to provide a strategic resource through a sponsorship which holds the potential to become a source of competitive advantage for the sponsoring firm.

## The Relational Paradigm: Empirical Findings

As the previous section focused on the internal conditions of the organisation and aimed to explore how resources and capabilities within DGI may be sources of competitive advantage to their sponsors, the following section will change perspective and focus on how sources of competitive advantage may stem from the interfirm relationship between partners. As argued by Dyer & Singh (1998) an inter-organisational perspective is an increasingly important unit of analysis for understanding how competitive advantage is sourced in the interfirm relationship between firms. And as argued by several authors within the academic field of sponsorships (Fahy et al., 2004; Farrelly & Quester, 2005), a sponsorship arrangement should be considered a dyad function between two entities. Therefore, I acknowledge that a sponsorship should be considered a relationship between two parties and be treated as a dyad function between two individual partners. And based on the emphasis of Urriolagoitia & Planellas (2007) that sponsors and sponsored parties should recognize the organisational dynamics that sponsorship relationships entail, and the complexity involved in leveraging and adapting the value adding associations, it becomes relevant to explore how sources of competitive advantages may stem from the interfirm relationship between DGI and their partners.

The intention of the following section is therefore to discuss DGI's approach to sponsorships from an inter-organisational perspective, represented by the relational paradigm, to understand how sources of competitive advantages stem from the interfirm space between DGI and their partners. Consequently, I aim to explore how the interfirm relationship is perceived among DGI and their partners in order to understand the dynamics of the value generation and how that may be impacted by the interrelationship between the parties. The analysis is structured around the four theoretical indicators proposed by Dyer & Singh (1998) for sources of competitive advantage. The four theoretical indicators include *complementary resources and capabilities*, *relation-specific assets*, *knowledge-sharing routines* and *effective governance*. The below table depicts the main findings of this part of the research which are elaborated and discussed in relation to relevant theories in the following part of the analysis.

Relational Indicators	Empirical findings
<i>Complementary Resources &amp; Capabilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching values, image complementarities and shared agendas are key factors in order to leverage complementary resources in the sponsorship.</li> </ul>
<i>Relation-Specific Assets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging partners to contribute with additional resources and engage them in promotional activities generate firm-specific value to the sponsor.</li> </ul>
<i>Knowledge-Sharing Routines</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through a trustful relationship and acknowledgment of DGI's role as experts, effective knowledge sharing routines are more likely to be established.</li> </ul>
<i>Effective Governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment of expectations and minimum three-year contracts lays the foundation for an effective governance to be matured.</li> </ul>

Table 3: Empirical findings based on the Relational paradigm

### Complementary Resources & Capabilities

A firm's ability to generate rents from its resources may require that resources are utilized in conjunction with the complementary resources of another firm (Dyer & Singh, 1998). However, complementarities of strategic resources may only be sources of competitive advantage if the firms

in the partnership also share organisational and image complementarities (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Farrelly et al., 2006) as well as shared objectives (Farrelly & Quester, 2005).

**Finding 5: *Matching values, image complementarities and shared agendas are key factors in order to leverage complementary resources in the sponsorship.***

A shared set of values, organisational compatibility and shared objectives are key priorities when DGI considers engaging in new partnerships. And through the right fit, the partnership establishes a firm ground for collaboration and allow partners to leverage the complementary resources of the counterpart.

Matching organisational values is an important factor when DGI enters into a new sponsorship arrangement with a new firm. An important precondition for new companies to become partners with DGI is that shared values between the two organisations are present. Consequently, a potential new partner's values are being considered and assessed to ensure that the partnership is established on a reconciled basis. Jan Nielsen emphasizes:

We are not going to make partnerships with anyone where we cannot draw any similarities between the values and the approach we have to the agendas. It takes precedence over everything else, because otherwise we are breaking down our brand that I speak so proudly of and which has been built over many years. (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020).

As discrepancies between organisational values and the approach to solve a certain agenda may lead to an unsuccessful partnership, it may also damage the brand of DGI in the long run. Therefore, DGI is selective in their approach of choosing new partners and they are conscious about how a potential firm and their reputation may affect their own brand. Jan Nielsen exemplifies how DGI prefers to collaborate with firms which have a strong brand reputation over firms which invest more money in the partnership:

We may not cooperate with the discount chain, where there is no service and do not take responsibility for the local environment. Then we prefer to collaborate, even if we get

less money, with the local company or the national company, which has the good brand and help lift the DGI brand to new heights. (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

Consequently, a positive reputation of a new potential partner becomes another key factor to DGI as they also aim to gain a rub-off effect from the partnership (T. Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). This is also acknowledged by one of their partners who believes that a partnership, where the firms share a common agenda, can create a win-win situation for both parties: “We have a shared agenda to get more women into the business and sports. [...] Despite our differences, then we actually share the same challenges, and this could actually also generate some positive synergies in general” (A. Bay Riisager, Interview, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020). Thus, matching values, image complementarities and a shared agenda are crucial factors in order to establish a firm foundation for the partnership to grow and for the later exploitation of each other’s complementary resources.

It becomes evident from the data above, that organisational values of potential partners and their approach to certain agendas are thoroughly considered by DGI before a sponsorship is established. This is done to ensure that a strategic and organisational fit between the firms is present in order to establish a strong foundation for the partnership to grow. This can be related to Dyer & Singh's (1998) argument that organisational and cultural complementarities must be compatible with each other in order to realize relational gains from strategic complementary resources.

Furthermore, DGI’s conscious and selective approach to engage with firms holding a strong brand reputation, which may also have a positive impact on the brand of DGI, is supported by Farrelly et al. (2006). They emphasize, that partners need to understand the issues of organisational and image complementarities in order to establish a firm foundation for collaboration. By acknowledging and realizing these complementarities, partners are more likely to provide and contribute with the necessary resources into the partnership and, thereby, be able to enjoy the complementarities of each other.

Finally, sharing a common agenda, or sharing the intention to solve the same challenge, is mentioned to be an important factor to generate a successful sponsorship between DGI and a partner. Goal convergence has also been argued to be an essential element for a sponsorship to become a success. Partners should outline their objectives in order to align expectations in regard to each party’s contribution to the partnership. By aligning goals and reconciling the common agenda



will ensure that both parties in the partnership will work towards the same objective (Farrelly & Quester, 2005). Thus, it can be argued, that DGI's focus on matching values, image complementarity and shared objectives creates a firm ground for collaboration. And through a firm collaboration, exploitation of each partner's relevant complementary resources may result in a higher value generation of the sponsorship.

### **Relation-Specific Assets**

Relation-specific assets emerge through the right combination of scarce and durable resources (Dyer & Singh, 1998) and the more firm-specific these strategic resources become, the more valuable to the firm can be their deployment (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993).

***Finding 6: Encouraging partners to contribute with additional resources and engage them in promotional activities generate firm-specific value to the sponsor.***

By ensuring that partners are willing to invest in the sponsorship with additional resources and actively involve and advise them in the promotional activities make the sponsorship a unique resource and generate firm-specific value for the sponsor.

By including partners in planning processes and encourage them to contribute with relevant resources in the execution process of promotional activities ensure that value generated from the sponsorship become specific to the partner. With a purpose driven approach to sponsorships, DGI makes sure to involve partners in the planning and execution process of any promotional activities. By involving the partners in this process, DGI aims to create promotion projects and activities that are specific to the partner and ensure they are a part of the value creation. Jan Nielsen emphasizes the importance of involving the partners in the planning processes in order to include complementary resources and their brand in the events, so the value generated becomes specific to the partner:

We try to make them a part of our events to ensure that they not just become another sidekick that is located in the corner and tells about their product. Instead we make sure to give them input to what kind of target group it is, how they can approach them and what they should do. And afterwards ensure to take the follow up and talk about the outcome. (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

However, Jan Nielsen stresses that value is not solely generated from only aligning goals and involve partners in the planning process. An important condition is that the partner is willing to contribute with additional resources in order to support the promotional activities created as a part of the sponsorship. This to ensure that the outcome and value generated in the sponsorship becomes firm specific to the partners. Conversely, if the partners are not willing to contribute with additional resources during the process, a healthy relationship may not be established, and the partner may not gain the same level of firm specific value in the end.

If they (red. partners) are not ready to invest in the partnership, well, then they are not really ready to make a cooperation either. So, for us it is really, really important that we from the beginning also have had a talk about resources. Because if we are not aligned on resources, then we might not reach the goal. (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

With the result that partners are willing to contribute to the partnership and be an active part of the promotion activities are also positively impacting the collaboration between the two parties in the sponsorship. This is acknowledged by Anne Bay Riisager who exemplifies how they contributed with additional resources during an event with DGI: “That we delivered some awesome videos from the event and contributed to a great atmosphere made the event much better. And you can say, that these things are also contributing to a better collaboration in a good way” (Interview, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020). Thus, DGI aims to actively involve partners in the planning and execution process of promotional activities and ensure that partners are willing to allocate additional relevant resources in order to promote the association occurred from the sponsorship arrangement. This to ensure that partners are motivated to collaborate and generate as much firm-specific value as possible.

From the data above, it becomes evident that DGI aims to include their partners in the strategic processes around the promotional activities in the sponsorship. By doing this, DGI ensures that partners become an active part of both the planning and execution process of the various events and encourage them to contribute with additional resources. This approach is also aligned with Farrelly et al. (2006) that recommend that before successful sponsorship relationships are possible, both parties should appreciate the need to contribute at the strategic and operational level. This will

motivate the parties to work together and increase the likelihood of generating firm-specific value for the partner. Thus, to encourage the partner to be a part of the planning and execution process of the promotional activities may have a positive impact on the reciprocal commitment (Farrelly et al., 2006).

As DGI expect partners to invest in the sponsorship by contributing with additional resources ensures that the value generated from the arrangement becomes firm-specific to the partner. In accordance to Dyer & Singh (1998) relational-specific resources emerge from the unique combination of complementary resources contributed by each firm in the partnership. Consequently, the high demands to their partners to invest additional resources into the partnership may have a positive impact on the value generated through the sponsorship which therefore become firm-specific to the partner. Furthermore, it can be argued that with a reciprocal commitment to contribute in the sponsorship, DGI is able to impact the value generation in the sponsorship and improve the likelihood of providing firm-specific value to the sponsor.

### **Knowledge-Sharing Routines**

Transparency and openness in the knowledge-sharing process between firms is a prerequisite for successfully realizing valuable knowledge from the alliance partner (Dyer & Singh, 1998). And through intensive interactions among the employees in both the sponsored property and the sponsor enable the two parties to discover ways to both strengthen the sponsorship relationship and satisfy their own organisational needs (Urriolagoitia & Planellas, 2007).

***Finding 7: Through a trustful relationship and acknowledgment of DGI's role as experts, effective knowledge-sharing routines are more likely to be established between the partners.***

With the intention to establish a trustworthy relationship with their partners and accepting the role as experts, DGI acknowledges the need to bring their know-how into the sponsorship. Consequently, effective knowledge-sharing routines are more likely to occur.

DGI, and especially the sponsorship department in DGI, is supposed to be experts on sponsorships and possess the knowledge of how the sponsorship can be activated and promoted in

order to generate value to their partners. Jan Nielsen emphasizes that it is crucial that DGI brings this knowledge into the sponsorship as their partners usually are experts within their own field and expect DGI to take the responsibility to initiate the promotional projects. “So, we need to bring it (red. knowledge) into play because the partner may have a communication or marketing director which has a lot of other tasks as well” (J. Nielsen, Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Hence, by acknowledging the different roles and responsibilities in the partnership, DGI commits to provide the knowledge necessary to ensure their partners experience a valuable outcome of the sponsorship.

Further, Jan Nielsen (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020) emphasizes that providing and sharing knowledge should be based on a foundation of trustworthiness in order to be perceived as professionals and allow the relationship between DGI and the partner to grow. Therefore, DGI places a great emphasis on building close ties to their partners based on openness and trustworthiness to ensure that partners experience that DGI lives up to their promises. “We need to be trustworthy to deliver what we promise (J. Nielsen, Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Thus, on the basis of acknowledging their own role as experts in the sponsorship relation and with a strong emphasis on delivering on their promises, DGI provides valuable knowledge to their partners.

This is further supported by Anne Bay Riisager who experiences that DGI provides valuable expertise into the sponsorship by including people with specific competencies and relevant know-how to support the various promotional projects. “I am constantly introduced to new people who are a part of the different projects. And then you get to know these guys and you just start to work with them. That is really a good thing” (A. Bay Riisager, Interview, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020). Hence, including people with the right competencies and expertise into the sponsorship is perceived as a valuable way to provide knowledge to the partners.

It becomes evident from the data above, that DGI places a strong emphasis on building trustful ties to their partners to be able and willing to share valuable knowledge in the sponsorship. This can be related to the argument made by Dyer & Singh (1998) who stated that a prerequisite for successfully realizing valuable knowledge from an alliance partner depends on their ability to establish transparent and open sharing processes between the firms. By acknowledging the role as experts within partnerships and the importance of bringing this knowledge into the partnership, it can be argued, that DGI aims to build knowledge-sharing processes with their partners.

The intention to establish a firm ground for knowledge sharing between DGI and their partners can be exemplified in the approach to introduce people with the relevant competencies directly to the partner. With the approach to expose their partners to various people from the organisation can further be related to Urriolagoitia & Planellas's (2007) argument that interactions among various employees between sponsor and the sponsored property enable the two parties to discover ways to strengthen the sponsorship relationship. Thus, with the strong emphasis on establishing trustful ties to their partners and bring people with various competencies into the sponsorship enable the relationship to develop knowledge-sharing routines which may benefit value generation process of the sponsorship.

### **Effective Governance**

The underlying governance structure in a partnership is playing a central role in the creation of relational rents between firms (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Establishing an informal self-enforcing governance structure based on trust has great potential to generate competitive advantage since it is being socially complex, difficult to imitate and idiosyncratic to the relationship between the partners (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

***Finding 8: Alignment of expectations and minimum three-year contracts lays the foundation for an effective governance to be matured.***

By clarifying the expectations in the early phase of the sponsorship and committing to contracts for minimum three years provides the foundation for an informal governance structure to be established in the sponsorship.

To DGI it is of utmost importance to align expectations with their partners in the beginning of a sponsorship. An alignment of expectations ensures that the sponsorship with the partner evolves into a relationship based on reliability and trust. With the alignment of goals and contributions in the beginning of the sponsorship, the foundation for a reliable and trustful relationship can evolve. Jan Nielsen (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020) emphasizes the need to thoroughly align expectations in the beginning of a sponsorship in order to create a firm foundation for the relationship to evolve into a trustful sponsorship and likewise, prevent formal contracts to be used against each other in later stages of the sponsorship if controversies occurs. Jan Nielsen elaborates:

In this phase, we need to have expectations aligned. [...]. It should not be that we have to pull the contract forward and use it against each other if problems occur. In such cases, we really need to get far out in a collaboration. (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

And by making contracts with any new partner of minimum three years, DGI ensures space for the sponsorship to evolve and allow interpersonal trust to be established between the parties. According to Jan Nielsen, DGI commits to make agreements with new partners that last for a minimum of three years. “We do not have partnerships for one or two years. The shortest one is three years and I want to make them even longer” (Interview, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Hence, by committing to make longer contracts with their partners allow interpersonal trust to grow and develop the collaboration into a trustworthy relationship.

It is evident from the data, that DGI pursues to enter into sponsorships with new partners for a minimum three-year period. Consequently, it can be considered that the commitment to make longer contracts allows time for the partners to interact and develop interpersonal ties. And by making long contracts and allow DGI and their partner to establish interpersonal bonds between the employees may positively impact the development of an informal governance structure. According to Granovetter (1985) an informal governance structure requires time and a history of interactions and personal ties between the employees in the alliance firms in order to be matured. Thus, it can be argued, that the commitment of making contracts for a minimum of three years lays the foundation for the sponsorship to develop an informal governance structure over time.

Conversely, as several authors have argued (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Dyer et al., 2018; Granovetter, 1985), most partnerships are primarily based on a formal governance structure, exemplified with formal contracts, in the beginning of a partnership. However, with a thorough clarification and alignment of expectations, the partners tends to develop norms and prove their reliability which make the foundation for an informal governance structure to be established (Dyer et al., 2018). As DGI emphasizes the necessity to align expectations with their partners in order to ensure a trustworthy relationship to be built, it can be argued, that DGI intends to develop an informal governance structure with their partners. Thus, commitment to make long contracts and

thoroughly clarify expectations in the beginning of the sponsorship lay the foundation for an effective informal governance structure to be developed in the sponsorship.

## **Subconclusion**

With this section ends the second part of the analysis. This section used the second stream of theory, namely the Relational paradigm, and focused on the inter-organisational perspective to discuss how value is created in the space between DGI and their partners. The four theoretical indicators proposed by Dyer & Singh (1998) constituted the foundation for each of the findings. First, the analysis showed that matching value, image complementarities and shared agendas are key factors in order to leverage complementary resources between DGI and their partners. Secondly, encouraging partners to contribute with additional resources and include them in promotional activities are more likely to result in value that is firm-specific to the partner. Thirdly, through a trustful relationship and the acknowledgement of their role as experts within sponsorships, effective knowledge-sharing routines between the parties are more likely to occur. Finally, a thorough alignment of expectations between the partners and by committing to minimum three-year contracts were considered to lay the foundation for an effective governance structure to be developed.

The empirical findings from the second part of the analysis indicates that through DGI's purpose driven approach to sponsorships and their conscious ability to select the right partners lay the foundation for a healthy sponsorship relation to develop. Moreover, with DGI's attentive way to engage with sponsors which mutually share the same interests to societal challenges and ensure that a sponsorship is commenced based on a foundation of reciprocal commitment to solve the specific challenges, increases the likelihood of generating positive synergies across the sponsorship relation. Concludingly, the empirical findings indicate that DGI's approach to engage in sponsorships with their sponsors may be value-enhancing drivers which is likely to increase the potential value outcome of the sponsorship and, consequently, provide their sponsors amplified strategic benefits in return for a sponsorship investment.

With this section ends the analysis chapter. The following chapter will discuss the empirical findings in relation to the theoretical framework and present a set of managerial implications.

## **Discussion & Managerial Implications**

Based on the empirical results derived from the previous analysis, the intention of this chapter is to present a set of managerial implications. The managerial implications imply a discussion of the interrelationship between the two theoretical paradigms used to illuminate the research question. The discussion will form the argument for how the two paradigms should be considered complementary contributors to the value creation in the sponsorship setting between DGI and their sponsoring partners.

### **The interrelationship between the RBV and the Relational paradigm**

The case study and the combination of the two distinct theoretical paradigms used for this research paper can be helpful for sponsorship managers in non-profit sport properties to understand how they demonstrate the potential value and opportunities that sponsorships of their organisation may provide. The intra-organisational framework was applied to the case organisation DGI to demonstrate which internal resources and capabilities that constitutes the sponsorship as a strategic resource exhibiting Barney's (1991) four indicators, whereas the inter-organisational framework by Dyer & Singh (1998) was applied to demonstrate how sources embedded in the interfirm relationship between the parties impacted the value generated to the sponsoring firm.

The first part of the analysis showed that DGI possesses a set of internal resources and capabilities which comply with the theoretical indicators implied by the intra-organisational perspective. Hence, a sponsorship with DGI can be considered a strategic resource which contains a unique set of resources and capabilities that holds the potential to become a source of competitive advantage for the sponsoring firm. However, with a purpose driven approach to sponsorships, the interfirm indicators were also considered important value-enhancing elements of the sponsorship arrangement. The empirical findings from the second part of the analysis indicated that the collaborative indicators stemming from the inter-organisational perspective were perceived important enablers in order to establish a rewarding sponsorship. And based on these empirical findings, the interfirm elements may therefore be perceived as influential value enhancing enablers in the sponsorship arrangement between DGI and their partners. Hence, both theoretical perspectives provide valuable insights into how a sponsorship with DGI may be a strategic resource for the sponsoring firm and potentially alters into a competitive advantage.



Based on the complementarity of the two distinct perspectives of sources of competitive advantage, the derived empirical findings from this study imply a set of managerial implications for managers of non-profit organisations aiming to explore how their organisation can unlock the potential value their organisation may provide to their sponsors through a sponsorship. The implications are further elaborated below.

**Managerial implication 1:** With a ‘purpose driven’ approach to sponsorships, the inter-organisational theoretical indicators become value enhancing enablers of the sponsorship.

As DGI ensures that new sponsorships are formed on the basis of a shared interest to solve a certain issue or challenge, DGI places strong emphasis on activating the sponsorship through the shared issue of interest rather than selling rights to associate with their brand image. Hence, based on the purpose driven approach to sponsorships, a strong collaborative relationship between the firms is perceived as an important factor in order to reach the shared objective and generate a valuable outcome of the sponsorship. And with the perception of sponsorships as an equal alliance in which both parties contribute to solve the shared challenge, the collaborative elements stemming from the inter-organisational perspective are perceived important enablers in the value generation of the sponsorship. Consequently, sport properties practicing a purpose driven approach to sponsorships may be more likely to enhance the value to their sponsors when the sponsorship constitutes a firm collaborative and reciprocal relationship between the parties involved.

**Managerial implication 2:** Understand how value is generated from both the intra- and interfirm level of the sponsorship arrangement is essential to provide maximized returns to the sponsor.

Secondly, it is evident from the analysis, that the sponsor appreciates the internal resources and capabilities of DGI which constitutes the accessible opportunities and rights of the sponsorship. Specifically, the sponsor saw the opportunities to associate themselves with DGI’s brand and leverage the extensive network of sport associations to achieve their own commercial objectives. On the other hand, DGI emphasizes the interfirm relationship and collaborative elements in the sponsorship arrangement as important factors in order to initiate viable projects and programs which consequently lead to value-adding benefits for the society, DGI and their sponsors. Consequently, based on the perceptions from DGI and their partners, non-profit properties should

be keen to understand how value is added both at the intra- and inter-organisational level in order to demonstrate how a sponsorship in their organisation may be leveraged as a strategic resource for their sponsors.

**Managerial implication 3:** Sport properties with the ability to adapt to changing demands from the sponsors are more likely to continuously add value to the sponsor.

Thirdly, with companies operating in an ever-changing environment where conditions and demands change, the perceived value from a sponsorship arrangement may also be subject to change. It appeared from the analysis that the commitment to commence into long-term contracts (minimum three years) with their partners may lay a firm foundation for an effective governance structure, based on a trustful relationship, to be developed. However, as firms are subject to changing conditions and demands in their respective markets may cause the initial thoughts and objectives of the sponsorship to change. And as a sponsorship relationship is dynamic, like any long-term inter-organisational relationship that adapts and develops over time (Wolfe, Meenaghan, & O'Sullivan, 2002), the sport property should be capable of adapting and adjust to the changing needs of their partners in order to ensure value is continuously provided to the sponsor. Thus, the sport property's ability to adjust and adapt to changing demands from their partners may be more likely to ensure value is continuously provided despite changing conditions or requirements.

In conclusion, the managerial implications constitute a set of considerations for sponsorship managers aiming to explore the potential value and opportunities that sponsorships of their organisation may provide to the sponsors. And despite their varying theoretical views, it appeared from the analysis that each paradigm provided valuable insights into how a sponsorship in a non-profit organisation may be source of competitive advantage. Consequently, I suggest that the two distinct perspectives are viewed as complementary indicators of how value is generated and maximized in the sponsorship arrangement of a non-profit organisation in order to provide a strategic resource which eventually become a source of competitive advantage for the sponsoring firm.

## Conclusion

The conclusion of the thesis will be presented in this final chapter. Finally, the chapter ends with the limitations of the study and provide directions for future research to be conducted.

### Concluding Remarks

With the evolvement of sponsorships to constitute a prominent element in the communications and marketing mix of the firms and with the acknowledgement that sponsorships hold the potential to be a source of competitive advantage, an increased focus has pointed towards the role of the sport properties in order to understand how they are able to provide this value in return for an investment. And with the lack of research focusing on the role of the sport property in the sponsorship arrangement, this dissertation sought to understand how a sponsorship in the non-profit organisation, DGI, may be perceived as a strategic resource which holds the potential of becoming a strategic competitive advantage for the sponsor. Based on two distinct theoretical perspectives on sources of competitive advantage, this thesis project aimed to answer the research question: *How can a sponsorship with DGI be a source of competitive advantage?*

Build on the notion that a sponsorship is perceived and leveraged as a strategic resource for the sponsoring firm, the exploration of the research question was divided into two main sections. The first part of the analysis was based on an intra-organisational perspective exhibiting Barney (1991) RBV paradigm for resources holding the potential to become a source of competitive advantage. The analysis indicated that DGI possesses a set of unique resources which collectively can be considered valuable, rare, imperfect imitable and non-substitutable. Based on the empirical findings, the collective bundle of resources constituting the sponsorship included a strong brand image, a unique organisational structure based on an extensive network of local sport associations and their ability to reach a large target audience. Hence, based on the intra-organisational perspective of sources of competitive advantage, it was concluded that DGI possesses a unique set of resources that constitutes a sponsorship as a strategic resource and is subject to be a source of competitive advantage for the sponsoring firm.

Conversely, as DGI practices a purpose driven approach in which all sponsorships are based on a shared interest to solve or elucidate a specific challenge in the society through specific projects and programs, the relational and collaborative elements within the relationship become essential

indicators for the understanding of how value is amplified in the sponsorship. Consequently, with the recognition of a sponsorship as a dyadic function between the entities, an inter-organisational perspective, exhibiting the Relational paradigm (Dyer & Singh, 1998), was applied in the second part of the analysis to explore how sources of competitive advantages may stem from the interfirm relations and embedded routines between DGI and their partners. The interfirm empirical findings included matching organisational values and image complementarities, contribution of additional resources, trust in the relationship, acknowledgment of expert role, thorough alignment of expectations and a commitment to commence into minimum three-year contracts. The analysis indicated that the interfirm elements are essential enablers of enhancing the value generated to the partners from the sponsorship arrangement beyond the mere provision of internal resources and rights. Thus, based on the purpose-driven nature of sponsorships in DGI, the empirical findings indicate that the interfirm elements become value enhancing enablers of the sponsorship arrangement and thereby contribute to the likelihood of generating a strategic competitive advantage to their sponsors.

The thesis ends with a discussion on how each of the theoretical frameworks contribute to a better understanding of how a sponsorship with a non-profit sport property can be a source of competitive advantage. As the intra-organisational perspective offers a static view on internal resources and capabilities which may be source of competitive advantage, the inter-organisational perspective provides a more dynamic view of the interrelated elements between partners in the relationship and how this affects the value generation of the sponsorship. Hence, as DGI is not solely concerned with providing promotional rights and association opportunities to its sponsors but instead focus to initiate community-based projects conjointly developed with their sponsors, a static perspective of value generation may be insufficient in order to understand the full picture of the value generating elements in the sponsorship arrangement. Consequently, the dynamic perspective portrays the interfirm relational elements in the sponsorship arrangement which impact the value generation of the sponsorship and thereby represent a broader depiction of how a sponsorship with DGI may be a source of competitive advantage for their sponsors.

In conclusion, the answer to the research question is that the collective bundle of internal resources and capabilities constituting the sponsorship as a strategic resource with DGI may be a source of competitive advantage for the sponsoring firm. Furthermore, DGI's ability to promote the

interfirm elements will increase the likelihood of provide a strategic competitive advantage to the sponsors.

## **Limitations**

Despite the aim to investigate DGI's role in the sponsorship arrangement and how they may provide strategic benefits to their sponsors through a sponsorship, the study has been subject to a number of limitations. First, the empirical data used to answer the research question has been scarce and caused the findings of this study to be purely indicative which also limits the generalisability of the study. This is likewise a limitation of the qualitative research approach and the use of a single case study, as this kind of studies focus on in-depth studies of the specific phenomenon under study. Secondly, due to the impact of the COVID 19 caused the research to be based merely on a single relationship between DGI and one partner. The lack of varied perceptions and insights from other partners cause therefore the findings to be limited to the single relationship included in the study.

## **Directions for Future Research**

In light of the limitations impacting this study, several recommendations for directions for future research can be suggested. First, further research into the role of non-profit sport properties is needed to enlighten the various elements and contributions expected to provide sponsors with a strategic resource which may be subject to be a source of competitive advantage. Therefore, a broader set of empirical data will provide comparable insights into the subject which may yield more valid results. Secondly, conducting a longitudinal study may be a preferable next step to understand the dynamic nature of sponsorships and explore how value perceptions may evolve over time. This may offer a better understanding of how sport properties should act towards their partners in order to ensure maximized value is added throughout the life time of the sponsorship. Thirdly, a comparable study to sport properties in other industries e.g. the commercial industry of football, may allow scholars to understand how various kind of sport properties approach sponsorships in order to provide value to their sponsors. Finally, as previous research has tended to neglect the role of the sport property in the sponsorship relation, more research is generally needed to cover the multiple angles this topic encompasses.

## Bibliography

- Amis, J., Pant, N., & Slack, T. (1997). Achieving a sustainable competitive advantage: A resource-based view of sport sponsorship. *Journal of Sport Management*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.11.1.80>
- Amis, J., Slack, T., & Berrett, T. (1999). Sport sponsorship as distinctive competence. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(3/4), 250–272. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569910253044>
- Amit, R., & Schoemaker, P. J. H. (1993). Strategic Assets and Organizational Rent. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(1), 33–46.
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 22.
- Bennett, R. (1999). Sports sponsorship, spectator recall and false consensus. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33, 291–313.
- Bennett, R. (2003). Corporate hospitality: Executive indulgence or vital corporate communications weapon? *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 8(4), 229–240.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280310506403>
- Bradbury, T. (2017). *Understanding Sport Management*. *Understanding Sport Management*.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315657554>
- Brinkmann, S., & Tanggaard, L. (2015). *Kvalitative metoder: En grundbog* (2. udg.). København.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Cambridge University Press. (2020a). Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/paradigm>
- Cambridge University Press. (2020b). Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved May 13, 2020, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rub-off>
- Cornwell, T. B. (2019). Less “Sponsorship As Advertising” and More Sponsorship-Linked Marketing As Authentic Engagement. *Journal of Advertising*, 48(1), 49–60.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2019.1588809>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3. ed.). Los Angeles, [Calif.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (3. ed.). Los Angeles.

- DGI. (2020a). About DGI. Retrieved April 17, 2020, from <https://www.dgi.dk/om/english/about-dgi>
- DGI. (2020b). Article of Associates. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from [www.dgi.dk/om/fakta/baggrund/vedtaegter](http://www.dgi.dk/om/fakta/baggrund/vedtaegter)
- DGI. (2020c). *DGI-partnerskab: Skal vi gøre en forskel for jer? Sammen!*
- DGI. (2020d). DGI's historie. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from <https://www.dgi.dk/om/fakta/baggrund/historie>
- DGI. (2020e). Grundlag & Værdier. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from <https://www.dgi.dk/om/fakta/baggrund/idegrundlag-og-vaerdier>
- DGI. (2020f). Medlemstal. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from <https://www.dgi.dk/om/fakta/tal-og-referater/medlemstal>
- DGI. (2020g). Partnerskabspolitik. Retrieved April 17, 2020, from <https://www.dgi.dk/om/partnerskaber/partnerskaber/dgis-partnerskabspolitik>
- DGI. (2020h). Strategi. Retrieved April 17, 2020, from [www.dgi.dk/om/fakta/baggrund/strategi](http://www.dgi.dk/om/fakta/baggrund/strategi)
- DIF. (2020). Forbund. Retrieved April 17, 2020, from <https://www.dif.dk/da/forbund>
- Dyer, J. H., & Singh, H. (1998). The Relational View: Cooperative Strategy and Sources Of Interorganizational Competitive Advantage. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(4), 660–679. <https://doi.org/10.7880/abas.13.77>
- Dyer, J. H., Singh, H., & Hesterly, W. S. (2018). The relational view revisited: A dynamic perspective on value creation and value capture. *Strategic Management Journal*, 39(12), 3140–3162. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2785>
- Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 25–32. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2007.24160888>
- Fahy, J., Farrelly, F., & Quester, P. (2004). Competitive advantage through sponsorship. *European Journal of Marketing*, 38(8), 1013–1030. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560410539140>
- Farrelly, F., & Quester, P. (2005). Investigating large-scale sponsorship relationships as co-marketing alliances. *Business Horizons*, 48(1), 55–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2004.10.003>

- Farrelly, F., Quester, P., & Burton, R. (2006). Changes in sponsorship value: Competencies and capabilities of successful sponsorship relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 35(8), 1016–1026. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2006.05.006>
- Farrelly, F. J., & Quester, P. G. (2005). Examining important relationship quality constructs of the focal sponsorship exchange. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 34(3), 211–219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2004.09.003>
- Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3), 481–510.
- Grant, R. M. (1991). The Resource-Based Theory of Competitive Advantage: Implications for Strategy Formulation. *California Management Review*, 33, 114–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-7506-7088-3.50004-8>
- Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2006). *Doing Case Study Research*. Teachers College Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- Hofer, C. W., & Schendel, D. (1978). *Strategy formulation: analytical concepts*. The St. Paul, Minn: The St. Paul, Minn. ; West.
- IEG. (2018a). *Sponsorship Spending of Causes to Grow 4.6% in 2019*. Retrieved from <https://sponsorship.com/Latest-Thinking/Sponsorship-Infographics/Sponsorship-Spending-of-Causes-to-Grow-4-6--in-201.aspx>
- IEG. (2018b). *What Sponsors Want & Where Dollars Will Go in 2018*.
- Jahdi, K., & Acikdilli, G. (2009). Marketing Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Marriage of Convenience or Shotgun Wedding? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(1), 103–113. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0113-1>
- Jensen, J. A., Cobbs, J. B., & Turner, B. A. (2016). Evaluating sponsorship through the lens of the resource-based view: The potential for sustained competitive advantage. *Business Horizons*, 59(2), 163–173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2015.11.001>
- Kontrapunkt. (2013). *Revitalisering af DGI's brand*.
- Kotler, P. (1988). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control*. Englewood Cliffs.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Interview: Det kvalitative forskningsinterview som håndværk* (3. udg.). København.



- Masterman, G. (2007). *Sponsorship: For a return on investment*. Amsterdam ; Elsevier.
- Meenaghan, J. A. (1983). Commercial Sponsorship. *European Journal of Marketing*, 17(7), 5–73.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000004825>
- Meenaghan, T. (1995). The role of advertising in brand image development. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 4(4), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610429510097672>
- Meenaghan, T., & Shipley, D. (1999). Media effect in commercial sponsorship. *European Journal of Marketing*, 33(3/4), 328–348. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090569910253170>
- Mesquita, L. F., Anand, J., & Brush, T. H. (2008). Comparing the resource-based and relational views: Knowledge transfer and spillover in vertical alliances. *Strategic Management Journal*, 29(9), 913–941. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.699>
- Oliver, C. (1997). Sustainable Competitive Advantage: Combining Institutional and Resource-Based Views, 18(9), 697–713.
- Peteraf, M. A. (1993). The Cornerstones of Competitive Advantage: A Resource-Based View. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(3), 179–191. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250140303>
- Plewa, C., Carrillat, F. A., Mazodier, M., & Quester, P. G. (2016). Which sport sponsorships most impact sponsor CSR image? *European Journal of Marketing*, 50(5–6), 796–815.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2015-0078>
- Quester, P. G., & Thompson, B. (2001). Advertising and promotion leverage on arts sponsorship effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(1), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-41-1-33-47>
- Ryan, A, & Fahy, J. (2003). A relationship marketing perspective on the sponsorship of the arts in Ireland: a Galway arts festival-Nortel networks case study. *Irish Marketing Review*, 16(1), 31–42.
- Ryan, A, & Fahy, J. (2012). Evolving priorities in sponsorship: From media management to network management. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 28(9–10), 1132–1158.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2011.645858>
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research Methods for Business Students* (7th ed.). Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Spekman, R. E., Forbes, T. M., Isabella, L. A., & MacAvoy, T. C. (1998). Alliance management: A

view from the past and a look to the future. *Journal of Management Studies*, 35(6), 747–772.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.00118>

Stotlar, D. K. (2004). Sponsorship evaluation: Moving from theory to practice. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 13(1), 61–64.

Ukman, L. (2014). How Adding Purpose to Sports Amplifies ROI. *IEG*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.sponsorship.com/About-IEG/Sponsorship-Blogs/Lesa-Ukman/October-2014/How-Adding-Purpose-to-Sports-Amplifies-ROI.aspx>

Urriolagoitia, L., & Planellas, M. (2007). Sponsorship relationships as strategic alliances: A life cycle model approach. *Business Horizons*, 50(2), 157–166.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2006.10.001>

Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A Resource-Based View of the Firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 5(2), 171–180.

Wolfe, R., Meenaghan, T., & O’Sullivan, P. (2002). The sports network: Insights into the shifting balance of power. *Journal of Business Research*, 55(7), 611–622.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(00\)00191-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(00)00191-0)

Wright, R. W. (1994). The Effects of Tacitness and Tangibility on the Diffusion of Knowledge-Based Resources. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 1994(1), 52–56.  
<https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.1994.10341650>

Yin, R. K. (2013). Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations. *Evaluation*, 19(3), 321–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389013497081>

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and methods* (5. ed.). Los Angeles.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. SAGE Publications.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview Jan Nielsen 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 – Transcript

00.00.01

**Mathias:** Det er jo selvfølgelig lidt med udgangspunkt med det vi snakkede om sidst omkring det med sponsorkaber og partnerskaber. Og lidt mere konkret er det jo, at jeg forsøger at undersøge hvordan DGI kan bidrage at sponsorer faktisk får så værdi som muligt og potentielt en konkurrencemæssige fordel.

Så der hvor det er interessant, som jeg måske også nævnte sidst, det er jo det her med at der er lavet rigtig meget litteratur baseret på sponsorens synsvinkel. Hvad er det de behøver og hvordan skaber de mulighederne for sig selv ved partnerskab.

Så det kommer til at fokusere lidt mere på hvilke kompetencer I har i DGI, hvad er det I spiller på og hvad er det I bringer i spil overfor jeres partnere i et partnerskab.

Men aller først, helt kort, vil du ikke give en kort introduktion til dig selv. Hvem er du og hvad laver du?

00.00.54

**Jan:** Jeg hedder Jan Nielsen og arbejder med partnerskaber og events i DGI. Derudover så træner jeg, eller min afdeling, træner vores konsulenter i det og blive endnu bedre til at komme ud og være sammen med vores målgruppe som primært er foreninger og kommuner.

00.01.14

**Mathias:** Og DGI, hvad er det for en organisation og hvad har den som formål?

00.01.17

**Jan:** DGI arbejder med breddeidrætten. Vi arbejder med at få mennesker til at bevæge sig. Det som er vores løfte til markedet, det er at vi vil have flere til at være i forening, vi vil sørge for at der kommer flere medlemmer og vi vil sørge for at foreningerne er stærkest mulige der kan have de medlemmer og de frivillige som vi som de har. Og det er det vi er sat i verden, det er for ligesom at styrke næste led, som er foreningerne, fordi vi tror på fællesskabet og det er med til at hjælpe på rigtig, rigtig mange ting i Danmark. Og samtidig det med at være i god fysisk form alder eller i hvert fald være i en form hvor du er ikke er ved at slå dig selv ihjel på det. I DGI behøver der ikke altid være progression. Nogle gange skal det bare være at sige, at vi også tilfreds med at gå halvanden kilometer og det har vi også på tirsdag og det vi også næste tirsdag og fortsætte med det. Så for os er det vigtigt bare at folk for sig rejst op og bevæger sig og gerne i fællesskab og gerne i en forening.

00.02.13

**Mathias:** Og hvis du kort skal sætte nogle ord på forskellen mellem jer og DIF?

00.02.18

**Jan:** Den store forskel er at DIF arbejder med dem der gerne vil være bedst. Det er desuden en organisation, hvor der ligger nogen og 60 specialforbund nedunder, hvor fodbold gerne vil have så mange som muligt. DBU have så mange mulige til at spille fodbold. DHF vil gerne have så mange til at spille håndbold. DCU vil gerne have så mange muligheder til at cykle. Hvor man i DGI er fuldstændig ligeglad med om hvad folk gør fordi vi bare gerne have folk der bevæger sig fordi vi har alle idrætterne liggende under samme tag. Vi er i DGI rigtig god til arbejde med foreningen,

hvor de i hvor de i DIF-forbundene er endnu bedre til at arbejde med idræt. Og hvordan udvikler vi trænere. Hvordan udvikler vi atleterne. Hvor tror vi meget på at vi skal udvikle hele foreningen. Men det er groft generaliseret, men det er som den helt store forskel, som jeg ser det. Og så har vi jo sammen det store, som hedder Bevæg dig for livet og vil gerne have 75 procent dansker til at være aktiv. 50 procent af dem i en forening og gerne inden 2025. Det er jo en spændende udfordring vi står i lige nu.

00.03.34

**Mathias:** Og hvis vi så dykker lidt ned i det her med partnerskaber. Sådan helt overordnet, efter dit hoved og jeres tanker, hvorfor skal man så være partner med DGI?

00.03.46

**Jan:** Det skal man jo fordi man er med til at løfte et formål. Vi tilstræber at de partnerskaber vi laver, de alle sammen tager udgangspunkt i formål. Det som man gør når man betaler penge til DGI for at være partner. Det er man med til at sætte aktiviteter i gang. Man betaler ikke til spillere eller til nogen andre eller til organisationen eller noget. Når man betaler til den problemstilling, som man gerne være med til at løse. Det er en af de måder, som vi laver partnerskaber på, som vi kalder "formåls partnerskaber" i DGI. Så det vil sige, vi kommer egentlig tilbage til at snakke om hvordan er det så vi sælger det. Vi kommer ikke med pakker, som den har man sikkert hørt mange gange inden for fodbold- og håndboldklubber i en professionel verden. De kom med nogle pakker som de gerne vil sælge. Så de er produktsælger i min verden. De kan i bedste fald blive løsningssælgere fordi de kommer ud og spørger virksomheden, hvad har du behov for og så blander de posen med bolsjer, som jo består af noget eksponering, det består af nogen kundeoplevelser, det består af nogle medarbejderoplevelser og det består ofte af noget netværk. En af de fire ting, det er jo det, de kommer ud og forsøger at sælge til deres sponsorer. Vi kommer mere ud at sige, at vi har en udfordring. I vores nyeste samarbejde kom vi ud og sagde, vi vil gerne sørge for at endnu flere unge fortsætter med at dyrke idræt efter de bliver 13-14 år. Det fandt vi en partner, som gerne være med til at løfte hele den problemstilling. Og det laver vi så et projekt om, hvor vi så inddrager målgruppen og tager nogle andre ting.

Men da kom vi ud og snakke om formål, hvor vi så gerne vil have virksomheden med ind til at være med til at løfte det formål. Og ikke fordi det virksomheden der bliver primus motor, for de har en anden kerneopgave. Men de kommer til at understøtte den økonomisk, men også byde ind med de kompetencer, som de nu har inden for de forskellige. Det kan være kommunikationen ud til en stor målgruppe. Det kan være, at der kan være mange andre ting, som de ser med kompetencer inden for. Så på den måde ser vi, at det at man spiller sammen i et partnerskab. Det er også derfor vi ikke kalder det sponsorat, men partnerskaber, fordi man spiller ind med de ting man gør. Et sponsorat er for mig noget, hvor man giver nogle penge og så får man en ydelse. Her der gør man noget mere end det. Så det er tilgang til, hvordan vi forsøger arbejde med partnerskaber.

00.06.02

**Mathias:** Så kan man sige det sådan lidt den omvendte, nu var du inde på, at I ikke arbejder med pakker. Men det der med at det ligesom er jer som starter med et formål, med en udfordring?

00.06.11

**Jan:** Det kan være os. Det kan også være nogle virksomheder, som gerne vil have os med. Ofte møder vi virksomhederne på en bane. Det kan være, vi har en konkret problemstilling, som vi siger. Hvem kan vi læse i Børsen, på internettet, alle mulige andre steder. Når man er ude og udtale sig

om "om vi vil gerne være med til at gøre noget mere her. Godt så noterer jeg det på min lille blok. Vi skal også lige have fat i Poul, som sidder herovre for han vil gerne gøre noget her. Men det kan også være, at vi kommer ind når vi møder, og vi møder jo mange af de store virksomheder, hvor vi præsenterer os selv, de præsenterer sig og så snakker vi sammen om hvad er det egentlig vi er til for. Og så finder vi ud af om vi har nogle snitflader. Og det er der hvor DGI det er så stort og bredt, at så tager jeg dem med hjem og så undersøger jeg hjemme i vores eget hus om der er nogle ting som vi allerede er i gang med som kunne give mening at samarbejde om. Eller vi har nogle projekter til at ligge i skufferne, som vi har skrevet de første par linjer på, men som vi gerne vil arbejde videre på med en partner. Så på den måde bruger vi også. For os handler det ikke om at få lukket et salg hurtigt. For os handler det om at bruge den tid der skal til på at vi kommer derhen, hvor vi møder hinanden og hvor vi er enige om, hvad det er vi skal gøre. Og det kan godt lyde meget lidt salgsagtigt, fordi da handler det om at luk' luk' luk'. Vi skal have ordren hjem og alt muligt andet. Det tror jeg også. Selvfølgelig skal vi lukke så hurtigt som muligt, men vi skal også være sikre på, at det vi så lukker om, det er det bedst muligt. For os handler det om at få lavet konceptet rigtigt fra starten af, fordi det er en del af hele den sponsoraktivering. Tit og ofte så ser man nogen som køber et sponsorat, fordi de har nogle penge og de vil nu gerne lave marketing sats, så køber de et sponsorat, hvor de får nogle ting med i den pakke som de køber. Og så skal de til at have aktiveret bagefter Vi tror på at hvis man er inde og tænke aktivering ind allerede når vi udformer konceptet, så bliver så bliver det meget mere ægte. Den bliver meget mere autentisk og relevant for både virksomheden, men også DGI men forhåbentlig også for målgruppen, fordi de godt kan se, at det er det som de er med til ved at være kunder i en bank. Det kunne være et pensionsselskab, det kunne være nogen andre. Det er med til at gøre en forskel for dem, som understøtter det formål, som virksomheden har. Og det er jo det som vi som kunder også køber med ind på. Så hele der med vi ikke laver direktør sponsorater, vi ikke laver de andre ting, men vi forsøger at få den ind og så forsøger vi at få den ind i de her afdelinger i organisationen, som vi samarbejder med hvor det giver mening. Jeg synes en spændende ting er, at man har en sponsoraftdeling til at sidde og de skal så lave sponsorater. Nej for mig. Hvis vi sådan tænker det traditionelle når vi snakker sponsorat. Jamen, eksponering det hører til i marketingafdelingen, kundeoplevelser det høre til ovre i salgsafdelingen, medarbejderoplevelse det hører til i HR, netværk hører til i salg også, så de hører jo til i mange andre steder end sponsoraftdelingen. Og hvis de ikke kommer ud og bliver rodfæstet allerede fra start af, så tror jeg ikke på at samarbejdet bliver så stærkt, som det kunne være blevet, hvis man havde inddraget de rette partnere i det her.

00.09.17

**Mathias:** Okay, interessant. Og hvor er det, du ser værdien skabes og hvornår bliver et partnerskab værdifuld for en partner.

00.09.26

**Jan:** Det er når den understøtter den rejse de på. Det kan være deres vision eller mission, som de vil have sat noget bevægelse eller vi kalder det sådan set, at sætte puls til. Det kan være når de gerne vil entrere med en ny målgruppe, præsenterer sig selv for en ny målgruppe eller drage noget af deres målgruppe endnu tættere på. Det kan også være, at de gerne vil gøre noget for deres medarbejdere. Men det kan også være deres CSR-strategi. Men det er jo alt dette, som man opnår ved at tale sammen og det er jo derfor, at det for mig er det afsindig vigtigt. Og så kan vi som en slags salgsmetoder og alt muligt andet. For mig er det afsindig vigtigt, at vi åbner dialogen så vidt muligt op som overhovedet muligt. Næsten ligesom sokratiske spørgsmål, altså hele den der coaching tilgang for at finde ud af hvad er det de vil. Vi tegner på nogle tavler. Vi går tættere på hinanden, vi laver nogle workshops sammen også inden vi har indviet partnerskab på plads, fordi vi

simpelt hen skal helt derved, hvor vi finder ud af, hvad der er vi gerne vil løse sammen. Og så bringer vi de relevante med ind i den dialog. Jeg tror på at hvis vi bare tager det og så siger han om det fordi der ligger nogle penge i overskud og så skal vi have den her på plads. Så bliver det aldrig rigtig ægte. Og det er der jeg gerne vil ned og arbejde med partnerskaber for det er også der, hvor jeg ved der bliver partnerne, at der bliver de tilfredse. Vi har heller ikke partnerskaber på ét eller to år. Det korteste vi har det er treårig og jeg vil gerne lave endnu længere.

Og så kan man altid ligge nogle trapper ind og man kan altid selv op af inde i forløbet og hvis man skal have flere ydelser og alt andet. Men hvis vi skal have ting til at virke, så er vi jo nødt til at sætte dem i søen. Vi er nødt til at evaluere på dem, vi er nødt til at tilpasse. Så skal vi have sat nogle, måske endnu flere ting, måske spidse endnu mere til. Og så hele tiden være i den proces. Så for os er det vigtigt at have de status møder også. Finde ud af, hvad skal være målet med det her. Hvad er det vi gerne vil rykke. Hvis vi vil gerne være mere kendte i vores målgruppe, så er vi jo nødt til at måle på, om vi bliver mere kendte. Sådan et mål eller et sponsorat uden et mål, jamen det er jo bare en drøm og en tro på, ah, at det giver os forhåbninger til et eller andet. Og så skal være realistiske mål.

Det nytter ikke noget at sige, om vi vil gerne være kendt af alle mulige andet ved vores målgruppe. Hvis det er Grundfos, vi vil gerne være kendt ved ingeniørerne, jamen så skal vi jo ikke lave et sponsorat, hvor vi ikke er direkte ude sammen med ingeniøren eller hvor vi understøtter det der forskellige ting. Så vi er jo nødt til også at finde ud af, hvad er målgruppen for det. Og kan vi overhovedet lykkes med det her. Så kan man sige om det giver noget økonomi på kort bane. Ja, men det kan satme også ødelægge det på lang bane, hvis du bare indgår de partnerskaber uden du har mål for sigte, for hvis jeg mislykkes med Grundfos. De møder nok et par enkelte, så siger de, vi har af et partnerskab med DGI. Det fik vi ikke en skid af. Nå, så skal vi ikke have partnerskab med dem. Så man kan lige så godt være ærlig i hele den der dialog. Kan vi flytte noget, tror vi på at vi kan flytte os her hen til deres ønske i stedet for bare at sige, vi skal have ordren i hus. Og det er jo der, hvor vi er i en anden organisation end hvor man er en fodbold eller håndboldklub, hvor der skal økonomi ind hele tiden. Jeg synes Sankt Pauli er et perfekt eksempel. Det ligesom den alle hiver op. Lidt ligesom Blockbuster nok er det den alle hiver op. Åh, de formåede ikke at forny sig, men Sankt Pauli de er jo rene i deres tanker om at et partnerskab skal være aktiveret. Det er måske også derfor de har udsolgt dernede. Vi havde en partner som gerne vil ind og eje et af vores koncepter, som hedder DGI ... noget skoler, hvor partneren gerne vil ind og sige, jamen det kunne også hedde DGI + vores navn og skole.

Så siger jeg, jo Men for os, hvad så når der gået tre år, så skal det hedde noget andet. Vi vil ikke sælge vores sjæl. Vi sælger ikke vores sjæl for økonomi og det er jo det samme Sankt Pauli de heller ikke har gjort. Og det er jo det som klinger igennem ved målgruppen og det er jo derfor, at det bliver endnu mere værd for målgruppen, fordi de ikke bare eksponeret over for logoer og alle mulige steder.

Så har vi få et nyt ord. Et nyt dansk ord ind som hedder effortless når vi laver partnerskaber, jeg kan ikke finde det danske ord for det, men når vi laver partnerskaber, så skal det være effortless for dem vi samarbejder med, fordi vi ved godt de har nogle andre kerneopgaver i deres virksomhed. Så vi vil hellere sige, jamen det koster 2000 mere om året og så dedikerer vi en halv medarbejder til at skulle løfte området. Simpelthen for at sikre, at de får den ønskede effekt. Om man kan sige, at hvis de ikke er klar til at investere i det der, jamen så er det jo heller ikke rigtig klar til at lave samarbejde. Så for os er det rigtig, rigtig vigtigt at vi fra starten, også når vi snakker mål og også har snakket ressourcer. Og hvis vi ikke har styr på ressourcerne også, så er der en risiko for at vi ikke når derhen.

00.14.27

**Mathias:** Og det er meget interessant med de ressourcer her fordi, hvad kunne så være jeres forventning til sådan en partner her, hvad er det for nogle ressourcer de skal besidde?

00.14.35

**Jan:** Jamen, dybest set skal de ikke besidde så mange på aktiveringsdelen, fordi det er den vi løfter af for dem ved at dedikere nogle hænder og ved at der er noget økonomi i aftalen. Og det kan vi sige, om hvis det er 100.000. Så sætter vi 20.000 af til at sige, der skal være en der tager sig af at få det her i gang. Så skal vi have brugt nogle for målgruppen og brugt nogen andre ting. Men at hver gang sætter os ned og siger vi, i stedet for når der hundrede der går ind så slår vi 100 i kassen. Så siger vi nej, vi fylder 80 i kassen, fordi vi skal sikre at de får værdi, virksomheden får værdi af det. Men i forhold til hvad virksomheden skal komme med, det handler 100 procent om hvad projektet. Det ved jeg godt, det er det kedelige svar, men det handler jo altså. Vi kan ikke sige der er noget, men de skal komme med der, hvor de også har mulighed for at være med til at løfte os et andet sted hen. Det er sådan helt overordnet.

Og det er også derfor at vi selektere, hvem er det vi gerne vil samarbejde med. Vi vil måske ikke samarbejde med discountkæden, hvor der ikke er service, hvor der ikke er noget hvor man ikke tager ansvar for sit lokalmiljø. Da vil vi måske hellere samarbejde, også selv om vi får færre penge, da vi hellere samarbejde med den lokale virksomhed eller den nationale virksomhed, som har det gode brand, som kan være med til at løfte DGI brandet et andet sted.

Da jeg var i Århus, der havde vi et meget sjovt spil og vi spurgte altid de nye praktikanter der kom ind og som havde læst nogle tykke bøger ligesom dig. Så siger vi, AGF de skal sælge deres tribune derovre. De har mulighed for at få Audi ind. De også mulighed for at få Skoda ind. Hvem skal betale mest? Og det var altid en sjov en, for de sagde altid, at det skulle Audi for de har dyrest biler og alt muligt andet, hvor jeg tænker, næ det skal Skoda, fordi de er på det tidspunkt ikke med til at løfte AGF brandet så meget som Audi er. Fordi AGF bliver mere værd ved at samarbejde sammen med Audi, også i andres øjne. De kan lave noget bedre aktivering, de gør en masse andre ting. Nu hørte jeg med Brøndby sponsorat, hvor de siger at det skal koste et tocifret millionbeløb og så laver de mellem 70 og 80 millioner i underskud. Så for mig er det jo fuldstændig ligegyldigt om det hedder 10 eller otte millioner sponsoratet. Det som er vigtigt det er bare de finder den rette sponsor, som kan være med til at løfte til næste hylde. Og det er nok ikke Kasi-Jesper igen, fordi han er ikke med til at løfte dem, for det er jo det her med, hvad det for nogle værdier. Det er den virksomhed du samarbejder med kan være med til at bibringe dit produkt. Og når man kigger på, og det er jo det spændende, hvis vi tager fodbolden herhjemme som jeg kender det, det er forholdsvis små beløb i forhold til hvad man kan sælge en middelmådig fodboldspiller til. Hvad vi kan hente ind på et sponsorat. Så om du får to millioner mere for et sponsorat, hvis det giver super god mening for hele din målgruppe der står ude på langsiden og vil associere sig, så find de rette partnere. Altså dem der matcher dig på visioner og værdier, så tror jeg på, så det endnu vigtigere end økonomi. Og så er økonomi jo også en spiller. Men vi må heller ikke blive hellige omkring al økonomi. Men man skal dælmehuske at det andet er mindst lige så vigtigt - også på sigt.

00.17.51

**Mathias:** Så kan man sige, at I har et andet fokus?

00.17.56

**Jan:** Ja, men jeg tror ikke den skal være unik for os. Og det er jo lidt ligesom når Nike de tager sig selv af, hvad den hedder. Nogle af de store kæder er, Amazon er det ikke der de har taget sig selv af

eller en af de der, hvor de ikke er med mere, fordi i deres, det hele det handler bare om at sælge produktet billigtst mulig. Så ødelægger de jo brandet også og det er der hvor klubber, forbund osv. skal huske på deres brand bliver ødelagt ved ikke at knytte sig sammen med de rette partnere og ved at lave for korte partnerskaber, for så bygger du ikke værdi ind i det, så er det bare med til lige og skaffe noget økonomi.

00.18.39

**Mathias:** Ja, interessant. Og når du nu snakker om den her måde i kører de her partnerskaber på, og for at vende tilbage til spørgsmålet om hvorfor man skal være partner med jer. Hvordan ser du det i forhold til jeres konkurrenter og først og fremmest hvem anser du som jeres konkurrenter i forhold til det med at skabe partnerskaber.

00:19:07

**Jan:** Den er svær fordi jeg tror måske det mere er velgørende organisationer end det er sport. Men jeg tror også spektret er rigtig, rigtig bredt fordi det handler om, men det kan også være annoncer. Altså det kan være tv reklamer, det kan være alt muligt. Hvis man ser et sponsorat som en del af markedsføring. Og det er jo der, men ved at angribe bredt, ved at sige, det kan så mange ting et sponsorat, det kan alt fra kunder, medarbejdere til salg til netværk osv. så går du ind og kæmper med nogle forskellige om nogle forskellige ting. Så direkte konkurrenter, det ved jeg faktisk ikke, fordi det er ikke bare sport.

Et af de spændende spørgsmål der altid kommer, er hvilken branche ser du som sig selv i. Det er sådan som en helt nyere og jeg ser os mere, som vi er i fællesskabsbranchen. Vi er i foreningsbranchen, vi er derhenne hvor vi er med til at få nogle ting til at ske. Vi med til at gøre noget for samfund, vi er med til at byde ind på en større dagsorden end at vi er i idræt branchen og vi laver fodboldskoler. Det er bare et produkt af det vi er sat i verden for, så den er svær også at sige, hvor er det jeg kan sige da jeg var i Århus håndbold. Når jeg kigger på tilskuere, så kunne man jo godt sige nå men til at starte med, så AGF og Bakken Bears og Århus United de er vores store konkurrenter. Hvor jeg siger, nej det er det ikke.

Det er skoven. Det er Tivoli, det er byen. Det er alt muligt andet. Det er der hvor folk vil bruge deres tid. Og det er jo de der ting som vi skal huske, fordi jeg elsker at se håndbold. Så derfor går vi til håndbold, når jeg har mulighed for det. Jeg går ikke over og ser fodbold fordi jeg ikke interesserer mig for fodbold og det som hele tiden, hvad er det for arbejde for en målgruppe, hvad er det for en konkurrent man har. Er vores det var jo, at få folk til at bruge deres tid på at de ville komme at se os. Og der er man nødt til at gøre sig relevant, for der er nogle der vil komme at se dig. Og det er ikke for at lave et politikersvar. Men jeg synes bare den er meget bredere, fordi vi er med til at løfte den store dagsorden. Så det kan godt være dem der kæmper om CSR kroner. Men jeg vil alligevel ikke sige, at om man sidder med en million og så vurderer man skal det skal gå til Røde Kors eller skal det gå DGI. Det er heller ikke sådan jeg ser os. Men det er jo noget med at gøre noget for samfundet, som så også har en afsmittende effekt på dig. Og så tror jeg i øvrigt på at målgruppen gennemskuer når man forsøger at gøre CSR til marketing. Lad vær med at skal stå og fortælle, se vi gør noget godt for negerne. Nej. Gør noget godt for dem, fordi det ligger dig på sinde. Og så skal du nok få effekten. Og det er faktisk nogle gange den interne branding, med at se som en medarbejder i min virksomhed er med til at løfte noget der er lidt større end bare os selv. Det behøver du ikke at markedsføre. Det bliver sådan lidt ulækkert.

00.22.32



**Mathias:** Så i og med, at den er lidt svær at definere den her branche og hvem er konkurrenterne. Kan man så stadigvæk sige, hvad det er der skiller DGI ud fra andre spillere på markedet. Altså hvad er det som gør jer unikke for en partner?

00.22.49

**Jan:** Jeg tror vores tilgang og så tror jeg også på vores brand. Og så tror jeg på, det at man er med til at finansiere et projekt, man ikke er med til at finansiere lønninger - altså lønninger én til én. Selvfølgelig kan der være noget projekt lønninger og alt noget andet. Men det at man er med til at investere ind i noget for at skabe en forskel i samfundet. Det tror jeg. Det tror jeg med til at gøre en forskel.

00.23.17

**Mathias:** Interessant. Nu studsede jeg lige over, at du sagde brand. Kan du prøve at sætte nogle ord på det?

00.23.27

**Jan:** Altså, helt koldt, det er jo det som folk forbinder med DGI. Hvordan oplever man DGI derude. At man er med til at løfte en dagsorden som er lidt større. At man møder DGI og at vi i DGI arbejder hårdt for fællesskabet. Det er jo nogle af de ord som vi forsøger at få med ind i det. Vi har fire brandværdier som er styrke, som er samfundssind, som er tillid og som er vilje. Det er de ting, det er jo det man også gerne vil købe sig med ind på, men også at man så lever troværdigt op til de ord som man siger. Der synes jeg ved at være at vi har vist igennem mange år er det sådan her vi arbejder. Det er sådan her vi er sammen med målgruppen og sådan her vi forsøger at få Danmark til at bevæge sig. Det er jo det som er med til at bygge brand. Det er jo ikke bare det, at vi får et nyt logo og får nogle nye farver på og så skifter vi et skilt. Det er jo hele den der konsistente tilgang, hvor man bare bliver ved med at og gøre de ting som man som er lover markedet.

00.24.33

**Mathias:** Så føler du, at I lever jeres logo/brand?

00.24.36

**Jan:** Ja det synes jeg. Det synes jeg vi gør langt hen ad vejen, men som alle andre, så kan vi jo hele tiden forbedres. Vi har i sådan en afdeling som jeg arbejder med, at hvis man siger aldrig tilfreds. Vi er kommet et godt stykke hen ad vejen og så har vi hænderne over hovedet. Og tager vi ned igen og så tager vi arbejdstøjet på og knokler videre på det. Og det synes jeg egentlig, det er også det der skal være kendetegnende for DGI. Det nytter ikke noget at vi bliver ved med at sidde og fejre os selv når vi har vundet. Der jeg var i en håndboldklub i Århus håndbold, så om mandage hvis vi havde vundet, så sad folk med hænderne over hovedet og sagde vi også fantastiske eller også sagde de, hvis vi tabte, vi kan heller ikke ringe til sponsorerne.

Der vil jeg bare sige, efter at være blevet pensioneret som jeg selv med i nogle af kampene fordi der var nogle skader. Der tabte vi med 13 mål i en af kampene. Om mandagen gik jeg ud og lave den bedste aftale som jeg har lavet i hele min tid, fordi det handler om noget helt andet. Nogle gange så tror vi det handler om øjebliksbilleder. Jeg tror mere på det handler om den konsekvente tilgang du har til at gøre tingene igen og igen og igen. Og så er der da nogle udfald, men det ved folk godt. Det er jo derfor de synes sport er spændende. Det er ikke ligesom at gå ind og se James Bond, hvor vi ved at han ikke dør til sidst. Altså vores helte, de kan godt tabe til sidst med et enkelt mål. Og det er jo den at der er så spændende i sport, for du kender aldrig udfaldet.

00.26.05

**Mathias:** Så det er der faktisk også skabes noget værdi?

00.26.07

Jan: Ja, det er det jo, fordi det bringer følelser i spil. Det er jo det, jeg synes elitesport kan. Bredde sporten kan også på en helt anden måde, men det bliver ikke spændende på samme måde. Men der går vi ind og røre ved nogle andre ting i mennesker end elitesporten. Deres helt store, det er jo at det kan bringe følelser i spil. Hvis man kigger på LED banderne der kørte, der er jo to til tre gange så stor effekt på de budskaber der kommer der, som i forhold til tv-reklamer, for i tv-reklamer der ved du godt du bliver eksponeret overfor et eller andet og enten går du på toilet eller også går du ud og laver kaffe. Der sidder du og ser det hele og du får som påvirkning oppe i hovedet samtidig med du har paraderne nede. Så hele det der spil er jo interessant. Det jo meget elitesporten, hvor det også handler om branding, produktplacering eller logo placeringer. Det arbejder vi ikke ret meget med. Vi arbejder mere med at fortælle historien om hvordan man er med til at løfte. Hvordan er med til at gøre en forskel.

00.27.17

**Mathias:** Og hvis du skulle vurdere sådan lidt på, nu har vi været lidt inde på det, men dermed med kompetencerne i DGI. Hvad jeg er jeres stærkeste kompetencer?

00.27.26

**Jan:** Det at vi er til stede lokalt. Hvis vi sådan kigger på partnerskabsafdelingen, så sidder vi ikke i Vingsted. Vi sidder ikke i København. Vi er til stede ude, 14 lokalforeninger, landsdelsforeninger, som vi kan få med til at gøre at partnerskabet lever i hele Danmark. Det er nok vores helt, helt store kompetence, det er at vi har så mange der kan være med til at bringe budskabet videre, især når det er tænkt rigtigt fra starten af. Det er også derfor når vi laver partnerskaber, så bringer vi både i den eksterne afdeling ind, men kan bringe også vores egne ind, fordi vi skal have taget ejerskab rundt i organisationen for at sikre, at folk de er med til at bære den videre ud. Så det er en af vores helt store. Hvis vi kigger DGI sådan generelt, så er det også, at vi er tilstede lokalt. Vi forstår de problemstillinger som er. Lige nu kører der en stor debat i Århus om, at man bliver ved med at bygge nye kvarterer. Flytter der 12.000 ud i et område og er der ikke bygget en eneste hal. Der er DGI også en vigtig spiller i og sørge for at der er faciliteter, sørge for at der skyder nye forening op og når der er mange mennesker samlet fordi, hvis vi kigger sådan i storbyerne, København og Århus primært. Der er masser af mennesker, men der er ikke ret mange faciliteter. Hvis vi kigger i Vestjylland, så er der har mange faciliteter, men der er ikke mange mennesker til at proppe ind i dem. Så der er vi jo nødt til at kunne forstå, sådan de forskellige der er, hvad er det for nogle dagsordener der rør sig og hvordan kan vi byde ind i dem for også at være en medspiller i hele det. Nogle gange bruger vi ligesom det der udtryk "vi er foreningernes forening". Så det vil sige, at vi lytter til alle de foreninger, vi har 6.500 foreninger som er medlem af DGI. Alle dem er vi jo i mere eller mindre dialog med i løbet af året og de ting som vi hører ude fra dem af, det er jo også dem vi skal hjælpe dem med og at kunne få ført igennem. Og der må man bare sige, når du kommer som så stor en organisation som vi er, så kan vi også lægge et helt andet tryk på fordi vi kommer med et mandat fra så mange mennesker som har nogle ønsker. Og det er jo sådan en af de store ting som vi gør i DGI. Det er jo med at støtte støtteforeningen til at de kan være de bedst mulige for deres medlemmer. Vi arbejder meget i DGI nu med at sige, at vi skal forstå hele kæden, dvs. fra DGI-landsplan ned til medlemmet ude i foreningerne. Men vi skal sælge gennem næste led hele tiden. Så landsdel skal sælge til vores landsdelskontor, vores landsdelskontor skal ud til vores foreninger, vores foreninger skal så ud og have fat i deltagerne. Så hele tiden den der tankegang med at vi skal

hjælpe næste led til at kunne lykkes med de ting. Det tror jeg faktisk er en af vores styrker, fordi der er mange led vi kan bringe med ind i det.

00.30.23

**Mathias:** Og internt i organisationen, hvis man kigger på det med organisatoriske briller, hvor er I så stærke ift. hvad I kan bringe i spil i et partnerskab?

00.30.35

**Jan:** Så er vi lidt tilbage. Vi er stærke på det tryk vi kan lægge på. Vi er stærke når vi sætter maskinen i gang, så kan vi berøre rigtig, rigtig mange mennesker gennem vores netværk. Og så leder den lidt tilbage til den måde som vi indgår partnerskaber på, og det er, at når der er nogen dagsordner som bor ude i organisationen, jamen så er der også en stor lyst til at støtte op om dem. Og det er de dagsordner, som vi også er ude at finde partnere til. Vi går ikke bare ud og finder partnere til en dagsorden, hvis vi ikke synes at den er relevant fordi der er en partner derude. Så er vi nødt til at sige pænt nej tak til at lave et samarbejde, simpelthen også for at være troværdig for ellers er vi tilbage ved at vi skaber en dårlig case. Hvis vi siger ja til at få Ussel Mamond og så ikke får gennemført. Så sidder de tre år efter, jamen I har ikke bevæget nogen af dem som I har lovet, nej, det vidste vi sku egentlig godt fra starten af.

00.30.30

**Mathias:** Og nu har du selvfølgelig haft en masse follow up på de partnere I har nu, men også som I har haft. Hvor er de mest tilfredse ift. det I har leveret?

00.31.48

**Jan:** Det er at sætte de kanaler i spil, som vi nu kan. Men også at inddrage dem i processerne. Fx. Det Blaa Danmark, hun bliver inddraget i hvordan hun kan være med til at skabe værdi ude i den målgruppe vi har. Vi forsøger ligesom at tænke dem med ind i vores arrangementer, så de ikke bare bliver et eller andet side kick, som står ovre i hjørnet og fortæller om skibe. Men hvor vi giver dem sparring på, hvad er det for en målgruppe, hvordan kan du møde målgruppen, hvad kan du gøre og derefter også have opfølgningen og så sige, hvordan gjorde du, hvordan gik det. Altså hele den der løbende dialog med, hvad er det der skaber værdi både for målgruppen, men også for jer. For når vi skaber værdi for de to, så skaber vi også værdi for DGI.

00.32.42

**Mathias:** Og ift. hele den her proces, når man er i projektet, sparre I også med partneren ift. hvordan de kan bruge den her værdi?

00.32.55

**Jan:** Ja. Det er jo en af de steder, hvor vi skal ind og hjælpe til. Og der er jo nok også der hvor jeg ser, at der er mere og mere salg der ryger over. Hvis man vil snakke partnerskaber, så er man jo nødt til at sætte den der viden i spil, fordi ofte er partneren eksperter på noget andet. Vi skulle gerne være, i vores lille afdeling, eksperter på partnerskaber. Så der er vi jo nødt til at sætte i spil. For derovre kan der jo være at der sidder en kommunikationschef eller en marketingchef eller noget, som har en masse andre opgaver også. Da jeg var i Århus håndbold, jamen vi vil gerne have nogle flere kunder, så vi vil gerne have en gulvrekklame. Så siger jeg ja, men ved at købe en gulvrekklame, så får du ikke flere kunder, der skal du sidde med i vores netværksgruppe. Og hvis jeg ikke havde givet ham den sparring, så havde jeg været voldsom dårlig sælger og derfor havde jeg stået med en rigtig dårlig case bagefter, hvis jeg ikke havde udfordret ham på det. Det kan godt være at du skulle

have noget af det andet, men du skal hvert fald have det her ellers er jeg ikke en troværdig sælger og jeg er ikke en partner til ham. Så er jeg bare pistolsælger og så kan han jo købe det alle mulige andre steder henne.

Så der findes sådan en bog der hedder Challenger Sales, hvor den sådan definerer forskellige salgstyper. Og ham der tør udfordre sine kunder derude, det er ham som vinder i på den lange bane, fordi ham kan man ikke gå ud og erstatte ved at begynde at købe et andet produkt. Hvad hvis, jamen de leverer samme produkt og alt det andet, men hvad hvis der sker noget nyt på markedet, så er jeg nødt til at komme og udfordre dig på de ting ved at være leverandør til dig. Jeg ser jo os som leverandører af et partnerskab. Giver det mening?

00.34.47

**Mathias:** Ja, det giver meget mening. Jeg forsøger også lige at holde styr på det her. Vi flyver lidt rundt nemlig, men det må vi gerne, så der er rigtig fint. For jeg er jo nemlig lidt på vej over til det her med selve samarbejdet. Altså en ting er, hvordan I som organisation kan tilbyde en værdi, hvor I jo kan tilbyde en form værdi. Men meget af den her værdi skabes jo også i selve samarbejdet undervejs i partnerskabet. Så den del er jeg også interesseret i.

00.25.16

**Jan:** Men hvis vi tager nu de to, som du har fået ProfilOptik. ProfilOptik de tilbyder 15.000 par briller til børn, for de har set - det var faktisk dem som inviterede os ind til en snak – de har talt med målgruppen, hvor de kan se børn at børn har et par briller, dem skal de bruge i skole, i fritiden og til sport. Der er rigtig mange som stopper til sport, for du skal også passe på dine briller og uha og sådan noget. Så derfor har de lavet 15.000 par briller, som de gerne vil have os til og fortælle ud til hele Danmark og det passer jo direkte ind i vores satsning med at vi gerne vil have alle børn med ind i det gode selskab. Så der er de jo med til at støtte op om ved at give gratis briller, så hvis man faktisk kommer til et DGI-arrangement eller ude i en forening, der er vi jo kanalen ud til alle foreningerne til og sige, hvis I har nogen børn som går dernede og bruger briller, hvor du kan se de kun har et par briller, så kan de faktisk gå ned i ProfilOptik, få testet synet sammen med deres forældre og få et par gratis briller. Der er de jo med til at bidrage voldsomt ind i, at vi har en position ude på markedet, som sikrer at vi har børn til at bevæge sig og samtidig fortælle en god historie om det. Så der byder de jo ind.

Hvis vi tager det Blaa Danmark, så kom de ind og gerne ville gøre nogen ting. En af de ting, som de gerne vil være med på er, det er de gerne vil have piger. Vi arbejder lige nu på at få flere piger ind i Esport. Og vi har lavet et samarbejde om Esport. Så de tilbyder at vi kan bruge deres faciliteter og vi kan komme op og se, hvad kan du egentlig blive til via Esport, fordi grunden til de laver samarbejde der er, at de ser Esport spillerne som nogen er rigtig, rigtig spændende for dem at få ind til at stå på skibet som kaptajn eller noget andet ifbm. det der, fordi de kan splitvision og mange andre kompetencer som de kan se i det. Så der kan de jo se, at de kan bruge. Så der byder de jo ind med faciliteter, de byder ind med spil, underholdning til vores...vi har lige haft et stort trænerseminar, hvor de kommer med de der ting. Vi har et samarbejde med en advokat, som hjælper Esport's foreninger, hvor han er inde og fortælle historien om, hvordan man skal lave de der partnerskaber, hvad er det man skal gøre, hvad er det man skal sikre. Så vi forsøger at sætte nogle af deres kompetencer i spil fordi det giver meget større effekt, at der er en som har stået og hjulpet dig. Når I laver aftaler, skal I lige huske på det og det og det, i stedet for bare at hænge hans flag op nede bagved, fordi så for vi ikke gjort noget ved det. Så ser de bare endnu en logo og tænker, når der er lige en advokat som har lagt lidt penge, det er sikkert fordi hans søn dyrker Esport. Ej, det er faktisk fordi de kan se nogle udfordringer. Så på den måde forsøger vi ligesom at flette dem med ind til at blive medafsender på det budskab vi nu har.

00.38.10

**Mathias:** Så er det helt forkert og sammenligne det her med, at I har nogle kompetencer og ressourcer og partnerne har nogle ressourcer og på en eller anden måde forsøger I at kombinere...

00.38.22

**Jan:** Ja, vi forsøger at tage de kompetencer som partneren har med ind til at gøre vores produkt, som vi leverer ud til vores målgruppe, endnu stærkere. Og dermed får partneren også forhåbentlig en afsmittende effekt der styrker det samarbejde for dem og giver dem værdi i samarbejdet. Og nogle gange er det jo via kompetencerne og nogle gange via brand. For det kan også være noget brands, som vi går ind og hooker op med for simpelthen at løfte os, for at blive blåstemplet på en anden måde.

00.38.55

**Mathias:** Og har du et eksempel på det?

00.38.67

**Jan:** Lige nu er vi i gang med Coop og hele deres arbejde med frivillighed. Der har vi sat de to organisationer, der har arbejdet med frivillighed, sammen. Vi fortæller lidt om det, men ikke sådan meget, men det er simpelthen for at få Coops kompetencer med ind i det fordi de kan være med til at give os noget endnu bedre. Så på den måde. Der kommer nogen, som jeg kan ikke præsentere endnu, men vores samarbejde med Novo (læs: Novo Nordisk), handler netop om det her også. Til at sige, hvordan kan vi være med til at løfte den dagsorden med at vi gerne vil have endnu flere sunde unge mennesker. Men det samme siger Novo jo også om os, så det er jo der, hvor partnerskaberne bliver rigtig, rigtig gode. Det er når vi finder de fælles formål og dagsordner og bruger hinandens kompetencer i det.

00.39.56

**Mathias:** Ja okay, interessant. Så en ting er også, at man bruger det man har i forvejen, men der faktisk måske også mulighed for at man skaber nogen nye.

00.39.53

**Jan:** Vi skulle gerne komme videre derop af på trappen altså, og det er jo det man lærer. Det er jo også derfor der er så spændende at lave længere partnerskaber, fordi hvis det bare er 1-2 år, så kan vi nå at sætte noget i gang, men vi kan ikke nå at evaluere på det, vi kan ikke nå at justere på det. Så derfor skal partnerskaberne være længere, også fordi vi udvikler ting mens vi er i gang. Og samtidig udvikler verden sig, så det kan være det er nye problemstillinger, som vi sammen skal løse.

00.40.32

**Mathias:** Hvad vil du sige er det kriterie eller forudsætning, som skal være opfyldt hos partneren før man indgår et partnerskab med DGI?

00.40.43

**Jan:** Det er, at vi stemmer på værdierne. Vi kommer ikke til at lave partnerskaber med nogen, hvor vi fra starten af ikke kan sætte nogenlunde lighedstegn mellem værdierne og den tilgang vi har til de dagsordner som vi nu vil samarbejde om. Det går forud for alt andet, for ellers er vi i gang med at nedbryde det brand, som jeg taler stolt om og som er blevet bygget gennem rigtig mange år. Nogle gange er det jo bare en dårlig case man skal have med sig, så kan man ryge i de værste storme den

vej rundt. Så derfor er det simpelthen vigtigt, hvad det er for nogen virksomheder, og så hvad det er for nogen mennesker vi samarbejder med.

00.41.36

**Mathias:** Og nu var du lidt inde på det her med processen før, så hvordan vil du karakterisere den gode proces mellem jer og en partner?

00.41.44

**Jan:** Jeg vil sige, at der skal være en åbning, hvor vi finder ud om vi har lyst til at danse. Derefter er det jo lidt ligesom at blive kæresten. Så skal vi jo danse lidt, vi skal have en drink, vi skal kysse og vi skal alle de andre ting inden vi måske bliver kæresten og skal til at have børn. Men der altså et godt stykke derhen, og det kan hurtigt være en 3-4 måneder, hvor vi mærker hinanden af, hvor vi finder ud af, hvor dybt borer den problemstilling inden i den organisation, som gerne vil være med til at løse den. Og det handler det om hos os selv, men det handler også om partneren. Så det tager den tid, som det tager. Men jeg tror, at det er rigtig, rigtig vigtig for at man sikrer at partnerskabet giver værdi, det er at man bruger tiden på at finde ud af. Og så får defineret målet og hvad er så processen for at nå hen til målet. Fra hvis vi står her i dag og siger at vi drømmer om at komme herop, hvad er det så for nogle trin det kræver for at nå der herop og hvad er det for nogle ressourcer der kræves. Og det er både økonomi, men det er også hænder og hoved. Og hvis vi ikke kan forventningsafstemme på det, så tror jeg det er bedre at vi siger pænt farvel og tak og vi håber, at vi har efterladt et godt indtryk. Og man kan sige, at det handler måske om troværdighed ift. brandet, fordi hvis vi ikke indfrier de forventninger som folk sidder med i et partnerskab til os, så kommer vi ikke til at løse det.

00.43.30

**Mathias:** Så troværdighed er en vigtig del...

00.43.45

**Jan:** Ja, men ikke bare troværdighed bare for at være troværdige. Men troværdighed for at levere det som der forventes. Ellers kan det godt lyde lidt som sådan noget. Det bliver lidt sådan noget, uh, vi skal også være troværdige alle sammen. Nej, det er sku også for at kunne indfri de forventninger der er til det, for ellers kommer vi ikke til at kunne sælge næste gang. Så er det godt være, at vi kan slå penge i kassen, men hvis vi ikke har leveret det vi har lovet, så kommer det ikke til at blive godt og de kommer ikke til at tale pænt om os.

00.44.02

**Mathias:** Så i mine ører lyder det som om, at man skal være committed til at levere og den skal bygges på en tillid. Og den går vel begges veje eller hvordan?

00.44.16

**Jan:** Jaa, men altså tillid til at kunne indfri det vi laver. Og det samme skal en partner også. Vi kan jo ikke have en partner med... Det har været et længere partnerskab omkring verdensholdet, hvor der har været mange forskellige som har siddet med den over i virksomheden og dybest set, så er det en frygtelig dårlig case. De har betalt nogen penge og de har ikke nået deres mål. Med god rette, så kan de sige, at I har heller ikke leveret det I skulle, hvor vi også kan skyde den anden vej og sige, næ, men I gjorde heller ikke det I skulle. Og der var jo der vi... Det sker ikke i dag, for hvis vi kan mærke, at den er på vej derhenad, så er vi jo nødt til at tage en forventningsafstemning med den partner, og det er jo også der, hvor vi så kan sige, skal vi have bolden mere over på vores bane for at

kunne sikre os, at vi når derhen. Og så må vi jo sige at det koster noget økonomi, det ved man jo godt. Altså vi ved jo for fanden godt, hvis vi tager væsentlig flere opgaver over til os, jamen så kommer der også nogle opgaver væk fra virksomheden, så dvs. At de får frigivet nogen ressourcer til at kunne gøre noget andet. Så hele den der fordeling af økonomi, det er jo noget vi skal tage en snak om, men det er jo også i en professionel verden, hvor godt har forståelse for, at det ikke bare handler om at skulle snyde hinanden. For os handler det altid om at skabe win-win for partneren, men det handler også om at skabe win med målgruppen. Men den første er win-win med partneren, men også win-win med målgruppen. Fordi målgruppen kan hurtigt gennemskue, og det er jo det vi skal huske, den er væsentlig klogere end man går og regner med. Især med den unge generation, de kan sku godt gennemskue om du går og reklamere med at gøre noget godt for negerne eller virkeligt er noget som ligger dig på sinde. Jeg synes jo priden, som var i København, det er jo fantastisk at se, hvor mange virksomheder som lige pludselig havde nogen holdninger og en politik og alt muligt andet om, hvordan de homoseksuelle og alle de andre køn skulle behandles. Men jeg ser ikke rigtig noget af det, som står i deres reportager eller visioner og alt muligt andet, så vi udnyttede en mulighed for at få noget opmærksomhed. Det gennemskuer målgruppen lynhurtigt.

00.46.32

**Mathias:** Ja, det er en meget interessant pointe.

00.46.35

**Jan:** Jo, men se da Danske Bank blev hovedsponsor for vores landshold, vores alle sammen landshold, derefter går de ud og siger, at der er nogen kunder som de ikke vil have fordi vi ikke tjener penge på dem. Det er jo en KÆMPE problemstilling. Og der er jo der, hvor der brand virkelig kommer i modvind, hvilket det også gjorde på det tidspunkt. Fordi du kan ikke ville os alle sammen og så er der nogen som du alligevel ikke vil og som du smider ud i kulden, fordi du ikke tjener penge på det. Så der er du simpelthen nødt til at have stemt tingene af med dit budskab. Der tror jeg bare at internet, sociale medier og alt muligt andet, det er kommet derhen til, hvor folk hurtigt gennemskuer, hvis du ikke er real i dine hensigter.

Hele bæredygtighedsdagsordnen. Det er jo ikke for sjov at Green Wash er kommet. Nej men, det bunder jo i nogen ting og det kan folk godt gennemskue. Så gør det fordi du mener det eller også hold dig fra det. Det er jo noget, som vi også forsøger at lue ud i, altså hvis de ikke mener det alvorligt, jamen så skal vi jo ikke bare have dem med, for så bliver det jo aldrig til noget.

00.47.30

**Mathias:** Og er det meget baseret på, for en ting er jo projektet og det er jo en del I styrer, men er det lige så meget hvordan de så bruger det i deres del eller hvad?

00.47.39

**Jan:** Ja, det er det. Der skal vi jo altså, hvis vi har noget, hvor vi siger: Vi vil gerne bruge det til at nå alle jeres medlemmer, hvis vi laver et samarbejde med en stor pensionsvirksomhed eller pensionskæde, så vil vi jo gerne have nogen budskaber ud til dem også, for dem skal vi jo samarbejde om. Der er vi jo nødt til at have forventningsafstemt. Det der har vi jo aftalt. Det er jo ikke fordi vi skal hive kontrakten frem og sidde og dunke i hinanden i hovedet med den. Der skal vi virkelig komme langt ud i et samarbejde, men skal jo hele tiden kunne stille krav til hinanden om, hør her, det her var jo en forudsætning, for noget af det kan jo godt være at vi er gået på kompromis med noget økonomi fordi vi har set, at vi kan nå en stor målgruppe af danskere, som vi gerne vil have til at bevæge sig. Så det er jo også en slags "betaling" til os, at vi når nogle flere for det er vores mål, det er at få Danmark til at bevæge sig.

00.48.30

**Mathias:** Interessant. Og hvis man så kigger på ligesom den afsluttende del – og nu er vi ved at være ved vejs ende – og her har vi også været lidt inde omkring det, men hvad er de vigtigste forudsætninger for, at det ender som en succes også efterfølgende. Nu ved jeg godt, at I vil have lange partnerskaber...

00.48.52

**Jan:** Men lange partnerskaber skal du jo også... Altså vi er jo henne ved, at elefanten skal jo også skæres op i bidder og jeg tror jo det vigtige er, at altid finde ud af, hvad er dit ståsted i dag, hvad er det du drømmer om, hvad er det vi skal måle på, hvad er det vi skal lykkes med, når vi sidder her om 10 år og så evaluerer vi på om partnerskabet var en succes eller ikke en succes. Så de to ting skal vi have stemt af. Derudover skal vi have fundet, hvad er det så for nogle trappetrin som skal være der for at vi når op til og vi kommer i mål med vores drøm. Og hele tiden den der forventningsafstemning, men det er jo også det med at tage det lange partnerskab ned i små bidder og så sige, hvis vi skal rykke på den der, så tror vi på, at vi skal gøre det. Og så skal vi bagefter evaluere på det. Vi skal gøre det bedst muligt mens vi er der. Og så skal vi evaluere på dem bagefter. Så skal vi tage det næste trin, så skal vi blive ved med hele tiden at bygge på, så vi når op og drømmer. Og hvis vi lige pludselig kommer til at drømme noget andet og gerne vil noget andet, så er vi jo nødt til at gå op og tage fat i den og så finde ud af det nye. Jamen, hvor er vi så på det i dag og så justere til derfra og så lave den nye proces op imod det. Men hele tiden arbejde med mål og plan for ellers kommer vi ikke til at lykkes.

Og det skal allerede være stemt af fra starten. Hvis jeg ikke har fået spurgt dem om, hvad er egentlig dit mål. Når vi sidder her om 5 år, hvad gør så at du er tilfreds. Så har jeg været en dårlig sælger. Han har også været en dårlig køber, fordi så er han ikke sikker på at få det som han gerne vil have. Så det er vi simpelthen nødt til at turde at tale ærligt omkring. Og vi er også nødt til at sige, hvis vi ikke tror på, at vi er i stand til at lykkes med det. Og så må det jo godt være et ambitiøst mål. Altså det må også godt række ud. Når vi siger 25-50-75 i Bevæg dig for livet, så er det jo også fordi vi er ambitiøse. Og ambitiøse mennesker kan altid skydes i skoen, at I nåde ikke jeres mål, men ja, hvis vi ikke havde haft det havde vi måske heller ikke haft den der fremdrift. Altså det er jo hele snakken om mål og alt det andet der. Der tror jeg på, at målet skal være ambitiøse, men de skal også være opnåelige, hvis vi er heldige og dygtige.

00.51.20

**Mathias:** Interessant. Så vil du sige, at I kun har partnerskaber der bliver en succes?

00.51.53

**Jan:** Nej, men vi har kun partnerskaber, hvor vi har en intention om at det skal blive en succes. Men det er det jo. Men altså, der er jo alle mulige forhold, som vi ikke altid... Så er der også nogle gange, hvor vi rammer skævt på bolden og der også... Og det vil altid ske. Men vores intention skal altid være, at vi vil lykkes med det vi gør, så. Det var det helt store politikersvar.



## Appendix 2: Interview Anne Bay Riisager 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – Transcript

00.30

**Mathias:** Hej Anne, som jeg kort skrev, så er jeg jo i gang med at skrive speciale, og jeg har jo haft nogle snakke med Jan fra DGI, hvor jeg er i gang med at undersøge, hvordan DGI kan generere og tilbyde værdi til sine partnere, som potentielt kan bruges som en konkurrencemæssig fordel. Og i den forbindelse, så nævnte han jer som en af de partnere, som kunne være interessante at snakke med. Og det er jo derfor, at jeg har kontaktet dig. Så egentlig formålet med den her snak, det er lidt af få dit syn på, hvordan jeres samarbejde har været med DGI og hvad der ligesom har været i det her samarbejde, som har gjort det en succes eller en fiasko. Det skal jeg selvfølgelig også høre lidt mere om.

01.48

**Anne:** Altså, jeg vil godt for første starte med at sige, at vi har jo ikke lavet så meget endnu. Det er jo først her fra 2019 at vi egentlig har indgået et samarbejde. Så vi har ikke nået at lave så meget endnu. Vi har kun nået at deltage i et arrangement. Så derfor er det ret nyt. Så det skal jeg lige skynde mig at sige.

Men altså overvejelserne ift. at indgå et samarbejde med DGI, hvis du vil have den. Altså for mig handler det om at vi skal tiltrække unge mennesker og gøre opmærksom på en branche. Og det bruger vi jo forskellige platforme til og et af dem er helt klart, at vi er gået ind i Esport fordi der er jo en masse unge mennesker samlet der. For os svarer det nærmest til et alternativ til en uddannelsesmesse i virkeligheden, ikk. Fordi vi jo bare kan se at de standard og traditionelle uddannelsesmesser bare ikke virker på samme måde længere. Og det har vi så haft gjort med nogen andre eksterne partnere og har haft succes med det. Men når det så er sagt, så synes vi også det var spændende at indgå et samarbejde med DGI fordi DGI har det navn de har og vi synes, at der er en stærk signalværdi i at sige, at man samarbejder med DGI også ift. en masse grundlæggende faktorer. Der er jo mange dilemmaer ift. Esport og hvad folk synes om det, og er det en sport, men vi synes bare at et samarbejde med DGI gør det mere legalt. Så der er meget sådan i hele branding og samarbejdet og brugen af, at kunne sige at man samarbejder med DGI fremfor alle mulige andre eksterne partnere giver rigtig god mening for os. Der er også en god historie i at sige, at DGI og hele deres frivillighedsarbejde og sådan nogle ting, det kan vi også godt lide. Så der er noget grundlæggende i det, som vi syntes er rigtig fint.

Og det vi så har aftalt at der skal laves, den første ting vi så lavede her i februar, det var et Esports trænerseminar i Vejle for 150 Esports trænere og gjorde vi så det, at vi gik ind og sponsorerede Det Blå Danmark prisen for bedste træner – Årets Esports træner. Og nu må du sige, hvis jeg siger noget, som du ikke kan bruge eller hvis du gerne vil have at jeg svarer i anden retning.

04.23

**Mathias:** Jaa, det skal jeg nok ellers skal jeg nok spørge, det er helt fint.

04.26

**Anne:** Og man kan sige, hvorfor gør vi det? Jamen, det gør vi så fordi vi også bare kan se, at de her Esports trænere, det er bare, vi kan bare se, at det også bare lidt er fremtidens vejledere. Altså det er jo nogen trænere, nogen mennesker som er meget tæt på unge mennesker og som også, hvis du får noget viden omkring de Blå Danmark, vil de måske kunne se potentialet i at se at der sidder nogen ude i foreningerne som det kunne være relevant for. Så der er derfor vi går ind i det her og havde en super fin dag, og lavede en helt masse aktiviteter, som gjorde, at det hvert fald godt ved hvad det Blå Danmark er nu.

Så man kan sige, at der var det i det og så den del i det, at vi gennem DGI og deres sociale medier. Vi producerede en helt masse videoer osv. og det røg ud dengang, så der er også noget synlighed generelt ift. at sige, at vi gjorde det her og for at få vores navn ud.

05.24

**Mathias:** Okay, så der er faktisk mange elementer I anser som vigtige ift. at lave det her partnerskab. Hvad er så jeres største forventninger, nu siger du, at I godt nok ikke er kommet så langt endnu, hvor mange arrangementer skal I lave?

00.36

**Anne:** Jamen, planen er også, at vi skal indover nogle forskellige Yousee, Esports ligaer. Altså, jeg har forventning om, at vi kan komme ud og fysisk og møde nogle unge mennesker til nogle store lan parties og sådan nogen ting der altså. Min forventning er at møde, at komme ud og stå ansigt til ansigt med en masse unge mennesker og på den måde få vores budskab igennem.

05.59

**Mathias:** Okay, så hvis du helt kort skal sætte et par overordnede ord på selve formålet med det partnerskab I laver med DGI, hvad er så det?

06.05

**Anne:** Det er at oplyse om det Blå Danmark. Brande det Blå Danmark.

06.11

**Mathias:** Okay, interessant. Og hvor længe skal I køre det her partnerskab?

06.18

**Anne:** Jamen indtil videre, så har vi jo aftalt her for 20 (læs 2020) og så har vi egentlig også delvist aftalt for 21 (læs 2021). Nu skriver vi bare ikke toårige kontrakter med en samarbejdspartner, men vi har da en aftale om, at hvis det går godt, så er planen da at vi fortsætter i 21 (læs 2021) og skal være en del af landsstævnet og sådan nogen ting, i Svendborg, og det er også oplagt fordi Svendborg er mega maritimt. Så derfor er planen at det er her 20 (læs 2020) og 21 (læs 2021).

06.49

**Mathias:** Og hvis jeg lige må vinkle det lidt på det her med DGI, hvad for nogle forventninger har I til DGI ift. at levere i det her partnerskab?

06.57

**Anne:** Vi har helt ekstremt høje forventninger. Og det er jo også en af grundene til at vi har valgt at indgå et samarbejde, for jeg er meget afhængig af at nogen leverer ind. At jeg ikke selv skal, at det ikke lander på mit skrivebord. Og det var egentlig det der skete med det andet samarbejde jeg havde gang i og det kan jeg ikke i og med, at jeg sidder alene med kampagnen, så jeg er ret afhængig af min eksterne samarbejdspartner. Og det er også noget af det, som jeg har talt ret meget med dem om. Altså, jeg er afhængig af at I leverer ind og der sidder nogen professionelle... og det er også en del af det samarbejde, for der sidder professionelle kræfter i det der, som leverer og som er vant til det og som... Det er en større maskine og det kan jeg også godt allerede mærke på den gode måde.

07.38

**Mathias:** Okay, så kan man sige, at det meget er deres ressourcer og kompetencer, som du forventer de kan levere?

07.46

**Anne:** Ja.

07.47

**Mathias:** Okay, interessant. Og hvad forventer du til sådan et godt samarbejde og selve processen omkring det, hvad forventer du de så ligesom bidrager med?

08.00

**Anne:** Jamen, det gælder jo generelt samarbejdspartnere, men min forventning er til det, at... Jeg har forventning om god service. Søde og rare mennesker at samarbejde med, det har meget at sige. Det er man meget afhængig af, at de leverer... At de leverer til tiden. At man udviser at man har overblik og at tingene er systematiseret og organiseret. Det er nogle ret basale signaler, som er ret lette at aflæse i virkeligheden, men det er noget som jeg lægger ret stor vægt på, fordi hvis ikke det er til stede, så er det ikke en samarbejdspartner der er særlig interessant for mig...

**pause**

Og det har de bevist indtil videre...

08.45

**Mathias:** Ja, og det var egentlig min næste spørgsmål... Nu har I jo ikke været i gang så længe, men hvad er indtrykket indtil videre?

08.49

**Anne:** Det er et rigtig fint indtryk. De mennesker jeg har mødt har givet et rigtig godt indtryk og det har jo ufattelig meget at sige at man overhovedet indgår et samarbejde. Og de er meget ærlige og jordnære mennesker. Det er ikke sælgere på den dårlige måde. Det er meget reelt det der foregår og det synes jeg er ret rart.

09.10

**Mathias:** Ja. Så føler du, at der er en forhøjet grad af tillid på en eller anden måde?

09.14

**Anne:** Ja, helt klart. Jeg synes også at de har været gode til allerede nu... De er meget dygtige til at uddelegere til de folk, som har de specifikke kompetence, så dvs. jeg bliver løbende introduceret til nogle nye, som er inde over forskellige projekter og så er det så dem man kører det med, men det synes jeg også bare er stærkt. Altså, det vidner jo bare om at han sidder med det, han sidder med det, han sidder med det. osv. Og når man så får fat i den rette, så er det jo bare dem som er vant til at levere på den opgave og det gør de også.

09.45

**Mathias:** Okay, interessant. Og det forventer du selvfølgelig fortsætter går jeg ud fra?

09.55

**Anne:** Ja ja.

09.58

**Mathias:** Og hvad tænker du ift. at hele projektet bliver en succes. Er der andre elementer, som også skal være til stede ift. dem som er nu?

10.08

**Anne:** Altså, det er jo klart at det... Nu det Esports seminar, der tror jeg også bare... Jeg tror DGI synes helt klart også at det arrangement blev federe, fordi vi var en del af det. At vi leverede nogle fede videoer på dagen, så var vi også med til at lave en god stemning og sådan nogle ting. Og man kan sige, det er jo også bare noget som yngle et samarbejde på den gode måde. For man kan også sige, hvis vi også er i stand til at levere noget, som de synes er fedt, så gør det jo bare tingene endnu bedre. Så man kan sige, hvis vi kan gøre det... Jeg synes der er en god energi, jeg synes der er et godt samarbejde med de personer og en god energi og det har meget at sige, at man er på bølgelængde. Og det er meget besvagt, men det bare har virkelig meget at sige.

10.53

**Mathias:** Så det du siger her... Føler du, at I er et godt match og hvordan kan man sige?

11.04

**Anne:** Hmm, ja, det synes jeg egentlig. Men jeg vil så egentlig også vende den om og sige, at det nok også er grunden til, at vi ikke laver toårige kontrakter. Det er også meget nyt i det her stadigvæk ift. giver det nok at bruge penge på de her ting og er det det her vi gerne vil have ud af det, så derfor har vi også en aftale med dem om, at vi har en løbende evaluering for at se hvad virker og hvad virker ikke ift. giver det mening at være en del af. Jeg skal jo også dokumentere i mit bagland, hvorfor bruger jeg pengene på det her. Hvad var dit spørgsmål?

11.37

**Mathias:** Jamen det var det her med, om du synes at I er godt match mellem jeres to organisationer?

11.46

**Anne:** Jaaa, tænker du på det personlige også? Altså ja, jeg synes det er et godt match. Jeg synes det giver god mening ift. at DGI også er interesseret i at, selvfølgelig også med alle de fordomme de møder blandt forældrene, at de kan sige ude i foreningerne, prøv at høre, vi gør faktisk også noget for at de unge skal vælge noget uddannelse i det her, og noget karriere. Men det er jo også et godt budskab og signal for dem at sende. Så på den måde tror jeg, at det er win-win også for dem altså.

12.13

**Mathias:** Ja ja, så I deler måske faktisk lidt nogle formål, men måske også værdier ift. hvad I gerne vil?

12.20

**Anne:** Ja, det tror jeg. Vi har en fælles agenda ift. at få flere kvinder ind. Der tror jeg også, at vi kan bruge hinanden meget og... Jo fordi begge brancher jo har udfordringer, altså Esport og Det Blå Danmark med at tiltrække kvinder. Så der har vi også allerede talt om at der kunne være noget sparring indbyrdes. Selvom vi er meget forskellige, så har vi faktisk samme udfordringer og det kunne der også komme nogle gode synergier ud af – i det hele taget.

12.49

**Mathias:** Okay, spændende. Så indtil videre positivt?

12.53

**Anne:** Ja.

12.54

**Mathias:** Du nævner også noget om, at I har brugt nogle andre tidligere, leverandører og partnere, kan du så allerede nu se, at der er nogle forskelle på de samarbejder I har med DGI i nu og dem I har haft tidligere med andre partnere?

13.12

**Anne:** Jaa, altså som jeg også sagde, en af grundene til at vælge de andre fra, ikke fordi de laver noget dårligt, de kan bare ikke organisere sig. Altså, jeg er meget afhængig af at der bliver leveret og jeg ikke selv skal levere, og det er meget der bliver flaskehals. Så det er også en af årsagerne til at jeg valgte et samarbejde med DGI og det har jeg heller ikke lagt skjul på. Og det var også noget at det jeg sagde, hvis jeg indgik det samarbejde her, så forventer jeg at I leverer ind og I skal også forvente, at det er begrænset hvad jeg leverer ind, fordi jeg vil ikke sidde som flaskehals og sidde og prøve penge på noget og så ligger den på mit bord.

13.43

**Mathias:** Nej nej, så tilliden til at de kan levere, med hjælp af deres ekspertise, det er en af de vigtigste parametre, som jeg kan forstå dig?

13.51

**Anne:** Ja, det er en af de vigtige parametre.

14.01

**Mathias:** Okay ja, spændende. Men ja, det var egentlig meget fint lige at få klarlagt, fordi de jeg også forsøger at undersøge, det er lidt det her med, nu er I jo i starten af og det er noget med, hvordan man ligesom etablere det her samarbejdet, hvordan det så er i løbet af processen og hvordan det så er efterfølgende. Og nu er I jo så i pre-fasen, eller tidlig startfase, ikk. Så det er klart, at det giver måske ikke så meget mening at snakke om endnu, hvordan det deciderede samarbejde er og jeres outcome kan I jo heller ikke rigtig endnu vurdere.

Men ift. de her kompetencer og ressourcer, som de har i DGI, er der nogle specielle eller specifikke ressourcer – og du må sige, hvis jeg kommer til at gentage mig lidt her - som du anser som vigtige? Altså nogen ting som I kan udnytte, som DGI er i besiddelse af. Her tænker jeg på DGI som organisation, når I skulle sidde og vælge dem, så har I jo, går jeg ud fra, vurderet lidt på, hvad det er for en organisation, hvad er det for nogle stærke træk de har, nogle kompetencer, nogle ressourcer som de har, som I tænker I godt kunne udnytte.

15.36

**Anne:** Jamen altså helt grundlæggende har de jo et gigantisk netværk. Og det er jo det det handler om for os, det er jo at vi gerne vil ud til så mange mennesker som overhovedet muligt. Og det har de. De har jo adgang til dem. Det er jo en af de helt klare fordele ved dem, blandt andet ja. Jeg ved ellers ikke, hvad jeg ellers skal svare.

Altså udnytte deres ressourcer ift. at de har meget viden, ikk. Altså det netværk man også får, ikk. De har jo et kæmpe netværk fordi det er så kæmpe stort DGI med så mange foreninger, så der virkelig mange tangenter at spille på. Der mange muligheder for der er både store ressourcestærke foreninger og der er mindre osv., så der er virkelig bare mange kontaktflader i det her.

16.38

**Mathias:** Og hvordan vil du vurdere deres brand.

16.42

**Anne:** Jamen deres brand, som jeg også sagde tidligere, det er et godt brand og det er jo også en af de ting, som vi har valgt det på. Jeg synes det sender et stærkt signal og kunne samarbejde med dem omkring det. Og igen, det er jo også hele den her frivillighedsmentalitet, ildsjæle og det at man gør noget godt for andre på frivillig basis og sådan noget der.

17.10

**Mathias:** Jamen fedt Anne. Det var også lige for at få den her forståelse af, hvad I har af forventninger til samarbejdet. Mange tak for snakken.

**Slut**

### Appendix 3 – Interview guide Jan Nielsen

<b>Introduktion</b>	<p><b>Kort præsentation:</b> Formålet med interviewet er at undersøge, hvordan DGI kan bidrage til, at sponsorer opnår en konkurrencemæssig fordel gennem et partnerskab med DGI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fokus på hvilken værdi DGI kan tilbyde igennem deres ressourcer og kompetencer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Praktisk:</b> Interviewet vil tage cirka en time. Interviewet optages til egen reference Navn kan anonymiseres, hvis dette ønskes.</p>	
<b>Temaer</b>	<b>Spørgsmål</b>	<b>Fokus</b>
<p>Præsentation og baggrund</p> <p>Introduktion til DGI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kan du starte med en kort introduktion af dig selv? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Navn, baggrund og position</li> </ul> </li> <li>Kort introduktion til DGI og deres formål som organisation</li> </ul>	Baggrundsviden
<b>Tema 1:</b> Partnerskab med DGI - Hvorfor?	<p>Hvorfor skal man være partner med DGI?</p> <p>Hvilke aktiver og rettigheder tilbyder i jeres partnere igennem et sponsorat?</p> <p>Hvem anser du som jeres konkurrenter i markedet for sponsorater?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hvem konkurrerer I imod?</li> </ul> <p>Hvordan, vurderer du, at DGI adskiller sig fra konkurrenterne på markedet, som også tilbyder sponsorater?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kan I tilbyde noget andet end de kan?</li> </ul>	Formål med partnerskab Værdi USP
<b>Tema 2:</b> Interne ressourcer og kompetencer	<p>Hvilke kompetencer, vurderer du, organisationen DGI besidder?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materielle (fysiske, teknologiske, finansielle)</li> <li>Immaterielle (menneskelige, organisationsmæssige, omdømme)</li> </ul> <p>Hvad vurderer du som de mest værdifulde/unikke ressourcer og kompetencer for DGI?</p> <p>Hvordan bringer I disse ressourcer og kompetencer i spil i et partnerskab?</p> <p>Hvordan udnytter partnerne bedst disse værdifulde ressourcer og kompetencer?</p>	<p>DGI som organisation</p> <p>Ressourcer og kompetencer</p>





## Appendix 4 – Interview guide Anne Bay Riisager

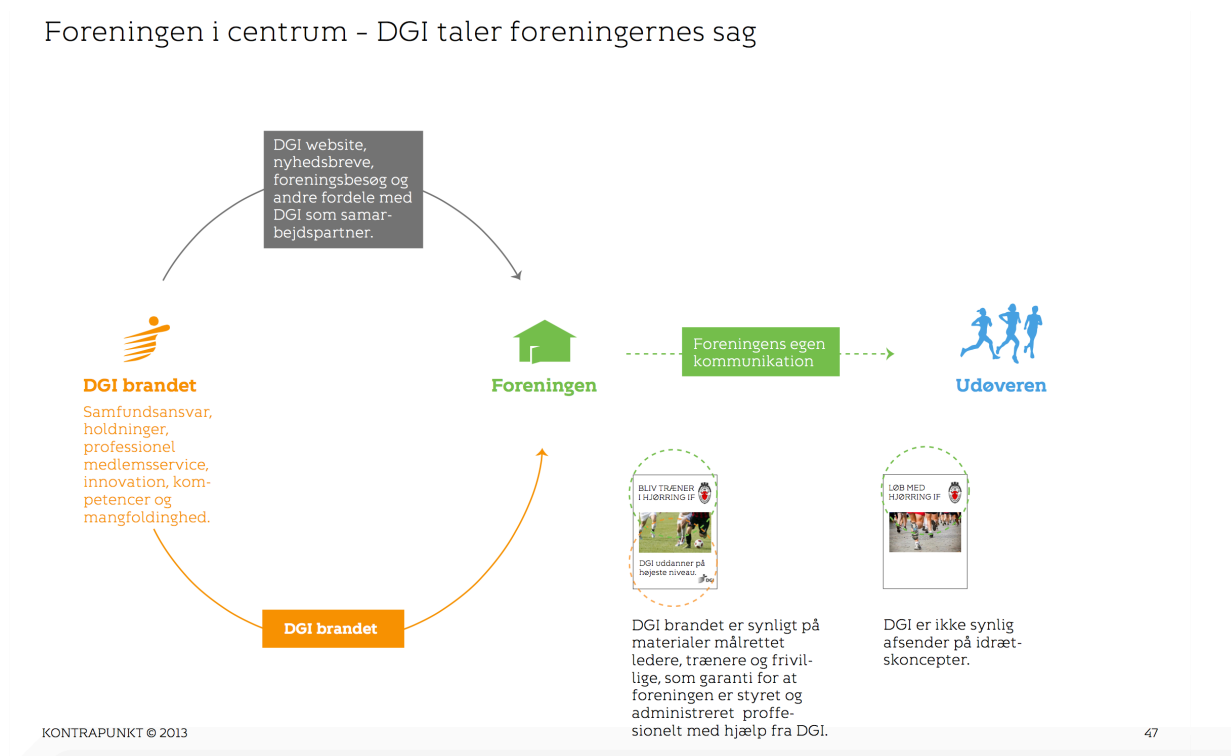
<b>Introduktion</b>	<p><b>Kort præsentation:</b> Formålet med interviewet er at forstå, hvordan I har oplevet jeres samarbejde med DGI og forstå hvilke elementer der var vigtige for at I opnåede den værdi, som I forventede.</p> <p>Det vil desuden have et yderligere fokus på, hvilke forventninger I havde til samarbejdet og hvordan DGI agerede som samarbejdspartner for at opnå succes med partnerskabet.</p> <p><b>Praktisk:</b> Interviewet vil tage cirka en time. Interviewet optages til egen reference Navn kan anonymiseres, hvis dette ønskes.</p>	
<b>Temaer</b>	<b>Spørgsmål</b>	<b>Fokus</b>
Præsentation og baggrund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kan du starte med en kort introduktion af dig selv? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navn, baggrund og position</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Introduktion til De Blaa Rederier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vil du give kort introduktion til De Blaa Rederier og det partnerskab I har haft med DGI? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formål og målet med partnerskabet</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Tema 1:</b> Hvorfor DGI?	<p>Hvorfor var DGI en interessant partner for jer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hvad kunne de tilbyde, som andre ikke kunne?</li> </ul> <p>Var der nogle specifikke ressourcer eller kompetencer, som var vigtige eller interessante for jer at udnytte?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand</li> <li>• Org. Kompetencer</li> <li>• Reach</li> </ul> <p>Havde I andre organisationer i overvejelserne?</p>	
<b>Tema 2:</b> Forventninger (Før)	<p>Hvilke elementer anså du som vigtige ift. at stable et godt samarbejde på benene?</p> <p>Hvilke forventninger havde I til DGI ift. at nå det mål som blev sat? Afhængig af kompetencer og leverer</p> <p>Hvad var vigtigt for jer at DGI leverede i partnerskabet?</p>	
<b>Tema 2:</b> Samarbejdet (during)	<p>Hvordan vil du beskrive samarbejdet med DGI under selve partnerskabsprocessen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hvad var samarbejdet baseret på?</li> </ul>	

	<p>Hvilke elementer var I mest tilfredse ift. samarbejdet med DGI</p> <p>Er der noget, som kunne have forbedret samarbejdet?</p>	
<p><b>Tema 3:</b> Outcome</p>	<p>Hvorfor blev partnerskabet en succes/fiasco?</p> <p>Hvad var de vigtigste elementer for, at jeres partnerskab blev en succes?</p> <p>Evne DGI at genere den værdi, som I havde håbet/forventet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hvis nej, hvorfor ikke?</li> </ul> <p>Hvordan vil du vurdere DGI som partner/samarbejdspartner?</p>	

## Appendix 5 – New Branding Strategy

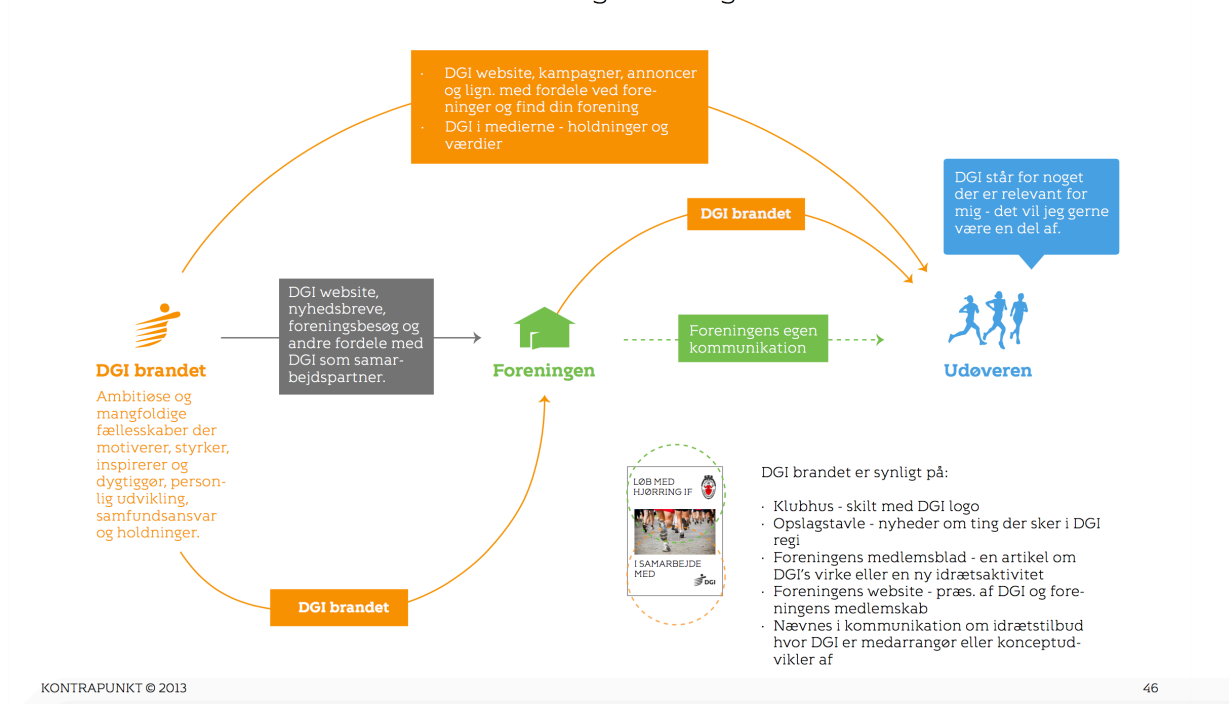
### Before the revitalization

Foreningen i centrum - DGI taler foreningernes sag



### After the revitalization

Udøveren i centrum - DGI taler foreningernes sag



## Appendix 6 – DGI brand perception (values)

