



Editorial



Research needs to follow commercial growth

This year, the world's biggest sporting event takes place in London, and it is useful to look back to see how the commercial side of the Olympics has changed. The business of the Olympics has now become huge, with domestic sponsorship deals smashing previous records. Indeed the Olympic community claims that its sponsorship model is crucial to the Games' existence.

“Our brand is our most valuable asset. To fund the Games, LOCOG ‘sells’ its brand to sponsors and merchandise licencees. If anyone could use London 2012 logos or associate with the Games for free, this funding model simply wouldn’t work.”

Source : IOC (2012).

The Olympic Programme (TOP) and domestic sponsorship now accounts for approximately \$1.8 billion per quadrennial – up from \$813 million in 1993. In the 1980s there were more than 300 official suppliers or sponsors generating an income which was significantly lower in real terms.

When Michael Payne became IOC marketing director in 1983, this marked the start of the Olympic renaissance. During his tenure, Payne led a team that generated more than \$15 billion in broadcast and marketing revenues. He left the IOC in 2004 with the satisfaction of having created a structure that both financed the Games and, importantly, re-invigorated the brand.

This year will also see football's Euro 2012 finals take place in Ukraine and Poland. The event is football's second biggest international tournament and again the broadcast and sponsorship platforms have evolved into sophisticated packages that finance the tournament.

Indeed, I am very proud to feature in this issue an interview with Patrick Gasser, senior manager for Football and Social Responsibility at UEFA, by our interviews editor, David Snyder.

These huge international events, with high levels of commercial financing, show that our field of research has a relevance to an industry that is growing exponentially.

However, it is important that academic research is applied to genuine industry needs and helps to generate new ideas and understanding. We must resist the temptation to explore purely theoretical concepts and instead focus on work that has a direct relevance to the commercial world.

Therefore I hope that all researchers will use these fantastic opportunities in 2012 to consider new and valuable projects that will offer the entire industry a fresh insight into how sports marketing can develop.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to apologise to Andrey Mikhailitchenko and Kihan Kim for the error in our last edition in which Mikhailitchenko's name was inadvertently replaced by that of Kim. This was down to an error in the production process. We will re-run Mikhailitchenko's paper in the correct format in our next edition as an extra paper.

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