Original Article

Ambush marketing and RTM as a dangers for sport organisations

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Published online: April 30, 2020

(Accepted for publication: April 15, 2020)

DOI:10.7752/jpes.2020.s2157

Abstract:

Carrying out marketing activities during sporting events is an indispensable way to display the image of a sponsor, partner or event organizer. If an entity is involved in creating the event, then gaining profits from it is justified. However, impersonating the event sponsor and attempting to build a competitive advantage on it is not in line with accepted standards. The issue in question, *i.e.*, ambush marketing, has already been described many times, however there are still no publications that would present the threats related to new technologies and the implications for sports organizations. Therefore, the major objective of this article is to define the threats to sport organizations in connection with the use of ambush marketing by external entities. Subject literature analysis was adopted as the research method, the conclusions of which will allow defining the most important aspects protecting sports organizers against the phenomenon of ambush marketing. When discussing ambush marketing, one omits the area of his activity in social media. Real-Time Marketing (RTM), which mainly works on the Internet, according to the "be the first" principle, which will subtly refer to a given event / event is a major threat to the organizers of sporting events. Real Time Marketing is often implemented by entities that are not sponsors of a given event, want to get as much coverage as possible through a creative post or advertisement, which is so valued in social media. Therefore, the main goal of the article is to show how RTM (which can be used as part of ambush marketing practices) poses a threat to sports organizations.

KeyWords: ambush marketing, sport, management, marketing, sponsorship, e-sport, RTM

Introduction

When describing ambush marketing, the authors most often refer to major sporting events. When Coca-Cola or Visa being global partners of the Olympic Games, in their image campaigns emphasize the support of the Olympic movement, it is difficult to expect that their main competitors - Pepsi and MasterCard for the period of the Games will exclude themselves from marketing activities. Creative agencies are even more encouraged by trying to 'impersonate' the overall atmosphere of the event, by attempting to convince the recipient in their advertising messages that they also support the event. The fact that (in the case of the Olympic Games) the IOC is attempting to safeguard its and sponsors' interests is quite understandable, which is set out in Article 14 of the Olympic Card (Olympic Card, p. 24) dealing with securing Olympic designations - and not only through vision and sound. The article also protects associations related to the Olympic movement, which cannot be used by entities not associated with the IOC. Obviously, due to a lack of 'intuition' in the violation of the IOC's interests, there were reported cases such as blocking the idea of the Municipal Transport Company in the town of Zamość, which during the Winter Olympic Games 2014 changed the name of a bus stop from 'Królowej Jadwigi' (Queen Jadwiga) into 'Królowej Justyny' (Queen Justyna) and of a housing estate from 'Osiedle Słoneczny Stok' (The Sunny Slope Housing Estate) into 'Osiedle Słoneczny Stoch' (The Sunny Stoch Housing Estate). The order for the transport company to remove the markings in Zamość resulted from the breach of the Article 40 of the Olympic Charter, more often referred to as *Rule 40* (Olympic Charter, p. 77), where the implementing rules clearly state that [...] no player, activist or other team personnel who participates in the Olympic Games may not allow the use of their person, name, image or sports results for advertising purposes during the Olympic Games [...].

Obviously, ambush marketing is not only about major events, and it is not used in sports exclusively, either. One of Allegro's actions serves as an example of non-sporting use of ambush marketing. Its airship branded with a shopping platform was visible in the sky during the Heineken Open'er Festival. It is worth paying attention to the costs of sponsorship and the use of ambush marketing - sometimes it may be cheaper for a potential sponsor to 'impersonate' the partner of the event instead of signing a contract with the organizer.

Ambush marketing in research - economic aspect

Ambush marketing was first defined as an organization's planned campaign (effort), which aims to be indirectly associated with the event in order to gain recognition and/or benefits that accompany [the official]

sponsor (Sandler, Shani, 1989, p. 11) . In turn, S. Chadwick and N. Burton defined the concept as marketing activities of a brand that seeks to use the attention, awareness, customer capital and goodwill generated by its association with an event or property that goes beyond the official or authorized rights provided by that event or ownership (organization) (Chadwick and Burton, 2011, p. 714). Due to the fact that the implementation of ambush marketing strategies varies depending on the organization (ambusher), the intensity and balancing on the border of the law (more or less legal actions), N. Burton and S. Chadwick in 2018 proposed yet another division of the ambush marketing strategy into incursion, obtrusion, and association. The first type (*i.e.*, incursive ambushing) is defined by the authors as aggressive, predatory or invasive activity of the brand, which has no official or legal possibility to use the event/property, which aims to threaten, undermine or divert attention from the event or the official sponsor of the event (Burton , Chadwick, 2018, 289). An example of such an action is the Pepsi campaign 'Oh Africa' referring to the FIFA 2010 World Cup in South Africa where Coca-Cola was the official sponsor of the event. Pepsi's commercials at the time featured Henry, Messi, Drogba, Arshavin, Lampard and Kaká who were playing football together on a quickly prepared square of one of the African villages, or Messi who played with meerkats positioning themselves as defenders.

N. Burton and S. Chadwick define obtrusive ambushing as a visible or undesirably visible marketing activity of a brand that has no official or legal possibility to use the event/property, which may intentionally or accidentally undermine or divert attention from the official sponsor of the event by another brand (Burton, Chadwick, 2018, 289). An example would be the Biedronka's 'We are all a national team' campaign run in 2011-2012, which, unlike the incursive ambushing, does not necessarily have to compete with the rival being (in this case) the sponsor of the UEFA EURO 2012 European Football Championship .

The last type of ambush distinguished by the researchers is the associative ambushing understood as a brand test that has no official or legal possibility to use the event, or to suggest or create an allusion that it is related to the event (Burton, Chadwick, 2018, 289). An example is the German airline Lufthansa, which used the finals of the FIFA 2006 World Cup in Germany through a promotional campaign entitled 'LH2006'. As part of this campaign, customers could win championship tickets by playing the lottery based on airline tickets purchased. An additional activity was painting the football symbol with 40 beaks of Lufthansa aircraft as well as transporting their national team (although Emirates Airlines was the official sponsor) (Leonfarr, 2015) Another example of using this associative approach is the sponsorship of national teams by a sponsor other than the sponsor of the event in which the players participate (Shi Qiang Sim, 2015).

Polish authors also undertake research on ambush marketing activities. Z. Waśkowski defines this term as intentional actions of an enterprise - which is not a sponsor - aimed at ensuring that public opinion associates it with an ongoing sporting event and treats it as an official sponsor (Waśkowski 2009, 482). He also noticed a threat to organizers of sporting events (especially international and national tournaments and international matches) where ambush marketing activities can be used by companies that cannot afford to sponsor sporting events or intentionally bypassing the high costs of official sponsorship (Waśkowski 2009a, 482; 2009b). A. Sznajder (2012) points out that ambush marketing threatens the effectiveness of sponsorship. M. Piątkowska, J. Zyśko, S. Gocłowska (Piątkowska, Zyśko, Gocłowska 2009) did a literature review of over 21,000 articles on ambush marketing published in the time period 1984-2013.

A. Mikołajczyk (Mikołajczyk 2009), citing M.A. McDonald and G.R. Milne, noticed that among the most popular methods of diverting customer attention from competing brands (event sponsors) the following four predominate:

- purchase of advertising time before, after and during the event broadcast,
- organization of competitions for clients or other forms of promotion related to the event or its location,
- negotiating a sponsorship agreement with a sports team, individual athlete or organization that takes part in the competition,
- placing ads in and around the venue (McDonald, Milne 1999, 188).

One of the ways to counteract ambush marketing practices described by N. Burton and S. Chadwick (Burton, Chadwick 2008) is to implement (1) proactive strategies, such as (a) combining event sponsorship and event television broadcasting, (b) counteracting the potential activity of competition, (c) the adoption of legal acts against ambush marketing and (2) reactive strategies (a) 'name and shame', (b) initiating legal proceedings (Piątkowska, Gocłowska 2015, p. 61; Piątkowska, Gocłowska 2016).

J. Kończak and M. Gębarowski in their articles also refer to the phenomenon of ambush marketing oscillating in the communication activities zone during Euro 2016 (Kończak 2016) and describing ambush marketing activities before Euro 2012 (Gębarowski 2013). In turn, E. Baranowska-Prokop (2014) focused on indicating ethical problems and violations of intellectual property rights related to ambush marketing.

Ambush marketing in research - legal aspect

There are a lot of publications available on the market that describe the phenomenon of ambush marketing in terms of legal provisions, such as a work by S. Townley, D. Harrington and N. Couchman, describing legal and practical possibilities of protection against ambush marketing (Townley, Harrington, Couchman 1998), or by N. Shi Qiang Sim, who points to the problem of clarifying regulations so that they sufficiently protect against ambush marketing practices (Shi Qiang Sim, 2015). One of the most valuable publications for global brands is

that of G. Berger-Walliser. M. Stallings-Williams, B. Walliser and M. Bender entitled 'Bavarian Blondes Don't Need a Visa: A Comparative Law Analysis of Ambush Marketing' (Berger-Walliser *et al.*, 2012) comparing the legal status in the area of ambush marketing in such countries as Australia, the United States, Canada and Germany. Obviously, the legal status has changed since its publication, but the idea of creating a kind of guide for international institutions is absolutely justified. D.L Ellis, M.M. Parent, B. Seguin (2016) focused in their research on the impact of sponsors and the IOC itself on the implementation of legislative procedures to protect these organizations against ambush marketing practices within the competition area (and the entire country as well).

Polish authors are also interested in the above topics in the aspect of legal solutions. Z. Pinkalski (2011) analysed the legal assessment of the phenomenon of ambush marketing in the perspective of the upcoming Euro 2012. M. Pleban (2016) focused on compliance of ambush marketing activities based on the provisions of April 16, 1993 on combating unfair competition. Moreover, the researcher analysed the possibility of violations of the provisions of June 30, 2000 Industrial Property Law when using ambush marketing. The article published by the *prawosportowe.pl* portal entitled 'Sponsorship and ambush marketing' (*prawosportowe.pl*, 2016) is presented in a similar tone.

Ambush marketing and sport organizations

Ambush marketing activities are often carried out using mass media, such as the aforementioned 'event broadcast sponsorship', which does not necessarily mean that the advertiser has the status of an official competition partner. However, we also have unconventional outdoor activities related to guerrilla marketing, *i.e.*, the use of (urban) space for marketing purposes. It is worth noting, however, that guerrilla marketing cannot be directly combined only with ambush marketing. One of the examples of the use of guerrilla marketing was a situation when the organizer of the European Handball Championships EHF Euro 2016 changed bus stops in the city of Katowice into handball goals.

The problem faced by cities which host large events, and also manage the sports facilities where the competition is held, is the 'suspension of naming rights', *i.e.*, suspension of the rights to use the commercial name of the object. During the EuroBasket Women 2011 European Basketball Championship, basketball players played in the Arena Łódź Hall, not in the Atlas Arena Hall. The same problem concerned also the Allianz Arena in Munich and the Commerzbank-Arena in Frankfurt, where during the 2006 FIFA World Cup, the stadiums had to temporarily change their name to 'The FIFA World Cup Stadium Munich' and 'The FIFA World Cup Stadium Frankfurt'. This was due to the fact that FIFA also acquired the right to name objects (*i.e.*, naming rights) during the championships, which is due to the limited promotion of sponsors who are not an official partner of the competition.

When considering ambush marketing, researchers rarely pay attention to its use in the Internet. Most often, an ambusher buys advertising spots (banners) on sports pages during major events. However, more effective action is the use of Real-Time Marketing (RTM), which is a response to current events. There are plentiful examples of RTM. Let us quote a situation where the marketing agency responsible for social media of the Żywiec Group creates a lot of such content (Figure 1) referring to the football champions cup, the victory of Anita Włodarczyk in the hammer throw, or the world cup in ski jumping.

Figure 1. Examples of Real-Time Marketing activities of the Żywiec Group

Source: Facebook profile: <https://www.facebook.com/ZywiecMeskimZdaniem> (access: 11.11.2019)

Another example of activities related to Real-Time Marketing is the use by the Audi marketing department of the moment when during the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Sochi the last circle did not ignite – it was the fifth Olympic circle. It did not take long for Audi to publish in social media an advertising slogan 'when four wheels is all you need'.

Interestingly, the creations created as part of Real-Time Marketing are not restricted only to organizations focused mainly on selling publicly available or international products. During the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, the National Museum in Warsaw was active on social media, commenting on Senegal's victory with Poland with Jacek Malczewski's painting 'A boy covering his eyes'. Professionalism in the museum's activities can also be seen in the comments below the post, where, when asked 'what painting was prepared for the situation when Poles win', the profile administrators replied that they would present the canvas by Józef Brandt 'Cossack Wedding' (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Real-Time Marketing as performed by the National Museum in Warsaw
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/MuzeumNarodowe/>

Returning, however, to the threats caused by ambush marketing, Table 1 contains entities that are a platform for sponsorship activities as part of the official partnership of enterprises (sponsors) as well as a field for ambushers. Looking from the perspective of the developing e-sport, whose sections also arise at traditional sports clubs, and e-gaming events bring together hundreds of recipients (including on-line ones), this was necessary to add this aspect. As T.B. Cornwell noted, e-sports are an ideal area for ambusher activities (e.g., a sponsor of gaming competitions in which players play FIFA at the same time period when the championships take place). Another problem, especially for sports clubs, is the diversity of sponsors at the level of club, league and sports facility where matches take place, and which is usually owned by the municipal government. Of course, it is hard to talk about sponsorship of the league on the Polish market just to 'impersonate' club sponsorship. However, when there is a match between teams whose main sponsors are companies in the same industry, the same techniques as for ambush marketing are used.

Table 1. Ambush marketing and sport organizations

No.	Entity	Sponsor	Ambusher	Problem	Threat/result
1.	International Sports Federation (sporting event)	titular, technical, logistic	direct competition of sponsors	- insufficient protection regarding the exclusive interest of the sponsor, including separate rights to television broadcasts, the possibility of appearing in clothes branded by a brand other than the official sponsor of the IO	- lower advertising equivalent, - reducing the sponsor's brand visibility, - reduction of the sponsor's budget for subsequent events - use of RTM and guerrilla marketing by ambushers
2	a) The International Sports Federation (sporting event) b) Sports facility c) Sports club d) Outdoor event (long distance running)	-	companies	- the amount of sponsorship packages is too high	- implementing cheaper activities based on ambush marketing such as giving out gadgets to participants with the ambusher logo or using RTM and guerrilla marketing

3.	a) The International Sports Federation (event, tournament) b) Sports club	titular, technical, logistic	direct competition of sponsors using in their activities cooperation with the e-sport community	- possibility of using games and players of e-sports section (e.g., FIFA) to promote sponsors other than official partners during the streaming (product placement, advertising placement)	- reduction of official sponsor brand visibility
4.	Sports facility	titular, under naming rights	enterprises, including direct competition	- the possibility of renting free VIP lounges, - the ambusher is the sponsor of the match	- reducing the visibility of the sponsor's brand
5.	Sport Club	titular, in the team name	league sponsor	- duplication of official sponsors (club and league) can create confusion regarding the rank of sponsors and a decrease in the value of one of them	- resignation of the club's sponsor

Source: Own study based on Brownlee, Greenwell, Moorman 2018; Burton, Snyder, McKelvey 2018; Cornwell 2017; Frey, Ertz, Buttgen 2015; Koenigstorfer, Uhrich 2017; Palomba 2011; Richman 2010; Waśkowski 2009; Weeks, O'Connor, Martin 2017, Tomanek 2019.

Conclusion

Looking at the growing activity of brands on the internet that use influencers (youtubers, instagramers, etc.) to place their product, it can be concluded that preventing ambush marketing practices can be extremely difficult. Therefore, the marketing departments of sports organizations will have to focus in the near future on strengthening the image of their sponsors, creating unconventional solutions. Also, one of the solutions is building a marketing alliance with a sponsor, which will clearly define its links with a sports organization.

The article presents a list of sport organizations and threats related to ambush marketing practices. It is believed that the use of ambush marketing is cheaper than sponsorship of the event, hence there is a justified fear that some sponsors may take advantage of such action. The budget of advertising agencies dealing with Real Time Marketing is even lower (mainly due to the use of marketing space only in social media), hence there may be a fear that many companies will want to use in their campaign the event of their non-sponsored event (just like Audi did) at the Olympic Games in Sochi). What is worth paying attention to is the fact that RTM will not necessarily cause the main sponsors to leave. However, due to the "communication chaos" in which many brands inform about the event (as RTM), it can cause the sponsor's recognition to be dispersed.

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