

**CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP STRATEGIES IN  
CANADIAN WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY**

**by**

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## Abstract

This thesis reports findings from a study that analyzed the sponsorship strategies, objectives, and benefits of the Canadian Hockey Association's women's ice hockey support program. There has been a notable increase in recent years in the number of women sport spectators and sport participants in ice hockey, which has increased the sport's potential for sponsorship. Women's ice hockey is Canada's fastest growing sport with approximately 40,000 females registered from coast to coast – an increase of over 400% in the last 10 years. (<http://www.canadianhockey.ca>). Although small in size compared to the men's program, (Women= 37,700, Men= 470,714) these numbers suggest that women's hockey is a good candidate for targeted sponsorship marketing approaches such as direct marketing and relationship marketing.

Relationship and direct marketing are approaches to marketing and business communications that have emerged recently in the literature and can be used to enhance the benefits of sponsorship. Relationship marketing can be described as an integrated effort to identify, maintain, and build a network with individual customers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of all parties involved (McDonald and Milne, 1997). Direct marketing methods can be used to help identify, build and maintain relationships with customers and prospective customers using database technologies. According to Shani (1997), database marketing is a necessary tool to implement relationship marketing and involves the collection of information about past, current, and potential customers to build a customer database.

The thesis study was designed to assess the marketing and sponsorship activities of thirteen major corporate partners involved in the women's program at the premier (\$500,000+), broadcaster, or associate/program (\$100,000+) levels. Eight corporate partners participated in the study. Interviews were conducted, in each case, in the offices of the respective corporations. Each interview was recorded and transcripts were prepared of the tape recordings. In addition to the audio recordings and transcripts, observations were made on-site and a wide range of sponsorship-related promotional materials were collected. The data were analyzed according to the corporate objectives, strategies and benefits obtained and the marketing & sponsorship methods that were utilized.

Four major sponsorship objectives were found, ranging from traditional goals such as brand (and corporate) image & awareness and community involvement to more innovative objectives in sales and integrated promotions and advertising. Nine core corporate programs offered to the sponsors by the CHA are outlined in the thesis including: the Initiation Program; Skills Development Program; Experience a Dream; Fun Days; Medals of Achievement; Schools Program; PlayRight; the Coaching Certification, Development and Rewards Program; and Women in Coaching and Role Model Seminars. The research found a number of benefits of these core programs for the sponsors, including opportunities for relationship marketing, direct marketing, and niche marketing. Although for the most part CHA sponsors were very optimistic and supportive of the women's ice hockey program, there were a number of barriers and issues that concerned them. This research shows, however, that corporate partners for the most part were able to overcome these barriers and that they felt it was important to support the women's game of ice hockey in Canada.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Women's ice hockey provides a useful case for studying sport sponsorship strategy. In today's economic environment, corporate sponsors are looking for a medium that will fit their specific marketing needs and help them build their customer base (Lough, 1996). In a recent survey of corporate sponsors of women's sports, it was found that women are increasingly being recognized and valued as a "new market" that can be reached through sponsorship (Lough, 1996). There has been a significant increase in the number of female sport spectators and sport participants within women's team sports and the popularity of some women's sports, such as ice hockey is growing. In the early 90's

it was estimated that 7,500 women were playing in CAHA (Canadian Amateur Hockey Association) leagues across Canada. Another 18,000 were said to be playing high school, university or recreational hockey. According to D'arcy Jenish, writing in Maclean's, there were 4,600 CAHA players and 327 teams in Ontario. Alberta was a distant second with 940 players and 57 teams (McFarlane, 1994, p.152).

Although still modest in comparison with men's hockey, these numbers have continued to increase. By exploiting some of the new methods in sponsorship such as relationship and direct marketing, sponsors of women's ice hockey could potentially realize significant promotional benefits even though the sport's overall participant, spectator and media audience figures are presently smaller than more popular women's team sports such as basketball. When correctly applied and executed, these sponsorship strategies have the potential to enhance the value of traditional sponsorship programs and better differentiate a sponsor's products or services from those of its competitors (Copeland, Frisby & McCarville, 1996).



Following McDonald and Milne (1997), relationship marketing is defined in this thesis as an integrated effort by corporate partners to identify, maintain, and build a network with individual customers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of all parties involved. Mutual sponsorship goals between the sport organization, the corporate partner, and the end consumer can be achieved through interactive, individualized and value-added contracts over a period of time (McDonald and Milne, 1997). Direct marketing can be defined as a method of identifying and maintaining personal relationships with customers using database technologies. According to Shani (1997), database marketing is a necessary tool to implement relationship marketing and involves the collection of information about past, current, and potential customers to build a customer database.

### **Rationale**

Sponsorship of the Canadian women's ice hockey program has potential commercial value from the standpoint of social image, reach and relationship value. The social image attached to national women's ice hockey emanates in part from the identity of hockey itself.

It is hardly surprising that of all the sports played in Canada, hockey has long been celebrated as something unique. Writing in the 1960's, Al Purdy called hockey "the Canadian specific"; Dryden and MacGregor call it "our common passion"; Scott Young refers to it as "the language that pervades Canada"; Peter Gzowski exalts it as "the game of our lives". These are just a handful of examples from a long list of claims about the game's importance in Canadian culture (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993, p.3).

Also, when sport audiences match the consumer group(s) a corporate sponsor is trying to reach, there is potential for using sponsorship to build relationships directly with the consumer through participant and fan communications. Relationship and direct marketing

techniques are information-driven and have the ability to target new consumers, and maintain current valued customers. In this thesis, principles and concepts surrounding relationship and direct marketing are applied to sponsorship using the Canadian women's ice hockey program as a test case (exemplar).

A review of related literature and recent similar cases in women's team sports were conducted to provide key information and potential direction for maximizing sponsorship strategies. Cases include a marketing overview of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and the now disbanded American Basketball League (ABL). The literature suggests that Women's basketball (WNBA) may be in a comparable, although more advanced stage of development (due to higher grass-root participation levels), and it therefore constitutes an illustrative example for sponsorship of women's team sports.

Academic research in the area of Canadian women's ice hockey can be justified on several levels. Canadians have grown up with ice hockey - it's an integral part of our nation (McFarlane, 1994). There were just 7,321 registered girls and women playing hockey in Canada in 1988, but that number jumped to 27,307 in 1997 (<http://www.cs.toronto.edu>). Women's ice hockey is currently Canada's fastest growing sport with approximately 40,000 females registered from coast to coast in the 1998-99 season, an increase of over 400% in the last 10 years (Canadian Hockey Association, 1999).

### 1.1. Female hockey registration in Canada and the U.S. since 1990-1991

Year	Canada	United States
1990-91	8,146	5,573
1991-92	11,341	6,805
1992-93	12,418	8,991
1993-94	15,467	12,577
1994-95	19,050	17,573
1995-96	23,922	20,319
1996-97	27,305	Not available
1998-99	37,700	Not available

(Avery & Stevens, 1997, p.129)

These figures suggest wider interest in the women's game and a growing market of participants and spectators. Despite these increasing figures and interest in women's hockey, however, there has been very little research done on the sport or its sponsorship value. In fact, progressive literature focussing specifically on Canadian women's ice hockey is almost non-existent. Glynis Peters makes this very point in the foreword to a recent book on women's hockey, 'Too Many Men on the Ice'.

It is clear that the decisions we make now will determine the face of women's hockey in the next millennium. As I write this, I glance toward the bookshelf in my office and see row upon row of books on hockey – men's hockey. Someday soon, I will need a reference and will stroll to the shelves, still stacked with books on hockey – but this time, women's hockey (Avery & Stevens, 1997, p.9).

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the corporate strategies, objectives and benefits of sponsoring the Canadian women's ice hockey program. The information

found in this study is of value to both current and potential sponsors of women's team sports. The study describes and critically analyzes the sponsorship strategies used by CHA corporate support partners and determines how they have responded to the market of women's ice hockey. Specific research questions were used in order to determine:

### 1.2 Study Research Questions

1. How does women's ice hockey fit into the corporate sponsors overall marketing plan?
2. What are the overall sponsorship objectives of CHA corporate sponsor's?
3. What specific programs, elements and techniques are corporate sponsors of the women's ice hockey support program using to maximize sponsorship potential?
4. What sponsorship benefits do these corporations derive from their connection with the Canadian women's ice hockey program?
5. Are these corporations using relationship and direct marketing approaches within their CHA sponsorship program?

By tracing relationships between corporate partners and the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) in the 1998/99 fiscal year, this study attempts to identify current corporate strategies and objectives and highlight the benefits of the CHA corporate support program. Based on these findings, recommendations are made describing how sport organizations can maximize sponsorship within women's ice hockey by looking at new sponsorship perspectives. The study outlines the benefits of using relationship and direct marketing as an extension to current mass marketing methods, and an ancillary result of the research is a set of procedures for using these methods within the women's program. Sponsors need justification for spending money on women's sport; this study supplies corporations with information on the value of sponsorship-linked relationships and direct marketing. Finally, this research offers administrators within the CHA an opportunity to enhance current sponsorship techniques and generate more funding to support future developmental programs and events.

## Chapter II

### Review of Literature

This chapter analyzes literature on the sport sponsorship process with respect to the women's national ice hockey program in Canada. Because of the lack of research on sponsorship of Canadian women's ice hockey, literature is also reviewed in the broader area of sponsorship of women's sport. Even here the literature is quite limited, and so general analyses of sponsorship are also utilized. Part of what is found in this chapter is that marketing and sponsorship of women's sport for the most part is still an underdeveloped area. "Marketing women's sport to gain sponsorship is a relatively new concept and it is only in the last decade that women have started actively negotiating with national corporations for sponsorship of their sports organizations" (<http://www.ausport.gov.au>).

Sports are a popular area of sponsorship because they appeal to most classes and types of people. Sport is typically seen as a healthy character-building activity that is important to the development of active women and men. Women are a particularly important target for sport and sport-related products, in part because of their purchasing power and their centrality in purchasing decisions. "One of the most recent changes influencing sponsors to consider involvement with women's sport is the increased recognition of women's strength in the market place and their expanding decision-making power" (Lough, 1996, p.11).

A number of factors have stimulated the growth of sport sponsorship. For instance, there has been a significant increase in leisure time that has lead to a greater demand for sporting and cultural activities (Otker & Hayes, 1987). This applies to

women as well as men. In addition, interest in women's sport at the Olympic and professional levels has grown. This has led to an increase in media coverage of events, making these sports events advantageous and profitable sponsorship vehicles (Otker & Hayes, 1987). Also, growth in participation has resulted in greater demand for women's sporting equipment and apparel. Corporations like Nike and Reebok, among others, have reacted to the new women's market by manufacturing specific sporting equipment to meet the unique equipment needs of women.

I have organized the chapter in seven sections, as follows. Initially, I review key concepts in the literature concerning sponsorship objectives, evaluation of sponsorship, relationship marketing and sponsorship, and direct marketing. This is followed by three sections in which I discuss the special case of sponsorship of women's team sports, including women's professional basketball and women's ice hockey.

### **Sport Sponsorship Objectives**

The purpose of this section is to discuss the range of corporate objectives and benefits in sport sponsorship. Sport has become a popular sponsorship activity because it encompasses several potential markets, including sports participants, fans, and spectators, as well as the general public (Abratt, Clayton, Pitt, 1987). Sponsorship has been defined by Abratt, Clayton & Pitt, 1987 as:

an agreement in terms of which a sponsor provides some aid to a beneficiary, which may be an association, a team or an individual, to enable the latter to pursue some activity and thereby derives the benefits contemplated in terms of its promotion strategy.

The aid provided may be

financial, or a guarantee of financial assistance, for example, paying the shortfall of any costs incurred, a service or provision of expertise, for example, providing transport or supplying computer operators.

The benefits contemplated may be:

exposure on TV and other media, creating name awareness of the product/company, promoting public relations of the firm, and publicity.

As this definition of sponsorship implies, there are a number of specific corporate objectives that can be realized through sponsorship.

### 2.1 Sport Sponsorship Objectives

Target Specific Consumers
Image
Awareness
Media Coverage and Advertising
Cost Effectiveness
Corporate Goodwill
Client Entertainment and Prestige

Each of these objectives will be considered in turn.

#### **Target Specific Consumers**

There are many ways for corporations to target a market of interest such as women sport participants, but a major consideration is the value of a corporation's products to the participants. Louisville's 1997 launch of the world's "first ever", full line of women-specific hockey gear reflects this market reality as well as the possibilities that result when women's needs are taken seriously and made a central concern of corporate strategy. Starting off by:

...taking specifications from over 150 female players, Louisville re-proportioned traditional hockey gear to properly fit a female's body. The company has (now) begun distribution to specialty shops in the US and Canada and has begun outfitting several teams (Bernstein, 1997).

Louisville established concrete interactive relationships with channel members and customers to identify their equipment needs. Then through a collaborated effort, they

designed a line of hockey equipment to meet the specific needs of women hockey players, a key target group.

Following from this example, one can see that there are a number of product/brand-related strategies sponsoring corporations can use to target specific consumer groups. As noted above, Louisville achieved brand recognition and awareness in the women's hockey market, in part by reconfiguring its product line to accommodate women. When marketing a particular product through sport, sponsors also attempt to make consumers familiar with their brand(s) such that they will hold favorable, strong and unique brand associations in memory. By satisfying the specific needs of their target market, Louisville accomplished this and established the potential for both short- and long-term brand equity with their target customer group.

Sponsorship can also serve as a targeting vehicle that reaches a broad selection of consumers without being too limited by a very specific specialist interest (Gillies, 1991). The sponsor's product or service does not have to be specifically linked to a sporting event or participants. For example, Domino's Pizza sponsors a number of sporting events and makes their product available for on-site consumption and sales. Domino's potential target market is expansive and encompasses a wide array of consumers allowing them to form short and/or long-term relationships with a broad target audience. This process is very dependent on the value these consumers associate with the product at the time of consumption. Despite the size and/or type of sponsorship, it is essential for corporations to identify and build an image within a selected target market (positioning) (Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992).



### **Image**

As noted by Irwin & Asimakopoulos (1992), another objective (and benefit) of sponsorship is the possibility of achieving a product image-association with a sponsored sport. The objective here is to establish a brand image that coincides with the interests of the general public and/or the target market of sports participants, fans and spectators the sponsor is trying to reach. If the image portrayed by sponsoring a particular sport fits the consumers' own image needs and interests, there is potential for forming a lasting image-based relationship with the consumer. Sponsorship can be a very subtle way of creating, enhancing or even changing an image (Gillies, 1991). For example, sponsors can attempt to associate their brands with sporting events that their target market is involved in and enjoys. Image is perhaps one of the most important benefits of sponsorship but one of the hidden benefits since it never overtly appears in the contract, due to the fact that it is difficult to measure effectively.

Sponsorship can also be incorporated into a multi-dimensional marketing strategy in order to leverage the value of the sponsorship and help the company project a favorable image to the general public as well as specific market segments like fans and participants (Abratt, Clayton & Pitt, 1987). For example, the Royal Bank recently used a multi-media approach in its Olympic marketing. Besides sponsoring a contest on Canoe's Slam!Sports Road to Nagano Olympic site and sending posters to hockey arenas in support of its official Olympic sponsorship of both the men's and women's Canadian ice hockey teams (actions which targeted fans, spectators and participants), the bank showed the Olympic rings at the end of its TV spots for its banking services (Hitchcock,

1996). The latter was in some respects a “less-is-more” approach, but it was intended to differentiate the bank to the general public.

“We’re of the view that every other Olympic sponsor will be using Olympic athletes or affiliation with a sports body,” says Patricia Straker, senior manager of sponsorship and media enterprises. “To differentiate ourselves, especially during this time of year, our creative is tied to retirement savings” (Hitchcock, 1996, p.2).

The Royal bank differentiated themselves from other Olympic sponsors by focusing on what was most important to their business success. Through their conservative Olympic advertising campaign, the Royal Bank projected a positive image that their main creative energy was directed at what mattered most to their customers, their commitment to sound investments and investment returns (in this case, retirement savings). At the same time, however, they also demonstrated their commitment to supporting major cultural events that are important to Canadians.

### **Awareness**

Beyond brand, product and company image-building, the other benefit most often cited as coming from sponsorship is “brand, product, and company awareness” (Cornwell, 1995, p.17). Consumer awareness can be stimulated through sponsorship through such means as venue-situated corporate signs (including rink board advertising and in-ice logos in hockey), special events such as ceremonies and news conferences, and through product labeling and sponsorship-linked advertising. The main objectives for sponsorship-based awareness campaigns are the same as for advertising: to get the consumers who are interested in the sport to be able to recognize (or possibly remember) the sponsor’s product or service when they make future purchasing decisions. Such use of sponsorship, in addition to increasing customer awareness and differentiating their

products and services, potentially allows corporations to pre-empt competitors through sponsorship and gain tactical advantages (Otker and Hayes, 1987). The primary means for achieving awareness among the general public is through the media coverage and advertising opportunities offered by large-scale sport sponsorships.

### **Media Coverage and Advertising**

Sponsorship and advertising strategies may differ slightly in their targeted audiences: advertising targets media audiences (readers, listeners, viewers) whereas sponsorship targets participants, spectators, and media audiences (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998). Nevertheless, in both cases there needs to be compatibility between what the sponsor needs and what is offered by the sponsored party in terms of target groups reached, image transfer potential, and media coverage (Otker & Hayes, 1987).

Media coverage really overlaps with advertising since much of the purpose of perimeter boards and logos on players' shirts is not so much to be seen by the spectators present but rather to be picked up by a much larger audience. That wider audience may be viewing a game or an event on television and it is the sponsor's intention that their company name should be seen continually as a background to the main event being followed by the cameras (Gillies, 1991, p.6).

Another stimulus for using sponsorship has been the increased costs of media advertising. Television coverage of a sponsored event has the ability to reach a wide array of consumers in a manner similar to advertising but for less cost. For instance, CBC recently showed a woman's hockey documentary twice broadening its audience reach. It was first aired on the CBC National on Jan 16, 1998 and then aired again on Jan 18<sup>th</sup>, under the title The Game of Her Life (<http://www.cs.toronto.edu>). Improving media coverage of women's sport is of crucial importance if women's sport is to attract more sponsorship, and the media performance of sponsorships stands to be an important factor for determining longer-term investment in women's sport properties.

Many corporations have experimented with using new media like the World Wide Web to reach a larger audience, at a fraction of the cost of traditional mass media. The final pre-Olympic game between Team USA and Team Canada in Colorado Springs on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1998 was available on the Microsoft Netshow Player. The USA Hockey web page had a link to the audio feed (<http://www.cs.toronto.edu>). New media already allow a wide array of people from all over the world to interact with women's sport, and increasing bandwidths and the provision of audio and video feeds over the internet mean that these possibilities will only increase.

The growth in new media such as the World Wide Web and Direct TV has already enhanced the potential for sponsorship within traditional sports such as basketball, football and hockey. The internet is the fastest growing mass communication medium as well as the fastest growing marketing vehicle (Delpy & Bosetti, 1998). It is estimated that the internet population grows by 10 to 15% each month, with the Web component doubling every 53 days (Delpy & Bosetti, 1998). The World Wide Web presents an unparalleled opportunity to reach sports fans worldwide at a fraction of traditional advertising costs. Recent research demonstrates that the typical demographic of the sports fan closely resembles that of the internet user (Delpy & Bosetti, 1998). As these media continue to develop and mature, sponsors can take advantage of this newfound exposure by pursuing additional sport associations, possibly with smaller sports that meet their marketing objectives. This may enable "nontraditional sports for women", like women's hockey, to attract more sponsorship interest and investment.

### **Cost Effectiveness**

The factors most influential in the development of corporate involvement in sport sponsorship according to Lough, (1996) are affordability, cost effectiveness and access to potential buyers. Since at the present time sponsorship costs are lower for women's sports, corporations are finding women's sport sponsorship increasingly viable and worth pursuing (Lough, 1996). As alternatives to conventional men's sport sponsorships, women's sports give corporations more return on investment allowing them to become heavily involved at a lower cost. For instance

IBM Canada Ltd. of Toronto, chose to sponsor Canada's women's Olympic hockey team, instead of the men's "dream team," because the company felt it would have more access to using the female players in promotions. "The problem we had with the men's team was the late announcement of the team and the fact that they're all NHL players and very busy," says Cassandra McRae, Olympic and sports marketing manager. "They would have been harder for us to bring together for use in a video or a customer event." (Hitchcock, 1998, p.2).

Another contributing factor for sponsorship has been the reduction in support from public funds for sport. County and city governments no longer have the money to fund cultural, art, and sports activities (Catherwood & Van Kirk, 1992) and federal and provincial support for sports in Canada has been cut back over the last 6-8 years. In some countries "sponsorship has replaced other forms of funding (especially government support) to the point that some sponsored activities depend solely on corporate funding for their existence" (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998, p.18). In Canada this reality has forced sport organizations to seek stronger sponsorship ties with corporations and local businesses in order to maintain their programs.

### **Corporate Goodwill**

According to Gillies (1991) the sponsorship goal of corporate goodwill might also be termed community responsibility, public relations, or community care. Sponsorships should have social impact in areas such as employment, the environment, or the community. As a result, corporate sponsorship may foster goodwill and better relationships not only with customers, but also with employees and with the community in which the sponsor operates (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998). Corporations need to be seen as supporting those geographic and market areas in which they do business and earn their money (Gillies, 1991).

In order for sponsorships to be truly effective, a number of corporate-related public relations objectives need to be met. For instance, there should be a measurable increase in public awareness of and support for the corporation and its services. Arguably, sponsorship of women's sport has this potential since sponsors can be seen as contributing to the development of women's sports and the improvement of opportunities for women, particularly if they sponsor previously unsponsored or under-supported women's sports. Beyond the PR benefits this would achieve with the women athletes themselves, women more generally stand to view such sponsors positively if portrayed in the right light. The latter in particular could be an important benefit, since women participate in most purchasing decisions for men and families as well as for themselves (Branch, 1995).

It has also been suggested that sponsorship ties can in many situations build business and trade relations and public goodwill. Each company strives to maintain a positive image with customers, stakeholders and the general public (Irwin &

Asimakopoulos, 1992). By fostering relationships with and building a long-term commitment to a sport, public perception can be altered and a strong corporate image potentially can be established. Since sport has such a positive healthy semblance, sponsorship support can contribute to a positive overall company image. An added benefit in the case of women's sports is that sponsorship can give a company the reputation of being socially conscious, sensitive to women's needs and aware of new social trends. For example, by sponsoring the Canadian women's ice hockey team, a corporation can signal to its customers that it supports women's personal and social development in a "non-traditional" sphere of activity for women. Few areas in advertising offer an opportunity to synergistically integrate marketing and PR goals in this way. (Cornwell, 1989).

#### **Client Entertainment and Prestige**

Sponsorship can also be used for client entertainment purposes. Client entertainment affords a dynamic opportunity for gaining allies, forming relationships and influencing people (Gillies, 1991). Prestige and image are important issues in client entertainment. Prestige can be derived from the type of sponsorship of the entertainment event and the status of the sport among the sponsor's clients. As outlined by Cornwell and Maignan (1998) sponsorship can be used as an instrument for developing relationships with corporate clients and partners. "Sports offer an opportunity for building relationships with other businesses, affiliates, and trade customers beyond the daily business operations" (Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992, p.47). This can be accomplished by offering corporate clients VIP treatment at sponsored events.

## **Evaluation of Sport Sponsorship**

One of the most difficult questions in sponsorship concerns evaluation. "Currently in the sport industry, there is no standard practice or policy for evaluating sponsor's investments" (Komoroski and Biemond, 1996, p.35). In order for corporations to realize the full potential of their sponsorship contracts, they need to be able to evaluate their performance.

Traditionally marketers evaluate promotions with quantitative data. But since we are in these programs for the impressions we make, our evaluation tools tend to be subjective rather than objective. Are we making the impression we want? Is it consistent with the brand's positioning? Does it reinforce the brand's image? Is it a program with growth potential? Are we generally getting the dimension of coverage we anticipated? (Weiner, 1985, p.27).

Research can be conducted to evaluate the intermediary effects of sponsorship (recall/association with sport). However, the effects upon the total level of awareness of a company and its image are more difficult to measure (Otker & Hayes, 1987).

Sponsors need to see the tangible results of their expensive investments and sport organizations need to deliver if they wish to maintain these relationships (Komoroski and Biemond, 1996). Two established methods for measuring sponsorship success are increase in market share and increase in sales (Cornwell, 1995). It is also important to consider the effects of sponsorship involvement in relation to the participation by employees (internal) and the effects it has on society as a whole (external). Important variables with respect to internal employee factors include sales force turnover, job satisfaction, employee recruitment, and organizational commitment (Cornwell, 1995). These factors can apply to both the sport organization and the corporate partner. Commitment to the servicing and maintenance of the sponsorship alliance is essential if the sponsorship is to survive and expand year to year.



When measuring the short-term effects of sponsorship there are a number of questions that Cornwell (1989) believes need to be considered. First, what is the difference in effect between an advertising exposure and a program impression in terms of resulting increased awareness, knowledge, liking, and preference? (Cornwell, 1989). It is stressed that "research is needed to determine the differences and similarities between additional advertising exposure and program impressions" (Cornwell, 1989, p.291). Also, is there a difference in the image building effect for those who attend the events and programs and those who do not? (Cornwell, 1989). According to Cornwell, (1989) these are questions that have not yet been adequately answered and should be the focus of future research in this area.

It will become increasingly important for sport organizations to have an evaluation system in place in order to fully support and assist sponsors in reaching their objectives. (Komoroski and Biemond, 1996). Unfortunately, the examination of sponsorship purpose, objectives, strategy, and evaluation continues to lack depth and integration (Cornwell, 1995).

### **Relationship Marketing and Sport Sponsorship**

This section briefly reviews the literature on relationship marketing and sponsorship as it applies to women's sport. The successful adoption of relationship marketing techniques by corporate sponsors of women's sport potentially would enable the sponsor to attract, satisfy, maintain and retain key customers. Relationship marketing in sport has been defined as an integrated effort to identify, maintain, and build a network with individual customers, corporate partners and the sport organization and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of all parties involved

(McDonald & Milne, 1997). This is achieved through interactive, individualized and value-added contracts over a period of time (McDonald & Milne, 1997). Five aspects of relationship marketing and sponsorship are reviewed in this section: prospecting, customer retention, sponsorship involvement, sponsorship customization, and levels of relationship building.

### **Prospecting**

Identifying, recruiting and retaining good customers are key parts of the relationship marketing process. By continuously expanding their customer base with new prospects, corporations create future opportunities to communicate with and build relationships with desirable customers. Consumer databases that contain lists of individuals are useful starting points for prospecting. These can be enhanced by amalgamation with other lists, and the resulting profiles compared with the company's extant customers, making it possible to target similar groups of potential customers in the consumer database (Stone, 1997).

This approach has good potential application in women's sports. Prospecting new customers through popular women's sporting events and programs allows sponsors to attract and recruit the sport's loyal fans and participants. This means that a sport organization's membership list, list of season ticket holders or list of event attendees, can be useful tools, especially when enhanced with database technologies (Stone, 1997). Because the organization has already established a direct relationship with its members and fans, sponsorship prospecting using this list could prove to be very productive and responsive. Database enhancement can substantially increase the amount and quality of information sponsors currently have on each customer or prospect (Stone, 1997). Product

designers, and other key parties throughout a manufacturer's design, manufacturing and distribution channel could use this customer information to maximize product development, product enhancement and customer service practices. Brand managers could use this information to better position their brands through sponsorship and to communicate with the prospective customers. Overall, this process has the potential to increase sales and profit.

From a database of sport organization members or attendees at key sporting events, an effective sponsorship-linked prospecting program could isolate individuals most likely to become customers and establish a "prospect database" (Stone, 1997).

Stone 1997 outlines five techniques to accomplish this task:

## 2.2 Establishing a Prospect Database

1. Profile customers in your existing database first, then seek prospects like them.
2. View such profiles in terms of lists (of members, ticket holders, fans) in order to effectively utilize all advertising media and not just direct mail.
3. Think in terms of market segmentation and product differentiation. Then position differentiated products (hockey skates) to market segments (female players).
4. Employ a rifle rather than a shotgun approach to prospecting. Aim for those with similar characteristics to existing customers, not the mass market.
5. Experiment with prospect lists... test them.

(Note: Parenthetical information has been added).

This process of targeting and recruiting profitable customers for relationship marketing involves the study and analysis of loyalty- and defection-prone customers.

Relationship marketing involves fixed- and variable- cost investments during the customer "attracting" phase to create an opportunity for "maintaining and enhancing" customer relationships - which offers the most profit potential (Berry, 1995, p.239).

This process involves searching for distinguishing patterns in why consumers stay or leave, determining what creates value for current and potential customers, and who the

current customers are (Berry, 1995). "A satisfied, loyal customer is one who re-purchases, again and again, and recommends a product to friends as well" (Peppers & Rogers, 1993, p.34). From this effect, the principle of targeting the "right customers" for relationship marketing has been derived. Marketers need to determine which types of customers they wish to retain and then create a value-added strategy for recruiting customers that fit these requirements, while strengthening the bond(s) with customers who are already loyalty-prone.

As Gillies has noted, "providing the audience of the sponsored event or activity matches the audience that the sponsor wishes to reach, then there is a ready-made, captive and receptive audience waiting to be turned into customers" (1991, p.9). In the women's sport arena, there is a range of potential relationships that can be developed. For example, relationship marketing can target the spectator or participant as well as specialty press readers, radio listeners and television viewers. Also, by forming relationships throughout the retail chain, the needs and wants of end consumers can be effectively communicated at all levels.

Research has contended that prospecting and recruiting new customers through sponsorship is merely the first step in the marketing process (Burca, Brannick & Meenaghan, 1995). "Cementing the relationship, transforming indifferent customers into loyal users, and serving customers as clients are all intrinsically important, but often neglected aspects of the marketing process" (p.89). Concepts concerning the retention and maintenance of customers through the use of relationship marketing strategies will now be discussed in more detail.

### **Customer Retention**

Sporting events result in the congregation of a large number of consumers in a common setting that is conducive to the positive utilization of sponsorship communication strategies and product placements and demonstrations. These settings can be used as a basis for affirming the sponsor's support for and commitment to the sport and its fans as well as a basis for rewarding its best customers with tickets to special events and behind the scene activities. Well executed sport sponsorships thus provide an opportunity for fans to identify with the sponsoring corporation and a basis for long and short-term relationships to emerge that aid in customer loyalty and repeat purchases (Burca, Brannick & Meenaghan, 1995).

The retention of reliable, paying customers is an essential step in the relationship marketing process. Research has indicated that it can cost an organization six times more to attract new consumers than it does to retain current customers (McDonald & Milne, 1997). This demonstrates the importance of improved retention rates and the impact they can have on the bottom line. Berry (1983) outlined five strategy elements for practicing relationship marketing:

#### **2.3 Relationship Marketing Strategy**

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing a core service around which to build a customer relationship.</li> <li>2. Customizing the relationship to the individual customer.</li> <li>3. Augmenting the core service with extra benefits.</li> <li>4. Pricing services to encourage customer loyalty.</li> <li>5. Marketing to employees so that they, in turn, will perform well for customers.</li> </ol> |
|--|

A sponsoring firm that focuses on these strategy elements could integrate its sponsorship programs into its customer retention strategies. Sponsorship-linking and service customization potentially could foster relationships with both current and prospective customers. These strategies will now be discussed in more detail.

### **Sponsorship Involvement**

For most sports, including women's sports, there are a number of different ways and levels sponsors can be involved with their sponsored sports properties. In terms of sponsor participation, for example, sponsorship:

...can be accomplished in three ways: (a) through simple financial investment, (b) through investment and arms-length participation in the sponsorship, and (c) through investment and extensive participation in the sponsorship (Cornwell, 1995, p.21).

In the first kind, or "non-participatory sponsorship", financial support is provided to a group or sport organization (Cornwell, 1995). The effects of this kind of sponsorship may be simply to gain a 'good Samaritan' image in society. Participatory arm's-length sponsorship is accomplished through a third party such as an advertising agency, event packager, or specialized sales promotion agency (Cornwell, 1995). And lastly, the distinguishing characteristic of participatory sponsorship is the active involvement of management, salespersons, and employees from the sponsoring group (Cornwell, 1995). From a relationship marketing perspective, participatory sponsorships are the most effective. "Personal participation offers opportunities for grassroots image building, the generation of sales leads, and other personal communications" (Cornwell, 1995, p.21).

Following the latter approach, sponsors of women's ice hockey could take advantage of potential relationship links that exist with participants and fans. According to Long (1997), Bauer Nike Hockey has followed this approach. Bauer Nike Hockey has a self-evident link to ice hockey in that their equipment is essential to play the game. Bauer Nike's sponsorship of the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) provides Bauer Nike with an opportunity to reach participants who use hockey equipment. One of the programs developed between Bauer Nike Hockey and the CHA is designed to help

coaches teach young players basic hockey skills. This sponsorship arrangement includes skill manuals, decals (awards), and a series of 10 two-day development hockey camps for young players in major cities across Canada (Long, 1997). The assumption can be made that increased purchasing of hockey equipment by women will result from increased participation in women's hockey. By sponsoring a grassroots program that develops young female players, Bauer Nike can increase women's abilities and interest in the sport, thus establishing the potential for customer recognition and loyalty as well as establishing the basis for a long-term relationship.

### **Sponsorship Customization**

Corporate sponsors who utilize relationship marketing techniques potentially can become more knowledgeable about their customer's requirements and needs, resulting in a better sponsorship "fit" with their marketing programs. Gronroos (1995) suggests that firms can apply a relationship marketing strategy that monitors customer satisfaction by directly managing their customer base. Instead of sponsors thinking in anonymous numbers or market share, they can think in terms of people with personal reactions and opinions. Fans of women's sports, in particular, have demonstrated that they can be influenced and "moved," in some cases dramatically, to consume more of the sponsor's product if the approach and product are designed for and with the women's sport spectator/participant in mind (Branch, 1995). For corporate sponsors of women's sports, the key to success is in the design of strategies that appeal to the women's sports fans' and participants' sensitivities toward quality, price value(s), feelings, and emotional well-being (Branch, 1995). Knowledge of the customer base, combined with social rapport

built over a series of sporting events or programs, facilitate the tailoring or customizing of sponsorship to the customer's specifications (Berry, 1995).

Reebok's successful introduction of the Freestyle aerobics shoe (the first athletic shoe designed for women) during the height of the 80s fitness boom, demonstrates the value of customization to the needs of women consumers (Rohm, 1997). "By 1992, the Freestyle had become the industry's all-time #1 selling athletic shoe, and Reebok sales had reached over \$3 billion, from less than \$10 million in 1980" (Rohm, 1997, p.17). Reebok realized what women wanted and provided a product to satisfy women's special athletic shoe necessities. Their products and promotions, in turn, contributed to the development of women's sports.

Customizing of sponsorship can be achieved by knowing who the corporation's target market is and tailoring its sponsorship package around those spectators/participants attending the sporting event or program. Women's sport can generate considerable excitement and emotional attachment among its spectators, fans and participants. Such attachment may render sport spectators and participants more receptive to product-based messages and other marketing initiatives (Copeland, Frisby, & McCarville, 1996, p.33).

As outlined by Pham (1992) the more a person is involved with an event or team such as in a hockey game, the more intense is his/her processing of the game. Processing occurs in an inverted U pattern, which means that above and below a certain point, involvement is counter-productive to sponsorship recognition. While this would be hard to control for, it means that people who are involved with an event are still more likely to be aware of and to appreciate the event's sponsors than are those who are only slightly involved.



### **The Three Levels of Relationship Marketing**

Relationship marketing in the sponsorship of women's sport can be practiced by corporate sponsors on multiple levels, depending on the type of bond(s) used to foster customer loyalty (Berry, 1995 & Shani, 1997). The following section outlines a number of relationship marketing strategies, which can be used by corporate sponsors to utilize, maximize and leverage their sponsorship potential. These three levels of relationship marketing, which have been described in the literature, involve: pricing incentives, social bonds and structural solutions.

#### **Level One- Pricing Incentives**

Level one relationship marketing relies primarily on using pricing incentives to secure spectator/participant loyalty (Berry, 1995). At this level, sponsors can attempt to create customer loyalty through offering "financial rewards" to their best customers (Shani, 1997). For example, a sponsor of a particular women's sports team could create a fan club and offer loyal fans who frequently attend games and participate in programs discount tickets or give loyal spectators and participants discounts on merchandise. However, this technique may only constitute a short-term relationship.

Another way for sponsors to promote brand use is to give out free samples or offer on- site testing and trials of their product. This strategy may get consumers to try the sponsor's product and keep buying it until a better product comes onto the market. Again, product give-a-way's and trials may only elicit a short-term relationship with the customer, but have the potential to establish long term relationships. As a result these techniques will effectively capture immediate market share, and can even entice a one-time buyer into becoming a long-term consumer of your product.

General Motors has used a unique charity contribution program in their sponsorship of the WNBA to establish relationship connections with its customers. As the "Official Car and Truck" of the WNBA, GM donated 50 cents to breast cancer research for every ticket sold in the 1997 season. (<http://www.wnba.com>, 1997).

Although the concept of donation/charity encompasses level two-relationship marketing (social bonding), it also encompasses pricing and similar price strategies can be easily adopted by competitors.

As demonstrated, in some instances the possibility of sustained competitive advantage from this approach lacks depth, due to the fact that price is the most easily imitated element of the marketing mix (Berry, 1995). Also, these techniques tend to form short-term ties with customers, and lack long-term relationship potential. Moreover, sport fans most interested in pricing incentives are particularly vulnerable to competitor promotions, or negative occurrences like a losing season, an increased ticket price, and bad publicity. Thus, "marketers seeking to establish the strongest possible relationships typically must be more than a price competitor" (Berry, 1995, p.240).

### **Level Two – Social Bonds**

Level two relationship marketing relies primarily on social bonds in an attempt to capitalize on the reality that many service encounters are also social encounters (Berry, 1995). According to Berry, social bonding involves personalization and customization of the relationship. Although social bonding normally cannot overpower a noncompetitive core product, it can drive customer and participant loyalty when competitive differences are not strong (Berry, 1995). At the very least each loyal spectator or participant should be identified by their name during any service interaction or transaction with the

corporate sponsor (Shani, 1995). In addition the core service should be augmented with educational and entertainment activities that are tailored to individual spectator tastes. For instance, Kellogg USA produced a special three-pack of Apple Jacks, Frosted Flakes and Smacks with five WNBA players featured on the front panel and WNBA schedule information on the inside (<http://www.wnba.com>, 1997). Also, Sears sponsored the Sears Kid Beat Reporter program, giving eight girls ages 6-19 the opportunity to attend WNBA games, including the home opener, and report back to local radio stations. In addition, Sears ran the "Be a Player for a Day" sweepstakes, giving one winner in each WNBA city a chance to spend a day behind the scenes with their WNBA team (<http://www.wnba.com>, 1997). Fan autograph and photo sessions with the players and key sponsorship representatives can help create social bonds between the customer, the corporate partner and the franchise or sport organization being sponsored. A convincing social relationship can also prompt customers to be more tolerant of a service failure or give the sponsor an opportunity to respond to competitor entreaties (Berry, 1995).

### **Level Three – Structural Solutions**

The final level of relationship marketing depends essentially on structural solutions to important customer problems (Berry, 1995). Sponsors must realize that it is far cheaper per sale completed, to make the extra effort needed to communicate with proven paying customers and solve problems for these individuals based on what they know about them (Peppers & Rogers, 1993). When sponsor's of women's sport can offer customers value-added benefits that would otherwise be difficult or expensive for them and that are not readily available elsewhere, sponsors create a strong foundation for

maintaining and enhancing relationships (Berry, 1995). All sides of the relationship become, in essence, equal partners rather than a customer and providers (Shani, 1997).

This third level of relationship marketing can be demonstrated when successful sponsorship agreements represent a heterogeneous distribution of resources. The negative social implications and ethical issues of the case aside, Virginia Slims, a known sponsor of women's tennis comprised a unique resource their competitors could not easily imitate.

Virginia Slims cigarettes are aimed at female smokers. The firm's advertisements generally feature attractive, athletic, young women. By sponsoring the professional women's tennis tour in the United States, Virginia Slims' carefully marketed image was enhanced by an association with high-profile population of young athletic women, namely female professional tennis players. The sponsorship and the marketing image combined to produce a resource not readily available to rival cigarette manufactures, which target the same population (Amis, Pant & Slack, 1997, p.84).

The combination of Michael Jordan and Nike is another example of the "perfect fit" that every sponsor is striving for, and has produced in the industry a heterogeneous distribution of resources that is clearly to Nike's advantage (Amis, Pant & Slack, 1997). Ultimately, "the benefits from building strong and lasting relationships with customers only accrue to those who take the proper steps to really know their customers and understand their needs and wants" (McDonald & Milne, 1997, p.31).

Various dominant themes have emerged in reference to future research in this area. "The sports industry, although having the product services and types of consumption patterns that are ripe to benefit significantly from practicing relationship marketing, are lagging behind in adopting it" (Shani, 1997, p.15).

A number of research questions specifically related to relationship marketing and its connection to the sponsorship of women's sports could be answered through future

research. For instance, what sport spectators or participants are most receptive to relationship marketing techniques at women's sporting events? What types of participants and spectators attend women's ice hockey events and programs and what are their demographic, and psychographic characteristics? What sponsorship elements increase or decrease the appeal of the corporate partner to consumers? What type, kind, or level of relationships with sponsors drives product loyalty and/or product defection?

This section has defined relationship marketing and its potential value in the sponsorship of women's sport. Given that more corporations are adopting the relationship-marketing paradigm in a variety of industries, it is surprising that there has been minimal research focusing on the lifetime value of customers in sport. Shani found that "an extensive search in the academic literature and even in business and trade publications resulted in less than a handful of published efforts by sport organizations to employ relationship marketing" (1997, p. 10). The potential benefits of relationship marketing techniques are becoming more realizable as rapid advances in information technology decrease the cost of implementation, increasing the practicality of these alternative methods (Berry, 1995). Also, given "the rise in sponsorship spending and the concomitant decline in traditional funding for sport organizations, it is likely that the demand for information about the sponsorship process will increase" (Copeland, Frisby, and McCarville, 1996, p.47). This in turn, demonstrates a need for further academic research about relationship marketing concepts in association with sponsorship particularly of women's sport, a need this thesis attempts to address, albeit in a limited way.

## **Direct Marketing**

Direct marketing is another tool used by companies to attract, maintain and retain customers. By establishing a customer database, companies can understand their customers better and communicate with them on a more personal basis. Direct marketing is therefore an important tool in implementing relationship marketing (Shani, 1997). According to Stone (1994, p. 4), direct marketing is "an interactive system of marketing that uses one or more advertising media to effect a measurable response and/or transaction at any location, with this activity stored on a data base" (Stone, 1997, p.4). Database use is information-driven and centers on efficiently reaching, maintaining, and retaining consumers (Shani, 1997).

The astute sport marketer has the potential to build a sport-related customer database and to personalize communications, promotions and programs to a much greater extent than ever before (Morris and Irwin, 1996). They also have an opportunity to collect, store and update useful information for sponsors such as members' demographics and at least some of their lifestyle consumption patterns, such as sports equipment purchases and use. For a sport sponsor, this is potentially a useful direct marketing benefit that can be achieved by partnering with the sport organization. If given access to these lists through their alliance with the sport, sponsors could deliver targeted messages with specific membership-linked offers (Morris and Irwin, 1996).

Unfortunately many sport organizations still have not realized that direct marketing is a potential tool for their own promotion and publicity, let alone for the purposes of providing a unique benefit to potential corporate sponsors (Gillies, 1991). "Developing such a database should be viewed as a dynamic, continuous process

ultimately leading to improved sponsorship contracts, sales and relations" (Morris and Irwin, 1996, p.9).

### **Important Customer Information**

Although it is important for sponsoring corporations to collect all the information they have available to them, it is equally important for them to utilize and evaluate customer purchase information to enhance their direct marketing program. One important performance indicator is the lifetime value (LTV) of the customer. LTV is defined as the total number of financial transactions a customer makes over the relationship life span (Stone, 1997). A second dimension is recency, which is the last time a person purchased a product (within a given period of time). Frequency, or the number of times a customer buys the sponsor's products within a season or year (Stone, 1997) is important as well. Frequency reflects the amount of business you are getting - or not getting - from each customer per unit of time (Peppers & Rogers, 1993). It is important for the company to collect customer purchase information, and to utilize it to increase the share of each customer's patronage, one customer at a time, by using direct marketing techniques (Peppers & Rogers, 1993). Lastly, the amount of money a customer spends within a season or year is similarly significant (Stone, 1997).

Knowing the lifetime value of a customer reveals how much you can afford to invest in a customer and still realize a satisfactory profit. Keeping tabs on customers by recency of last purchase, by frequency of purchase within a given period, and by amount spent enables the marketer to identify segments of the customer base that offer the greatest profit potential (Stone, 1997, p.7).

Historically, the nurturing of customer relationships has been difficult, in fact almost impossible to evaluate, however, database technology is changing this.

An organization can at last identify its loyal customers, its repeat purchases and its one-time-only "triers," especially within well-defined market segments.

Moreover, marketers can now trace each customer's actions and transactions. This ability makes customers a significant - and measurable - asset (Stone, 1997, p.24).

This process can be simplified by using database-marketing techniques effectively.

### **Privacy Regulations and Database Marketing**

The purpose of this section is to consider the extent to which Canadian law restricts the use of private information for marketing purposes on the basis of privacy and ownership rights of databases of personal information. Under the federal law, consumers are guaranteed protection from use and transfer of personal information. The key concept to be considered here is the issue of privacy. The definition of privacy, which is widely accepted, is one of control over personal information and can be stated as:

“the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others.”  
(<http://www.smithlyons.ca/it/dbm/privacy.htm>).

Criminal Code provisions of Canada provide another means through which databases are protected from unauthorized use or alteration

(<http://www.SmithLyons.ca/it/dbm/contract.htm>). The White Paper proposal for regulations on privacy has its roots in the OECD Principles, perhaps the most noteworthy and influential privacy document (<http://www.smithlyons.com/fs/cpts/drp.htm>). Adopted by the OECD, these guiding principles were proposed to form the basis of legislation in the organization's member states, and arose from an interest to protect the free commercial flow of personal information and privacy of consumers (<http://www.smithlyons.com/fs/cpts/drp.htm>). The guideline foundation is a series of eight principles, which can be applied to the private sector:



## 2.4 Eight Consumer Privacy Principles

1. Collection limitation
2. Data quality
3. Purpose specification
4. Use limitation
5. Security safeguards
6. Openness
7. Individual participation
8. Accountability

In the early 1990s, Quebec passed legislation providing comprehensive protection of personal information in the private sector (also known as Bill 68). (<http://www.smithlyons.com/fs/cpts/drps.htm>). Disputes under the Act are resolved by the body responsible for resolving disputes under Quebec's public sector access and privacy statute, the Commission d'accès à l'information (<http://www.smithlyons.com/fs/cpts/drps.htm>). This act outlines a number of guidelines which corporations must follow prior to obtaining lists of potential consumers from sport organizations. In summary, at the very least, organizations that have lists of consumers names and personal information are obligated to send a letter to each individual providing them with instructions on how to remove their name from the list.

A privacy code has also been developed by the Consumer Standards Association (CSA) to serve as a voluntary standard. Drafted by a collective of representatives in business, government and consumer groups, the Code was adopted by the CSA in 1996. This code is also based heavily on the OECD guidelines.

The Canadian Direct Marketing Association (CDMA) is a self-regulating body for the industry. One goal of the CDMA is to increase consumer confidence in direct/database marketing by taking a leadership role in responding to consumer concerns (<http://westminster.ca/cdma/>). The CDMA has developed a privacy code containing seven

key principles based on the privacy principles of the OECD ([http://www.cdma.org/new/ethics\\_2.html](http://www.cdma.org/new/ethics_2.html)).

## 2.5 Privacy Code

<p>Principle #1: Giving consumers control over how information about them is used.</p> <p>Principle #2: Providing consumers the right of access to information.</p> <p>Principle #3: Enabling consumers to reduce the amount of mail they receive.</p> <p>Principle #4: Collection of information and use by third parties.</p> <p>Principle #5: Safely storing information about consumers.</p> <p>Principle #6: Respecting confidential information.</p> <p>Principle #7: Enforcement.</p>
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(<http://www.westminster.ca/cdma/cdma2.htm>)

As the use of databases for direct and relationship-marketing purposes becomes more prevalent in the sport industry, corporations will need to become aware of the guidelines and principles outlined in this section. Privacy issues will be an important concern as the industry becomes more and more technologically advanced. Technology enables the gathering of, and access to, customer information on an unprecedented scale. Due to the growing public awareness of database technology and its infringement on the private lives of consumers, new laws such as the White Paper are being considered.

Staying well within the bounds of these codes and regulations, it is possible to protect customer's rights to privacy while using database information to track customer preferences and build relationships. Database information can be used both for identifying and recruiting customers, however, this is only the first step in building a direct marketing plan. "The next - and more important - step is to keep and cultivate these customers" (Stone, 1997, p.23). At core, this is a relationship marketing approach. As demonstrated in the direct marketing literature, sport sponsors should strive to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers at a profit, so that the objectives of

the parties involved are met (Gronroos, 1994). Ultimately, databases enable direct marketing efforts to be targeted (Stone, 1997, p.22).

### **Women's Team Sports**

Interest in women's sport has expanded recently as more marketers have begun to recognize women as participants and spectators of sports (Hudes, 1998). For decades, women's individual sports, such as golf and tennis, have drawn fans, sponsors, and big money. However, the record of women's team sports has been decidedly more modest (Rozin, 1997). The change in women's team sports in the U.S. can be traced to the 1972 passage of what has come to be known as Title IX, the law prohibiting gender discrimination in programs that receive federal funds (Rozin, 1997). "The impact of Title IX has been dramatic: In 1970, 1 in 27 girls played on a high school team. By 1996, that figure was 1 in 3, according to the Women's Sports Foundation" (Rozin, 1997, p.54). According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association at the more advanced college levels, where competition is tougher, the number of female athletes has increased to 123,832 from 80,040 in 1982 (Marcus, 1997). Mirrored in the Canadian University and high school systems, these participation increases demonstrate a growing interest in women's team sports at levels.

#### **2.6 Intercollegiate sports offered to women: Division I Schools**

<b>Average Number of Sports</b>	
1972	2.5
1977	5.6
1984	6.9
1988	7.3
source: Women & Athletics: A Twenty Year Retrospective on Title IX by D.Heckman (1992)	

With four new women's pro leagues formed since the 1996 Olympics (WPF - Women's Professional Fastpitch League, ABL - American Basketball League (recently disbanded), WPVA - Women's Professional Volleyball Association, WNBA - Women's National Basketball Association) and more skilled and recognizable female athletes than ever before, sponsors are beginning to take notice of women's team sports (Rozin, 1997). Greater opportunity has led to better female athletes, and greater success has attracted more spectators and media profile (Rozin, 1997). Bigger audiences and better attendance at women's team sports means that marketers have a much larger pool of women who could develop an allegiance to their products through sports.

As demonstrated in the sport of ice hockey, a growing trend is an increase in the number of female sport spectators and sport participants (Branch, 1995). For instance, between 1990 and 1997, the number of female hockey players registered with USA Hockey more than quadrupled, and women's teams climbed from 149 to 910, although the majority of women play on mixed-gender teams (Lasswell, 1998). As suggested earlier, this recent increase in the USA has been paralleled in Canada as popularity surrounding the game of women's ice hockey continues to expand.

Although there are a number of obvious differences between women's professional basketball and Canadian national women's ice hockey, the following cases will be looked at solely from the sponsor-consumer connection and the unique relationships surrounding and within women's team sports.

#### **WNBA and ABL - Like cases examined**

Basketball currently has something that hockey does not - a tremendous number of females who play the sport, which in itself will ultimately lead to a larger audience.

According to the 1995-1996 US National Federation of State High School Associations Survey, 445,869 girls played basketball – the most playing any girls sport. This number also represented 45 percent of the total number of high school basketball players. There were under 2,000 girls playing hockey in high school that same year. Nearly every high school in the US offers basketball to girls. Only one state recognizes girls' high school ice hockey, and a handful of other states sport a dozen or fewer girls' hockey teams. The numbers are somewhat misleading, though, since most girls who play hockey at the high school level play on a community youth team – about 5,000 of them in 1995-96. But the base of both players and fans for girls' ice hockey cannot begin to compare with the participation numbers for basketball (Avery and Stevens, 1997, p.248-249).

According to the literature, the 1996 entry of the WNBA professional league may have been successful for three reasons: attendance at women's college basketball games was rising; women's basketball was in the spotlight for over a month during the Olympics and was well-received; and numerous television contracts were signed. In order to analyze future opportunities available to women's ice hockey, it will be important to take a close look at the emergence of women's professional basketball.

#### **ABL (Now Disbanded)**

Some commentators suggested that the American Basketball League would need to utilize every strategy and entrepreneurial technique available to them to avoid getting overrun by the WNBA (Useem, 1997). In the market competition that ensued, the ABL was no match for its NBA-backed rival. The ABL which recently folded, had a \$7 million marketing budget for the 1998 season, up from \$3 million the previous season, but still less than half of the reported \$15 million budget of the WNBA (Murphy, 1998).

The ABL's games were played during basketball season, and the organizers felt this would be appealing to a wide array of fans, especially families who love basketball and families with young girls (Klemm, 1997).

The A.B.L., which operated in smaller markets during the fall and winter, was known as the players' league; it paid more - the average salary was \$80,000 a year - and boasted of having the best players (Olympians Dawn Stanley, Teresa Edwards and Katrina McClain). Playing in cities like San Jose, Calif., Richmond, Va., and Columbus, Ohio, the A.B.L. averaged 3,500 fans a game with very little TV exposure. By one estimate, the A.B.L. spent \$6 million on salaries this year and \$1.5 million on marketing. The W.N.B.A., on the other hand, is spending \$15 million on marketing and \$3 million on salaries (Wulf, 1997, p.2).

Gary Cavalli, one of the league co-founder's, emphasized that the league tried to make its employees feel united in a common purpose through worker empowerment and a profit-sharing plan. The ABL also embraced the management buzzword "focus." The ABL league put the women's game at the forefront, whereas WNBA clubs are owned and operated by the men's franchises (Useem, 1997). They provided worker empowerment sessions for player input on everything from the size of the ball to the league's business plan and profit-sharing plan (Useem, 1997). However, in the end, the ABL failed in its attempt to confront the organizational success of the NBA's innovative marketing strategies.

### **WNBA**

It is widely suggested in the trade literature that the new women's basketball league has transformed the business side of sports into a high art, making them accessible to more fans than ever. As Harlan Stone, managing director of Advantage International stated: "They designed it beautifully, executed it flawlessly and delivered it to an audience of sponsors and consumers who were salivating for something concrete in women's sports" (Lefton, 1997). Throughout the literature there seems to be a consensus that the WNBA's players are more accessible, and the crowd is as in love with the game itself as with its team. Lefton (1997) observed that fans go to games early, and stay late and cheer regardless of the score.

Backed by the existing infrastructure and marketing success of the NBA, the WNBA has exceeded all expectations. The league's average attendance has been 9,669 per game, 9,804 including playoffs (Lefton, 1997). The league also had very respectable TV ratings, 2.0 on NBC, 0.9 on ESPN, and 5.0 for Lifetime, (for comparison the very much more established NHL got 8.0 for its regular season package on ESPN 1 last season) all in the least-watched TV quarter of the year (Lefton, 1997). According to Lefton (1997) the TV audience was about 10% more female than the typical NBA TV audience.

The audience breakdown at games was 60 percent female and 30 percent under the age of 18 – a very different demographic from the NBA (Associated Press, 1997). Preliminary numbers showed the typical WNBA crowd was composed of 20% more females and double the amount of youths of the typical NBA crowd (Lefton, 1997). Some of that certainly had to do with cost. Every arena had \$8 seats; the price of an average NBA ticket is about two-and-a-half times the cost of the average WNBA ticket (Lefton, 1997). The WNBA is thus very affordable, for instance in Charlotte, a family of four can buy a Valuepak for \$25 which includes: four tickets, four hotdogs, four sodas and popcorn (Wulf, 1997).

The WNBA's corporate sponsors, who got TV packages with promotional rights, do not include the usual generic sponsors of women's events, like marketers of feminine hygiene products or health and beauty aids. The list of Anheuser-Busch, GM, Nike, Coke, McDonald's, AmEx, Reebok, Champion, Sears, Pinnacle, Kellogg and Adidas includes some of the biggest sports marketers and corporate sponsors in the world. And all of them signed three-year contracts (Lefton, 1997). "The sponsorships range from a

reported \$1.5 million to \$5 million, and often include integrated marketing tie-ins and promotions extending beyond the small screen” (Hudes, 1998, p.16). Almost every client involved had dollars specifically earmarked for event marketing targeted to women. Organizers of the league believe that the WNBA filled an important niche by enabling sponsors to market to women without it being small time (Lefton, 1997).

David Stern, the NBA president, has been a master in building structural relationships and alliances with the NBA corporate sponsors. It is believed that these structural relationships have been a significant factor in the phenomenal successes of the NBA. The league has kept the roster of corporate sponsors stable and built a strong and equal partnership with blue-chip companies. “When the NBA needed sponsors for the newly created women's basketball league (WNBA), all existing sponsors joined in supporting this risky venture” (Shani, 1997, p.14). It is the support of the NBA that makes the WNBA most likely to succeed. By most accounts, the NBA is the most sophisticated sports league in the world today, and the WNBA is starting with the power and prestige and genius of the NBA (Lorge, 1997).

The WNBA achieved competitive advantage over the ABL on several levels. First, since games were played June through September, the WNBA did not have to compete with other sports for TV time. Second, a summer schedule left NBA venues open for WNBA play. Third, promotions for upcoming WNBA games were piggybacked on NBC telecasts of the NBA Finals in June. More importantly, the teams were owned by the NBA teams, and depended on the local franchises to host the feminine counterpart (Klemm, 1996).



Wulf (1997) observes that purists such as UCLA's legendary coach John Wooden think women's basketball is more 'watchable' than men's basketball. "It's certainly more structured and team-oriented than the helter-skelter NBA game, and that aesthetic has helped the WNBA attract older fans who miss the traditional pace of basketball" (Wulf, 1997, p.3). The effectiveness and consistency of the NBA's marketing program along with the demand by sponsors for big-time women's sports may have produced the most successful pro sports launch in memory (Lefton, 1997). Does that mean that there is untapped market potential that events like the upcoming Women's Hockey World Championship (to be held in Canada in the year 2000) can draw upon? One lesson that has been made evident by the WNBA's continuous success is that sponsors are interested in finding channels to reach women through "big time" sports.

### **Women's Ice Hockey – A Special Case**

One of the best-kept secrets in Canadian history is that women have enjoyed the sport of ice hockey, the great Canadian tradition, not just as spectators, but as avid, highly skilled players since before the beginning of the 20th century (McFarlane, 1994). According to the CHA the first documented game was held in Barrie Ontario in 1892, two years before the first Stanley Cup championship (<http://www.canadianhockey.ca>).

The fact is that all Canadians have grown up with hockey - it's an integral part of our nation (McFarlane, 1994).

As of 1997, total female registration in the country was 27,305. The many girls who play on boys' teams were not included in that number. If they were estimated at 1,000 players for each province, the national total would rise to just less than 38,000 players. Will this increase to 150,000 in four years? Maybe. From 1990, when the first world Championship was held, to 1997, the rate of growth for female hockey in Canada was 235 percent. Compressed into three years, from 1997 until 2000, at this rate the projected number of women and girls playing hockey in Canada would be around 100,000. A similar projection for the US would take the total registration there to approximately 74,000 women and girls playing hockey by the year 2000 (Avery and Stevens, 1997, p.272).

## 2.7 Hockey Registration in Canada 1993-94, 1994-95 & 1996-1997 Seasons

Province	93-94 Female	94-95 Female	96-97 Female
British Columbia	1595	1677	2872
Alberta	1223	1798	1960
Saskatchewan	411	600	878
Manitoba	900	1251	1667
Ontario	7743	9497	15116
Quebec	2084	2208	2205
New Brunswick	433	501	558
Nova Scotia	494	879	969
Prince Edward Island	215	269	404
Newfoundland	369	370	516
Totals	15467	19050	27145

(<http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~andria/country/canada/registration.html>)

Women's ice hockey is one of the fastest-growing games in North America (Rozin, 1997). One reason for this growth is the change in attitude toward women's sports. For instance, "in Minnesota, when rink time became an issue, women legislators in 1993 pushed through a law guaranteeing equal access during prime hours for males

and females: In three years, high school girls' teams went from 8 to 67, amateur clubs from 20 to more than 200" (Rozin, 1997).

Future women hockey players should be given every opportunity to excel in this celebrated Canadian sport. Due to the considerable lack of funding (outside of sponsorship revenue) within the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA), however, it will become increasingly difficult to attract new participants and retain current players within the women's ice hockey program. In their promotional material, the CHA predicts that 150,000 women and girls will be playing hockey in Canada by the year 2000. Thus, it has become more and more important for administrators within women's ice hockey to attract media exposure and additional corporate sponsorship dollars to support current developmental programs. Sponsorship funding stands to lead to more prosperous teams, athletes, programs and events in the future.

Within the extant organizational structure of women's ice hockey in Canada and throughout the world, there are numerous players, coaches, managers, administrators, parents, and spectator's involved across the system, who together make up a unique and growing market for some corporations. One possibility for corporate sponsors might be to focus on this target market through ice hockey sponsorship programs. However, it will also be important for these corporations to look beyond the immediate population of people who are directly involved in ice hockey. Companies sponsoring non-traditional sports involving women may also receive image and awareness benefits among the broader population. These sponsoring corporations essentially are providing female athletes and teams with the resources needed to improve within the sport system, throughout Canada and the world. When properly positioned, sponsors can leverage CHA

associations and add value to the corporation's overall PR and marketing program. Player development support is needed from corporate sponsors to help local and national authorities fund programs which give female players necessary hockey skills at a young age. Sponsored player development programs have the potential to produce a larger and more proficient talent pool of national team hopefuls as the local, national and international women's game becomes more competitive (Long, 1997). Sponsors of these programs are seen as fulfilling a social responsibility, that of making ice hockey available to women of all ages at affordable prices. As a result, consumers stand to view this contribution positively and, other things being equal, will reward the sponsor with their business and goodwill.

In their book *Home Game*, about hockey in Canada, Ken Dryden and Roy MacGregor defend the cultural significance of hockey in Canada.

...Dryden and MacGregor argue that while participation in hockey is far from universal, it continues to be remarkably broad ranging. Millions of Canadians play hockey in one form or another – young and old, boys and girls, urban and rural, French and English, East and West, able and disabled. Millions more follow the game passionately, and even people who dislike hockey have difficulty escaping its reach, its omnipresence in the media and in everyday conversations that occur at the office, the playground, and the school. Added to this is a history that has allowed the game to represent something quintessentially Canadian. For better or worse, ice hockey is something “we” invented; it is “our” game (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993, p.3).

The national women's ice hockey teams of both the United States and Canada competed in the 1998 Winter Olympics. Evidently, the U.S. team (as demonstrated in their gold medal win over Canada) was more prepared for international competition. By the fall of 1997, the U.S. players had been together for an entire year, training and competing in a full-time program (Avery and Stevens, 1997). By the new-year they had traveled to Canada, China and Finland for international exhibitions and tournaments, and

of course, they played at the 1997 World Championship in Kitchener, Ontario (Avery and Stevens, 1997). On the other hand, due to a lack of funding within the CHA, members of team Canada trained individually for most of 1997. They had a training camp in January to select the team to compete at the World Championships in March. The decision to centralize for Olympic preparation was under discussion at the beginning of the year, but it was not until September 1997 that the team began training together in Calgary (Avery and Stevens, 1997).

Starting from September, 1997 and leading up to the Olympics in Nagano, Japan, the Canadian national women players received \$1,865 a month—the first time Canadian women have made money playing hockey. By comparison, Canadian Hockey supports a full-time men's national team, which didn't even go to Japan because a dream team of mainly NHL players made the trip (<http://www.chatelaine.com>). For the women, six months together was a luxury. While the money helped the players pay the rent, it was not enough to make this endeavor anything but a labor of love. Most team members spent the summer juggling jobs and trying to save enough money so they could quit working during the pre-Olympic training period (<http://www.chatelaine.com>).

It is evident that sponsorship funding, or the lack there of, will play a major role in the development of the women's national ice hockey program in Canada. As seen in the table below, sponsorship is the second largest money generator within the CHA.

2.8 Canadian Hockey Association Sources of Funding 1997-98		
Sponsors	\$4,055,000	27%
Program/Event Revenue	\$4,690,000	30%
Membership/Service Fees	\$1,809,000	12%
Merchandise	\$1,743,000	12%
Sport Funding Agencies	\$1,465,000	10%
Government	\$1,110,000	7%
Other	\$268,000	2%
Total	\$15,140,000	100%

(<http://www.canadianhockey.ca/e/about/funding.html>)

Because the women's ice hockey support program falls under the larger umbrella of the CHA sponsorship support program it is difficult to determine what percentage of sponsorship funds are allocated directly to female ice hockey players. Generally speaking, Canadian female ice hockey members receive equal opportunities to participate in CHA development programs, however, their membership numbers are considerably lower than males. Based on their registration numbers (37,700), women make up about 7.4% of the total CHA membership. Since sponsorship funding in 1997-98 totaled \$4,055,000, it can be roughly estimated that the women's program realizes approximately \$300,687 of value from the corporate partner support program.

In addition to the traditional sponsorship approaches to women's ice hockey noted above, new marketing strategies such as relationship and direct marketing stand to have considerable potential value for Canadian women's ice hockey sponsorship. Extant relationships between sponsors, the CHA, and participants and fans of women's ice

hockey possibly could be nurtured and developed for the mutual benefit of all parties.

The following study was undertaken to analyze the present conditions of sponsorship in CHA women's ice hockey and the potential application and use of these new approaches for the women's program.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This study used an interview-based case study method to identify the sponsorship strategies, objectives and benefits achieved by a select sample of corporate sponsors in the CHA corporate support program. In this chapter, I discuss key elements of the research methodology. The chapter is organized in four sections: study population and sample, development of the survey procedures, informed consent and ethics, data collection and data analysis.

#### **Study Population and Sample**

Corporate sponsorship of the Canadian national men's and women's ice hockey programs falls under the larger umbrella of the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) corporate support program. The CHA has five categories of sponsorship, which allows for different levels of financial involvement for respective corporate sponsors: Premier Sponsors (\$500,000 +), Official Broadcasters, Associate/Program Sponsors (\$100,000 +), Promotional Partners/Suppliers (\$25,000 – 50,000) and Licensees. Collectively, there are approximately 58 CHA corporate partners. The sample frame for this study was limited to the thirteen sponsors who were directly involved in the women's ice hockey program during 1998-1999. Included in this group were four premier sponsors, the official broadcaster, and eight of the eleven associate / program sponsors. The rationale for choosing these particular sponsors was to select those with the highest involvement and largest investment in the CHA and the women's ice hockey program.

In addition to the CHA women's program corporate sponsors, a second population of key marketing staff within the CHA was identified for study. This



population was intended to provide an understanding of the CHA corporate support program from the CHA-side. The sample frame in this case included the following CHA personnel: a) General Manager - Women's National Program, b) Female Programs representative, c) Media Relations/Sponsorship Programs representative and d) personnel working within a consulting and marketing firm responsible for sponsorship sales and servicing for the CHA. The selection process used intensity sampling, (Palys, 1997) and a multiple key informant approach, a technique which identified those interviewees whose jobs made them "experiential experts" because of their frequent or ongoing exposure to the targeted activity, in this case CHA women's program sponsorship.

### **Development of the Interview Procedures**

A semi-structured personal interview method was selected for primary data collection, with all interviewing by the researcher. The semi-structured interview was considered optimal in this case because it combines uniformity of questioning with openness to new information. Given the lack of prior research on sponsorship of women's sports, a methodology that could target specific sponsorship-related questions yet remain open to the potentially unique ways that the sponsorships are conceived, conducted and evaluated seemed best suited for eliciting new information about the industry. In semi-structured interviewing, the interviewer "maintain(s) the discretion to follow leads, but the interview guide (provides) a set of clear instructions" (Bernard, 1994, p.210). This method also reduces the possibilities of misinterpreting the findings. As outlined by Palys (1997), face-to-face contact provides 1) the chance to clarify ambiguities or misunderstandings and 2) the opportunity to monitor the conditions of completion. Finally, it is also not unusual with face-to-face interviewing to have higher

participation rates than with other forms of surveying such as mailed questionnaire or telephone (Palys, 1997).

A research protocol was developed to cover each step in the survey process, including participant recruitment, interviewing and debriefing (Appendix II).

### **Participant Recruitment**

Ensuring an adequate participation rate is a priority for a recruitment protocol. The first step is to ensure good response rates, which involves sending a good request-for-interview letter. Because the interview requests arrive in the mail without any prior contact, the letter has to do all the work of explaining the study and the general procedures, as well as motivating the person and organization to participate (Mangione, 1995). In order to motivate corporations to participate in this study, participants were given the opportunity to request a summary of the results that potentially would be useful to the corporation. It was anticipated that the sponsors would also be inspired by the opportunity to contribute to literature in the area of women's sport sponsorship, which has been predominately overlooked in the past and could serve as a potential promotional opportunity. An outline of the interview questions and a letter of consent were sent to participants in advance which gave each participant the time to check records or confer with someone else within the corporation to make sure that the information being reported was accurate.

### **Interview Protocol**

An interview protocol (Appendix II) was developed that outlined each step in the interview process. The protocol contained procedures for the initial telephone follow-up call (two weeks after the request-for-interview letter was sent) and the actual interviewing

including interviewer introductions, study overview and purpose, tape recording procedures, confidentiality issues, and probing. The briefing procedure before the interview (see Appendix II) was devised to provide the study participants with a context for the interview subject and procedures (Steinar, 1996).

The interviews themselves began with a brief explanation of the session including interview procedures, confidentiality issues, and the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time. Questioning then followed. Good contact was established with the participants by attentive listening. It is essential from the beginning for the interviewer to show interest, understanding, and respect for what the interviewees say. At the same time, the interviewer has to be at ease and clear about the information that needs to be collected (Steinar, 1996).

#### **Debriefing and Interview-Ending**

Debriefing and interview-ending procedures were developed for bringing closure to the interview and thanking the participant. Following the interview, the protocol provided for 10 minutes of quiet time for the researcher to recall and reflect on what was learned from the interview, including from interpersonal interaction.

#### **Construction of the Interview Questions**

Interview questions (Appendix 1) were developed focusing on the five research questions outlined in Table 3.1 (below). The language and terminology used in the questions was selected to be appropriate for the research sample noted above. Interview instructions and questions were stated as clearly as possible, and the interview protocol stressed monitoring for signs of ambiguities and misunderstandings so that the researcher could correct them, as outlined by Palys (1997).

### 3.1 Study Research Questions

6. How does women's ice hockey fit into the corporate sponsors overall marketing plan?
7. What are the overall sponsorship objectives of CHA corporate sponsor's?
8. What specific programs, elements and techniques are corporate sponsors of the women's ice hockey support program using to maximize sponsorship potential?
9. What sponsorship benefits do these corporations derive from their connection with the Canadian women's ice hockey program?
10. Are these corporations using relationship and direct marketing approaches within their CHA sponsorship program?

The flow of the questions was organized from general to specific, with the initial questions covering CHA corporate sponsorship involvement, program components, and benefits. These were followed by more specific questions about key sponsorship strategies and objectives. Questions were also ordered from least to most threatening, with all personal demographic-related items at the end of the interview. In order to hear the opinions of respondents in their own words, the interview questions were open-ended. In addition, a few questions also included some closed response items. All attempts were made to minimize bias. For example, as much as possible, questions were designed to be neutral in direction and tone to avoid leading the interview and eliciting interviewer bias. A goal was to make the experience of participating in the interviews as enjoyable and free of frustration as possible for participants, while ensuring that the research objectives of maximizing response rates, minimizing error, and obtaining candid responses were also met.

#### **Interview Techniques - Questioning and Probing**

The interviewer is responsible for the course of an interview and must indicate when a theme has been exhausted (Steinar, 1996) by directly and politely breaking off long answers that are irrelevant to the topic of the investigation. For example the interviewer can redirect by saying, "I would now like to introduce another topic:..." (Steinar, 1996).

According to Weiss (1994) the best questions fit in so well with what study participants are saying that they seem almost to be continuations of the participant's own associations. Transitions to new topics that are unsettling for the participant must be handled very delicately. As outlined by Weiss (1994), transitions in the interview protocol must be phrased in a way that prepares participants for redirection. For instance, if a particular line of inquiry is adequately developed, the interviewer can respond, nodding affirmatively, "Okay. Now there is another issue I wanted to ask you about. It is..."

It is equally important for the interviewer to interpret the participant's answers appropriately. In order to ensure the correct interpretation of the answers, the interviewer can rephrase an answer, for instance: "You then mean that...?". It is also important for the interviewer to ask questions that direct the participant straightforwardly to provide the information needed by the study (Weiss, 1994). In this case, probing questions are useful such as: "Could you give me a concrete instance of that, a time that actually happened, with as much detail as you can?" This helps to direct the participant to produce the material needed.

It is also the interviewer's responsibility to get the participant to respond to the interview questions as informatively as possible. The following techniques outlined by Weiss (1994) were used in the study for helping respondents develop information.

### 3.2 Weiss' Techniques for Clarifying Information

1. **Extending.** The researcher might want to know what led to an incident. Questions that ask for this include "How did that start?" "What led to that?" Or you might want to know the consequences of an incident: "Could you go on with that? What happened next?"
2. **Filling in Detail.** The researcher might want more detail than the respondent has provided. A useful question could be "Could you walk me through it?" or "I need you to be as detailed as possible."
3. **Identifying Actors.** The researcher might want to learn the social context of an incident, the other people who were involved. The researcher can ask "who else is involved and what do they do?"

It was anticipated that getting the information required for this study would require some probing. In addition to repeating the question, other appropriate probing techniques were identified as outlined by (Foddy, 1994) and (Steinar, 1996).

1. How do you mean that?
2. Tell me more about that?
3. Anything else?
4. Could you say something more about that?
5. Can you give me a more detailed description of what happened?
6. Do you have further examples of this?

These probes are easy to remember, they are non-directive, and they do not give the interviewer an opportunity to innovate in ways that would make the interviews different (Foddy, 1994). The interviewer's task is to decide which of these probes is appropriate, and this involves analyzing the participant's answers (Foddy, 1994). The suggested probes, which include repeating the question, correspond to the four ways a respondent's answer can be inadequate (See Table 3.3).

### 3.3 Inadequate Responses

1. The response failed to answer the question; it answered some other question. The interviewer repeated the question.
2. The answer contained unclear concepts or terms that made its meaning ambiguous. The interviewer probed, saying, 'How do you mean (that)?'
3. The answer was not detailed enough or specific enough. The interviewer probed saying, 'Could you tell me more about (that)?'
4. A perfectly appropriate answer was given, but there was a possibility that there was additional points that the respondent could make in answer to the question. The interviewer asked, 'Is there anything else?' (Foddy, 1994, p.136).

It was also important for the researcher to identify markers within the interview.

Weiss (1994) defines a marker as a passing reference made by an interviewee to an important event or feeling state. Because markers occur in the course of talking about something else, the interviewer must attempt to write them down and return to these markers by saying, "A few minutes ago you mentioned..." (Weiss, 1994).

### **Tape Recording Procedures**

All interviews in this study were tape-recorded and a letter of consent was signed authorizing tape recording prior to participation. Tape-recording the interviews enabled the interviewer to devote more attention to the participant (Palys, 1997). As the interviewer brought out the tape-recorder in the interview she asked, "Is using the tape recorder okay?" The point was not the particular remark but, rather, the assumption of a collaborative relationship (Weiss, 1994). Notes were also taken, allowing the interviewer to retain the flow of the interview and to safeguard against technical foul-up or the inability to record the interview or interpret the recording. Participants were notified when the tape recorder was turned on and off.

### **Pilot-Testing**

Three trial interviews using the protocol and questions were conducted with “experts” in industry, and changes to the interview questions were made based on their recommendations. Pilot study participants included a public relations manager with a major brewery and two sponsorship consultants in Vancouver. These interviews helped to determine whether the interview questions were comprehensible and effective, and also uncovered gaps that might disrupt the flow of the interviews.

The following criteria were used for evaluating the interview procedures and questions (Foddy, 1994):

- a) Did any of the questions seem to make interviewees uncomfortable?
- b) Did any of the questions have to be repeated?
- c) Did the interviewees misinterpret any of the questions?
- d) Which questions were the most difficult or awkward to answer? Did the researcher come to dislike any specific questions? Why?
- e) Did any sections seem to drag?
- f) Were there any sections in which the researcher felt that the interviewees would have liked the opportunity to say more?

### **Informed Consent and Ethics**

Ethical approval for the research protocol was obtained prior to making contact with the sponsors (see Appendix III). Appropriate ethical procedures were followed in collecting, handling and summarizing data so that anonymity and participant confidentiality were preserved. Written informed consent was received from all participants before the actual interview took place. Consent forms were sent to prospective participants with the initial contact letter to be signed and sent back to the researcher. As well, in the case where the person had misplaced the originals, the researcher brought two copies of the consent form to the interview. The researcher gave



both copies to the participants and asked them to read and keep one for their own records, and sign the other copy for the interviewer to keep.

Participants were informed that the information they gave would be treated as confidential and used only for purposes of the research. Accordingly, corporate names are not used in this thesis and will not be used in subsequent publications and presentations. The researcher also assured the participants that their answers would be kept confidential as opposed to being attributed to them directly (Mangione, 1995). The data has been summarized so that the identities of individuals are not revealed. Only organizational-level summaries have been used. In addition, the information that was collected was non-proprietary and public as defined by the participants.

In accordance with UBC ethical guidelines, and as outlined by Mangione (1995), the following steps were taken to ensure participant confidentiality and the security and integrity of the research materials. Each interview tape and transcript was labeled with a random code number for the respective participant, and all other identifying information was removed. A list of participant names and addresses with the corresponding code numbers was prepared and put in a sealed envelope along with the participants' signed consent forms. This sealed envelope is being stored in a location accessible only by the researcher and separate from the coded transcripts. Code number-identified, computer file versions of the completed transcripts are being stored on a computer hard drive that requires a password. All records will be maintained for five years from the date of the completion of the thesis, whereupon they will be destroyed by shredding (paper) and erasure (audio tapes and computer files).

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

According to Stevens, Wrenn, Ruddick, and Sherwood (1997), data can be classified as either (1) *Primary data* or (2) *Secondary Data*. Primary data are those data that are collected for the first time by the researcher for the specific research project at hand. Secondary data are data previously gathered for some other purpose. As suggested by Stevens et al. (1997), when gathering data for this study the researcher first exhausted all sources of secondary data before undertaking the research project for primary data.

### **Primary Data**

The major sources of primary data in this study were the personal face-to-face interviews and on-site observation. In order to collect the required information for the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with CHA corporate marketing support personnel and corporate sponsors who are directly involved with Canadian women's ice hockey as outlined above.

### **Secondary Data**

Sponsorship advertisement samples, memos and other significant correspondence and promotional/advertising materials were solicited and analyzed from sponsors. Media reports, CHA sponsorship proposals, magazines, pamphlets, newspaper articles and internet sites linked to women's sport and the women's national ice hockey team were also investigated. This process allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of corporate sponsorship relationships within the CHA and the women's national program.

### **Role of the Researcher**

It is important to acknowledge that during the analysis of the interview results, the researcher obtained a contract position with the event management company that serves as the marketing and sponsorship agent for the CHA and is responsible for servicing and acquiring CHA corporate partners. Although this occurred after the interview portion of the study was completed, the contract still calls into question the social location from which the study was conducted because it positioned the researcher as an “insider” and to some extent affected how the interview results were perceived and understood.

In overall terms, the results of this study were unquestionably enriched as a result of the researcher’s employment with the event management company. The contract position (Marketing Services Coordinator) allowed the researcher to experience first-hand the diverging goals and strategies between the public, non-profit CHA and its private sector, corporate partners. The researcher’s practical work in the field and one-to-one interactions with CHA corporate sponsors, enabled a more informed understanding of the “corporate perspective” as well as of the intricacies of corporate sponsorship practices. This, in turn, allowed for a more practical and accurate description of the tensions, strengths and weaknesses of the extant CHA sponsorship programs.

Having said this, it is also important to stress that the experience may also have been limiting in other respects such as by deflecting attention away from issues such as the social responsibility of the sponsors or the organizational accountability of the CHA to its membership. Yet, researcher bias is always an issue in a case study design such as this, and it is likely that other influences would have prevailed had the researcher not worked under contract. For example, another researcher working under these same

conditions quite plausibly could have had different interpretations of the same data. The point to make is that these findings are inherently limited in scope and point of view, and that the researcher is not claiming objectivity. At the same time, however, because the analysis was conducted with a full knowledge of the inner working of the CHA marketing group, the results can be interpreted as an accurate reflection of CHA marketing practices and CHA corporate partners sponsorship practices, as well as of the lines of accountability between these two.

### **Data Analysis**

As suggested by Marshall and Rossman (1995) several strategies for data analysis were used including: organizing and sorting the data, generating major categories and themes, testing emergent hypotheses, and searching for alternative explanations. The data analysis process began by looking for emergent main themes and sub-themes within the context of the four major research questions of the study. This information was then more finely analyzed, sorted into sub-themes and cross-compared for similarities and differences among the organizations, and between the sponsors and the CHA support staff. A qualitative data analysis program was not used for this study. The researcher transcribed all interviews. Secondary information and supportive materials obtained from the interviews were also analyzed for themes and sub-themes and similarities and differences in the same manner.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

Initial letters of contact were mailed out on July 5, 1999 to the thirteen CHA corporate partners and two CHA marketing personnel, followed by phone calls the week of July 19th. Eight corporate partners and one CHA marketing representative working within a consulting firm (which acts as the marketing arm for the CHA), agreed to participate in the study. Those (corporate sponsors) who did not agree to participate stated that they were not available for an interview in the allotted time frame for the interviews. Interviews were conducted from July 26<sup>th</sup> to August 6<sup>th</sup> and ranged from 50 minutes to 2 hours in duration and took place, in each case, in the offices of the respective corporation. Each interview was recorded with a hand held tape recording device. In addition to the audio recordings and transcripts, observations were made on-site and a wide range of sponsorship-related promotional materials were collected.

The final sample of corporate support partners consisted of three (out of a possible four) CHA Premier sponsors, and five (out of a possible nine) CHA Associate sponsors. The "bolded" corporations below are the sponsors that participated in interviews. Five (5) of those interviewed were male and three (3) were female and the corporate head offices were all based in Ontario. The CHA sample included one (out of a possible two) CHA marketing representatives from a consulting firm that acts as the marketing arm for the CHA which is situated in Calgary, Alberta. Whereas the findings for the corporate partners are distinguished and compared, the results from the CHA have been summarized together with the initial information gathered from both primary and secondary CHA information sources. This allowed the researcher to provide as complete

a picture as possible of the CHA sponsorship program. There were minimal differences between the CHA personnel's individual accounts of their development programs.

<b>Sponsorship Level</b>	<b>Category (sample)</b>	<b>Promotional Activity</b>
<b>Premier Sponsors (\$500,000+)</b>	Airline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Hockey Events</li> <li>• National Hockey Championships</li> <li>• National Consumer Promotions</li> <li>• National Television Coverage</li> <li>• Title Properties</li> <li>• Promotions &amp; Programs</li> <li>• Publication Advertising</li> </ul>
	<b>Petroleum</b>	
	<b>Banking</b>	
	<b>Apparel</b>	
<b>Associate Sponsors (\$100,000+)</b>	Cereal	
	Restaurant	
	<b>Automobile</b>	
	<b>Brewery</b>	
	Broadcaster	
	Food Products	
	<b>Isotonic Beverages</b>	
	<b>Supplies</b>	
	<b>Watches</b>	

This chapter begins by looking at the underlying rationale for supporting women's ice hockey in Canada followed by a description of some sponsorship barriers within the women's ice hockey support program. The research findings are then organized according to the major sponsorship objectives of the eight corporations in the sample, the core corporate program components that the sponsors were offered by the CHA, the principal benefits obtained by the corporations via their sponsorship of the women's program, and lastly, corporate sponsors' use of direct and relationship marketing techniques (refer to Appendix V). Overall, CHA corporate sponsorship objectives, strategies and benefits were very similar and were driven by fairly direct commercial goals. This could possibly be attributed to the fact that sponsorship presentations, proposals, sales and servicing were structured, developed and conducted by the same CHA marketing staff.

### **An Underlying Rationale: Supporting Women's Ice Hockey and the CHA**

The corporate partners interviewed in this study felt that it was important to support the women's game for several reasons.

#### **4.1 Assets of the Women's Game**

1. Attendance and participation numbers are rising at a considerable rate.
1. Women are generally more courteous, approachable and are easy to work with in promotions and advertising.
2. Women's ice hockey in Canada is a growing area and is currently receiving high profile in the media within Canada.
3. Low cost for a potentially high value.
4. Women influence buying decisions within the family.

According to the CHA materials that were collected over 62,000 spectators attended the 1997 World Women's Hockey Championships that were held in Kitchener, Ontario. Given the recent growth in female hockey, attendance is anticipated to reach new levels at the 2000 Women's Worlds, which will be held in Mississauga, Ontario this April, 2000. Corporate involvement with Canadian women's ice hockey not only provides these corporate partners with a broad geographic spectator/participant reach and national media exposure, but also gives sponsors the ability to develop direct strategic relations with over 40,000 female hockey players in Canada.

Many of the corporations interviewed in this study (particularly the apparel, the automobile, watch, and petroleum categories) indicated that they were targeting part of their marketing specifically towards women consumers, and felt that women had a major say in purchasing decisions within the household. This was demonstrated in some of their CHA advertising and promotional programs as well, which focused on women hockey players. By comparison the isotonic beverage sponsor was not as concerned with

the women's market because a recent research study had concluded that young men were the main consumers of their product.

There's purity to it...the companies that are most interested (in women's sport sponsorship) are the ones that have actual retail products. Their target is head of household, and head of household is female. When you talk about anything to do with grocery or apparel... any of your retail outlets, they're all female-driven. (CHA Marketing)

And we can do it together. And we can probably do it together and help these organizations because we're all in it together, and that's the way it should be. Canadian women, obviously they fit into that. I mean we've been world champions, what, six years in a row. Not Olympic champions, but world champions. We're there leading the way. Do we want to be associated with the women's game? Of course we do. It's the game of hockey for one, so we're associated if we like to or not. But it's a great game and there are a lot of our consumers out there (involved). (Brewery)

One corporation (automobile) indicated that in order to effectively target promotions to customers involved in women's ice hockey, they need to collect more information about who is attending and participating in these events and programs. What are the demographics, and what are the numbers of participants and spectators?

...actually 80% of the buying decisions in general, over the next 5 years 80% of (the decisions) will be influenced by women...but if we are going to look at sponsorship of women's hockey for example... I would sit down and say OK, how many people watch the game. The few games that are televised... how many women watched and more importantly what demographic? Forget that 2 years of age + number. Talk about 25-54, because that's our prime demographic. Who watches, what time, and what percentage of women watch vs men... At the game, TV aside, who attends the game? For example in figure skating... right now attendance at the event runs 85% women, 15% men. That has changed from about 98% women 5 years ago. So (that demographic) has changed (and) that's an interesting change in demographic... So now you know that you are, if you are (advertising) on-site, talking to women. (Automobile)

By comparison, the strategy of the apparel sponsor was to maintain a broad reach.

With the women's program we are targeting all ages. I think we're sort of running along the lines that, female hockey players, at whatever age are interested in female hockey. And (women will) be the one's that tend to follow... the National team or women's tournaments...and what we might do on the grass-roots basis.



So if there's 30 or 40 thousand (women participating in hockey) in this country, we're trying to target all ages... with the overlay objective being the brand application. (Apparel)

Several sponsors made reference to the fact that women's ice hockey was a lot more affordable and inexpensive, and that it provided a high value.

But just in general, I think that women, and it's a growing area, it's a low cost, and it could be potentially a high value. But it's only a high value if you can tie it back to your marketing strategies, and to what bit you're doing with it. If you can't.... (Automobile)

Despite the lack of detailed information, the automobile sponsor suggested a number of innovative ways to specifically reach those spectators attending women's ice hockey events.

If the woman's market... is one of our strategies, we (need to) know we are talking to them. (Then we have to determine) how we are going to talk to them... At the venue itself is one element. And then television's another. With women's hockey... how many people watch that event and then how best can you speak to those folks. There are a number of ways of doing that, (for instance) flat signage. I say flat (because) that's always part of it, you always do that, but don't hang your hat on it, that's the difference today particularly in sponsorships. I don't think anybody hangs his or her hat on flat signage. So what else can you do, relationship marketing and customer relationship management is critical in the business world today and everybody is looking at that. Again how can you... mine that, (and) use that to your advantage? If there's Canada vs. US playing in Toronto... if they're playing, maybe there's a way that you (can) go in and mine your database, or send out (direct mail) to people to enter a contest to attend the game. That would have more prevalence to women, if more women watch women's hockey? I have those demographics, I haven't looked at them for a while...but I have all that. (Automobile)

Again, the apparel sponsor took a broader approach and emphasized reaching both males and females.

And then the Women's World's, it's right in our back door (here in Ontario). We'll get very involved with that. We'll be... on their uniforms, will have product on the ice, we'll have booths set up at the site. We'll be running local retail promotions we'll be on TV, we'll be in magazines. We'll be all around the event... An event of that magnitude goes beyond just reaching the 30,000+ female hockey players that definitely reaches hockey players male and female of

all ages. That's just a good event to leverage and get brand recognition...  
(Apparel)

### **Sponsorship Barriers and Issues**

Although for the most part the corporate sponsors were very optimistic and supportive of the women's ice hockey program, there were a number of barriers and issues that concerned them.

#### **4.2 Barriers and Issues Surrounding Sponsorship of Women's Ice Hockey in Canada**

1. Women's hockey is "different" than men's hockey.
2. Hockey has traditionally been branded as a "rough" and "tumble" sport with emphasis on brute force and fighting, as opposed to a game of skill, strategy and finesse.
3. Women's ice hockey is not one of the highest priority sport properties in the corporate portfolio, and when the time comes around to do something with the property there's no money left.
4. There is currently no professional league for women's ice hockey.
5. It's a fairly new sport, which makes it hard to predict where the sport is going.

One corporate sponsor (automobile) suggested that they based their present strategies on past experiences, that is, programs that had been predominately male in the past. In general, however, there was recognition on the part of this sponsor and others of the need to come to terms with where women's ice hockey is headed.

(In reference to) women's hockey, I think we need to understand where it's headed in order for us to find out how to support it. So there's really, we can continue to communicate on strategies, we will try to draw parallels from what we've done (in the past), and really leverage off of our existing programs because it's a lot easier than trying to create something completely new. So I can't say what we're going to do completely, I don't know. (Petroleum)

The automobile sponsor also noted that they originally "picked up" women's hockey because it fell under the umbrella of the CHA and the men's game, and also because it was recognized as a growing sport. However, when it came time to actually use and leverage the sport property they were out of money.

We picked up (the women's national team), as part of the contract because we thought it's growing and we want to do something with it. The problem (was)... when you have a budget you can only spend so much of your money. We (try to) get associated with (a property) that's already got a high profile...the NHL players (for instance). We picked up the women's team because we thought that it will elevate the whole game, and there could be opportunities within that. We did do some stuff, as I said earlier with the vignette (commercial), but we didn't do a lot more. We also had a picture of the women's team, and we were in some newspaper ads. We had a couple of things going, (and more) that we were looking at, but... we ran out of money. There's only so many places you (can) be. (Automobile)

A number of sponsors indicated that they felt that the women's game was in a period of growth, however, until further involvement with the program made "business sense" investment would only reach a certain level.

It's a great story, and there's just more and more women joining the game. But we'll invest up to a certain amount on women's hockey... and although its disproportionally high compared to the size of the business... that is because it's in a growth mode. And because... I think it's important for hockey and important for society to have girls (and) women playing more sports, team sports – (That's why we) have invested more. But it's never going to be at the same level as the men's and boys' program until it makes meaningful business sense I think. As far as the younger age group for females goes they'll be part of the parcel of the grass-roots program the skills development program... The camps we hold across the country (that) is the main component of our investment. There are 25 sites across Canada, age 8-11 and it's wide open in terms of skill level and so on. So the females are sort of folded into that program at every level and location. (Apparel)

As seen here, one barrier to further investment in women's ice hockey hinged on whether it made "business sense". This concept stands to mean different things to different sponsors; for instance, it might equate to the opportunity to self-liquidate their investment through sales in some cases, or to achieve media exposure and corporate awareness, enhance corporate image or build community involvement. In the final analysis, whether women's hockey makes "business sense" or not depends on the

individual corporation's core business objectives and strategies, as discussed below. (See next section in this chapter on Corporate Sponsorship Objectives.)

Four sponsors (automobile, watch, apparel, and banking) said that they found the women athletes on the Olympic National ice hockey team to be (on average) much more approachable and accessible, due to the fact that they were not high profile NHL players like the men's National Olympic team. The fact that involvement in the women's program attained high profile at a reasonable cost was very enticing to the majority of the participating corporate sponsors.

In general, women are much more approachable in sport. They are much more approachable, much more courteous. Just in general, than men in sports. But it's just now, and that's... just a general statement from me. I find that, but I also find an awful lot of good athletes in men's sports... (Automobile)

And you know (our commercial) is a very simple way for us to use the women's team, and I don't know if anybody else uses the CHA teams like we do, on an ongoing basis... and I guess that's why we decided to put the commercial up front. (And if we can) give that to the communities (and) bring a lot of attention to (the commercial)... and everybody loves to be on TV. (Watch)

Some sponsors who have traditionally marketed to men (automobile, isotonic beverage and brewery categories) are struggling with the fact that ice hockey has traditionally been marketed as a rough and aggressive game. All of the sponsors, however, felt that although the women's game has some of that roughness, it also has a lot of other unique marketable qualities.

Theberge (1998) has suggested that many elite women players feel that physical contact has a place in the women's game. It would be hard to dismiss the fact that some physical body contact plays a role in the women's game of ice hockey. However, when comparing the women's game to the men's game, in terms of physical play and body contact, they are very different. For instance, although "brute force", hitting tactics, and

body contact is “one element” of the women’s game, it is definitely not the most dominant strategy. Alternatively, in the men’s game this tends to be the case. Sponsors in this study seemed to have trouble understanding this aspect of the women’s game due to the fact that traditionally, spectators of hockey have equated excitement and good play to lots of fighting, hitting and body contact. The women’s game is new to many corporate sponsors, and they are just beginning to become educated and aware of the unique styles and exciting elements within the women’s game.

As the women’s game increases in popularity, however, and this “enlightenment” comes to fruition, it is predicted that these sponsors will be able to integrate the women’s game into their marketing strategies, programs and promotions more successfully. Until sponsors attain a better knowledge base of where the women’s game is, where it is going, and the demographics that make it up, it will be very hard for them to leverage these properties and maximize their potential. As a result, sponsors who have traditionally sponsored predominantly men’s hockey (as suggested above), felt that initially it has been hard to transfer their brand associations to the women’s game. Many sponsors (specifically the automobile, isotonic beverages, and brewery categories) in the past have attached a certain brand and ‘rough’ male image to the game of ice hockey. However, when looking at the women’s game of ice hockey, it will be important for these corporations to create a new image to fit the unique attributes of the women’s game.

That’s one of the problems right at the moment...(is determining) how to use the image (attributes) of the Women’s National Team. How (can we) use the theme with the brand and tie that (together) because it isn’t the same as (men’s hockey)... The part of hockey that fits our brand is the rough and tumble part of hockey (that’s) in the play. And that’s, not totally removed from the women’s game but there are skills and other things with the women’s game. But it’s...the same situation with any sport that we fit into the category, by definition of the sport. We have not resolved this issue, that’s why we haven’t gone... very much further

in terms of women's ice hockey. We're not quite sure... we're still fitting the brand into everything and putting all (of) that together...we don't have a strategy for that, but we know that we have the property, and we know that we should do something with it... (Automobile)

And the All-Star game in the NHL is international... and there are a lot of people that saw the women play (before the All-Star game in Vancouver) and were impressed. And that's what the (Women's Team) needs, they need the platform to profess the faith. It will happen... to a large extent next March (2000) in Mississauga when the Women's World's come to (Ontario), and this rivalry between Canada and the US will help too. (Brewery)

One sponsor (apparel) stated that since there is no professional league for women's ice hockey to date, that the Women's National Team has filled the corporation's requirement for targeting high performance hockey within the women's ice hockey market.

So through the Premier sponsorship were supporting the women's national team which is the Olympic Team (obviously)... (The Olympics only occur) every four years, and (therefore)... that's a stand alone program even within Canadian hockey. But if (we want to) sponsor women's hockey in this country there's no professional sport...and the grass roots isn't necessarily tied terribly well together. So it comes down to working with the national team as a good focus. (Apparel)

Overall, sponsors agreed that the women's game was indeed a valuable sport property, and although it is questionable as to where the sport is going, it is rapidly growing in profile and popularity.

### **Corporate Sponsorship Objectives**

Four major sponsorship objectives were found, and are discussed under the following subject headings:

#### **4.3 Sponsorship Objectives**

1.	Sales
2.	Advertising and Promotion
3.	Community Involvement
4.	Image & Awareness

### **Objective 1. Sales**

Sales objectives were a major focus when it came to sport marketing and sport sponsorship initiatives within the CHA corporate support program. Corporate sponsors involved in the CHA support program appeared to be strongly driven by sales objectives. This was a process whereby the corporate partner aligned their products with the sport organization (in this case the CHA), while utilizing several strategies and techniques within marketing and sponsorship to help them achieve and leverage their sales objectives.

A successful retail strategy, which results in direct product sales at the retail outlet and/or on-site was an important objective for the majority of corporate sponsors in this study. Successful retail strategies within corporate sponsorship programs allowed these sponsors to self-liquidate their investment. For instance, if a sponsor invests \$10,000 towards a particular sport property or event and then sells \$10,000 worth of product at that event they have successfully liquidated their investment. Sponsors aim to “over achieve” in this regard. For example, the apparel sponsor summarized their sales objectives as follows:

... point one is the association and brand visibility and recognition (for our company and products)... a close second is to tie in sales where we can... actually working with players and teams, and turn that into a selling opportunity to the teams. And then thirdly to leverage the sponsorships at store level (to) get... the recognition that we're associated with (the CHA) by actually having an application at retail. For instance, (customers can) win tickets to a Canadian National Team game or win an autographed Eric Lindros stick if (they) buy our products. ... (that part of the program is directed) to the consumer and then there's... a next level retail application that's directly used as trait promotion whether it's (to) the storeowner or a key buyer at a national account...or even (to) the floor staff to use the assets, if you can call it that, from the sponsorships. (This might be) tickets, jerseys, equipment you get and so on.... (The point is) to turn that into programs (where) you actually get some benefit directly to the people that are influencing the buy and then the one's doing the buying. (Apparel)

Although most of the sponsors interviewed in this study believed that a successful retail strategy was one of the most important objectives, there were two exceptions, the bank and the diversified supplies sponsors. The bank was more service-oriented and found that it was hard to link their sponsorship involvement to a direct increase in “sales” or business. The process of upgrading or switching services brings with it a number of barriers that are hard to overcome. For example, it would be hard to sell mutual funds or open new bank accounts at a hockey game without the infrastructure of the actual bank. Instead of utilizing retail strategies such as product give-a-ways and couponing this corporation (banking) handed out brochures and information about their services and linked their promotions to fundraising initiatives. The second exception was a corporation that manufactured and sold diversified supplies. This corporation distributes their products through large retail stores like Walmart, Kmart and Canadian Tire, and do not sell their products directly to their end consumers (those attending hockey events and programs). This corporation was interested in increasing awareness about their products through the national coaching certification program. The retailers who were selling their products were left with the responsibility of executing the actual retail strategy.

In both cases, it was harder within these two categories to attribute direct increases in sales or customers to specific retail components within their sponsorship programs. However, the majority of the CHA corporate sponsors were seeking a retail strategy that meshed with their core business values and resulted in concrete measurable product sales.

Core business values (are) believed in very strongly (within our corporation)...  
The first thing is to understand what your product is. (We) understand that (our) marketing strategies have to be based on (our) core business. Our core business is



selling (a product), that's what we do... Heart decisions might be that way, but business decisions rule the day... (We try to) have a retail strategy. The biggest thing that we're going through right now is, trying to figure out how to develop a set of retail strategies. (Automobile)

These corporations also received a number of selling opportunities with teams, and individual players, at events, tournaments and championships. This particularly benefited the sponsor in the apparel category as they had a direct link with women's hockey and their equipment is essential to play the game. Within the CHA support program, corporate sponsors secured a number of selling opportunities throughout the hockey season. Some corporate partners made their products available on-site at key championship events or, alternatively, made them available to the athletes, volunteers and spectators through direct mail, coupons and discount promotions.

Corporate sponsors also leveraged their sponsorship at the retail level by using a number of retail strategies, which targeted key buyers, storeowners, and sales people. This strategy included: retailer reward programs and sales contests. By giving concrete benefits to the people who were directly influencing the sale, these corporations pushed their product through the retail chain to their end consumers.

That's the whole idea obviously, to get people to buy our (product). And then at the same time we also get into our dealer network which we call, our dealer or independent sellers and our major accounts. And the sales associates, the people who are selling our product, we're going to run a promotion for them as well. We'll have a sales competition and give them autographed Team Canada jersey's as prizes to encourage them to sell our product. (Watch)

### **Objective 2. Advertising and Promotion**

Advertising and promotional activity within the structure of the CHA sponsorship program were undertaken through a number of channels including at international hockey events, at national hockey championships, in hockey publications, in TV telecasts and

commercials, with title properties (programs and associated promotions), and in national consumer promotions. Every sponsor interviewed in this study used a number of different advertising and promotional strategies to leverage their sponsorship and achieve annual sales objectives. These included five strategies listed in Table 4.4, as discussed below.

#### 4.4 Advertising and Promotion

• Retail level enter-to-win contests
• Product give-a ways, player signings and autograph sessions
• On-site demonstrations, product testing
• Rink boards, in-ice logos, signage and banners
• TV commercials, TV features, Newspaper, and radio

##### **Retail level enter-to-win contests**

These “enter-to-win” contests gave participants the chance to win product, win a trip to the World’s or the Nationals, a chance to be in a sponsor’s commercial, take part in a hockey training clinic, or even to be a part of the National Team for a day. Ballot boxes distributed to local retailers were intended to draw people into the outlet or retail store or on-site so they could “enter-to-win” a prize. By increasing the amount of traffic within the retail outlet, and offering on-site sales, corporations anticipated that profits and the customer/fan base would be augmented as a result. For example, the watch corporation was trying to get hockey teams to enter a contest this season, with the payoff being their appearance in a commercial. By giving contest participants a valid reason to visit a promotional website or a retail outlet, product knowledge is increased, as is the chance that they will eventually make a purchase. This strategy can also increase product awareness by increasing the overall interest in the commercial (which provides product knowledge) within a key target demographic.

The whole idea of (this new CHA program) is basically, enter to be one of five teams (to be featured) on our next commercial. So we will draw (a winning team) from five different regions (across Canada)... The teams can enter (the contest)

via the CHA or TSN website, or they can go to one of our dealers and get the information... Once (a winner is) drawn we will film them to be on our commercial. We hope to bring partners in as well (as a cross-promotion), so we can award the kids with a new jersey and hockey sticks... (Watch)

**Product give-a-ways, player signings and autograph sessions**

Participants and fans involved in these CHA promotions had a number of chances to win products at events and at the actual retail outlet. Giveaways at events and in the retail stores involved a number of promotional items including hats, pennants, T-shirts, sticks, and jerseys. Corporations hoped that these promotional items would potentially increase their corporate name and brand awareness. On-site sponsored autograph sessions gave consumers the feeling of being involved and an overall value-added experience.

We've done autograph sessions at certain tournaments. So if a child...is not a lucky winner in a draw (or contest) they are at least (provided with the opportunity) to get someone's autograph...and get up close and personal with the players. (Watch)

Give-a-ways also allowed these corporations to potentially solicit more information about their customer base through the collection of "enter-to-win" ballots (see CHA program components in this chapter).

**On-site demonstration**

The sponsors conducted a number of product displays in event venues and some corporations set up product information booths at key events. A select group also gave consumers the chance to sample their products by participating in on-site trials (brewery, automobile, and isotonic beverage categories).

This year we have developed a concept called "Proving Grounds", which we are running right now... While there's a sporting event going on we will have all of our product there and we have some personnel hired, college-type people. We're on-site at the event and it just says, "Would you like to try our product?" (We tell spectators) to try it all, and (after you try it) come back we have five

questions...(like) what did you think? (Their) name goes in a hat and (we give) some prizes and stuff. (We also hand out) a product brochure that tells (customers) about our product, and it talks about the event. (In addition) we give them an offer from a local dealer (that) states... if you do happen to be in the market to buy... over the next sixty days here's an additional \$250 off, after you buy and make your best deal from anyone of these dealers. (Automobile)

Again CHA sponsors for the most part, (mainly the ones who were selling a specific product rather than a service) believed that one of the most important aspects of a sponsorship program was the opportunity to tie-in the sale. As suggested above, the retail component in some form was tied into almost every CHA sponsorship program, and gave the corporate client added value and the beginnings of a direct customer relationship within a particular target market. However, it is just as important to match these promotional strategies with other advertising initiatives, in relation to product sales, and with the corporation's core business strategy. On-site demonstrations and product displays are essential in this respect.

(First) we look at the sponsorship property and ask what are (they) offering us, and (then we determine) how we can make a retail strategy (out of it)... that (also) addresses our core business strategies? (For instance,) the retail strategy for one (of) our properties is... we pick up two corporate nights... (and there) are some seats in the arena for us during a hockey game. (We) hand out towels and all kinds of stuff to spectators in a particular section, and there's a product display in between periods. Those are the standard things, along with a display, signage and big back-lit signs. Those are static things (and) they don't help in our case, to sell our product. They (do) help, but they are not primary. (Automobile)

### **Rink Boards, In-Ice Logos, Signage and Banners**

Typically sponsorship contracts offer a number of advertising opportunities in the form of rink boards, in-ice logos, scoreboards, billboards, signs and banners displaying the company's name or logo on-site. As the television cameras pan around the event and as the spectator and viewing audiences watch the game, these signs and banners are in full view. These are included in sponsorship packages for most national team games,

however, for key events like the World's these options must be purchased at an additional cost.

**TV Commercials, TV Features, Newspaper, and Radio**

The CHA is fortunate to have a major Canadian television network as a key corporate partner. This network has the television rights to key CHA events held in Canada and first right of refusal for additional events. According to CHA sources, during the 1998-99 season the Canadian Hockey Association allocated several thousands of dollars for advertising at the community level. The broadcast partnership allows the CHA to include television commercials and in-show features in their sponsorship contracts with Premier and Associate sponsors. During the 1998-99 hockey season the national women's team traveled to 5 communities in Canada. The host community at these events was expected to achieve a minimum 2 to 1 benefit to cost value in broadcast coverage, for all monies provided by the Canadian Hockey Association. With the Women's World's being held in Mississauga, Ontario this year, this ratio stands to be larger in the 1999-2000 hockey season.

The bank sponsor also used radio as an advertising tool. This allowed them to build image and awareness with one of their key target markets on a weekly basis.

We work very hard to develop community (relationships)... I mean there (are) so many communities across the country (and) it would be impossible to be involved in every single instance. We do a lot to develop community (involvement), and we try to help community relationships get developed. We have a hockey radio show (called) "Junior Hockey Magazine" that we've purchased independently and every week a Junior A team is interviewed. It's a major Junior program with a five minute Junior A segment. If nothing more, from this office we're talking to the 113 Junior A teams over the course of a year. We're developing our own relationships. It's critical to do that versus, leaving it up to the chance that the Canadian (Hockey) Association can deliver that for us. And really, the Canadian Hockey Association doesn't deliver that for us, it's up to us to do that for ourselves. (Banking)

This particular corporate partner also tried to use a similar strategy within the women's program. An attempt to gain additional awareness in print within women's ice hockey was undertaken through the development of a magazine devoted to Canadian women's ice hockey. This magazine endeavor failed, however, and only lasted two publications.

### **Objective 3. Community Involvement**

This research uncovered a number of common community-based objectives among the corporate sponsors of Canadian women's ice hockey program. Corporations were particularly concerned with strategies that identified role models within the community, were integrated within the community, and communicated with the community about something they were interested in (hockey). As a result, one key issue pertaining to CHA corporate sponsorship was the need to encompass national-level CHA programs and community-level grass-root development programs in their promotions. Community strategies tied local hockey associations and retail stores together to deliver programs that mutually benefited all parties involved.

And when you think about our sponsorship activity we try to focus at a national level, activities (that) have synergy...(and are) offered across the country. So (our) involvement in women's hockey is a natural fit, with respect to the National women's program. We're there (because) there's attention brought to it and... (they are seen as) icons of the sport for women... at the grass-roots level (it gives them) something to aspire to. Anything we can do to support that effort we will do. (At) the grass-roots level, we go... to the very local level in every community where there's a retailer. We try and have the retailers and the communities come together through hockey. Whether it's buying a sweater or supplying water bottles or having a clinic we do it. (Petroleum)

The study results show that sponsors felt an obligation to give back to the communities in which they operated. In turn, these sponsors "expected" the consumer to

buy their products because they supported a sporting endeavor that their customers were involved in and committed to on an ongoing basis.

(Our strategies) have made us what we are, and to try and change that because someone from the outside thinks that our share of market may not be significantly altered. As long as you use these trademarks properly and associate your product in a good way, then you'll get paid back... part of our program (is) re-investing in the community in which (we're) doing business. In this country one of the ways a corporation in our business would reinvest their profits is in this game (hockey). (Brewery)

Anybody can sell anything, but you really have to be at the consumer top of mind. (People) know that our company is involved with women's hockey or involved with the World Junior's... that gives the consumer possibly a warm fuzzy feeling. (When) they get to the counter there's going to be tons of different products to choose from, it's not just our product. Our challenge is... when (they) get to the counter and there's 15 different brands, hopefully they'll remember our brand because we have been involved in so many different things. Community oriented (programs) or supporting teams and individuals. Or whether it's just (our) commercial and they've heard our name, that's the last thing of the product they've heard. You have to continue to be on people's minds for sure. (Watch)

By communicating with and being directly involved in community events many sponsors felt that they had expressed a "social conscience". In addition to the interview data, this "social conscience" was also confirmed in the on-site observations made. The large amount of community-related hockey memorabilia in the corporate head office, visually confirmed the importance ice hockey played within the organizational culture of two corporations in particular (Brewery and Petroleum).

... Social conscience too, I think some companies have it and some companies just don't care. They see it as another vehicle, no matter if you golf... Hockey is different for us, hockey, it's in our blood. We probably spend too much money on hockey... but it's in our blood and it's very important. And that's probably the bottom line. (Brewery)

In most cases, especially in the service oriented banking category, employees within the corporation were directly involved in providing value-added opportunities within the community. Internal relationships were formed within the corporation first and then were

followed and enhanced by relationships with hockey teams and organizations within the community.

(We try to target our promotions) at the grass-roots level, and that's one of the reasons why Toonie Toss is so great... our branch and the hockey community are working together. (This allows for) relationships to form and then there's a bond that just exists. In a lot of communities there are a lot of our employees who are already involved in hockey and it's just that much easier. Where that doesn't necessarily exist, there's an opportunity to build that relationship between those two parties. And it's not just the two parties; it's that image of what's happening in the community. It really goes beyond corporate goodwill... these are people who live and work in the community working with people who live and work in the community. (Banking)

Community school programs and special events (see CHA program components in this chapter) allowed sponsors to deliver educational and fundraising opportunities to children and to become an integral part of community development programs. By forming relationships with and helping organizations to "help themselves", key CHA events and programs gave sponsors the opportunity to achieve their sponsorship objectives and at the same time become a key provider and deliver quality community hockey programs.

#### **Objective 4. Image and Awareness**

All the sponsors indicated that image and awareness were important sponsorship objectives. Among the conditions they felt helped to elevate image and awareness and extend the value of their sponsorships was building a long term association with the sport of hockey and emphasizing this association through consistent, repetitive communications. Two sponsors in particular (the petroleum and brewery categories) had been involved in ice hockey sponsorship for many years and at all levels of the game, this was also confirmed on-site in the respective corporate offices. The hockey memorabilia situated throughout the offices validated that these corporations truly believed that their



long-term commitment and investment in ice hockey had worked to their advantage. The watch sponsor also depended heavily on repetition, however, and had adopted a unique “in your face” advertising strategy to drive home their CHA sponsorship involvement.

People love our commercial, people just like the fact that there is (a person) there and it gets our name out there. People might notice our product (as well) but they will hear our company’s name over and over again, which is very important. (In our) commercials we have eight people saying their (own) name and then the name (of our product). And then we show four or five different types of (our product)... At the end (we) say our name (again), so it is repeated on the commercial about twelve times, over and over again. Now people know what (our product) is. The brand has a niche with that commercial... (Watch)

The study findings demonstrate that brand association with the sport property (the Canadian Hockey Association) was a key objective for the corporate sponsors (particularly, the apparel, brewery, watch, and automobile product categories).

Canadian hockey specifically... anything we do internationally is only because it is a Canadian hockey team that’s involved. But we have been a part of hockey for so many years when we had (a sponsored television broadcast) in the early days, right through these various programs, which have recently evolved. Over the decades we’ve... sponsored hockey and (we have) gained support for the game (while gaining) support for our company. Have people recognized our involvement?... hopefully it helps with product purchase decisions that people make when they go to the (retail network). And (our research shows) that is the case, and most of our buying publics are in fact avid hockey fans, and are also very clearly aware of our support for hockey. And times when we’ve diminished our investment in hockey we’ve found that people have asked questions like why isn’t (our company) doing this event. Where are they? (Petroleum)

Product differentiation was also a very important objective for sponsorship. This goal was achieved through a long-term association with the CHA and through various promotional strategies that were used to keep their products “top of mind” with consumers.

(If we were to sponsor) beach volleyball for instance, the idea would be that (we would do it), because it is important to that consumer that we do it...that they’re going to intrinsically associate the fact that we do things that add value to (their) experience or to (their lives). So there’s a positive association. So the next time

they go into a retail store that sells our (product), and they see that same brand that added to (their) experience, they're going to purchase that particular (product). Which is exactly what direct marketing is, it's supposed to give you a reason to do it...it's added value in some way. What is it (that makes them choose at certain brand), when you see a bevy of choices up there...(what's) going to encourage you to purchase one kind. Unless you're trying to go and try each flavor what's going to produce that kind of association. When the (consumer makes) a purchase, what's more substantial (what determines whether they buy) one brand over another? (Brewery)

Brand visibility was also important in developing sponsorship strategy, although some sponsors depended on this more than others (such as the brewery versus the isotonic beverage producer). The automobile sponsor, in particular, believed that success in this area was conditional on having category exclusivity within the sport property. Among the sponsors that stressed brand visibility, most focused their sponsorship mainly on one type of product or brand (automobile, brewery, petroleum and watch categories). These products were readily available and could be found elsewhere or substituted by competitors very easily. It was felt that competitive advantage could be achieved more effectively through promotion and advertising than through specific product attributes. The brewery, in particular, stressed the importance of using the sport property and their "trademark" effectively. Based on what was found, it seems that in order for these "trademarks" to be fortuitous marketing tools to build brand image and generate awareness, corporations must support the sport at the development level, which will in turn feed into the upper levels of ice hockey.

...we under took the Open Ice Summit, that was something, 'through the back door' you can do for hockey in this country (which is at the grass root level). (We) organized that (conference) because it (was) important to (our) company... and (we're) a leader in the game of hockey. It needed to be done... if these trademarks are (to) remain important, especially the (NHL team they own). We need to develop Canadian players that are at a World class level. (Canada) hasn't been doing that lately (at the grassroots) or at least we're not keeping up to the rest of the world. So that's why we do it, awareness. (Brewery)

As noted by the participating CHA sponsors, differentiating their product from that of their competitors was an important element to consider in regards to sport marketing and sponsorship initiatives. By associating themselves with hockey, all of the corporate sponsors believed that in one way or another they had separated themselves from their competitors in the eyes of key demographic groups.

...you have to differentiate, (either) differentiate your product, which we try to do, or differentiate in other ways. We've found (that) it's more effective at many levels to differentiate our brand based on the emotional decisions that are tied to the purchase. We've found that people identify with our corporation and hockey. (Also) that people will make brand purchase decisions based on that (identification), which is kind of surprising but they do. (Petroleum)

...we want to associate our products (with hockey), we've been doing it for several years and we want to continue. For us (it is) important (for) our consumers and the Canadian public to be aware that we are a supporter of (hockey), and intimately involved in hockey. (And we do that) through sponsorships. (Brewery)

In order to differentiate themselves, four of the corporate sponsors (automobile, apparel, watch, and brewery) used brand association techniques very extensively. Brand association, as defined by the corporations who participated in this study, centered on branding one or more of their products with the sport of ice hockey.

...if you're going to associate your brand with things, (you need to associate) it with things that make sense and reinforce the image and the attributes of the brand. For us this means that all hockey properties (are aligned with) one brand. Another one of our brands has defined attributes expressive with buying athletic (equipment), (but) that's another brand (that is aligned with) golf, and specifically women's golf in Canada. (Automobile)

The CHA happens to be a great property for Canada... national teams are (not) as meaningful in other countries. The program is not as prominent in the US for example. It's still right up there in terms of level of importance... but I don't think it still has the same hoopla as it does in Canada. We've been working with the Canada office to brand the whole CHA program (under one product category or brand name)... we have the elite men's teams, we have a program with the women's team and the women's high performance camps, and then we've

developed in conjunction with the CHA, a grass- roots Skills Development Camp (Apparel).

As noted above, there were a variety of sales-, advertising-, community-, and awareness-based promotional strategies used in conjunction with the CHA sponsorships. However, one of the most important objectives for sponsors in this study, was that the components within these programs fit into their overall plan, or core business strategies.

If there's an opportunity around the Women's World's for us to put a program in place to raise money for girls hockey then we'll do that. There will be lots of... secondary and tertiary opportunities for sponsorship incremental to what we get as a ...Premier sponsor. But unless (these opportunities have) a direct link to our strategy we won't do it. We're very focused and we are very conservative with our plans and our spending. (Programs and promotions) have to have that focus for us to be interested. (Banking)

### **CHA Sponsorship Program Components**

Corporate sponsors involved with the women's ice hockey support program in the 1998/99 season used a number of different program elements offered by the CHA in order to leverage their sponsorship opportunities. Listed below is a selection of important initiation, development and recognition programs that were developed by the CHA for their corporate partners and the hockey membership. These programs provide opportunities for the hockey membership and in some cases offer title sponsorship opportunities for corporate sponsors at the national level. Nine programs are discussed.

#### 4.5 CHA Programs

1. Initiation Program
2. Skills Development Program
3. Experience a Dream
4. Fun Days
5. Medals of Achievement
6. Schools Program
7. PlayRight
8. Coaching Certification, Development and Rewards
9. Women in Coaching and Role Model Seminars

##### **Component 1. Initiation Program**

The CHA initiation program mandates that hockey players (5-9 years old) must first participate in a hockey initiation program prior to league play. This unique program introduces beginning hockey players to the fundamental skills of skating, puck handling, passing and shooting. It also emphasizes fun, fair play, cooperation, fitness and safety. Objectives of the program are to ensure that a child's first experience with hockey is a safe and positive one, to have fun while learning the fundamentals of the game, and to introduce the concept of fair play and cooperation. CHA sources suggest that approximately 170,000 youngsters participate in the program each year. The parents of these children stand to be a key target market for some Canadian corporate sponsors.

Although a successful program in terms of promoting national hockey development, the initiation program's long-time title sponsor ended their title sponsorship association after the 1998/99 season. The CHA has currently re-packaged the program to attract another title sponsor. The past title sponsor felt that in present form this particular program was not meeting their needs.

We ended a program last year that we were (involved) in for nine years with the CHA... that was the initiation program and it was about learning. It was initially for those children who were just starting to learn how to play hockey. We took a

long hard look at (the program and) we reached a conclusion. It wasn't delivering what we really felt we needed. (Automobile)

Some of the shortcomings of the initiation program were that it was not adequately being used and did not provide a sufficient local community presence.

It (was) called the initiation program for a number of years, it was CHA sanctioned and was available to all the gazillion, 550,000 kids... (This program) was available throughout the centers of excellence to all the associations... And it worked well, and it ran for a number of years. Last year we withdrew from (the program) because it (only) worked OK... is what I want to say in the end... (In relation) to the strategies that I've talked about, it wasn't doing enough for us because it wasn't getting down to the local teams. There wasn't one team in this area in the end, that used it... But coming back fundamentally, it's just sitting down and saying if no one's using it, how come? And as (we investigated) we found out that there was a breakdown in communication... and (to make) a long story short it couldn't be fixed exactly right to our liking... That didn't say end the association with CHA... We still are a major partner and we want to be, and we're open to other programs but we have to know how it will fit (with) what we do. (Automobile)

The initiation concept in theory is an essential and worthy part of the CHA development program. The question that arose in this research was, how can the CHA align the assets this program has to offer with the needs of the corporate sponsor? What value-added components within this program could corporate sponsors use to leverage the benefits attached to the CHA initiation program? For example, how can sponsors reach their required demographic and at the same time tie in a retail strategy? More importantly, with more and more women entering the game at all age categories and learning how to play, how could this program possibly be geared and presented effectively to the female demographic at all ages?

### **Component 2. Skills Development Program**

The objective of the skills development program is to promote the country's national game by developing the hockey skills of young males and females across

Canada. This program consists of 2-day skills development camps held in 10 major cities across Canada. The program consists of three components: seasonal coaching manuals, development camps for Atom and PeeWee players, and high performance camps for under-22 female players.

This program gives the title sponsor a direct contact with coaches and players within these age categories across the country at a national level. From a critical standpoint, the present title sponsor (apparel) is aggressively targeting a demographic that is very active in hockey and at an impressionable stage of their development. As one representative associated with this program suggested, this program is very much branded under one section of their business with the main objective being sales and brand awareness. This program gives the sponsor a number of opportunities to sell, promote and display their products. The initiative also shows the corporation in a good social light (to the children's parents) as they provide key programs which are integral to the child's hockey development. As the title sponsor of this event, this sponsor also receives additional advertising exposure as the CHA promotes the program on their website, in Canadian Hockey magazines, in promotional material and on commercials and features during key televised events.

### **Component 3. Experience A Dream**

The "Experience a Dream" contest gives one local child (between the ages of 5-11 years) the opportunity to spend a game day as a member of Team Canada. The 'dream day' includes: a pre-game practice skate, an introduction during the game's opening ceremonies, a chance to sit beside Team Canada on the bench during the game, an authentic Team Canada jersey, and an autographed hockey stick from Team Canada. The

CHA produces the posters and ballots, and then ships them out to the host committees, which are made up of volunteers in each community where an event or championship is being held. The host committee in turn provides the CHA with a listing of the retail network within that community, so they can hit all the local retail sites providing them with program materials. As already suggested above, there are numerous ways for the CHA and the corporate sponsors to promote these programs throughout the entire CHA network. This chain of communication is very integrated and extends across the country and the Canadian hockey membership.

For example, a retail strategy is tied in, as contestants are encouraged to go to the local retail outlet to enter the contest. Through the coordination of the Canadian Hockey Association and the host team (wherever the game(s) is taking place), posters and ballot boxes are made available at each retail site.

Communication went out to our retail network in the surrounding area, in a 25 mile radius around the arena where the event was taking place. This gave children the opportunity to participate, and it was driven by them having to bring the ballot into our sites. So again our retail networks (were involved), I mean we wanted to leverage our involvement in the tournament. (Petroleum)

This program involves the children in the community as well as the local retailers and sponsorship representatives in the opening and closing ceremonies of the event as well.

These events allow for corporations to be involved in the community, form key relationships, and to generate considerable brand awareness and association.

Because our retailers are not employees we can only suggest (that they become involved). We involve our retailers by having them represent the (corporation) out on the ice during the opening and closing ceremonies. It gives our retail network the opportunity to leverage their involvement in the sport (and in the community). It just takes our name (to be attached to an event) and (employee) involvement for someone (to notice and) say oh, terrific. Hopefully that will drive business. Also, for this particular tournament, we provided some product (contra), and all the vehicles used for the event had our logo on them. (Petroleum)



This program serves as a key business generator, as children have to bring their ballots into retail outlets to enter the contest, making it a consumer relevant program. Since children between the ages of 5-11 don't drive, their parents drive them to the outlet (petroleum category) to enter the contest. This in theory will increase traffic through the retail outlet resulting in an increase in sales by giving an interested group of hockey enthusiasts a value-added experience. Also, because the winner of the contest is a member in the community this gives the retail outlets extra exposure in the community, as the family and local retail owners (who live and work in the community) participate in the opening ceremonies.

#### **Component 4. Fun Days**

The CHA Fun Day's program was developed to introduce the sport of ice hockey to young girls who are interested in playing hockey. This program also increases enrollment in female hockey and elevates the title sponsor's profile as a lead supporter of women's and girl's programming. Many girls attending Fun Days have never been exposed to the game of ice hockey or have only played on male minor hockey teams. Players are provided with an unthreatening introduction to female hockey and are given the opportunity to be introduced to the Canadian game through an instruction clinic given by female players (role models). Fun Days, are one-day seminars offered to girls of all ages, and include on- and off-ice sessions and a volunteer leadership training session for the parents and other interested individuals. According to CHA and corporate sources, the Fun Days program was very well liked by the CHA membership and was ranked number one on the women's council's strategic plan. According to CHA materials, Fun Days took place this season all across Canada in Prince Edward Island (2), British

Columbia (2), Manitoba, and the Northwest Territories. Over 300 girls were exposed to the female game directly by attending the Fun Days program. According to the CHA in the 1999/2000 season every branch across the country will be hosting a Fun Days event. This will create national exposure opportunities for the event's title sponsor of this event. (Petroleum)

The (petroleum) sponsor of this program has leveraged this sponsorship program on a number of levels. For instance, this sponsor is also the title sponsor of the national women's championship each year. By introducing more women into the game of ice hockey, participant numbers will continue to grow, the event will receive more profile, and the game will become more popular. As the sport becomes more successful, this corporation will be known as one of the sponsors that was involved in women's hockey from the beginning and helped to grow the game. Also, by providing role models to young women, parents will view this corporation in a positive light and may reward them with their business.

#### **Component 5. Medals of Achievement**

According to CHA corporate documents, since 1981 over one million medals and certificates of achievement have been awarded. The purpose of this program is "Building Champions in Life." This objective is accomplished by rewarding players for good sportsmanship and fair play by recognizing the entire team and individual players for the Most Improved Player, the Most Dedicated Player, and the Most Sportsmanlike Player.

People remember that their (child) won a medal of achievement, and that our corporation was the one that sponsored a coach's clinic (they were involved in)... or that we were involved (as a sponsor) in a key game in which their child participated. (And consumers will) probably make the decision to go to one of our retail outlets, or if we run a promotion out of our dealership... (We) actually

get a hockey hero's (image)...or we give away some glassware there's always that possibility. (Petroleum)

A number of successful hockey players have been recipients of these rewards including Nancy Drolet and Brendan Shanahan, who now act as key role models for the game to many young hockey players across Canada. By forming social bonds with these children and their families, this corporation hopes to be rewarded with an increase in market share within the (petroleum category) from the buying hockey community.

### **Component 6. Schools Program**

The School's Program centers on major Canadian National Team events, which are held throughout Canadian communities. This program gives young children who otherwise would not be able to attend a national team hockey game the opportunity to attend. Again, this program is meant to elevate interest in the game, give young players role models, and involve children in the event increasing the number of fans and excitement surrounding the event and the event's public profile.

We've (sponsored) a school's program in conjunction with each of the major events since 1997. The women's games have been the key for us... We always had (school's programs) for the women's team events... then we (held a program at) the men's World Jr's. We're planning on having another series of school days programs (in conjunction with) the 2000 Women's World's. It's an effective way of communicating to a lot of people about female hockey, boy's and girls it doesn't matter. Eventually you need to get the boys thinking about female hockey too, so that they enroll their daughters into it... you have to break the mold. (CHA Marketing)

As a promotion for the program, free tickets are distributed to those schools, which lie within a reasonable proximity to one of the sites where a national event or championship is taking place.

(The school's program is) a great program. When the Women's World's were held in Kitchener in 1996 the correspondence we received from schools was overwhelming, thanking us. It was a great lesson for the kids, (and) there was a

school that (got invited) that doesn't get a lot of funding for extra curricular activities...it was just fantastic I mean they were... Unfortunately because of the times of the games, (the Canadian team played at night) we couldn't bring them in for an evening game...So we got them to (include lessons in their) history class prior to coming to the game. For example, we had ten schools coming in for the Norway, China game. Some of the classes concentrated on understanding the culture of Norway, and the other half of the class would do China. The players just thought it was great to have Ontario children cheering for their team.  
(Petroleum)

These programs create a unique experience for the hockey community, which in turn, may result in support for the sponsor who is invests their time and money into the event to make it happen.

### **Component 7. PlayRight**

One Associate CHA corporate sponsor (who was not interviewed in this study, but is a leading distributor of food and household products) started a program last year called PlayRight. As reported by a key CHA marketing staff member the idea behind PlayRight was to give hockey players and team member's messages of good nutrition, good fitness and all the key elements in being a better player. In addition, for coaches there was a drill set which was called the PlayRight challenge. The idea was that the coach would run their team through this drill set, record the results, do the same drill set two months later and record results. In the end, the teams were only competing against themselves.

They would send in their results and that would determine a winner. We ran clinics across the country. Five clinics were done as prizes and then secondary prizes were products of key brands. So this year we looked at (the program)... it was a one-year pilot project last year. We went back and looked at it again this year and we went back to (the CHA hockey development staff) and (asked them) what worked and what didn't work. And at the end of the day, in principal there are some good things there, but it needed a core program. So we took the program and we revamped it, and aligned it to coaching... (we) worked with the hockey development people (within CHA hockey development and asked them) how we could improve the coaching program overall. (CHA Marketing)

Information within the CHA goes from the Canadian Hockey Association's national office in Calgary, to the Centers of Excellence and Branches, and then to the minor hockey associations. This program requires Master Course Conductors, which go to the Branches and train coaches at the Branch level. The Branches then send out coaches to work within the minor hockey associations. The intent behind the PlayRight program was to have coaching material available that could be distributed throughout that network of people. The PlayRight Challenge, was created so these coaches would have something to work on with their teams. As a result, if a team has a penalty-free game they can send in their game sheet and they are then eligible for prizes.

Another tie-in was established by the CHA to complement the Coaching program. This addition is called the Coaches Club. The intent here is that membership entitles coaches to get drill books and website access to a special section within ([www.canadianhockey.ca](http://www.canadianhockey.ca)). The CHA developed this program so that they could start an exchange of information back and forth, which again comes back through the original distribution of the PlayRight program. The corporation introduced the program by doing a 2.5 million household drop (mail out). This included a brochure that explained what the program involved and where to get more information.

They're delivering this to 2.5 million people in Canada through their (own) distribution network, which is ideal, it doesn't impact on or tax the membership at all... And within that (brochure) is our website address and where to go for more information on the coaches club. As well they are also running an in-store promotion, which is a trip for two to the World JR's in Sweden... So if you buy their products you can (win). (CHA Marketing)

The CHA PlayRight program gave this sponsor additional advertising and promotional outlets and the means to keep a core target group involved (coaches). In

order to leverage this program they also included an in-store promotion for a trip for two to the World Championships and provided an open channel of communication (through the core program components) to communicate with their end consumers. The Coaches Club provides an avenue for this corporation to continuously communicate with a key demographic (coaches who are in a position of authority) within the hockey membership. The CHA and retailers are also directly involved as this program aims to reach hockey households and communities throughout Canada. This program hits most of the important objectives found in this study, and which are involved in a successful sponsorship program. To begin with, they now have a core program within Canadian hockey, which is doing something constructive for the game. Also, they can pinpoint the beneficial components of the program, which profit Canadians involved in hockey across the board who are already really interested in the sport. And from a corporate standpoint, the corporate partner (a leading distributor of food and household products) now has a property that they are committed to, which gives them a strong focus and the image of providing a good community service.

#### **Component 8. Coaching Certification, Development and Rewards**

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is an educational program delivered by the CHA and its goal is to ensure that coaches of both high performance (elite) and developmental players obtain the necessary skills to become effective coaches. Coaching clinics, which are held throughout Canada each hockey season, involve three main components, which are essential to the development of Canadian coaches: technical, theory and practical instruction. CHA promotional material suggests that over

50,000 coaches are registered in this program through the CHA member Branch Associations.

What we did with (the CHA) is a hockey recognition program. It was a community grass root coaching education (program). We would give the CHA, I believe it was \$10,000 a year for a three-year contract just to run a program. And then we would give them eight to ten thousand dollars for the medals. We would purchase the medals that were given out to the coaches, in the different communities... and then we would (also invest) \$15,000 worth of product that could be used within the associations to help offset their costs. The program consisted of ... the CHA would send out a letter to all the minor hockey associations across Canada, or their division heads. They would (communicate that we) had this (coaching) program... to reward someone within the (minor hockey) organization who is outstanding as far as coaching goes. Anyone who sent in a letter saying we've got a great coach, was (given a) reward. So it worked out to be between 2000 and 2500 medals a year that we were giving out to grass-roots coaches across Canada. It's really a neat program, you see different things written up in the paper, and I got several letters saying... thanks it's nice to be remembered and (recognized). So that's basically all we have done with the CHA, is that one program and as I said it's 30,000 dollars, cash and then the medals and products. (Supplies)

One problem with this program is the fact that the CHA has not been able to provide the title sponsor of this program with feedback regarding who won or received the coaching awards. This may be due to a break down in communication between the CHA head office, the Branches and the minor hockey organizations. The result was that when the corporation wanted to place an ad in the Hockey News displaying all the names of the coaches across Canada who were rewarded, the CHA could not provide the organization with this very important information. Clearly, a better tracking system for this program needs to be developed.

We can't track the winners, not at this point...the CHA has a hard time of even giving us a list...because it goes from (the head office), and they'll send out to the Branches who send it out to say London Minor Hockey. And then London Minor Hockey they'll send it out to the different coaches. So if the minor hockey association doesn't send in their list of names... (and report to the CHA) who they gave those medals to, it's not really well tracked. (Supplies)

### **Component 9. Women in Coaching and Role Model Seminars**

The objective of the women in coaching seminars was to introduce new coaches, parents, and players to the opportunities that are available to coach female hockey and to provide some initial tools to allow them to begin coaching. The Role Model Seminars were created to introduce provincial athletes, coaches and officials to basic training in the areas of public speaking, media relations and formulating "their story". At the conclusion of the program, participants were asked (by their Branch or province) to go back and promote the women's game at the community and local level. The title sponsor of this program decided to withdraw from the program at the end of the 1998/99 season. This particular corporate sponsor is becoming more focused on fundraising activities, and the coaching program was no longer meeting their objectives.

In terms of women's hockey, we attempted to develop a program that was a coaching clinic for women, to introduce more women to coach women's hockey. We went to...the CHA and said (that) we wanted a program in women's hockey specifically. We took their advice...(and they told us) where the need was. We let them develop the program, but (in the end) they couldn't implement it. It just died, whether they couldn't promote it properly, whether the interest wasn't there? It's no longer a program of ours, because there was absolutely nothing worth doing... They couldn't get the participation from the coaches to help run the clinics, and it just didn't fly in any sort of organized fashion. They may want to attempt something again, but we've become more and more focused. And if girls teams want to run a Toonie Toss that's great, just as (it is for) boys teams to run a Toonie Toss. Our focus is in helping hockey clubs help themselves. So (programs) need to be in that sort of realm of fundraising (for it to work for us). And outside of that, a coaching clinic in women's hockey specifically, really doesn't fit within our strategy anymore. (Banking)

### **Sponsorship Benefits**

There are seven major integrated corporate benefits obtained by corporate partners as a result of CHA sponsorship initiatives within the Canadian women's support program. Each of these is discussed in turn.



#### 4.6 Corporate Sponsorship Benefits

1. Exclusivity
2. Promotions
3. Hosting
4. Advertising
5. Community Relations
6. Merchandising
7. Execution / Evaluation

##### **Benefit 1. Exclusivity**

Each sponsor of the Canadian Hockey Association receives (as part of their contract), category exclusivity within their product category. By providing corporate sponsors with exclusivity the CHA reduces on-site clutter and increases visual on-site potential for the sponsors.

Category exclusivity is one of the base things that everybody in the core sponsor group... is looking for. There's no point in going into any sponsorship if it's going to be cluttered to begin with. If you're... one of 20 different people trying to make some noise about your product you get lost... why are you there, and what's the value of the sponsorship at that point? The value that the (CHA) sells (us) is some exclusivity, and also how they can drive that better for (our) product. So from our end of it, that's what we look for always. If there isn't category exclusivity, we don't play, especially in any of the bigger properties. (Automobile)

##### **Benefit 2. Promotions**

As outlined above, within their contract sponsors have the opportunity to leverage their sponsorship through national consumer promotions. A CHA staff member is assigned to service the sponsorship account and assist with national promotions. The corporation usually initiates these promotions, however, the creative and implementation portions of the programs usually comes from the CHA marketing staff. The bank sponsor outlines one of their key promotions in detail.

The Toonie Toss is really a simple fundraiser, we provide all the materials in conjunction with (the) Canadian Hockey (Association) to the team...(We also provide) additional promotional materials and advertising materials to the

community through our (own) branches... Basically on the designated date of the game, spectators arrive and receive a small envelope that fits a Toonie. They write their name on it (and) put a Toonie inside...at one of the intermissions there's an announcement, and they're told to toss their Toonie's. They toss them onto targets and who ever comes closest to one of five targets wins prizes. So it's really simple. (The hockey associations) get to run it the way they want to, and then all the money stays in the community. No national body ever gets involved.  
(Banking)

Each corporation also has the right to use the CHA trademark for national promotions, and to conduct in-venue and in-store promotions. For instance, the CHA logo is on promotional materials used including contest ballots, stand-up signs, posters, jersey's, fan appreciation items, actual product boxes and so on.

### **Benefit 3. Hosting**

CHA sponsorship involvement also includes a number of VIP benefits. This essential sponsorship component gives corporations the ability to build on customer and corporate relations throughout the entire corporate network through hosting initiatives. CHA corporate partners receive hosting benefits at all international and national events. A VIP section or sponsor room is usually set up during events, whereby drinks and snacks are served throughout the competition. VIP passes are given to sponsors as well as free tickets for the event in the lower bowl seating area. Special sponsor appreciation dinners are also held at some events to cater to the corporate clientele. These special functions provide an opportunity to host potential clients and make the sponsors feel appreciated for their contributions and involvement in the event.

I mean we have access to world Junior Championships, Women's World Championships and we have access to tickets at those kinds of games. And that's a lot of peripheral kind of stuff we get from our sponsorship... Wherever the games are taking place, those tickets always go right to that community... (to) area managers or personal servicing managers, or whom ever. They use it for entertaining their clients, which is always a great thing to do. (Banking)

CHA Premier and Associate sponsors receive a number of hosting benefits, which are included in their sponsorship contract. As suggested, prime tickets and VIP passes to key national events are usually included in their sponsorship agreement terms.

#### **Benefit 4. Advertising**

A number of advertising and media exposure opportunities are available to CHA sponsors through national television coverage of events, program promotions, press conferences and CHA publications. Communications media include: hockey publications, newspapers, magazines, television, websites, and radio. For example, the watch sponsor used a variety of media to promote a new CHA promotion/contest.

The program that we're putting together, it's going to be a threefold. (First), we are doing posters to put at every single, hopefully with the center of excellence assistance...arena across the country. (These posters will) announce the contest.. and will explain, (how contestants can) be a part of the Team... and will mention which web sites (will offer more contest) information. The poster will also explain that they can go to our dealers to get information on how (they) can be the next Team on our commercial. That's how we plan to take it to minor hockey. Also, (the CHA official broadcaster) will work with us to run a promo spot and we will run promo spots on various hockey shows... and... broadcasts. So it's on-site (at the arenas) on (the TV) broadcasts and... we'll also see if we can work with some radio stations and print media. We may work with Hockey News or some other print avenues to get our message out to the minor hockey leagues and so forth. (This promotion) will reach some of our consumers because obviously some of their parents and so forth are our consumers. (Watch)

As already noted, however, it was important for the CHA to ensure that the sport property's assets were adequately connected to the business objectives of the participating sponsors. In this manner, advertising could be used effectively to associate the corporation's products and services to the sport property and to communicate this association to the end consumers.

Within the CHA one sponsor has a skills program, which is a program they bought into. With us there is no "program". We have our sponsorship to be able to use that trademark with our products and anything it brings to itself. (For

instance,) when games are televised... we get rink boards, we get pouring rights, and we get other advertising rights. We have the ability to use that trademark at point of purchase and to be able to offer things that our (competitors) can't. (Brewery)

By providing these opportunities through the use of trademarks, the CHA can render measurable return on sponsor investment through media exposure, event signage and advertising.

### **Benefit 5. Community Relations**

The opportunity exists within the CHA corporate support program to be the Title Sponsor of grassroots community based programs which when leveraged properly, can directly reach the corporation's end consumer. These programs benefit the hockey community and give local retailers and corporate employees the opportunity to interact with their consumers in a non-threatening way.

Obviously one (of our) objectives is to put money right back into minor hockey, and to the hearts of the kids that really want to play the game. And through (these programs), when you work with kids that way... sure we want them to grow up to say that (we are) more than a corporation selling (a product)... (This) corporation supports the sport for what it's worth... We want to sell (our products), but we also want to do community work so that in turn we're not just selling our stuff, we're doing something (beneficial) as well. (Watch)

With (our CHA) sponsorship an opportunity exists for us to talk to the athletes themselves. We take (our) events and look at what we can do in the community as a whole. So there's an opportunity to market our products, but that's not our primary strategy... (Our strategy focuses on) creating an opportunity in the community, for people to get involved (and) for our (corporation), branches and employees to be seen (by our consumers) as being involved in the community and good citizens. (Banking)

Again, the execution of events and community programs depend primarily on effective program servicing by the sport organization (CHA) to ensure the program components are carried out properly and meet acceptable corporate business standards.

The materials (for the program) come in from two ends (the CHA and the corporate head office), and from a national source that neither party has to pay for... We help foster that relationship from behind the scenes... from a national level we don't take the spotlight in the community at all. When I go out to (our sponsorship) event, (as) a representative from head office, sometimes I'm requested to do certain things. I always defer it to the person in the community, because they're the one's who are making a difference, in all of the things that they're doing... (We are involved in) all kinds of things, and a lot of that the community organizes... so hockey's just the vehicle. (Banking)

### **Benefit 6. Merchandising**

Sponsorship involvement also gives corporations the opportunity to help pay for or (liquidate) their sponsorship investment through merchandising activity. This can be conducted in two ways, by selling and merchandising their products on-site or by using the CHA trademark, associations and logo on merchandise being sold in the retail outlet (in-store merchandising or eye-catching displays using the CHA logo /trademark).

The CHA provides corporate partners with the right to conduct national consumer promotions (on-site or in-store) and merchandising.

There are a number of things you can do (from a merchandising standpoint)... for example our recreational hockey programs, which are limited to adults, by law, both men and women. (These programs) are one way the association gets out (to our consumers). If your favorite team is the Toronto Maple Leafs and you go to watch it you'll see us associated with it. When you go to the retail store, we want that association to be foremost in your mind from a merchandising standpoint. And it usually is through advertising... in our industry right now (we have to) associate (ourselves) with different properties by offering... value added. (This means) what can I add to the consumer's experience that somebody else can't add? So (with) the CHA for instance we would offer a sweepstakes contest to the World Championship in Sweden next year. There would be ballots in the cases of our (product) for instance... So you would have a chance at winning a trip to Sweden for the World Championships with Canadian Hockey. And the chance to win that is in case. (Brewery)

...(We) create the association between our products and (our corporation's) involvement in that consumer's sport (of choice or interest)... So at point of purchase, in the retail system... you go in and you see all this merchandising going on. Who merchandises better... and our ability to market with properties will have an impact on where (our product) is situated in a store. And you can

stand in the (store) and watch the impact of your merchandising and the properties that (the) consumer associates with. Hockey draws (consumers), and entertainment draws them. And (it's) not only what's on the (outside of the) box, but what's dangling from the ceiling. Also, the offer inside, is there something that they want to do (or win)? Does (the consumer) want to go to the World Championships in Sweden and wave a flag? If they're a 22-year-old male and a hockey player, (yes) that would probably be pretty cool. Now is (that merchandising) going to produce or induce (them) to buy that product, it might? (Brewery)

Sponsors use the CHA logo to sell or merchandise their products, for instance the (the watch and apparel) companies put the CHA trademarks on "official" Team Canada products (watches and Jerseys) hoping to appeal to the hockey population. As suggested above, sponsorship self-liquidation occurs when product sales or profits meet, exceed or surpass the initial sponsorship investment. There were a number of ways corporations / licensees within the CHA corporate sponsorship program used merchandising strategies to offset their sponsorship costs. For instance, as the supplier of the official Team Canada Jersey, the corporate sponsor (apparel) sells these Jersey's to the general public at a profit. As would be expected, the sponsors that were more involved in merchandising activity were those corporations that sold smaller retail products (brewery, watch, isotonic beverage and apparel categories).

In addition, each corporate sponsor as part of their contract also gets a 25% discount on Team Canada regular priced merchandise items and the right to ten autographed Team Canada merchandise items each year and at selected events they are involved in. These items can be used as rewards for employees or used as contest prizes in order to reward and form relationships with consumers, employees or program participants.

### **Benefit 7. Execution / Evaluation**

Along with their sponsorship contracts, CHA sponsors have traditionally been provided with a high degree of servicing to ensure their objectives are met. In every case, corporate sponsors noted that the actual execution of programs and events was an important factor in determining contract renewal and the sport organization's future sponsorship value and credibility. Evaluation procedures enabled changes in sponsorship performance to be benchmarked and monitored from year to year, facilitating planning and corporate decision-making, and helping sponsors to understand performance fluctuations.

You can bench mark (attendance numbers)...our audience numbers for a (Championship) Cup were up at the highest levels they have been (this year). There could be two reasons (for this), one reason is that we had a decent time slot, and we were killed last year with a terrible time slot... (also we did) not (have) a lot of competition, (i.e.) other sporting activities going on that day. So that's one reason why our numbers would be higher. The other reason could be that this is now the fourth year that this event has been broadcast. We've had some teams return for a second time, but for the most part (there are) different teams (competing) so there are more and more communities out there, who are tuning in (on TV) because they've already been to a (Championship) Cup (in the past)... (The increase in numbers could also be attributed to) the efforts that we've all made over the past four years in terms of building it to a level that people are interested in (watching it). (Banking)

CHA corporate partners are provided with post-season measurements and a customized cost/benefit follow-up document. These reports identify the gross impressions created and contain a concrete assessment of media advertising & publicity, on-site exposure and promotional activity. Sponsors typically also undertake or contract out evaluations of their own.

The CHA provides a yearly report; a lot of it is connected with the television component and radio at major events. We also do our own research at major events, like at a (Championship) Cup we (would) do pre- and post-research to

gauge the awareness and appropriateness of our involvement, and obviously where to make improvements. (Banking)

...it takes a lot of effort to track all the impressions and PR spin you get (from a program or promotion) and to me it still comes down to subjective call...you either got the profile and recognition... by just being out in the market talking to retailers, and talking to consumers you get an impression...(whether it) had a big impact or medium or low. It's tough... to put a hard value on it. In part you just go on the market value of what it's sold for, (or) how interested is the competition. (Also) what (other options are there)... to do with your marketing dollars. So you know, I think hard numbers still are TV, attendance at games and hockey camps, or applications for the camps. Part of the skills development program is the coaching manual, (so we can determine) how many coaches' manuals were requested and bought and sold and those types of things. So... (we are) always constantly monitoring it... (Apparel)

Many sponsors used the number of spectator "impressions" as a measurement of the effectiveness of their sponsorship investment. There are a number of measurable sponsor mentions, appearances and signs that can be catalogued for each national game or event.

...we do have the raw facts... (and we know) who is taking the (coaching) courses. We have a system here called positive impressions. I don't know if you're familiar with (this concept) I think it's kind of a unique to (our corporation). (With) the programs we (are involved in with the CHA) we cannot (determine) a direct return on investment. We work on a positive impression (system). What we do is we (collect) all the clippings (that) come in and we say, OK so that gentleman was recognized as a wonderful coach in Saskatoon, and the (story) was in the Saskatoon paper. (We collect clippings) from newspapers and magazines... We just get thousands of them and we have a service that reads everything for us and cuts it all out and sends it in. I'm trying to think what it was... 11 billion positive impressions created through the coaching program so far? 400 million no, I think 11 billion was the company (total). I think it was 400 million or something like that. (Supplies)

According to the CHA administration, some of the core sponsorship elements that contribute to impressions include the on-site public address system and sponsor announcements, on-ice appearances and ceremonies and on-site sponsor signs and in-ice logos. These are measured by number of impressions per game per person.



That's how we measure (the impact of our program)... through positive impressions. So... when we get those newspaper articles in we go through them and we say OK, this is an education (impression) now was it an education (impression) through hockey?... Not this year but next year, I (will be able to) tell how many positive impressions we had through our contact with the CHA. (But) only the (impressions) captured through newsprint. (In the past) we didn't separate out the education one's from the recognition... we were just kind of lumping them, but when I came into this job last March I decided (that) I wanted to know what programs these are coming from. (I want to be able to) tell whether they are viable programs or not. I'm not going to sink a whole bunch of money into something that only gets me two newspaper clippings. The hockey one, the CHA (program) gets us the most (impressions). It's unbelievable. (Supplies)

A CHA marketing representative explained how they use impressions to evaluate each sponsorship contract's performance for the corporate sponsors each year.

It's an assessment report that we do, and what we do is, try to take every kind of impression... An impression could be: in a newspaper, a magazine an advertising banner, actual television commercials, whether it's on the air, rink board passing, or ice logs or if it's just you're audience in attendance. We take all of (the components I just suggested) and we try to put all of it into impressions. Then we turn those impressions into a value against television commercial time. For instance... to buy a commercial for the World Junior Championships is worth \$3000 per commercial. We give (the sponsor) three as part of (their) sponsorship (and) there was eight games run (on television). (As a result the sponsor) had 24 commercials at \$3000 that's \$99,000 worth of value. And then depending on the event... (CHA Marketing)

Although attendance numbers at the national games was an important measurement, the sponsors indicated its value was more qualitative than quantitative. It was hard to link impression measures like attendance with quantitative measures like sales.

We would look at that as one measure, attendance at the rinks. We also sell product to (the) Canadian Hockey (Association) and all their programs (our sponsorship) is not 'all', giving free stuff away... You can get a read, although it's more qualitative than quantitative, on how successful the promotions are, and the (promotions) you might run at the retail as well. (Apparel)

(Whether a program) left an impression (or not) that is what's very difficult to gage. There are no numbers to... quantify the effectiveness of the direct business that is built as a result of our relationship (with the CHA). We ask a question in

our survey's you know would you, as a result of this (program or event), would you be more likely to switch to our institution? And you get a very small percentage that say - oh sure. But whether you actually get that switching as a result of us being involved in a tournament or in a Toonie toss event, you're never going to find that out. At least to date nobody has come up with a system of finding that out. (Banking)

Other common evaluation tools for sponsors with televised properties were television ratings and audience surveys.

...you have to do measurement if you're on TV, (and you) must pay for the TV ratings, (and pay) to have a survey done. (This can be a) random survey of people watching at (a certain) time, what did they think, or did they know who was there? Unaided awareness is key, aided is ok but unaided is the key. (Unaided) is the mover that's the one that tells us that somebody knows we were there (as a sponsor). And if they know we were there, what did they think about it? Well, they were watching it so they liked it... There's a positive association from that... it doesn't mean (that) everybody will run out and spend 40 grand (and buy our product) ... but it says that were supporting things that they like, and (those associations) tend to be longer term. (Automobile)

Although there are a number of benefits received from the various sponsorship initiatives, according to the results of this study, the bottom line focuses on the event's/program's ability to deliver a value-added experience to their customers.

That's my job, is to sell (our products), and...(as the) Director of Sports, I sell our product through sport. We make an association and (make) our sponsorships work to sell our product...there's a lot of different ways to do that, primarily (we) add value to our consumer's experience...it's as one-to-one as (we) can get. Because if you (reach the customer) one-to-one, then you're going to have results... results in terms of making an impression on the consumer, (the impression) that you're doing something to benefit their experience, or something that holds a lot of importance to (them). (Brewery)

## **Direct and Relationship Marketing**

### **Direct Marketing**

Each CHA corporate partner has available to them the ability to have in-venue sampling and other promotional opportunities such as enter-to-win contests, that allow these corporations to collect names of potential customers. As noted in chapter 2,

relationship and direct marketing are very costly marketing initiatives to start up and maintain. However, by continuously expanding their customer base with new prospects through the formation of one-to-one direct communications, corporations can create future opportunities to establish long-term relationships with the interested and committed consumer group within women's ice hockey. Establishing a direct relationship in a sport sponsorship context can result in a number of benefits for both the sport organization and the corporate partner. The watch sponsor, for example, used the CHA distribution channels specifically in order to decrease the cost of a direct marketing program.

Direct marketing is quite a large cost factor... direct marketing is excellent but it is a pretty large cost factor... (But) concerning direct mail, right now...for (that type of) correspondence, we are going to depend on the CHA and their centers of excellence to help us through that, and why not. (Watch)

Currently the CHA has a distribution chain through the Branch Associations and the centers of excellence (refer to Appendix V), which enables corporations to conduct mass mailings to the female and male hockey membership a few times a year. According to the CHA sources I interviewed, thirteen provincial Branch Associations are members of the CHA and provide linkage to over 600,000 players, coaches, and officials who participate annually in minor, junior and senior hockey programs throughout Canada.

One drawback to database marketing expressed by corporate sponsors, however, was a fear of receiving negative press, which could possibly be attached to the soliciting and collecting of names, addresses, phone numbers and other information from members and children for selling purposes.

Well see, I guess from a privilege standpoint, you wouldn't want any negativity regarding the program, that because a child's name is entered into our draw,

communication is now being sent to the parent. I mean you definitely... wouldn't want that negativity (associated with your program). (Petroleum)

In order to avoid any negative press another sponsor (apparel) initiated a voluntary 'hockey club' whereby the consumers have to write in to the corporation, and request to become a member and must obtain parental permission to obtain a club membership. By receiving permission to communicate with their customers, this corporation avoids negative associations and can give this target group value added benefits on a one-to-one level.

When it comes to direct marketing one of the initiatives we (have in place) is a loyalty program, we've set up a Hockey Club. We are capturing names, (however, these) tend to be a younger audience of kids playing the sport as opposed to adults. (This group consists of) male and female, forwards and goalies, French and English, east coast and west coast, (all types of hockey players). We actually give them a letter of agreement or a sign off for the kids parents, (giving them permission) to join. And then the benefits they receive from it are: up-to-date news on new equipment coming, player profiles, value added offers to access equipment or apparel at a cheaper price, and product previews in their cities through retailers, that type of thing. (Apparel)

The sponsor quoted above presented their customer information-gathering strategies in a positive light by rewarding their 'hockey club' members for joining their fan club and sharing personal information with the corporation. As foreseen in the literature, this sponsor (apparel) expressed a concern about the time and monetary factors attached to the introduction of a new database-marketing program.

I'm a big believer in database marketing... We're just sort of starting the initiative, and you know, we aim to get a significant number of the young players across Canada. But it is a big investment...not only to start it up, but to maintain it. (Apparel)

Some administrators within the CHA marketing staff realize the benefits that can be achieved through database marketing initiatives, but indicated that the hockey membership to date would not allow the release of this valuable information.

If we could actually use the database that's there of all the registered players in hockey... and on two occasions a year, do some form of solicitation direct to those households. I mean tastefully obviously, not something that's a hard sell but something very soft sell... unfortunately (the corporations) can't touch it, not even on a market by market basis... From where I sit (in a corporate servicing and marketing operations role) it's very frustrating. And corporations would pay big dollars and wouldn't think twice about it. But it's not allowed. We're starting to encourage (the collection of information), and we're going to take a more active hand in it this year, and start establishing those databases. For years we believed that we would reach a point where (we could use the information about the membership). And (the CHA) now has a consistent system across Canada for registration, and I'm pretty sure everybody is on it now. The national office worked with the branches to develop this system, I guess this started four years ago. And the initial plan we in marketing believed was that this would all of a sudden at some point, be one great big database that could be used. No one (in the CHA) will release it to become one big database, everybody has held on to it. I can understand it to a point, but the benefits that they could reap if they were just a little bit more open minded about it would be phenomenal. And you could do it so effectively, that I don't think you would have a problem with the membership. We've started now... anything that we send out, we get the little release box on the (correspondence permitting us to use the information)...In some ways we have to become independent of the hockey membership at large in order to handle the (marketing) part of it well, because it's just a protective market. (CHA Marketing)

If these corporations want to do their own direct mailings to households they are permitted to use the trademarks and their association with the CHA as a promotional tool. As long as the corporate direct mail initiative is "program related", CHA sponsors are able to do large mailings to the Canadian hockey membership through internal channels which saves a considerable amount of time and money.

We're allowed to use the CHA in any of our advertising to say that we are a sponsor of the CHA. But we really don't use that a lot. Where it helps us the most is the CHA does an awful lot with the NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program). And if we stay in partnership with them then every time they send out a manual or any kind of letter to their membership that has to do with the NCCP, our name is linked with it. So it's more or less just spreading the word that our corporation is involved with the coaching certification program and that's really where we want to go. We want to be known in the world of coaching as an educator and a recognizer. (Supplies)

Corporate sponsors interviewed in this study suggested that they in all instances had the ability to collect program and promotion participant information, however, very few were actually utilizing this information for direct marketing purposes. It is also important to note that these sponsors were not directly targeting the women's ice hockey component within the CHA marketing and sponsorship program even though the literature suggests that this group would stand to be more "manageable" and cost effective from a direct or database marketing perspective.

Certainly we do, we collect (information), I think everyone does it to a point. We have long lists of people that are taken in contests and lists of (consumers) who buy our product. And yes, we communicate with them. The website is one way...we worry about communicating one-on-one. It's difficult to do, because it's usually a third hand purchase. Because of the fact that (the consumers) go to the outlet to buy our (products). There should be some association already, I think there is when people buy a certain kind... more than just price. What you can offer in your (product packaging) or through your associations with the sport is what people remember and that's what hopefully drives them. (Brewery)

### **Corporate Alliances and Relationship Building**

Within the CHA women's sponsorship support program there is an opportunity to involve other CHA corporate sponsors in corporate promotions and initiatives.

According to CHA marketing administrators, in the late 1990's there has been a move towards partnerships as opposed to sponsorships, under the belief that long-term image and sales, and integrated relationships can better develop sponsorship equity. As explained here, these relationships are viewed positively by the sponsors.

The one thing that we have always been very strong with, is partnerships. And (the CHA broadcaster) is one great example of how we started building partnerships. They've been great with us, so that's what we base our business on...just finding the right people to work with and we'll hopefully work well, (on cross promotions) with them. (Watch)

Any major sponsorship, hockey what ever... there's a limited number of (corporations) that get into it. And you get to know each other right away, and

that sometimes leads to cross-promotions...and maybe mutual ventures... I mean you always approach it from you own product and your own set of product strategies and marketing strategies, but after that happens then you look for some synergies where you might be able stretch your dollar, better bang for the buck that kind of thing. (Automobile)

By forming relationships with multiple corporate partners these sponsors receive more added-value by reducing on-site clutter and providing more benefit to the end consumers experience. Cross-promotions allow participating corporations to utilize the best attributes each corporation involved has to offer, and thereby leverage their mutual promotional opportunities.

There's Business Depot, Magna (and others)...companies that we would love to do a program with, but we have to form partnerships with them first. The RCMP we already have a coaching program set up with them and the Ontario government, we are forming a partnership with them...to do a grass roots coaching program. (We will) link it up with their volunteer program and at their volunteer banquets that they have around Ontario there will be some coaches of the year nominated. Then those coaches of the year will be nominated for their yearly Ontario provincial awards. And from there they could be nominated for the national award. So we are trying to build that stepladder that gets (the coaches) from the grass-root coach this year, to the little more education and some more courses and now they're at the next level. And seeing that (process) through...involves (the formation of) relationships. (Supplies)

Two CHA corporate partners (brewery and petroleum categories) have been involved in ice hockey sponsorships for an extended period of time and have formed a number of very important relationships. These corporations have acquired long-term ownership within Canadian hockey properties and have fully integrated these marketing programs into their overall corporate marketing objectives and strategies. They have learned to form strategic alliances with other sponsors and sport properties in hockey in order to meet their objectives and reap benefits from the game, which the Canadian Hockey Association can provide.

I would (hope) that our competitor would want to be (a CHA sponsor if we were not involved). I mean they had the opportunity before we made the relationship. And it's really a strategic alliance, it's not just a sponsorship with (the) Canadian Hockey (Association)... I think when people are looking for partners, to align themselves with, in marketing and sponsorship, (sports properties) look at the companies that are heavily involved and have a lot of leverage and have a lot of relationships. The CHA looked at us and said if there's somebody that knows the game of hockey from all different aspects these would be the people. More and more I see sponsorships (that are) not just property oriented but (corporations) get into them for strategic alliances. It used to be that you used to go out and beat down the doors to get sponsors. For Open Ice, (a hockey development conference in Toronto) we went to sponsors and said you have qualified to be a founding partner of this, because of your links to hockey and your investment in hockey over a long period of time. (A lot) of companies weren't approached to be a part of this, you needed to have some commitment to the game. Those kinds of alliances now are being struck and are growing in prominence. All the partners in (the Open Ice) conference, they all take the game and their associations with it very seriously. And sponsors are now starting to come together to share ideas... (Brewery)

This sponsor also stressed the importance of long term commitment to a sport property. This seemed to be a shared issue as every sponsor in this study has been involved in the CHA corporate support program for at least 3 years.

We don't undertake in the short-term anymore. It's too expensive to do that... As I said sponsorships are now becoming strategic alignments... For instance with the Open Ice conference, one of the benefits was that it became a sponsorship forum for our company. (The major sponsors had the opportunity) to sit and meet and say, this is what we're doing... and sharing ideas and (in the future) it will make a difference. It will make a difference because, you're (learning to) work and form relationships with other sponsors. (Brewery)

### **"Niche" Activity**

As suggested above, the option exists for corporations to own an exclusive CHA property or program within women's ice hockey, which allows these sponsors to reach a specific target market with a particular sport/hockey interest. The results show that by limiting the number of sponsors involved, the CHA generally has been able to deliver a high level of awareness and a good return on investment for individual corporate



partners. Although rarely female centered, “niche” market activity included tailoring program components like newsletters to reach a target demographic already interested in the event or program.

Through newsletters we give (participants) incentive to share some information with us. Also (our promotion to) win a trip to the all-star game or win a team Canada Jersey and that type of thing. (Anything) to build some sort of relationship with the kids and get more learning on what they buy. (This also helps us) in that we can give (consumers) the right offers along the way. (Apparel)

Another sponsor (banking) has taken the first steps to separate out the different “niche” markets within the hockey membership and communicates with them one-to-one.

(Promotions) are an opportunity for us to talk about our products, and we’ve got products for every age category (and demographic). We did develop a brochure last year that we sent out to the entire membership of hockey that covered off everything from our young saver account, through student banking programs. And offered anyone involved in the hockey community if they went in to a branch (office), with the brochure or just stated that you were involved in hockey you could get a quarter percent off your mortgage. (Banking)

Corporations interviewed in this study realized that their involvement with the CHA corporate support program gave them direct access to a “niche” market of valued consumers (specifically the Petroleum, Banking, Apparel, Automobile, Brewery, Isotonic Beverages, and Watch categories).

We undertake sponsorships in hockey because our consumers are Canadian. And in being Canadian, hockey is something that’s in their blood, so to speak. And we’ve been associated with hockey since the day it was on (the) radio. (We’ve supported the) professional league (the) Leafs and Montreal and hockey night in Canada. We’ve been (involved in hockey) we produced and sponsored most of the Canadian NHL hockey games on television in the last four years. (Brewery)

The only exception was the diversified supplies category. This corporate sponsor did not target a specific demographic through their CHA sponsored program but rather tried to hit the mass market through their support of coaching certification in Canada.

It is important to note, that although the women's hockey demographic could be a potential fortuitous target market for corporate partners (as found in Chapter II), very few corporations actually targeted their direct marketing programs towards the participants and spectators within Canadian women's ice hockey.

## **Chapter V**

### **Summary and Discussion**

This chapter critically reviews the contribution of this thesis to the literature and to our understanding of industry practice in the sponsorship of women's ice hockey in Canada. The chapter is organized into five sections: summary, discussion, recommendations for sport organizations wanting to acquire sponsorship within women's ice hockey, limitations of the research, and implications for future research.

#### **Summary**

This study was concerned with the corporate strategies, objectives and benefits of the Canadian women's ice hockey sponsorship support program. Based on the research questions outlined in chapter one, the study findings were organized under four main research topics: corporate sponsorship objectives, CHA sponsorship program components, sponsorship benefits, and relationship and direct marketing.

By effectively utilizing programs, promotions and events within the CHA, corporate objectives were achieved and a number of shared corporate and membership benefits emerged between the corporate partners and the CHA. As demonstrated in the results, this task of finding common benefits may be hard at times due to the oftentimes diverging goals and strategies between the public (CHA membership) and the private sector (corporate partners). Such potential conflicts can be rectified, however, if overall program, corporate and membership/organizational objectives are clearly set at the beginning of the sponsor-sport relationship. As outlined in this thesis, there were a number of strategic advantages, and benefits attained through the effective use of sport marketing and core program components by CHA corporate partners. Among other things, the study demonstrates that by integrating current sponsorship practices with new

promotional methods in sponsorship such as relationship and direct marketing, sponsors of developing sports such as women's ice hockey can enhance sponsorship effectiveness and increase the value of their sport to potential sponsors.

### 5.1 Objectives, Programs and Benefits

Four (4) Objectives	Sales	Seven (7) Sponsor Benefits	Exclusivity
	Advertising and Promotion		Promotions
	Community Involvement		Hosting
	Image and Awareness		Advertising
Nine (9) Outlined CHA Programs	Initiation Program	Relationship and Direct Marketing	Community Relations
	Skills Development Program		Merchandising
	Experience a Dream		Execution / Evaluation
	Fun Days		Database Marketing
	Medals of Achievement		Corporate Alliances and Relationship Building
	Schools Program		"Niche" Activity
	PlayRight		
	Coaching Certification, Development and Rewards		
	Women in Coaching and Role Model Seminars		

### Discussion

The findings indicate that the CHA corporate partners that were studied in this thesis emphasized several distinct objectives and strategies for achieving equity positioning in the Canadian marketplace using their CHA sponsorships. This section briefly identifies some of the more important of these objectives and strategies and their

practical implications. Comparisons are also made to recent sponsorship literature, as appropriate.

### **Sponsorship Objectives**

The study found that the CHA corporate partners in the sample had four main objectives when acquiring a CHA sport property for sport marketing purposes: sales, advertising and promotion, community involvement and brand and corporate image and awareness. Although these objectives were already discussed independently, it is readily seen that in a more fundamental sense these encompass underlying brand and corporate-related objectives that run across these artificial divisions. For example, similar to research by Irwin & Asimakopoulos (1992), several *brand*-specific goals were identified by CHA sponsors. Brand visibility and differentiation through association with women's hockey, in particular, was an important criterion (in order to achieve top of mind awareness at point of purchase) as was having a community presence for the brand and the possibility of sponsorship-linked retail sales. All of these goals, in turn, could be identified as contributing to brand equity, sales and market share. This says that the objectives that were reported in this thesis could also be organized under more fundamental brand- and corporate-related objectives, benefits and strategies.

Several CHA corporate partners used the internet as part of their brand and corporate communications strategies in addition to other more traditional electronic and print media and organizational media such as newsletters. As suggested by Delpy and Bosetti (1998), the internet and web, in particular, may be useful due to the fact that the demographics of sports fans are similar to those of internet users. Here again, it is seen that media objectives may be understood to cut across the independent objectives that

were previously identified, and to encompass broader issues of corporate public relations, brand advertising, and customer relations.

Category exclusivity was a key objective, which is supported in research by Copeland, Frisby & McCarville (1996). Image and awareness initiatives relied on category exclusivity to reduce the occurrence of on-site clutter and assure category domination. In many respects exclusivity was at the root of the value of the CHA sports properties for the corporate partners since all of their other objectives, benefits and strategies were built on this.

Community goals and objectives were also a fundamental part of the value of the properties for the sponsors. Similar to findings by Cornwell and Maignan (1998), CHA corporate sponsors sought to build and foster relationships with people associated with women's hockey in local communities across Canada as part of a strategy to build awareness and a positive image for the corporation and brand, as well as to identify prospective customers, reinforce relations with existing customers and increase sales. Here again is a unifying objective that cuts across other areas.

CHA corporate partners were also aware of the need to coordinate their sponsorship efforts with their overall business objectives. The sponsors interviewed in this study were highly sensitive to the need to align their sponsorship objectives with their core business strategies and to assess the effectiveness of their sponsorship programs on this basis. Similar findings were reported in previous research conducted by Copeland, Frisby and McCarville (1996), and again underline the importance of seeing the results of this study in a holistic context. The findings do not document independent objectives and strategies so much as an interlocking set of initiatives that are part of an

overall business plan for achieving sales, market share, corporate recognition and competitive advantage.

### **Relationship Marketing**

CHA corporate partners have implemented and are using a number of strategies in order to identify, maintain and build a network with their customer base within ice hockey generally and women's ice hockey specifically. These include supporting grass roots development programs at the community-level as well as high visibility events and programs at the national and international level. They also include innovative use of promotions such as contests and coupons to bring customers and prospects into retail outlets or to websites and to collect information about them, including the means for reaching them. In each case, the ways that these undertakings are being conceptualized is in terms of building and maintaining long-term, value-added relationships with preferred customers. These findings are in-keeping with McDonald and Milne's (1997) proposed conceptual framework for building and evaluating marketing relationships in sport.

Corporate sponsors interviewed in this study found that it was beneficial to form relationships with spectators and participants who are already loyal to the game of ice hockey and directly involved in the sport. The findings demonstrate that relationships between the corporate sponsor, sport organization and the membership or end consumer can be integrated successfully into a mutually rewarding sponsorship program. This supports work by Burca, Brannick & Meenaghan (1995) who found that sponsorships provide consumers with the opportunity to identify with and form relationships with corporations and a reason to consume their products and services (See also Berry, 1995). In particular, when the corporate sponsors of women's ice hockey offered hockey

participants value-added benefits that would otherwise be difficult or expensive for them and that were not readily available elsewhere, they created a strong foundation for maintaining and enhancing relationships. Because the CHA offers very specific programs to those within women's ice hockey, it would be extremely hard for those participants to go elsewhere and receive the same value-added program benefits.

The sponsorship literature tends to construct the structural relationships between sponsors, sport organizations and consumers as linear and relatively direct. This study has demonstrated that these relationships are much more complex than has yet been theorized. Within the CHA's organizational structure there are a multiplicity of relationships internally within the CHA organization itself (between its national and local branches and centres of excellence), as well as between the CHA, sponsoring corporations, outside advertising agencies, and the end consumer (participants, fans, other hockey constituents). As a final observation, therefore, it will be necessary in future to research and map out the range and kinds of relationships of the organization (internally and externally) in order to better understand and capitalize upon the opportunities that relationship marketing provides. The study results demonstrate a need to increase the communication network between these various groups in order to meet both individual and mutual objectives, and to enhance these relationships to their full potential. In practical terms, as women's ice hockey continues to grow in size and popularity it will become increasingly important to the CHA and its corporate partners to identify these interorganizational resources and to leverage their value.



### **Direct Marketing**

The study results demonstrate that the CHA corporate sponsors are not using database-marketing techniques to full potential. As outlined by Morris and Irwin (1996), a more comprehensive and integrated use of database marketing techniques would allow CHA corporate partners to personalize communications and promotions to those involved in women's ice hockey on a one-to-one basis. Because this market and participant base is much smaller in comparison to the men's ice hockey support program, it would be considerably less cumbersome to collect information on these consumers in a useful database format. For instance, although the majority of CHA corporate partners used "enter-to-win contests", and they were collecting contest ballots that contained potentially useful personal information, these corporations indicated that they were not yet using this information to target new customer prospects or enhance current customer relationships.

### **Sponsorship Evaluation**

Evaluation in regards to sport marketing and sponsorship has traditionally been minimal. The CHA has standard procedures for evaluating sponsors' investments in ice hockey that are supported by the literature (see Komoroski and Biemond, 1996). However, as anticipated in some studies (Cornwell, 1997; Copeland, Frisby & McCarville, 1996), current measurements such as brand exposure and awareness within the women's corporate sponsorship program were difficult to quantify. By tying a targeted retail strategy directly to program components and promotions, however, some corporate sponsors in this case were successful at attributing sales increases directly to their CHA sponsorship involvement.

Many corporations took it upon themselves to measure the success of their sport sponsorship internally. The task of monitoring sales growth, increases in market share, and program or event attendance and impressions surrounding a particular event, was sometimes implemented by the hiring of an outside agency. These local agencies were hired to conduct research at key national CHA events. CHA administrators realize, however, that this task should not be left entirely up to the sponsor and that it is essential to have an internal organizational evaluation system in place. Presently, the CHA uses a number of innovative techniques to evaluate sponsorship effectiveness and value. These techniques measure positive impressions, attendance numbers, media clippings, souvenir program feedback, television, radio and media impressions, program interest numbers, frequency of on-site and television exposure (billboards, rink-boards, on-ice logos, jersey logos, bench boards, feature ceremonies, scoreboards) and commercials and features.

As suggested in the literature, gross impressions are a tally of all the impressions in the media as a result of the sponsored event or program (Cornwell, 1989). CHA corporate sponsors for the most part (with the exception of television ratings, attendance and participation numbers), evaluated their sponsorship success using some form of measurement of impressions, a tool they felt had more qualitative than quantitative validity. At the end of each season, however, they expected tangible results from their (oftentimes expensive) sports investments. This difficulty of not being able to finely measure sponsorship performance mirrors earlier findings by Weiner (1985) that sponsors want hard proof of their return on investment. The CHA marketing staff provides corporate partners with an extensive evaluation report each year of their

sponsorship properties. This document includes both impression measures, and a detailed assessment of audience numbers and television ratings.

Established sports like NHL hockey and CFL football have long consumed most of the corporate dollar in Canadian sports and sponsors have long been convinced that these high-profile men's sports were more entertaining and achieved a better return on investment. However, the evidence here suggests that when creatively applied and executed, the CHA's women's corporate support program enables sponsors to surpass the boundaries associated with traditional 'male' sports by providing an opportunity to reach beyond traditional mass advertising. As shown in this study, by utilizing targeted marketing approaches, some corporate sponsors were able to capitalize on the entertainment and social values within the sport of women's ice hockey.

### **Women's Team Sports**

Unlike men's hockey and women's basketball, women's ice hockey does not presently have the participation base or the infrastructure to support paid players or the ability to have a professional league. The findings indicated that because there is no professional league for women's ice hockey, corporate sponsors involved themselves at two levels of women's hockey:

1. Community-based grassroots programs
2. National team or elite high performance programs

Administrators within the CHA have been very successful at integrating these two objectives by linking grass-root development programs to corporate promotional opportunities presented within the constructs of the national women's ice hockey program. Most of the CHA programs, program components and core services are

augmented with educational and entertainment activities and are tailored to individual customer/participant tastes.

As suggested in the literature, women's basketball may be in a comparable although more advanced stage of development as compared to the sport of women's ice hockey. Although grass-root participation levels are growing in women's ice hockey at a rapid pace, these numbers still lag behind those of women's basketball. Nevertheless, as women's ice hockey receives more international profile at World Championships and the Olympics, interest in the sport will continue to grow as it did with the WNBA. As these numbers continue to increase they will require an advanced support system and infrastructure that eventually may support a professional league for women. For instance, (as the WNBA has done with the NBA) partnerships with the International Hockey League (IHL) and/or the NHL could provide professional opportunities for women's ice hockey in the future. As noted by Avery and Stevens (1998), as the sport of women's ice hockey evolves it may be beneficial to look to the marketing success of the WNBA as a model for expansion.

Hockey administrators and sponsors who participated in this study believed that media coverage of women's ice hockey is of crucial importance if the sport is to attract more sponsorship dollars. This is perhaps one of the biggest challenges for the CHA in presenting the women's game as an attractive package to other potential sponsors not already involved in the CHA corporate support program. It is a vicious cycle, but one which research like this can help to change. Nonetheless, there are signs that corporations and administrators within women's ice hockey are addressing these growing pains. As

women's ice hockey grows in popularity, it can be anticipated that media coverage of events will increase, making the sport a more advantageous sponsorship vehicle.

The results of this study have a number of implications regarding industry practice in the area of sport sponsorship within Canadian women's ice hockey. In particular, a number of unique program components and promotional strategies have been identified that can be used by corporations to maintain, retain and attract new customers. Perhaps CHA administrators and staff could use this information to expand current strategic programs and partnerships that have been executed successfully by a number of CHA sponsors. The study findings suggest that although each sponsorship program was comprised of different core elements, each sponsor was similar in their respective approaches to sport sponsorship. This finding supports the possibilities for further strategic partnerships among the CHA sponsors.

### **Recommendations for sport organizations**

Based on this research, eleven distinct recommendations can be made regarding the corporate sponsorship strategies presently being used in the Canadian women's ice hockey sponsorship program. Note that these recommendations are based on a limited study and should be interpreted cautiously. The actual application of the following recommendations is potentially broader, however, this lies outside the purview of this research. Some of the components can be generalized to smaller women's team sports, however, that are in a similar stage of development as Canadian women's ice hockey.

1. To begin with, potential sponsorship initiatives need to be packaged and itemized with the corporate partners core business objectives and assets in mind. Corporate sponsorship proposals need to target prospective sponsors' key marketing

objectives and sponsorship strategies. This information can be sought out by looking at annual reports, corporate websites, or by simply talking to people within the corporation. This process allows for customization of the sponsorship proposal prior to submission.

2. Specific and unique value-added components should be clearly documented within the proposal and/or contract and should outline how the sport property (women's ice hockey) will deliver a measurable return on corporate investment over an extended period of time. Sport organizations (as demonstrated by the CHA) should aim to commit corporate sponsors to (at the very least), a three-year contract with emphasis on long-term relationships and alliances. This strategy develops stronger sponsor equity and will bring the sport organization one step closer to ensuring contract renewal. Development of long-term agreements commits sponsors to the organization, forms bonds and relationships, and reduces the cost and time factors associated with attracting new sponsorship dollars.

3. Contract renewal is a significant factor and appropriate steps should be taken to retain and maintain current sponsors. At the end of the day, this strategy will save the sponsor and the organization a lot of time, money and human resources. The goal here is to make interactions more efficient by better acknowledging the sponsors' needs. As stated previously it is easier and more cost efficient (in reference to monetary and human resource factors) to renew and maintain current contracts, relationships and alliances. Corporate business objectives must be taken into account and dealt with immediately, even if they do not always mesh with the sport organization's way of operating internally. The sport organization must be sensitive to and aware of, the ever-changing demands placed on the corporate sector. Also, in regard to long-term contracts, if the sport organization is signing three-year contracts, they will need to be able to offer high profile

pinnacle events within the country each year. This should be taken into consideration early in the relationship and creative programs need to be initiated and put into place to encourage the development of future domestic hockey tournaments, Championships and events.

4. Another important strategy which may help take the financial burden off of the organization (as the CHA has done in recent years), is to actually stagger the sponsorship contracts. This can be done in such a way that if a major sponsor is lost it is not devastating to the financial operation of the organization. Contracts should be set for renewal in a year when there is an abundance of domestic events occurring and when sponsors can be offered extra advertising and promotional opportunities. In this respect it will become more and more important for sport organizations to avoid aligning key sponsorship alliances and hitting contract renewal for a number of contracts in the same year.

5. Brand association opportunities must be clearly outlined in the proposal. Strategies which encourage corporations to align and customize their brand assets with the interests and needs of the end consumer should be emphasized in the initial planning process. Corporate partners must be given the opportunity to customize some aspect of their sponsorship towards their target customers based on individual needs and interests. The program and or promotion needs to involve a connection between the consumer and the brand based on values, attitudes and evolving relationships. This process allows for strong emotional bonds and relationships to be created and enhanced. The sport organization needs to deliver consumer relevant programs which are directly linked to the corporations' sponsorship objectives. In doing this, however, they must also ensure that

they protect their own integrity, by offering programs and events, which provide added value to hockey households and participants.

6. The sport organization is compelled to provide the sponsor with a high degree of servicing and program evaluation, and should always try to exceed expectations. Sport organizations should strive to “over-deliver” throughout the entire process, from the sponsorship acquisition phase to the actual event and/or program execution. Consistency and dependability are important attributes, which need to be projected continually to the corporate partner. The sport organization is expected to make sure that events and programs are executed at an acceptable standard and that the appropriate staff exists to service the corporate accounts.

7. It is becoming more and more important for corporate sponsors to “partner-up” and form alliances and relationships with other corporate partners. When these opportunities arise, corporate sponsors should be consulted by the sport organization to undertake these ventures. It will be important for participating sponsors to have similar corporate objectives. This will allow for a more valuable and effective leveraging of the sponsorship for all parties involved. Sponsorship benefits need to be negotiated in such a way that they meet the needs of the various constituencies involved.

8. In a competitive sales-driven market, it will be important for sport organizations to provide the corporate partner with an opportunity to meet sales objectives. A retail strategy should be included in all sponsorship promotional packages. Retail strategies can be executed both on-site and in the retail outlet. These strategies give corporate sponsors the opportunity to liquidate their sponsorship investment through retail activity. It is also important for the sport organization to realize that even if the



corporate sponsor does not sell their product or service directly to the end consumer, they still have an interest in creating a better relationship with that end consumer. As demonstrated in this case, by creating a two way integrated marketing plan (push and pull), this strategy can add value throughout the entire retail chain and will positively impact sales throughout the retail network. As explained by Peppers and Rogers (1998), Ford Motor Company sells almost all of its cars to dealers, not to consumers, but the marketing staff within Ford recognizes that the drivers of Ford vehicles think of themselves as having a relationship with Ford.

9. As an industry standard, in the increasingly cluttered sport sponsorship arena, it has become very important for sport organizations to provide corporate partners with category exclusivity. This strategy will protect sponsors against industry competition within the same product category. In addition, as the competition to acquire sponsorship for sport properties increases at a rapid rate, it will be necessary to limit the number of sponsors within the corporate sponsorship program. As demonstrated within the CHA support program, it may be more effective to provide added value to a few key "Premier" sponsors who invest more money and are largely involved in programs and events on a greater scale. These sponsors have more invested in the sport property, and all partners involved will reap the rewards.

10. And lastly, in the new "information age" it will become essential to provide sponsors with direct marketing opportunities. As information about participants/spectators/customers becomes increasingly available and more detailed, it will be easier for corporate sponsors to differentiate their products and services. This can be achieved through the creation of organizational databases, member and arena lists or

providing the corporation with the strategies and avenues (via programs and events), to collect more information about their end consumers and prospects in a useful database format. By collecting information on participants and spectators within women's ice hockey these corporate sponsors can make their products and services more and more valuable to their target market through every interaction. Corporate sponsors and sport organizations can use this beneficial information and interaction to create long-term, profitable customer and member relationships.

### **Recommendations for sponsors of women's ice hockey**

1. Since women's hockey is a relatively "new" sport, there will be a number of opportunities to develop new programs and events within the female game, and become the "title" sponsor of these programs. By sponsoring and expanding the distribution of programs, projects, and services within women's ice hockey these sponsors can help to ensure that Canada continues to play a leading role internationally in the game of ice hockey.

2. Since there is presently no professional league for women's ice hockey there will be a number of opportunities in the next ten to fifteen years for sponsors to take part in the establishment of a women's national hockey league. Current CHA corporate sponsors who are involved in the sport from the beginning will have a chance to establish sponsorship equity within the sport and gain a competitive advantage. As these sponsors involve themselves in the professional level of women's ice hockey, they can compliment their current involvement at the national and grassroots levels of the game.

3. Also, since the target market is smaller in size, the women's ice hockey market stands to be more "manageable" and cost effective from a direct or database marketing

perspective. There are a number of existing channels within the CHA corporate support program, which allow corporations to collect participant and member information. By collecting this important information and utilizing it for direct marketing purposes these sponsors stand to reap a number of one-to-one relationship benefits if utilized to their full potential. For instance, more information on this target market will enable these sponsors to provide female CHA members with added-value experiences and structural solutions to “problems” they encounter within the game.

4. CHA corporate sponsors need to take advantage of the assets within women’s ice hockey. For instance, as the game receives more profile in the media, promotional opportunities will continue to rise and more corporate sponsors will want to become involved. By taking a participatory role in the women’s game the literature suggests that these sponsors can take advantage of grassroots image building opportunities, and will have the opportunity to generate sales leads and other personal communications.

5. Sponsors need to promote the fact that the women’s national team has won six (6) consecutive World Championships, and a silver medal at the first Winter Olympics in which women’s ice hockey was played. The women’s national team has dominated the international hockey scene since the first Women’s World Hockey Championship was won in 1990. This accomplishment has been underplayed in the media and needs to be brought to the forefront, if the game is to continue to expand and grow. Corporations need to promote these women as role models to young Canadian female players. As the game increases in popularity and a professional league becomes reality, it will be necessary to attract new talent and develop current players to feed into the professional league.

6. Corporations can use their connections within ice hockey to enhance interest in their own corporate web site. For instance, they could possibly have contest participants go to their web site in order to enter contests (to win trips to different hockey events and championships or win other hockey memorabilia). Corporations could also use this opportunity to collect more information on these members. Corporations could possibly post current hockey results, stats and player profiles on their web site, or any other information that would possibly interest their target market and attract traffic to their site.

7. And finally, corporations need to communicate their needs to the sport organization on a regular basis so they can develop programs to match corporate objectives. This will also allow the sport organization to provide more promotional leveraging opportunities, and execute existing programs and promotions more effectively. Frequent updates and evaluations regarding current sponsorship initiatives would help the sport organization to exceed expectations.

### **Limitations of Design**

Although this study used an interview methodology, the small population of sponsors ( $n = 13$ ) and the small sample ( $n = 8$ ) situate it as a case study of one small sector in the larger sport sponsorship industry in Canada. It is cautioned that as a case study the results were highly contingent on the specific objectives and organizational attributes of the specific companies that participated in the study and cannot readily be generalized to other sectors and companies. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that there are similarities between what was found in this study and in prior research. Additionally, the study was innovative in that it focused on women's ice hockey sponsorship within the CHA's broader sponsorship programs. Finally, it is also

noteworthy that the CHA itself and the companies involved with the CHA, in many respects, demonstrated “best practices” in industry terms. In this sense, therefore, this study provides useful insights into sport sponsorship in Canada generally and into ice hockey, and the women’s program, in particular. At the very least, what has been learned in this research lends itself to being “adapted” to other similar cases in men’s and women’s sports.

### **Recommendations for future research**

There are a number of research areas that could potentially help corporate sponsors and the CHA meet their objectives more effectively. The proposals offered by this study raise practical questions that might be answered through additional research. More information regarding the rapidly growing area of women’s ice hockey in Canada would allow these corporate partners to maximize their sponsorship effectiveness at a more efficient rate.

For instance, it will become increasingly important for the CHA to know who is attending women’s ice hockey games and events. How many spectators attend, are they male or female, what age are they, what kind of hockey background do they come from? Where do they make most of their purchases? What other activities do they enjoy? And who is playing or participating in the game? Any evaluation and/or information taken internally at key events and programs will be a very valuable asset to offer corporate sponsors throughout the hockey season. As stated earlier, it will become essential for corporations to tailor and customize their sponsorship packages to meet the needs and wants of those spectators/participants involved in women’s ice hockey. It is equally

important for corporate partners to form relationships with other sponsors in order to look for areas where cross-promotions can be utilized.

As old contracts expire and new funds are needed it will be essential for the CHA to initiate research surrounding the 'kinds' of corporations who support women's ice hockey. An inventory, database, and description of current sponsors may be useful when targeting new corporate partners. Also, product category gaps can be filled with fresh Canadian corporate support. In addition, to initiate these contracts it will be important to know what the CHA can do for these corporate sponsors that they are not already offering. Additional communication between the corporate partners and the sport organization will be essential as these relationships evolve. It will also be critical to know which product categories are lacking representation and how core programs within the CHA can meet both corporate and organizational needs. For instance, can a beneficial hockey program like the initiation program be turned into a program that offers the sponsor an effective retail and/or promotional strategy? Or similarly, can existing core program components be better designed to meet the needs and objectives of the corporate sponsor and the women's ice hockey community?

Research concerning relationships in regards to the servicing and maintenance of sponsorship contracts should also be ongoing. Evaluations need to be conducted to ensure that the needs of corporate partners are effectively being met. This internal process needs to be updated and monitored on a regular basis in order to ensure contract renewal. Corporate sponsors invest a lot of time and money into sport properties and expect a measurable return on their investments.

Lastly, research focusing on communication breakdown between the CHA head office, the provincial Branches and the community minor hockey associations, in delivering CHA programs to the players and coaches would be very beneficial. Communication gaps within the different CHA organizational levels and the end consumer or program participant need to be attended to immediately as problems arise.

### **Postscript**

With a membership of over 508,414 in 1998-99 and sponsorship revenues in 1997-98 of over \$4,055,000, the CHA corporate sponsorship program is somewhat unique in sports marketing in Canada. The CHA can therefore be seen as demonstrating "best practices", and can be considered as one of the leaders in the Canadian sports industry. This feat has been accomplished by securing many of Canada's top corporations as major sponsors for the game in Canada. In addition, the CHA has negotiated a landmark broadcast agreement, which has resulted in broad advertising exposure for the Canadian Hockey Association's national and international programs since 1990. The unique success of the CHA's sport marketing program is also demonstrated in the increasing numbers of hockey players that become members each year, and continue to participate in the wide selection of hockey development programs.

The continued success of the CHA's corporate support program, however, requires that the CHA membership, the CHA staff and each corporate partner mutually benefit from the relationships taking place, and that these relationships are not taken for granted. There are a number of components that must be present if these partnerships are to continue to grow and prosper. For instance, corporate partners must be willing to adapt their promotional activities, taking into account the constraints of the CHA's

schedule of events and membership centered philosophies. On the other hand the CHA staff needs to be sensitive to the business requirements and sales objectives of the corporate partners.

Based on this research, the Canadian Hockey Association's corporate sponsorship program is three-fold and results in a productive hockey partnership for all parties involved. First of all, these associations allow corporations to meet their key business objectives: sales, advertising and promotion, community involvement and image and awareness. Secondly, corporate alliances allow the CHA to effectively meet its needs, that is, to generate revenue, support core development programs, assist Canadian hockey players and promote the game. And lastly, these hockey partnerships allow for a wide range of Canadians to increase their skills and development in the prominent Canadian game of ice hockey.

Overall, these relationships and alliances deliver quality development programs to young male and female hockey players across the country. Within the context of the CHA, corporate partnerships represent both a promotional opportunity and a source of potential funds. The result of the CHA's approach to sponsorship is an integrated program, which prospers on long-term corporate partnerships involving high levels of corporate investment. Overall, the CHA corporate support system delivers financial support for the game, while providing corporations with equity positioning in the game of Canadian women's ice hockey.



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## Appendix I - Interview Questions

1. What are the overall sponsorship objectives of your corporation?
2. How did you come to be involved in the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA)?
  - ❖ How many years have you been involved?
  - ❖ When did you become involved specifically with the women's program?
3. What are the major objectives of your sponsorship with the CHA?
4. How does women's ice hockey fit into your overall sponsorship plan?
5. What are your major sponsorship objectives for the women's ice hockey program?
6. Who are you trying to reach (key publics)? Who are you targeting? Are there any particular groups you are trying to relate to with this sponsorship?
7. What are the major components of your corporate sponsorship support program?
8. How do these major program components help you meet your objectives?
  - How do you know that it is working?
  - How are you evaluating what you are doing?
  - What benefits are you getting?
9. What specific strategies are you using with your CHA sponsorship to reach your target group(s)?
  - How do you see this directly reaching your customer?
  - Are there any other ways you are communicating with your target group(s) to leverage your sponsorship?
  - How do you stay in contact with your customers?
10. How do you know if these strategies are successful?
  - Do you maintain a database of important customer information?
- Do you measure:
  - The Lifetime Value (LTV) of your customers by recording the total number of financial transactions a customer makes?
  - The recency or that last time a person purchased a product (within a given period of time)?
  - Frequency, or the number of times a customer buys your products within a season or year?
  - The amount of money a customer spends within a season or year?
11. What are some of the advertising and/or promotional materials you have used to promote your sponsorship of the CHA?
  - Can you provide me with some examples of these materials to take with me?
12. What future changes are you anticipating?

## **Appendix II - Interview Protocol**

### **1. Follow-Up Telephone Call for Scheduling Interviews**

#### **Greeting and Introduction**

I: Hello my name is Melissa Westgate and I am a graduate student in the Leisure and Sport Management program at the University of British Columbia.

I: I recently sent you a letter requesting your participation in my study entitled: Corporate Sponsorship Strategies in Canadian Women's Ice Hockey. Did you receive this letter?

**If NO**, ask them if it is best to mail or fax them another copy, and then confirm their address. Briefly explain the purpose of the study and say "I will mail the copy today and re-contact you next week. Is this the best time to reach you?" Thank them for their time.

**If YES**, proceed↓

I: Are you the right person to be talking with about this topic?

**If NO**, ask for the name and address of someone who would be better to interview.

**If YES**, proceed↓

#### **Will they participate?**

I: Would you be willing to be interviewed as part of this study?

**If NO**, politely ask their reason for choosing not to be involved. Would a phone interview better suit them? If they would prefer to do a telephone interview, then schedule a date for a telephone interview and proceed to Purpose of the Study. If there are any other reasons, then thank them for their time and say "If you change your mind for any reason feel free to contact me at (604) 904-3650".

**If YES**, ask if they have already mailed the signed consent form. If they have not yet done so, ask them to please sign and send it, then proceed↓

#### **Purpose of the study**

I: As outlined in the initial contact letter, the purpose of this interview is to identify (name) sponsorship strategies, objectives and the benefits (name) experiences as a result of your support of the Canadian women's ice hockey program in the fiscal year 1998/99.

#### **Setting up an interview time and place**

I: I will be in Toronto conducting interviews the week of the \_\_\_\_\_. Are you available this week?

I: What day is best for you? What time would you like to meet? Where would you like me to meet you? (Get exact address and meeting place)

#### **Thank-you and closing**

I: Thank-you for your time and cooperation, I will be looking forward to meeting (talking to) with you. See you on (date) at (time). The interview will last about 1 hour I will send/ you a package prior to the interview that outlines the area's we will be covering and some background information on the study. Thanks again (name). Talk to you again soon.

### **2. Interview**

#### **Greeting - Front Desk**

I: Hello, I'm Melissa Westgate from the University of British Columbia and I have an appointment with (name) at (time).

**Greeting - Interviewee**

Shake hands,

I: Hello (name) thank-you for meeting with me today. I'm Melissa and I will be conducting the interview. Your knowledge and expertise in this area will help me a lot. Where would you like to conduct the interview?

**Study purpose**

I: The purpose of this study is to identify the sponsorship strategies, objectives and benefits of the Canadian women's ice hockey support program.

I: Do you have any questions so far, regarding the study?

**Outline the interview procedures**

I: I will be tape-recording the interviews. It will last approximately 1 hour.

**Confidentiality Issues**

I: Any information resulting from this research study will be kept strictly confidential. All documents will be identified by code number and will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Your name will not be identified in any reports of the completed study.

**Right to withdraw from the study at any time**

I: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. You also have the right to refuse to answer any questions, or ask for clarification before proceeding with the interview.

**Tape-recorder procedures**

I: As I stated in the initial letter of contact, the interview will be tape-recorded. I will let you know when the tape recorder is turned on and off. Is using the tape recorder ok?

**Sitting down and ready to start**

I: Do you have any questions before we begin?

**If NO**, begin by turning on the tape recorder and ask the first question.

**If YES**, answer the questions before beginning.

**Interview Techniques:****Probing**

I: How do you mean that?

I: Tell me more about that?

I: Anything else?

I: Could you say something more about that?

I: Can you give me a more detailed description of what happened?

I: Do you have further examples of this?

**Transitions**

I: I would now like to introduce another topic...

I: Okay. Now there is another issue I wanted to ask you about. It is...

**Interpretation**

I: You then mean that...?

I: Could you give me a concrete instance of that, a time that actually happened?

**Helping respondents develop information**



*Extending.* The researcher might want to know what led to an incident. Questions that ask for this include I: "How did that start?" "What led to that?" Or you might want to know the consequences of an incident: "Could you go on with that? What happened next?"

*Filling in Detail.* The researcher might want more detail than the respondent has provided. A useful question could be

I: "Could you walk me through it?" or "I need you to be as detailed as possible."

*Identifying Actors.* The researcher might want to learn the social context of an incident, the other people who were there. You could ask

I: "who else is involved and what do they do?"

### **Last question**

#### **Who should I contact after the interview?**

I: If I need further clarification on anything after reviewing the interview tape, should I contact you? Who should I contact?

#### **Thank them for participating**

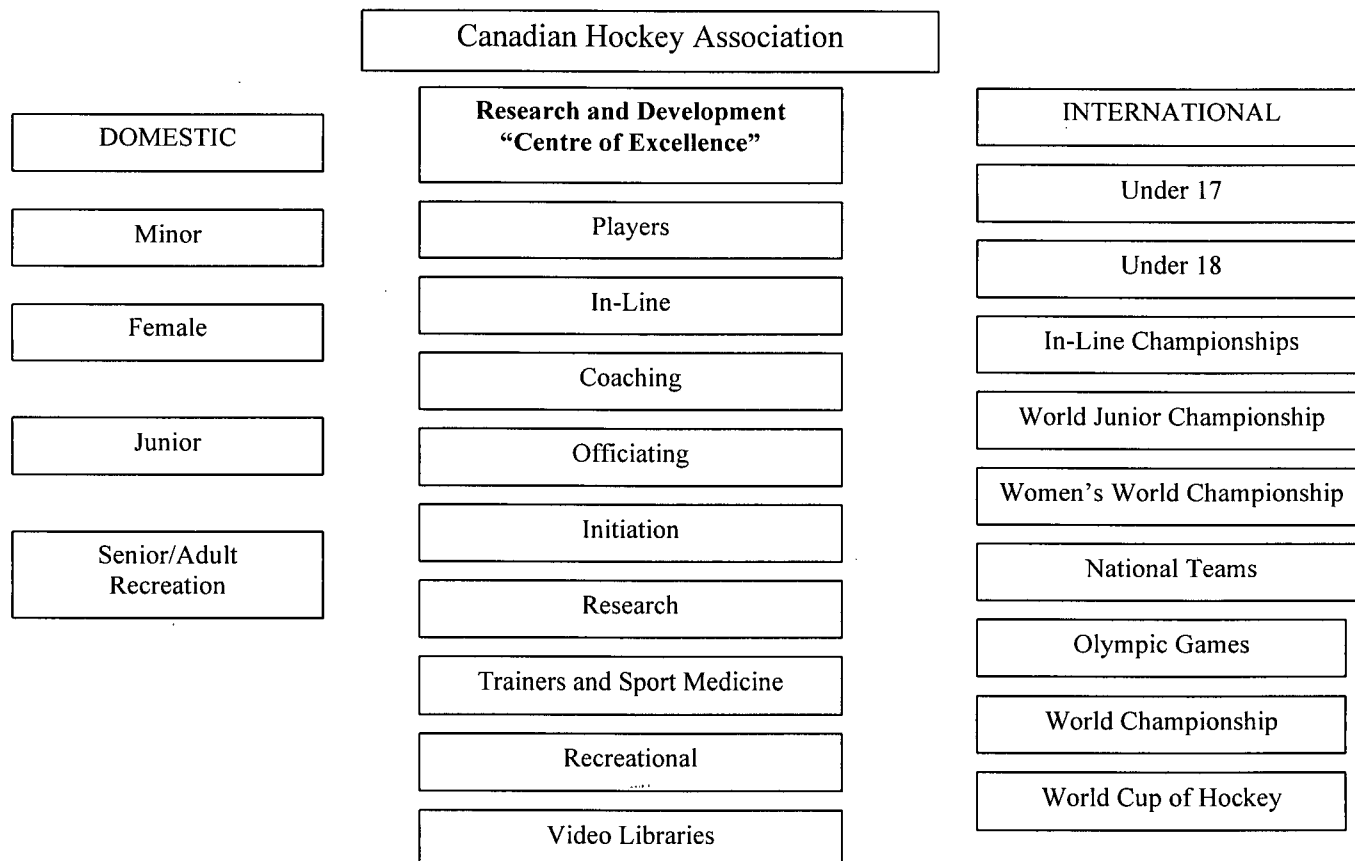
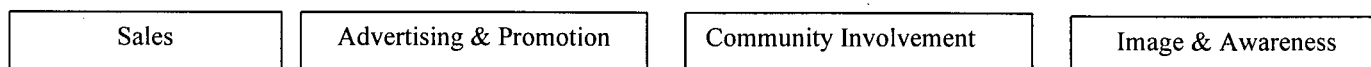
I: Thank-you for participating in my study. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at anytime, my phone number is on your consent form.

## Appendix IV - Study Timeline

Description	Interviewees	Location	Date
Information Gathering – Informal Meetings with CHA Staff	3 CHA Staff Members: ●Marketing and Promotions ●Hockey Development ●Women's National Team Manager	CHA Head Office Calgary	November 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> 1998
Information Gathering - Informal Meetings with CHA Staff	2 CHA Staff Members: ●Female Development ●Marketing and Sponsorship	CHA Head Office Calgary	April 22 <sup>nd</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> 1999
Thesis Proposal	Committee Members: ●Bob Sparks ●Wendy Frisby ●Chuck Wienberg	UBC	May 11 <sup>th</sup>
Ethics Forms were submitted	Office of Research Services and Administration	UBC	May 25 <sup>th</sup>
Ethical Approval Received	Behavioural Research Ethics Board	UBC	June 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1999
Pilot Testing re: Interview Questions	2 Sponsorship Consultants 1 Marketing representative from a local Brewery	Vancouver	June 11 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup>
Initial Letters of Contact sent	4 Premier CHA Sponsors 1 Official Broadcaster 8 Associate CHA Sponsors 1 CHA Marketing Staff	Vancouver	July 5, 1999
Follow up phone Calls - set up interviews	Sponsors	Vancouver	Week of July 19 <sup>th</sup>
Interviews – Data Collection	3 Premier Sponsors 5 Associate Sponsors 1 CHA Marketing Staff	Toronto Markham Windsor London Missassauga Calgary	July 26-August 6 <sup>th</sup>
Transcription of Interviews		Vancouver	August 15 <sup>th</sup> – September 1 <sup>st</sup>

## Appendix V - CHA Corporate Sponsorship

### CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP STRATEGIES & OBJECTIVES



### CHA SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS

