

## Is sponsorship planning on a par with 'classic' media planning?

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**Jean-Baptiste Felten** started his career in the late 1980s in advertising, with a focus on building global brands such as BMW, Montblanc and ABB Asea Broen Boveri Ltd. Early on, he used non-classical tools for establishing awareness and image as well as generating sales for the entrusted brands, eg the 'Prix Montblanc de la Literature' as well as sponsorship of the Salzburg Festival and the Rio Summit for Sustainable Development for ABB. He joined CWL, the sports marketing agency now known as Infront, in 1994 and was engaged for five years in the management board of the company. In 1999, J.-B. Felten founded Felten & Compagnie AG, a Swiss-based consultancy, and in 2007 he became partner of Frankfurt-based Mussler & Felten. Both agencies focus on content-driven communication in the field of sports, culture, science and social responsibility. Mr Felten is a founding member of FASPO and serves as its Vice President. In this capacity he initiated market analysis sponsoring.

### ABSTRACT

Market analysis sponsoring integrates sponsorship issues into existing consumer market research tools, allowing for sponsorship planning to be integrated with the very same tools used for print and online media planning Fachverband für Sponsoring und Sonderwerbformen (FASPO). Initiated by the sponsorship association of the German-speaking countries, the Swiss central institution for advertising media research in print and online, AG für Werbemedienforschung (WEMF),

enclosed a broad set of sponsorship-related questions in its standard consumer research with a sample size of 11,000 interviews. The results of this research, in a single source approach, can be correlated with two further research studies WEMF has provided to the advertising market, covering all aspects of consumers' product interest, media usage and buying behaviour etc, thus allowing for sponsorship planning on a par with 'classic' media planning in Switzerland.

**Keywords:** *integrated sponsorship planning, research tools, media planning*

### INTRODUCTION

Is sponsorship planning on a par with 'classic' media planning? Yes. The new Swiss market analysis (MA) sponsoring tool integrates sponsorship issues into the classic media planning tools, making for an interesting perspective.

Efficient marketing communication is based on facts. Over the decades, it has become the norm for the media finance market to research these facts and share the finding with the brands, which in return book their advertisements with those media — thus contributing to the funding of future research. Such systems have become the standard in most countries throughout the world, satisfying the needs of all partners in the market and growing steadily with the rise of new



media. In the sponsorship market, to date, a comparable system is not in place. Although Sportfive, the Paris and Hamburg based sports-rights agency, does finance and publish research data on the target audiences of certain sports as well as on the affinity of such constituencies to given brands (eg the European Football Study and the German Affinity Study), this certainly falls short with regard to providing the market with the same in-depth facts available for classic media planning and marketing.

Research data regarding sponsorship evaluation and planning, in the past, were only accessible at prohibitive costs. Even if a sponsor or a rights holder did decide to invest money for gathering data through specific market research, the findings could not be correlated with existing market research studies, eg with media planning data for print, television, online etc, thus pre-empting the market to argue on the same qualitative level as classic media. One of the arguments was the fact that sponsorships are often still not regarded as a 'sincere' and efficient tool in marketing and corporate communications, limiting the market share of sponsorships of the total communication investments in a given country. As the current economic climate will force brands to prove the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of their investments even more than in the past, a new planning tool — MA sponsoring — to be presented to the Swiss market this summer, will arrive just in time to provide the Swiss sponsorship community with clear and concise arguments in favour of sponsorships as a communication tool.

### SWISS COMMUNICATION PLANNING TOOLS

Media planning in Switzerland has always been supported by high-quality

tools, provided to the market by AG für Werbemedienforschung (WEMF, the Corporation for Media and Advertising Research, covering printed media and the internet). WEMF, a non-profit organisation financed by the media, is an institution jointly governed by the media, advertisers and other participants of the communication market. It offers, among other services, three research tools, delivering the basis for developing communication strategies and concepts as well as media planning and buying in Switzerland (see Figure 1):

- MACH Basic ( $n = 24,000$ ), covering information on the reach and readers of printed media;
- MACH Consumer ( $n = 11,000$ ), informing on the sociodemographic aspects, product and leisure time interests and the buying behaviour of the Swiss as well as on brand awareness and image of products and services;
- MACH Radar ( $n = 11,000$ ), providing insights on psychological aspects and the attitudes of the Swiss population as well as on the images of media.

( $n =$  sample size, the Swiss population aged 14–69 years consists of 5,848 million people).

Besides the above mentioned studies, WEMF also provides the basic data for the evaluation and planning of cinema advertising and recently formed a joint venture covering the online market: NET-Matrix AG. In doing so, WEMF works towards creating an integrated platform, allowing inter-media comparison out of a single database. Besides enhancing efficiency in the evaluation and planning process, this also assures an optimal usage of funds available for research as no data will be collected twice and most data can be correlated. Last, but not least, WEMF regularly publishes the

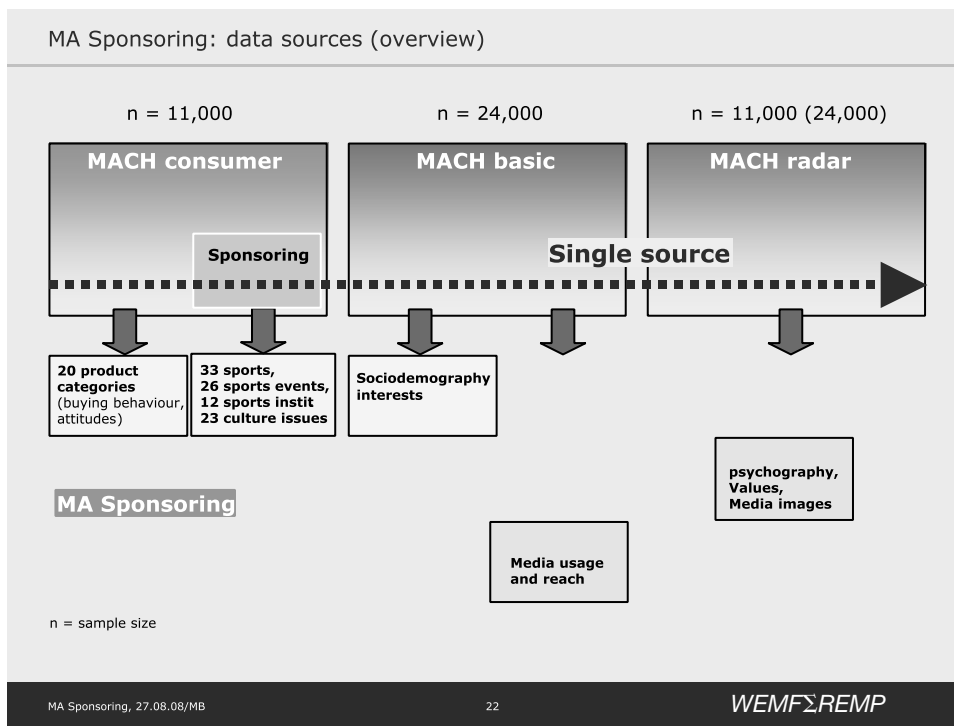


Figure 1  
Accessibility of the three MA sponsoring data sources allows the correlation of sponsorship issues with any other data gathered by WEMF

official Swiss Advertising Statistic which informs on spending in the various media categories (print, electronic, outdoor, cinema and direct marketing).

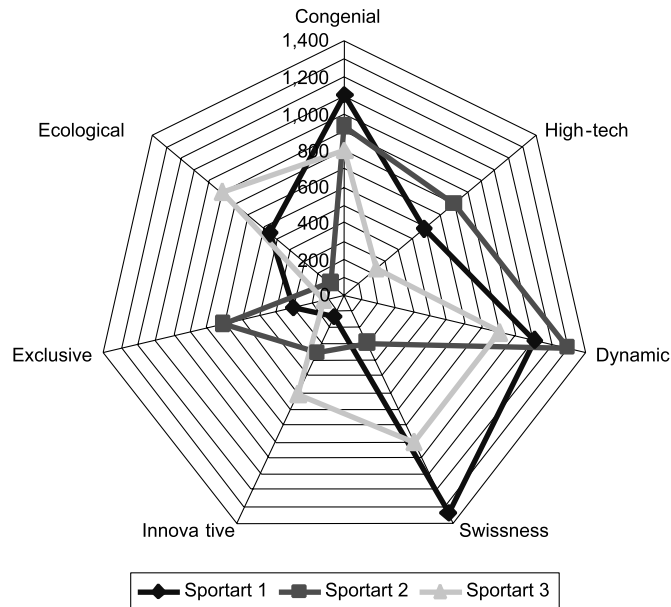
### SINGLE SOURCE APPROACH

Since the late 1980s, integrated communication has evolved as a standard in marketing communication. Thus it was a natural strategy to address the issue of sponsorship planning to WEMF, aiming at a single source philosophy, allowing online access to all three research studies and correlation of the data as needed. The substantial sample sizes assure a very high quality, covering every part of society as well as every region of the country. This was the reason why the Fachverband für Sponsoring und Sonderwerbeformen (FASPO), the sponsorship association uniting brands, rights holders

and companies servicing the sponsorship market of the German-speaking European countries, addressed WEMF in 2006 in order to initiate sponsorship issues to be included into WEMF's research tools. The project was presented to WEMF's board as well as to other stakeholders (eg the Swiss Ministry of Sports and event organisers) and three early-mover brands (Axpo, COOP and Orange) were convinced to contribute to the financing of the first MA sponsoring.

The first questions on sponsorship-related issues were included in the MACH consumer questionnaire which went into the field in 2008 (see the Appendix). Besides the Swiss sports and cultural activities regarding visits to such events as well as their interest and media usage in regard to such issues regarding events, the image attributes for sports, cultural issues as well as for the leading sports institutions (eg

*Figure 2*  
 Comparison of the image attributes of three different sports, based on data from MA sponsoring



federations and leagues, see Figure 2) and sports events (eg International Lauberhorn Ski Race and Davidoff Swiss Indoors) were covered. Fieldwork was finished in spring 2009, and the tools will be ready for usage at the latest by autumn 2009.

**ENHANCED QUALITY AND SERVICE FOR ALL MARKET PARTNERS**

In initiating MA sponsoring, FASPO lived up to its mission to optimise service and quality in the sponsorship market and thus enhance the share of sponsorships within the total communication spend. MA sponsoring will enable sponsors to enhance the accuracy, efficiency and effectiveness of the strategic and conceptual aspects of their sponsorships as well as the planning of integrated communication campaigns in conjunction with such sponsorships. For sponsees, MA sponsoring offers the unique opportunity to precisely evaluate all aspects of their constituencies and thus will provide them

with arguments for convincing potential sponsors (eg product interests and brand affinity of constituencies) as well as insights for optimising their own marketing communications (eg image and awareness, media planning etc). Of course, the tool can also be used for 'product development' by sponsees, eg by gaining insights into constituencies which do not yet attend their events or by creating merchandising products in categories their fans and event visitors are interested in. The following examples illustrate the benefits of MA sponsoring.

**From a sponsor's perspective**

Sponsors can, for example, evaluate costs per event contact in regard to very precisely defined target audiences (sociodemographic combined with psychographic criteria, see Figure 3). Of course, MA sponsoring also allows the evaluation of sales potential in matching the constituencies' product interest with a given content or event.

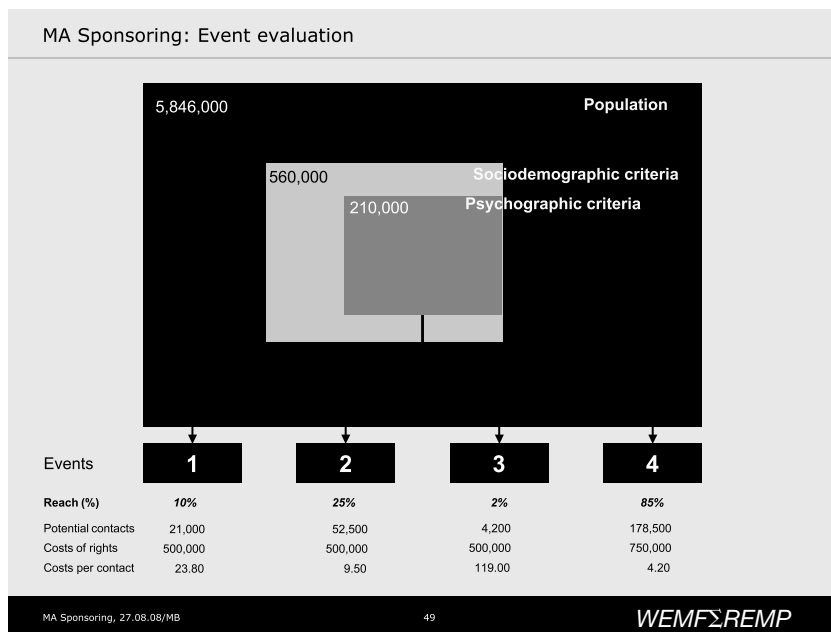


Figure 3 A sponsor needs to evaluate costs per personal contact for a given sports-event sponsorship, on the basis of a precisely defined target audience

The benefits provided by MA sponsoring are obvious. Cost-efficiency will be enhanced through precise evaluations as well as through data useful in negotiations with rights holders. Integrated communication of sponsorships can be executed precisely, defining those media which are of relevance. On the basis of the relatively huge size of the research sample, geographical campaign planning can also be done with a precision never matched before, which is very useful information for insurance or other financial services with numerous outlets throughout the country as well as for retailers. As information on consumers' interest for a given sports or cultural issue or event is not only generated in regard to information gathered by the constituencies through the media but also in regard to their willingness to visit such events, MA sponsoring can also provide valuable input for relationship marketing and hospitality.

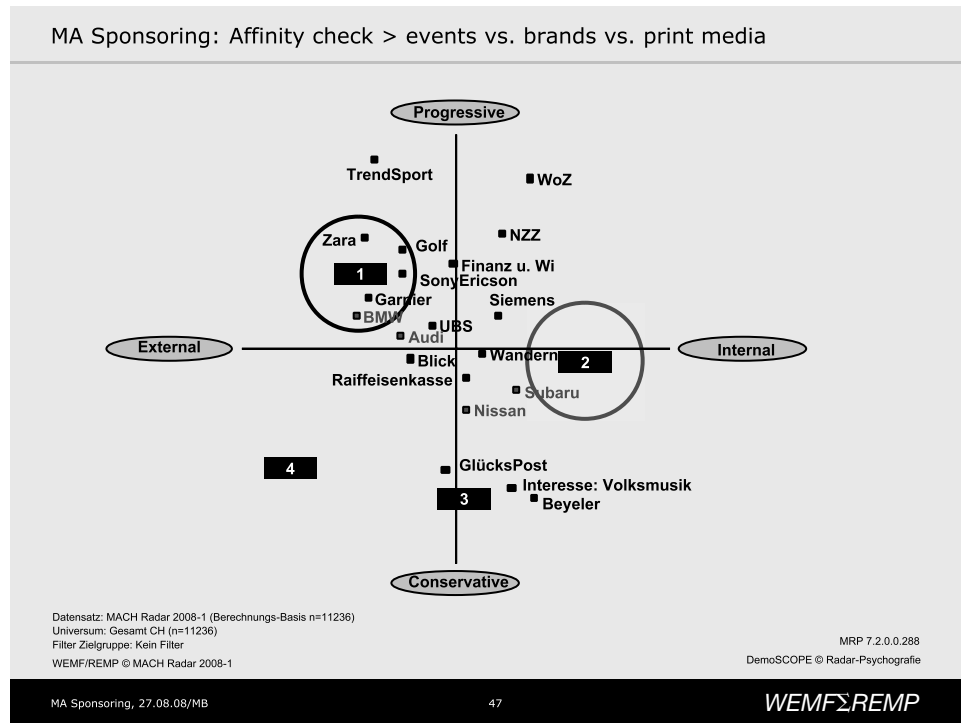
### From a sponsee's perspective

An event can detect brands as well as media which have a comparable positioning in order to optimise the positioning of the event itself as well as to prepare sales of sponsorships and media cooperation in an optimal way. Sizes of constituencies of such events (the number of visitors to such venues) as well as the media usage of this target audience can be defined precisely. In addition, of course, rights holders can compare people's interest in their event as well as their image versus that of their competitors (see Figure 4). Of course, sponsees can also use MA sponsoring for developing their product with new segments of the population as well as new regions in Switzerland.

### WHAT MA SPONSORING CANNOT DELIVER

The new tool is not designed to provide information in regard to the assessment of

Figure 4 MA sponsoring provides clear, readable information which not only optimises planning for all parties involved but facilitates communication through state-of-the-art graphics



effects generated by a given sponsorship. Information on reach or contacts, changes in a brand's image, sales generated or the satisfaction with a given hospitality programme cannot be delivered. Sponsors will need to continue to carry out their own research in this regard in order to control effectiveness and efficiency of their investments.

### WHAT COMES NEXT?

MA sponsoring will change the way in which sponsorships will be planned, evaluated and communicated in the Swiss market. What remains to be seen is the reaction of rights holders, especially in the field of culture. While the 14 leading sports events are already included in the current MA sponsoring, cultural institutions as well as the Swiss Ministry of Culture so far have not shown interest in

participating in the research. Therefore FASPO and WEMF will need to convince these stakeholders of the benefits of MA sponsoring. In order to provide a complete overview on the issues of interest to the Swiss, socially and ecologically oriented institutions should be represented in the study as well. However, FASPO is optimistic of convincing these institutions of the benefits that can be derived from being represented in MA sponsoring. For the sports institutions and events already included in MA sponsoring's first edition, the research will show what they have to offer to potential sponsors. Thus, the fact of being included in the study could become a sort of quality label for such events and institutions. Another axis for development is the integration of MA sponsoring with tools like PerforMind™, the online sponsorship evaluation, planning and management

tool. Although an automatic exchange of the data from MA sponsoring into PerforMind™ is not possible yet, this is another interesting perspective.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of MA sponsoring's first results at the beginning of 2009, the strength and flexibility of the new tool have been experienced. The author is more than ever convinced that the concept of MA sponsoring does create benefits for the sponsorship market, in ensuring that sponsorship planning is now

on a par with classic media planning. Especially in the current economic climate, the new tool will help to bolster a decline in sponsorship spending by providing information and arguments for both sponsors and rights holders.

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## APPENDIX

Presented here are the issues included in the questionnaire (interest, visit to the venue, use of media to inform oneself about an issue, image of a given issue etc).

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### *Sports*

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#### *Events*

- FIS Ski World Cup Adelboden
- Int. Lauberhornrennen Wengen
- Engadin Skimarathon
- Coop City-Sprints
- Spengler Cup Davos
- Allianz Suisse Open Gstaad
- Davidoff Swiss Indoors
- Omega European Masters
- Athletissima Lausanne
- Weltklasse Zrich
- GP Bern
- Greifenseelauf
- Swiss Alpine Marathon
- Eidgenössisches Turnfest
- Mercedes CSI Zürich
- CSI-W Genf
- CSIO Schweiz
- Tour de Suisse
- Swiss Bike Masters Prättigau
- Spiele der Axpo Super League
- 1 to 1 Energy Beach Volley Grand Slam Gstaad
- Coop Beachtour (beach volleyball)
- Eidg. Schwing- und Älplerfest
- Freestyle.ch (snowboard, free ski, FMX and skateboard)
- Ruderwelt Luzern (Rudern)

#### *Sports categories*

- Bobsleigh
- Figure skating
- Free ski/ride
- Alpine cross country
- Alpine skiing
- Ski jumping
- Snowboard
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Beach volleyball
- Ice hockey
- Soccer
- Handball
- Polo
- Unihockey
- Athletics/track & field
- Marathon
- Duathlon/triathlon
- Orienteering
- Mountain bike
- Cycling
- Swimming
- Rowing
- Inline skating
- Formula 1
- Moto GP

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*Sports*

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*Institutions*

- ASG (Schweizerischer Golfverband)
- Axpo Super League (Fussball NLA)
- BMW Sauber F1 Team (Formula 1)
- National League (Eishockey NLA)
- Swiss Ice Hockey Association
- SFV Schweizerischer Fussballverband
- Sporthilfe
- Swiss Athletics (Schweiz. Leichtathletikverband)
- Swiss Olympic
- Swiss Tennis
- Swiss Ski
- Team Alinghi (Sailing)

*Sports categories*

- Rally
  - Golf
  - Horse riding
  - Schwingen
  - Sailing
  - Tennis
  - Gymnastics
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*Culture*

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*Cultural issue*

- Concerts
  - Jazz
  - Classic
  - Pop
  - Rock
  - 'Urban' (eg Hip Hop & RnB)
  - Country
- Stage arts
  - Ballet
  - Comedy
  - Modern dance
  - Musical
  - Opera
  - Theatre
- Exhibitions
  - Old arts (up to medieval times)
  - Newer arts (1450–1900)
  - Modern & contemporary arts (1900 to present)
  - Design and lifestyle
  - Photography
  - Videoarts
- Further leisure activities
  - Film festivals
  - Book readings
  - Fashion shows
  - Geological excursions

*Films*

- Action films
  - Adventure films (eg *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Blood Diamond* etc)
  - Crime (eg *American Gangster*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Departed* etc)
  - Thriller (eg *The Da Vinci Code*, *Inside Man*, *Basic Instinct* etc)
  - Horror films
  - Sci-fi
  - Fantasy films (eg Harry Potter)
  - Animated films (eg *Chicken Little*, *The Simpsons*, *Shrek* etc)
  - Family films
  - Drama
  - Romance
  - Comedy
  - War movies
  - Western
  - Musical (eg *Hairspray*, *The Phantom of the Opera* etc)
  - Documentaries
  - Short films
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