Abstract

Airline sponsorship is a common feature of soccer within Europe with companies investing millions in soccer teams. Although many airlines are involved, Emirates has the biggest representation, currently sponsoring seven teams across seven different European countries. One of these teams is Arsenal F.C. who extended their shirt deal with Emirates in 2018, with the deal being worth over $250 million (Forbes). The study focuses on Emirates and their evolving sponsorship presence within European soccer, primarily through the use of kit sponsorships and stadium naming rights. The report identifies the teams Emirates has come to sponsor and analyze the reasons behind these sponsorship decisions, particularly focusing on why they pair with the teams they do. As well as this, the report provides an analysis of Emirates’ marketing strategy and how they use soccer to deliver this strategy effectively.

Methodology

- Financial reports
- Comparisons with other airlines
- Interviews with faculty members
- Media coverage

Sponsorship Benefits

- Sports teams can be used in marketing campaigns
- Increased media attention through sponsored clubs and events
- Increase public awareness of their flight routes
- Soft power (Foreign Policy)

Conclusions

- In 2018, Emirates used PSG and Real Madrid in their marketing campaign to promote their company’s values. The two videos produced for this campaign were viewed by over 4 million people.
- In 2018, their brand sponsored sports events were watched by a global television audience of 9.2 billion.
- Real Madrid’s Champion’s League Final was viewed by over 3 million people in the U.S. alone.
- In 2010, Emirates introduced flight routes from Madrid and in 2011 they began sponsoring Real Madrid, presumably as a way of promoting these new routes.
- Due to limitations with sources, no reliable data can be found on whether they have gained significant soft power through the sponsorships.

Future Airline Sponsorships?

- Was Emirates strategy successful? In what ways?
- With Emirates being one of the market leaders, will other airlines implement their sponsorship strategies?

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