

**LAPPEENRANTA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

School of Business and Management

Master's Degree Program in International Marketing Management (MIMM)

**SKEMA BUSINESS SCHOOL**

Master of science International Marketing and Business Development (IMBD)

**TO WHAT EXTENT SPONSORSHIP CAN IMPACT THE  
MARKETING STRATEGY OF AN INSURANCE COMPANY  
IN FRANCE?**

**The impact of promotional tools on the marketing strategy of an insurance company**

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# ABSTRACT

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<b><u>Title of the thesis:</u></b>	To what extent sponsorship can impact the marketing strategy of an insurance company in France? The impact of promotional tools on the marketing strategy of an insurance company.
<b><u>Faculty:</u></b>	Lappeenranta University of Technology / SKEMA Business School
<b><u>Major:</u></b>	International Marketing Management (MIMM) International Marketing and Business Development (IMBD)
<b><u>Year:</u></b>	2019
<b><u>Master's Thesis:</u></b>	Lappeenranta University of Technology / SKEMA Business School 112 pages, 19 figures, 8 tables, 4 appendices
<b><u>Examiners:</u></b>	Professor Olli Kuivalainen (LUT) Professor Peter Spier (SKEMA)
<b><u>Keywords:</u></b>	Promotional tools, Sponsorship, Marketing Strategy, Brand Equity, Millennials

The purpose of this paper is to study the impact of sponsorship on the marketing strategy of an insurance company. Moreover, the overall goal is to determine if sponsorship could become an alternative to traditional marketing tools. Indeed, the insurance industry is currently a very competitive market and companies are facing major issues of differentiation.

The theoretical part consists of three chapters that investigate what is the concept of sponsorship in a sport context, what is an integrated marketing strategy and how companies measure business performances and by extension sponsorship effectiveness. The empirical part is based on qualitative and quantitative research methods. The data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with sponsorship managers and consumers' surveys. Secondary data were also collected in order to better understand the phenomenon.

The results of the study indicate that sponsorship is a powerful tool when implemented successfully but needs to be aligned with corporate goals and marketing objectives. Accordingly, many insurance companies, not to say all of them, are present in the sponsorship market, but they all have different strategies and different brand image.

## **AKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Writing this thesis was intense but I have been supported by many people who highly encouraged me during this period. Therefore, I would like to thank everyone.

First, I would like to thank my parents for their unconditional love and their support through my studies and my daily life. I would not have become what I am today without them. I also want to thank my brother, Clément who gave me some valuable feedbacks and advice that helped me to achieve this paper.

A great thank you to all my team at Generali, who supported me those last three months and helped me to organize my work, so I could finish my thesis on time. I also have a special thought for my manager Benoit Gilles, who took the time to answer my questions and for my great colleague Philippe Cosse, who did everything he could to help me during the elaboration of this study. Thank you to Marie-Jo Ninine who nicely accepted to be interviewed without knowing me and to Tom Adriaenssens who made this interview possible.

I feel lucky to have been part of this double degree program between SKEMA Business School and Lappeenranta University of Technology. Thank you to my first supervisor, Professor Olli Kuivalainen, for his availability, his feedbacks and his patience and to my SKEMA supervisor Professor Peter Spier who was always very reactive to my questions.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all my friends who supported me those last few months and helped me even when I was impossible. Thank you to all the people who took the time to answer my survey. I also give a special thanks to Flavien who encouraged me every day to write this paper.

“Merci” to everyone.

Alix Vachaud, Paris, 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 2019

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

Setting a marketing strategy is very important from a long-term point of view because companies define their global objectives and plan actions to reach them. Indeed, promotional tools are one of the main issues that need to be dealt with. In some sectors, sponsorship can be a very powerful method to promote a company. Thus, this thesis will mainly be focused on sponsorship. The aim is to find out how insurance companies use sponsorship, how it is related to marketing and how consumers are impacted by those kinds of strategies. In order to better understand strategic decisions, the business perspective appeared to be the most relevant to explore this topic. Nevertheless, we will also provide some insights about how sponsorship is perceived by consumers in order to determine if strategies are effective.

The following part of the thesis will provide an overall introduction to the topic. First, the background of the study will be investigated. Then, the objectives of the study, the research questions and the theoretical framework will be introduced. The next subpart will provide some definitions of the key terms of the paper in order for the reader to better understand the important notions related to the topic. Thereafter, the methodology will be briefly developed, and the overall structure of the study will be explained.

## **I. 1. Background of the research**

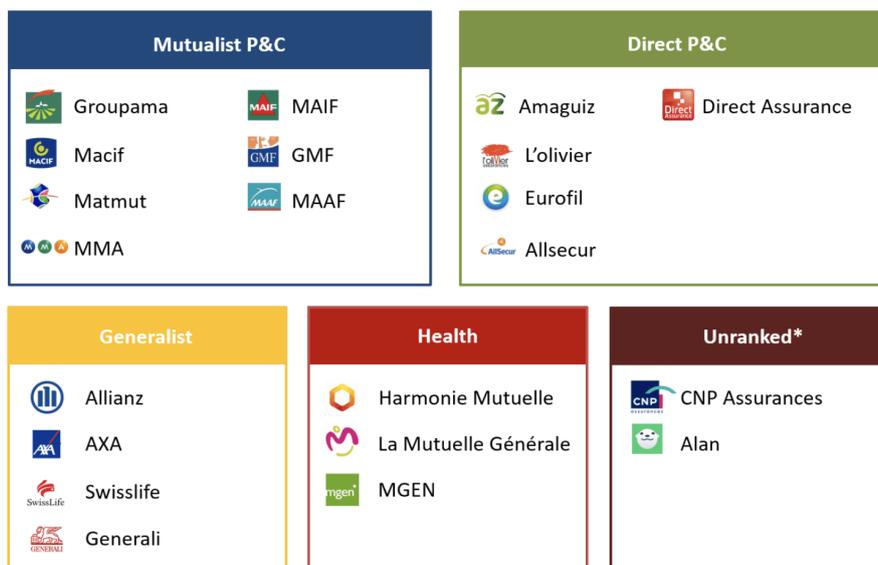
Marketing strategies have been studied deeply in the last decades (Noble and Mokwa, 1999; Kotler, 2003; Doyle and Stern, 2009) as sponsorship (Meenaghan, 1991; Cornwell 1995; Cornwell and Maignan, 1998). However, those scholars offer a broad perspective and little researches have been made from a business perspective. Why do insurance companies choose sponsorship? How do they integrate it into their strategies? What do they expect from it? How do they define if the objectives have been reached? This study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the strategies of insurance companies regarding sponsorship. We will investigate why and how it is implemented and we will assess the sponsorship's consequences on firms. It will provide a deeper understanding of sponsorship in a specific context and will contribute to the future academic studies.

### I. 1. 1. An overview of the insurance sector in France

In order to understand the aim of the thesis, it is necessary to provide readers with information about the current context, the main characteristics of the insurance industry in France and the issues it is facing.

“Insurance is a promise based on trust that has been developed in response to the universal need for security and protection, aiming at managing uncertainty”. It allows people to build a more secure future since the insurer is required to compensate the eventual damage occurred to the insured. (Generali, 2019).

The insurance industry is very strong in France and companies fall into different categories. As shown in Figure 1, there are mutualists, direct insurers, generalist groups and health insurers. There are a lot of offers on the market and many companies who try to gain market shares. According to the French Assurance Federation (FFA), France is the second largest insurance market in Europe after the United Kingdom. Indeed, French residents are legally required to subscribe different types of insurances including health assurance, home insurance, vehicles insurance and third-party liability insurance. (Expatica.com, 2019). There are many types of insurance agreements but all of them rest on one key principle which is ensuring future economic stability and security (Generali, 2019).

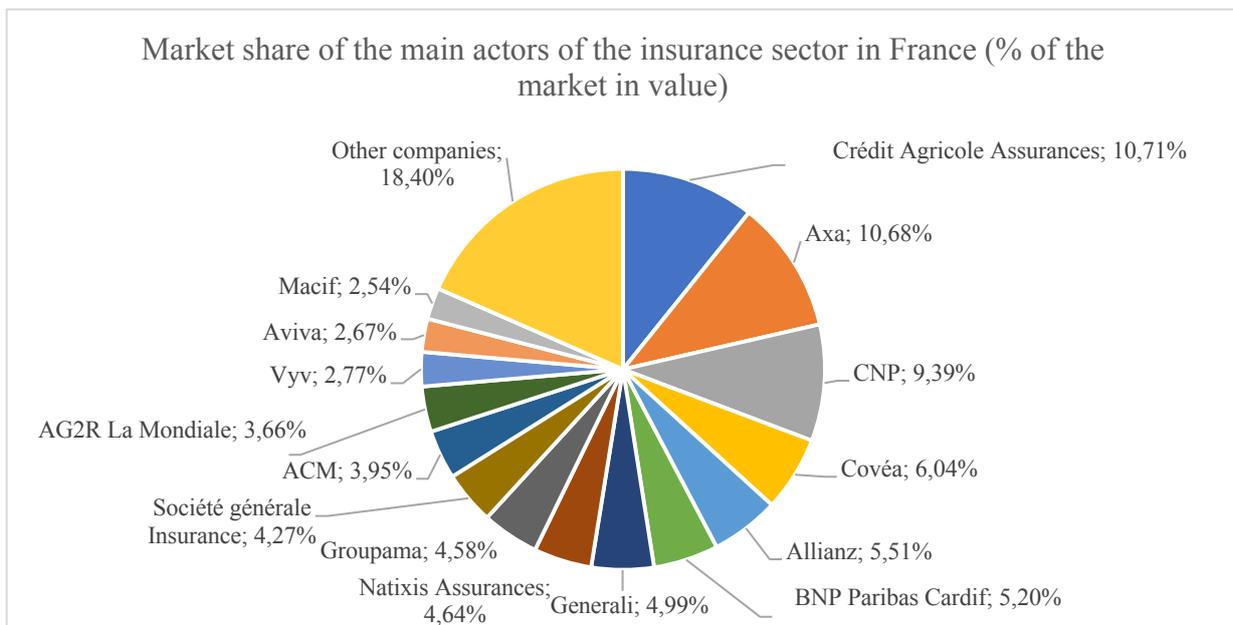


Sources: Dolist.com (2019)

**Figure 1: Landscape of French the insurance industry**

In 2017, the gross volume of the French insurance industry was 242 billion euros. The market is dominated by fifteen companies who generate the larger part of the sales revenue: Crédit Agricole Assurances, Axa and CNP Assurances slightly dominate the sector with about 10% of the market shares each. Figure 2 clearly illustrates the power of market leaders as they own 81,60% of the total market share. There are many actors on the French market and the competition is quite fierce.

However, those companies have different strategies and different ways to function, thus it appears to be interesting to better understand what is implemented in this sector in order to stand out from the competition. Hence, people have a negative perception of insurance companies and it is a real challenge for the whole industry to feel closer to consumers.



Sources: KPMG, the “Argus de l’Assurance” and the companies quoted.

**Figure 2: Market share of the insurance groups in France in 2017 (in %)**

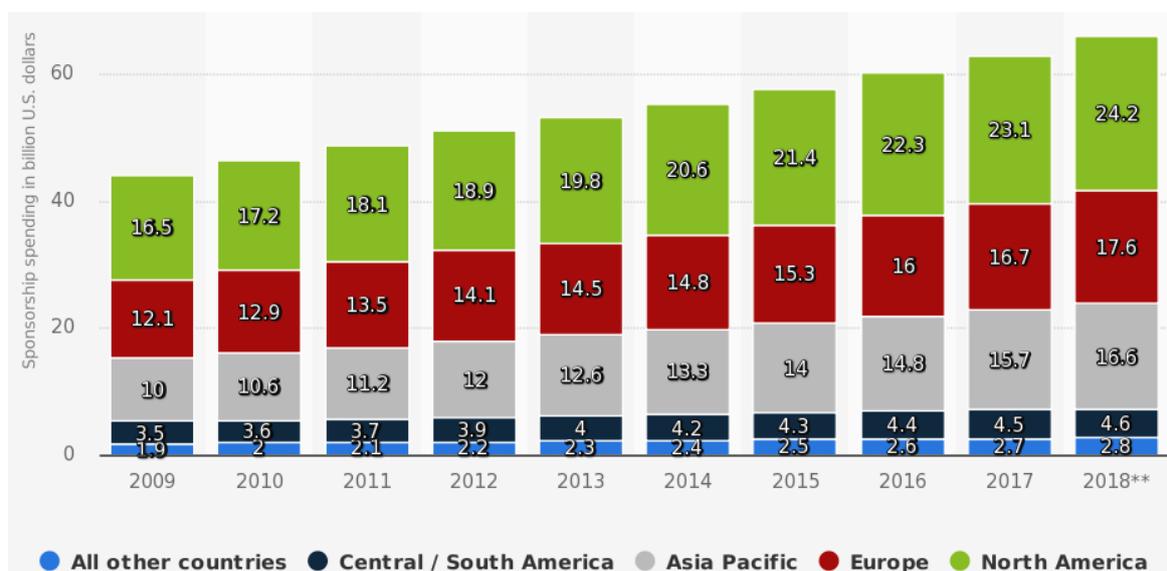
During the last few years, the insurance sector went through several changes including the implementation of new financial reforms, the evolution of communication and information technologies and the globalization of financial services (Epetimehin, 2011). Therefore, it impacted the market structure, the performance of the industry and the distribution channels. The competition is getting very aggressive in the sector, thus weaker competitors are forced out if they cannot adapt to the changing trends (Mehr, 1969). On the one hand, more and more people deal with agent middlemen and brokers and on the other hand, the technological

revolution has brought new types of insurance like smart contracts and connected insurance contracts (Atlas-mag.net, 2018). Moreover, the implementation of new tools as Electronic Data Processing (EDP) has materially changed the nature of the channels of distribution.

Facing those new challenges, companies have to adapt to the fast-evolving environment and find out new ways to differentiate themselves from competitors. One solution that came out is trying to modify their brand image by using new promotional tools and especially sponsorship.

### I. 1. 2. A brief introduction to sponsorship

Companies use a lot of promotional tools such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling to raise awareness (Edwardlowe.org, n.d.). People who live in a city are exposed to four to ten thousand ad messages a day (Simpson, 2017) including billboards, brand labels, print ads or digital ads. Hence, managers need to find solutions to get the company noticed. One tool that is really interesting for the insurance sector appears to be sponsorship because it is attractive and offers huge opportunities. Figure 3 shows that global sponsorship including sports, entertainment, causes, arts, festivals, fairs and annual events, associations and membership, keeps growing year by year. In 2017, a total of 16,7 billion U.S. dollars (€14,9 billion) was spent on sponsorship in Europe (Statista, 2019a).



Source: IEG Briefing (Statista 2019a)

**Figure 3:** Growth in global sponsorship spending by region (in billion U.S. dollars)

There are numerous benefits of sponsorship for a brand as it raises brand awareness, creates positive public relations, builds brand positioning through associative imagery and creates internal emotional commitment to the brand (Businesscasestudies.co.uk, n.d.). Those aspects are essential for insurance companies and one field that is even more interesting for them is sport. In France sport sponsorship represents 2,03 billion euros spending (Sporsora, 2018). It offers a massive visibility since it gathers millions of people in front of their television and can be less expensive than traditional advertising. Thus, companies always look for new sponsorship deals.

Moreover, sport is deeply anchored in the French daily life. About 28 million French people practice a physical activity at least once a week which represent 42% of the population (Sporsora, 2018). Sport carries strong values as it promotes solidarity, respect and hard work. It can easily be related to the insurance industry because practicing a sport involves a risk of accident. Thus, in terms of brand image it can be very interesting for insurers to sponsor sport. Indeed, many insurers have decided to invest in sport as Groupama (sailing), AG2R (cycling), Allianz (Olympic Games) and Generali (horse-riding).

From an external point of view, the link between insurance and sport sponsorship is quite logic but the question is: what are the strategic reasons behind those partnerships? The next part will present the objectives of this paper and the research questions we will investigate.

## **I. 2. Objectives et research question**

### **I. 2. 1. Objectives**

Generali sponsors some sport events, some sport federations and has implemented a program called “Responsible Sport”. Through this program, sport entities receive a label if they take initiatives in one of those fields: providing sport accessibility for all, encouraging diversity, improving health and well-being, implementing eco-responsible measures, pushing for education and insertion and promoting fair play and citizenship. This observation is the starting point of the thesis. Indeed, it occurred to me that sponsorship is important for insurance companies but also for the sport industry. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to investigate sponsorship practices within the insurance sector and precisely how it is linked to firms’ marketing strategy and firms’ performances. Those elements are closely related as

sponsorship is one promotional tool. Promotional tools are part of the marketing strategy. Marketing strategy impacts consumers perceptions and consumers influence firms' performances. This study will contribute to our understanding of sponsorship as a strategic tool in gaining customers' interest.

First, the paper aims to define what is sponsorship, how it works and explain why it has gained such interest especially in France. Secondly, we will investigate why and how firms implement integrated marketing strategies and which role sponsorship plays in this context. Then, we will provide information about the measurement tools that have been developed to assess marketing performances and the effectiveness of sponsorship. In the end, the empirical research will contribute to define if sponsorship is a relevant alternative to the other traditional promotional tools and if companies should rely on it to raise awareness.

### **I. 2. 2. Research questions**

Despite the managers' growing interest for new marketing strategies, it appears that very few authors recently focused on the link between the integration of sponsorship as a promotional tool into the marketing strategy and its effect on customers. Indeed, there is a huge gap in the literature concerning the impact of sponsorship in the insurance industry.

This study will focus on the use of sponsorship in the insurance industry. Therefore, in order to comply with the objectives exposed in the previous section, the main research question is: ***To what extent sponsorship can impact the marketing strategy of an insurance company in France?***

In addition to the main research question, the supportive sub-questions are:

SQ1: *What is sponsorship and why it has gained the interest of insurance companies?*

SQ2: *How do companies integrate sponsorship into their marketing strategy?*

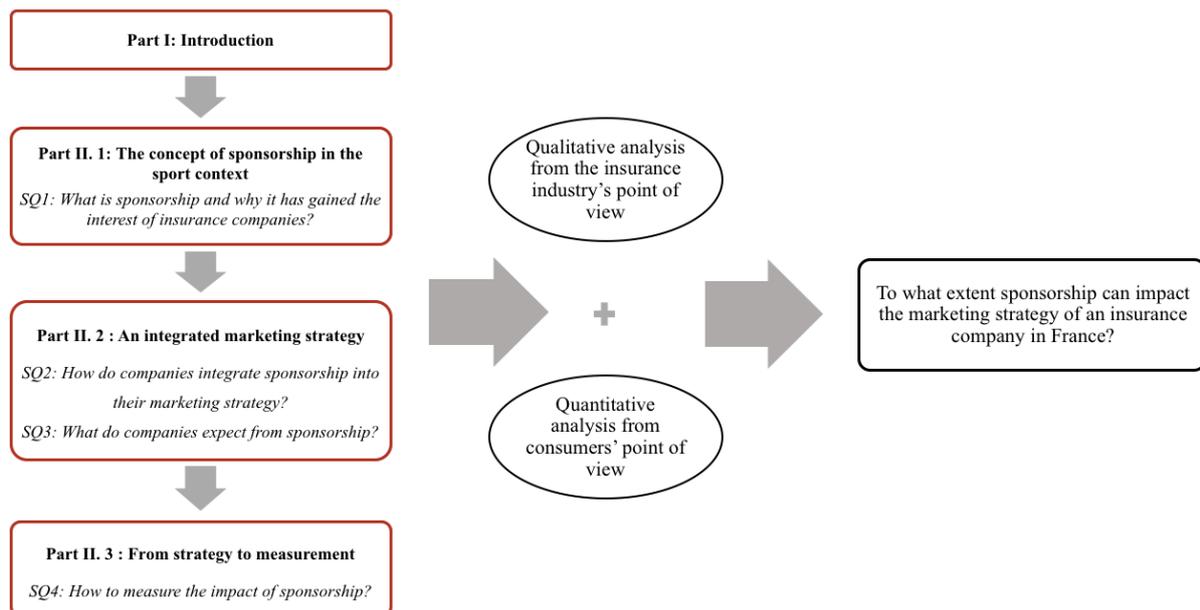
SQ3: *What do companies expect from sponsorship?*

SQ4: *How to measure the impact of sponsorship?*

### I. 3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study, illustrated in Figure 4, encompasses the presentation of the insurance industry, the concept of sponsorship, its integration into the marketing strategy of a firm and its outcomes. It emphasizes the changes that operate in the insurance industry and the new ways implemented to differentiate one brand from others.

Indeed, the review of the existing literature and theories will contribute to better understand the role of sponsorship, its characteristics and its outcomes. Thus, it will contribute to answer the main research question.



**Figure 4: Theoretical framework**

### I. 4. Definition and delimitations

#### I. 4. 1. Key words

##### **Sponsorship:**

Sponsorship is “an exchange between a sponsor and a sponsee whereby the latter receives a fee (or value) and the former obtains the right to associate itself with the activity sponsored” (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998). It is a powerful form of consumer persuasion (Crimmins & Horn, 1996).

**Marketing Strategy:**

A firm's marketing strategy is referred as an "organization's integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices" (Varadarajan, 2010). Those decisions concerns relationships with key stakeholders, offerings, resource allocation and timing (Sudharshan, 1995) but also marketing activities and resources that enable the firm to reach specific objectives (Varadarajan, 2010). More broadly, it refers to the development of the right combination the extended marketing mix or "7 Ps" defined by Booms and Bitner (1981): Product, Place, Promotion, Price, People, Process and Physical evidence.

**Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC):**

IMC has been defined by Philip Kotler as "a way of looking at the whole marketing process from the viewpoint of the customer" (2003). Thus, it consists in coordinating all promotional activities – media advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing and other forms of promotion – to produce a consistent and customer focused message (Gitman and McDaniel, 2008). This cross-functional process is also used to control the messages sent to stakeholders, thus it helps to manage profitable relationships (Duncan, 2002).

**Brand awareness:**

Brand awareness refers to the fact of whether a brand name comes to mind when consumers think about a particular product category (Shimp and Andrews, 2013). It encompasses two dimensions: brand recall which is the consumers' ability to retrieve the brand from memory when given a cue and brand recognition performance which is the consumers' ability to correctly identifies the brand as having prior knowledge of it (Keller, 1993).

**Brand image:**

It refers to the "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" (Keller, 1993). It can also be defined as "the total set of expectations and intangible values which are created in the customer's mind by all marketing communications a customer is exposed to" (Pickton and Broderick, 2005).

**I. 4. 2. Delimitations**

This research will focus on the French market since the insurance industry is well developed and quite competitive. Moreover, it is compulsory for French people to subscribe to different

types of insurance (Expatica.com, 2019). This geographical orientation will enable us to get a precise picture of the insurers' practices in France. Therefore, interviews and surveys will be conducted in French and addressed to French people only.

We will focus on men and women from the generation Y commonly called Millennials. They are born between 1980 and 2000, have a deep knowledge in modern technologies and expect immediate access to information (Young and Hinesly, 2012). Millennials value experiences have very high expectations concerning the quality of the service they receive (Serafimovikj et al., 2017) and seek to bond with brands (Gobé, 2001). Insurance firms are currently trying to reach this new generation with new strategies and this will be discussed in the literature review.

The thesis will discuss the marketing strategy's development, but the study will only cover one of the 4 P's being the promotion part. Accordingly, this step is crucial to develop the brand image of a company. Therefore place, price and product (or service) are secondary in this research. The research will be limited to the insurance groups' strategies and will not concern brokers or independent agents because challenges might be different for those entities.

## **I. 5. Research methodology**

In this section, we will give a brief overview of the research methodology applied along this study. Primary and secondary data will be collected in order to find out to what extent sponsorship is implemented in insurance companies' marketing strategies. In order to get a complete overview of what is happening in the sector, both qualitative and quantitative research methods will be used. First, the aim is to collect qualitative data through semi-conducted interview. This will provide insights about the sector's practices. Then, one survey will be conducted in order to better understand customers' opinions and perceptions about sponsorship and its use in our society.

The research will follow and inductive reasoning, defined as "the intensive examination of a strategically selected number of cases so as to empirically establish the causes of a specific phenomenon". (Johnson, 2004) but it will also use an exploratory approach by determining what is happening, seeking new insights and asking new questions (Robson, 2002).

Firstly, the literature review aims to find relevant data to the issue being investigated in order to provide a summary of the works previously done (Fink, 2013). This theoretical review, based on secondary data, will help the reader to better understand the concepts of sponsorship and brand image as well as the challenge they represent for companies. It will also provide more information about the implementation of sponsorship, its outcomes and the measurement of its effectiveness. Hence, the aim is to show that traditional marketing tools needs to be associated with new promotional methods.

Secondly, the empirical research will lie on primary data collected through interviews and surveys. On the one hand interviews will be conducted to gather valid and reliable data that are relevant to the research question (Saunders et al., 2009). Indeed, the semi-structured interviews addressed to managers and people working in the insurance sector will bring qualitative information about the firms' marketing strategies and how they implement sponsorship. On the other hand, a survey will be diffused on the Internet to better understand sponsorship's impact on consumers. The multiple-choice questions will enable to collect valuable data about the impact of sponsorship on brand image.

## **I. 6. Structure of the study**



**Figure 5: Structure of the study**

As figure 5 shows, the study will be structured in five different parts.

Chapter one introduces the research topic. It presents the structure of the insurance industry and sponsorship as a new critical tool to raise brand awareness. Then, it develops the research objectives of the thesis with its delimitations and defines the key concepts that will be used.

Chapter two reviews the past literature in order to acquire a strong academic knowledge about sponsorship and to answer the sub questions 1, 2 and 3. It is divided in three sections: definition of sponsorship concept, marketing strategy and measurement of outcomes. The first part will give a better understanding of what is sponsorship and how it has evolved. We will

also focus on the sport context and its benefits for companies. Then the literature review will give more insights about how to develop an integrated marketing strategy and how to use sponsorship in this context. We will see how it can be implemented and adapted to the audience in order to differentiate the company. Finally, we will present different methods that can be used to assess marketing performances and to evaluate the impact of sponsorship on consumers.

Chapter three will present the research design of the study and will justify the methods used to answer the main research question.

Chapter four will disclose the main findings of this study.

Chapter five will conclude the study, present the limitations and will propose some leads for further researches.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **II. 1. The concept of sponsorship in the sport context**

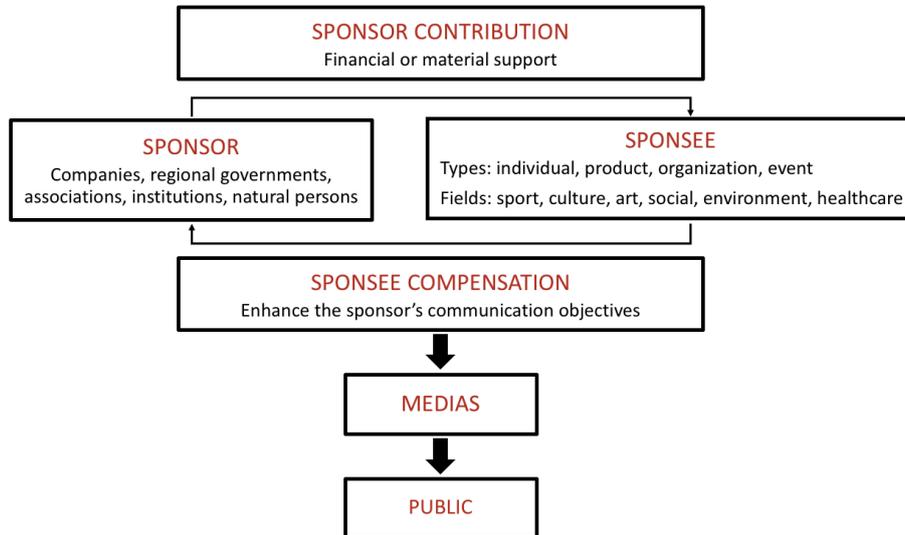
#### **II. 1. 1. What is sponsorship?**

Sponsorship is a very broad term that encompasses different dimensions. Several definitions can be found in the literature, but it seems difficult for researchers to reach complete agreement on a single one (Walliser, 2003). In this section, we will provide the readers with an understandable definition of sponsorship and answer to the first sub question.

Sponsorship is an exchange between a sponsor and a sponsee (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998) but from a business perspective it can also be seen as “as an investment, in cash or in kind, in an activity, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity” (Meenaghan, 1991). Both definitions are important since it enlightens the strategic but also the human side of sponsorship.

## II. 1. 1. a. How does it work?

In this study, we will differentiate sponsorship from patronage which can be defined as the support given to a cause for the general interest without expecting any direct compensations (Culture.gouv.fr, 2019). Partners can also be confused with sponsors but there are different. Indeed, those companies support events without any financial contribution.



Source : Claisse, Y (2013), Les contrats de sponsoring des collectivités territoriales, *Contrats Publics Juillet 2013*

### **Figure 6: The mechanism of sponsorship**

As shown in figure 6, sponsorship concerns two types of actors. On the one hand, sponsors give material or financial support. It can be companies, regional governments, associations, institutions or natural persons. They may have different roles. Financial sponsors will give money to their partner, media sponsors will secure the advertising part and in-kind sponsors will provide goods or services (Kramer, 2019). On the other hand, the sponsees that are also called properties are the sponsored event, cause, or sports team. (Madrigal, 2001). The latter contribute to the sponsor's communication and help it to achieve its objectives. Hence, media are a main issue for sponsorship. They broadcast the different events and/or provide information. Three types of media are used in sport: the broadcast sport media as the different channel specialized in sport, the autonomous media as the sport press and magazines as "L'équipe" in France and finally the communication media as the mobile phone and the websites (Namata, 2007). Here, the final goal is to reach the public which will be discussed in the part II. 2. 3.

Not all sponsorships are the same, and there are multiple types of sponsorships businesses can pursue (Kramer, 2019). One of them that is more and more popular in France is title sponsorship which consists in associating a sponsor's name with a building, project, or event by including the sponsor's name in the title of the item being named (Ashley and O'Hara, 2001). The first title right sponsorship has been conducted by MMA in 2007 and the interest of insurance companies kept growing for this type of sponsorship as Matmut, Allianz and Groupama named their own stadium in 2011, 2012 and 2017. However, the French market with only twelve sponsored venues is still weak compared to the United States or Germany. The study conducted by the French Ministry for Sport in 2018 shows that those sponsorships can be beneficial for firms in terms of image and revenues. Indeed, the media value of the sponsoring of the Groupama Stadium and the Allianz Riviera Stadium Groupama has been evaluated at 500000 euros in ten day for the former and 7,3 million euro for the season 2016-2017 for the latter. Other types of sponsors in the sport environment include official sponsors that give about 20% of all funds and technical sponsors who pay for goods and services. The type of sponsorship is closely related to the objectives of the company and to its choice concerning the direction it wants to take.

#### II. 1. 1. b. Determinants and dimensions of sponsorship

Three determinants that shape an entity's view of sponsorship are scale, focus and geographical region (Cornwell, 2014). Sponsorships are first defined by scale. Small-scale sponsorships allow companies to be close to local communities and to appear as authentic whereas large corporate sponsorships are mainly focus on media coverage and high-profile events. Another determinant is the focus. Properties may have limited appeal and will interest a narrow range of sponsors, thus those sponsee will become dependent on them. However, those contracts offer the sponsors the access to niche audience which can attract many companies. Finally, sponsorship is defined by the regional collectivity as it influences the way a sponsor is perceived by the audience. Indeed, some brands are strongly connected to a specific area and will be more easily accepted as a sponsor. Therefore, when choosing to sponsor a property, companies needs to consider those determinants in order to shape the deal that fits its objectives.

According to Zhang et al. (2017), sponsorship encompasses three dimensions: level, duration and congruence. First, it appears that corporate executives break sponsorship into different

levels depending on the firm's goals and budget. This is tightly related to the visibility the sponsee will get: the more an organization invest in a sponsorship, the more the sponsorship will make sense and be visible. However, sponsorship also relies on the involvement of the sponsor and the sponsee. Duration is the second dimension of sponsorship as longer duration will contribute to consolidate the link between the sponsor and the sponsee. A repeated exposure will help people to associate both entities, hence they will recall the brand more easily. Last but not least, congruence is critical. Defined as the "fit between sponsor and sponsored cause" (Woisetschläger and Michaelis, 2012), it clearly impacts the sponsorship success. Usually, corporations choose to associate their brand with people or events that share similarities and/or values as it will make the relationship relevant to the consumer. Hence, it can influence attitude towards the sponsor and its brand image. The balance theory applied to sponsorship shows that consumers who have a negative toward the brand may start to like it if the brand is sponsoring an event that they like (Cornwell, 2014).

The articulation of those three dimensions are part of a broader science, known as marketing. Indeed, companies intend to answer the consumers' needs and nowadays sponsorship appears as one tool that can be used to do so.

### **II. 1. 2. From a philanthropic giving to a business-oriented marketing activity**

Sponsorship has not always been used as a marketing tool, indeed it has moved from a philanthropic orientation to a market driven one (Cornwell, 1995). Sponsorship took different forms over times and has been evolving a lot (Elevent.co, 2017). Some aspects of what sponsorship is today can be traced back to the Greek and Roman civilization (Meenaghan, 1991). Indeed, around 46 BC, Julius Caesar started to sponsor gladiators' combats for its own entertainment and to show its power (Coleman, 2011). It became a true sport meeting for all the Romans. Thus, the first form of sponsorship was born: the tournaments were advertised on the walls of the city and flyers with the names of the organizer (the sponsor) and the gladiators were distributed in order to promote the event (Jacobelli, 2003). Historically, patrons and donors did not have commercial objectives in their support (Cornwell, 1995), they were more likely looking for creating strong relationships with a company and the population through social causes. Then, sponsors began to look to improve their brand awareness and to associate themselves with attractive events (Baux, 1991).

In the early twentieth century companies focused on advertising and sales promotions, but it became more and more expensive and people started to lose interest in those types of media (Cornwell, 1995). Managers had a philanthropic view of sponsorship as it was perceived as a gift. The main focus was to develop goodwill and there were no formal selection criteria (Cornwell, 2014). In France, sport sponsoring appeared in 1881 when Michelin began to support the cyclist Charles Terron (Selectra, 2019). Since then, the growth of sponsorship's investments has been huge and companies began to perceive it as a marketing tool.

T. Bettina Cornwell (2014) describes five distinct stages in which sponsorship is thought to have a dominant approach. The first one, described above was the philanthropic approach. Thereafter, in the 1980-90's, executives had a market-centered approach and saw sponsorship as an investment. In the early 1990's, managers started to adopt a consumer-centered approach as they were trying to understand consumers' mindsets. At the end of the decade, they adopted a strategic resource approach and began to consider sponsorship as a source of competitive advantage. Today, companies have developed a relationship and networks approach which focuses on interactions between the sponsor and the sponsee but also with their whole network.

Indeed, sponsorship isn't just a philanthropic activity anymore and firms began to expect a return on investment and to build real interactivity. Nowadays, every deal needs to be cost effective and the benefits are carefully balanced with the costs. Sponsorship which was the end in itself became a means to an end. Thus, it is considered like a strategic activity as it is used to achieve business objectives and also because sponsorship helps to align an organization with the pressures and demands of its environment (Slack and Bentz, 1996).

Table 1 shows different objectives that companies try to achieve through sponsorship. In practice, all companies pursue those goals, nevertheless they may prioritize some of them depending on their global strategy. Managers also set more sophisticated goals on a longer-term perspective that we will discuss this in part II.2.3.

<b>Objectives of sponsorship</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate/brand image enhancement</li> <li>• Direct on-site sales</li> <li>• Increased awareness levels</li> <li>• Reaching specific target market</li> <li>• Develop/build client relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain media exposure</li> <li>• Increase employee morale</li> <li>• Trade/hospitality objectives</li> <li>• Product/service demonstration platform</li> </ul>

Source: Cornwell T. (2014), *Sponsorship in Marketing*

**Table 1: The basic objectives of sponsorship**

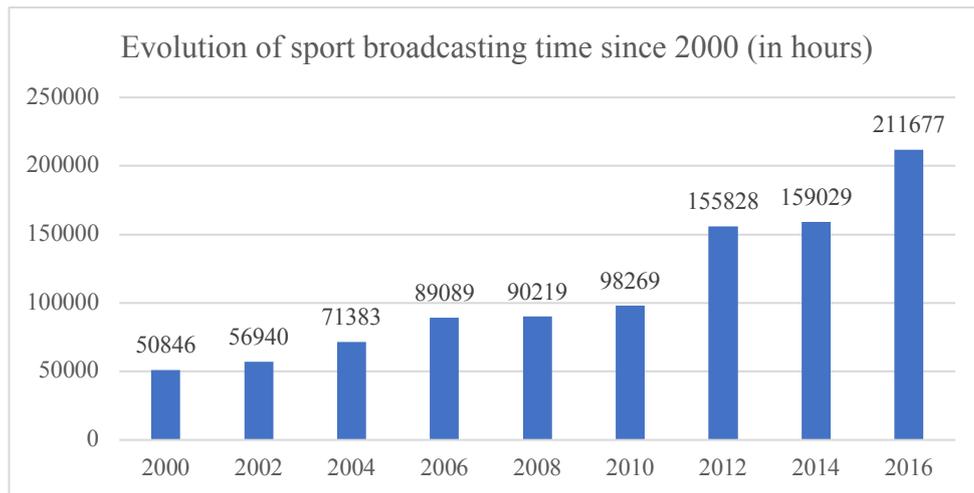
The new perception of sponsorship needed to be related to the environment and the cultural habits of the population. Therefore, companies started to focus on the sport context and it has become a huge business that offers many opportunities.

### **II. 1. 3. A strategic orientation: the sport context**

Alfred Chandler defined strategy as “the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources for carrying out these goals” (1962). As seen in the latest section, sponsorship has become a tool for generating revenues. Thus, companies select carefully their sponsees according to their objectives. Considering the history between sponsorship and sport, it is quite natural for companies to choose this sector as their “playing field”.

#### II. 1. 3. a. An extensive media coverage

Teddy Pessot, director of TP consulting declared that “associating a logo to big sport events aimed at creating a connection with the brand” (CB News, 2018). If sport has always been present in the French people life it has soared with the invention of the television and the computer. As shown in Figure 7, more and more sport programs are broadcast on television. In 2000, 50846 hours of sport were broadcast, and this number quadrupled in sixteen years. Moreover, the number of French channels broadcasting sport went from seven in 1995 to 37 in 2016 (CSA, 2017). Those evolutions show that sport is gaining more importance in French people’s life. Thus, it became very interesting for companies to invest in this field.



Source: Estimations CSA 2017

**Figure 7: The evolution of sport broadcasting time since 2000 (in hours)**

Furthermore, new generations are more connected and have a better digital culture which also represent new opportunities for companies. In 2019, the French agency Only Sports & Passions disclosed the results of its study conducted with Kantar « Sport & Millennials: what winning mix? ». First, it stated that sport is the only passion in common with millennials and people aged between 35 and 64 years old. It appeals different generations, and the former developed a stronger interest for sport as 50% of millennials watch live sport on television, 42% of them consult sport media and 36% attended sport events the last five years whereas those numbers are respectively 46%, 36% and 25% for people aged between 35 and 64 years old. The growing interest for sport is a huge opportunity for brands to obtain visibility and exposure. Investing in sport is a new way to reach the younger audiences. When media cover events, they might show the company logo or quote the sponsor's names and the publicity generated might not be possible with another promotional tool. Thus, sponsoring events, athletes or facilities becomes a strategic choice for companies (Friedman, 2019)

#### II. 1. 3. b. Sport as a cultural norm in France

Governmental studies have shown that sport teaches people several values as equity, team spirit, equality, discipline, inclusion, tenacity and respect. Thus, it helps people to develop the soft skills needed to become a responsible citizen (Unesco.org, 2019). According to Business France (2017) who quoted the French government Sports Economy Observatory, 46% of 15 to 29 years old say they enjoy regular physical activity. Sport is more and more integrated in people's life.

Firstly, the government is trying to encourage people to practice sport as often as possible to prevent people from obesity and chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, mood disorders as bipolarity and depression, Parkinson disease). Sport is more used in the medical sector than before and new measures are implemented to cure people without having to take medicine. The “Medical Prescription of Sport” (“Sport-santé sur Ordonnance”) enables doctors to prescribe sport to the patients suffering from chronic diseases (Connexionfrance.com, 2012). It has been tried out in 2012 and began to be effective in the whole territory in 2017. Françoise Gatel and François Cormier-Bouligeon published an official report (2019) that stated that 1500 persons were using this dispositive which is still weak considering that about twenty million people suffer of chronic diseases in France but quite encouraging for the future.

Furthermore, well-being at work is a main issue in France and many companies try to develop sport programs in the workplace as it meets important economic, health and social issues. On the one hand, it is used as a management tool to develop employees’ skills. It is beneficial from a group perspective as it can strengthen team spirit and exchange between employees, but it is also positive from an individual point of view since it can help employees develop their sense of responsibility. Thus, it encourages the professional development of each employee. On the other hand, other benefits can be observed for both the employee and the employer. The study revealed that regular workplace sport can reduce absenteeism, improve employee commitment, quality of work and enthusiasm. Employees feel better at work and employers notice financial benefits as they reduce health costs and improve their return on investment. (French Sports and National Olympic Committee, 2013).

France is seen as a nation of sportspeople (French Ministry for Sport, 2017) Hence, companies try to associate themselves with sport in order to connect with people. Gary Tribou (2011) identified five fundamental values that interest sponsors in sport:

- The value of fair competition meaning that every competition is supposed to be fundamentally even-handed and without any privileges.
- The value of sportive brotherhood developed during a collective effort
- The value of amateurism associated with altruistic efforts
- The value of performance synonymous of surpassing yourself and the competitors
- The value of adventure and risk

Banks and insurance companies are the more dynamic in sport sponsoring with about 70 million euros of investment each year. As sport is tightly connected to risks and accidents, it is quite legitimate for those types of companies to focus on the sport industry (Foulon, 2013).

In the end, sport is a cultural phenomenon in France, but it is also strategic for companies since it is a trending market that keeps evolving. Companies might see in sport a secured investment.

#### II. 1. 3. c. A trending market and upcoming opportunities

The sport market in France has been quite resistant to the economic crisis. In ten years, it has experienced an uninterrupted growth (Business France, 2017). The selling of sport sport-related goods and services (equipment, material, accessories and services) has been estimated to €11.3 billion in 2017, that is a growth of 2,9% compared to 2016. France is positioned as the second biggest market in Europe.

Sport is lucrative business in France as the French Ministry for Sport announced that “the total annual spending on sport nationwide is in excess of €38.1 billion, or around 2% of GDP for 2017” (2017). Another source of revenue is the sports rights market. In 2016, it was estimated to be worth €1.45 billion (Sporsora, 2018). This business is quite seasonal and depends on the events programmed. Indeed, the summer Olympic Games, the Football World Cup and the European Football Cup generates a lot of revenues. The worldwide sports events market including ticketing, media and marketing revenues for major sport has been estimated at €45 billion in 2009 (Collignon et al., 2011). During the Rio Olympic Games, about 150 athletes were sponsored by some sixty French companies (Business France, 2017), this represents a huge opportunity for companies as sponsoring properties can generate publicity and visibility.

The interest of insurance companies for sport events has been recently confirmed with the new sponsorship agreement concluded between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Allianz. The latter became a Worldwide Olympic Partner and declared in its press release, that both partners wanted to “use the power of sport to connect with new audiences” and engage with the next generations (Allianz.com, 2018). Another insurance company, MAIF, became an official partner of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. According to a study conducted

by Emmanuel Frattali for the magazine Sponsoring.fr (2019), 60% of the people that participated to the survey think that the Olympic Games will have a positive impact on the companies that partnered the event., hence, it is important for companies to associate themselves with big events.

Sport events has become an unavoidable sector for the insurance sector as it generates visibility, revenues and promote fundamental values. Hence, sponsorship has been implemented in many companies as a new form of communication. Of course, there are different scales of sponsorship and different way to integrate it in a firm's strategy depending on different factors that we will discuss in the following section.

## **II. 2. An integrated marketing strategy**

Companies try to exploit new communication and technological tools in order to stand out from their competitors. The executive director of Sponsorship Research international, Adrian Hitchen, pointed out that firms are increasingly looking for more integrated ways to fit sponsorship into their overall marketing strategy (Amis, 1999) as it is regarded as an important marketing tool by most marketing executives (Shimp and Andrews, 2013). What does companies consider when establishing their marketing strategy? How does companies use sponsorship and why? How to integrate sponsorship in the company's strategy? In this part, we will explore the different promotional tools used by marketers and disclose the different existing theories that explain how to integrate sponsorship into an overall strategy.

### **II. 2. 1. The combination of promotional tools within the strategy**

Promotion is one of the "Four Ps" of the marketing mix and has a crucial role in determining profitability and market success (Rowley, 1998). Defined as "the aspect of marketing that involves delivery of company, brand or product messages to target customers" it includes different traditional tools but also digital ones that contribute different way to reach customers and achieve communication objectives (Kokemuller, 2019). Since, the marketing strategy defines target markets and direction within the overall corporate strategy (Jackson, 2013), the combination of promotional tools is key to promote the brand and products. Advertising, Public Relations, sponsorship, direct marketing, sales promotions, exhibitions and trade

shows, relationship marketing can be used to complement each other and strengthen the overall impact of a campaign (Pickton and Broderick, 2005).

#### II. 2. 1 a. The promotional mix and its evolution

Historically, traditional mass-media advertising has always been used and is one prominent tool for marketing (Kokemuller, 2019). Advertising refers to “paid non-personal communication from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade or influence an audience” (Wells et al., 1992). This includes television, radio, cinema, press, posters and direct mail. However, this way to promote brands and product has become quite costly and sometimes ineffective. The development of new technologies has resulted in the fragmentation of media and markets, and the empowerment of consumers (Rust and Oliver, 1994). Therefore, new communication channels have risen to create awareness and convey brand associations (Joachimsthaler and Aaker, 1997).

Kokemuller listed the different alternative tools used in the promotional strategy of a company (2019). The Internet and mobile technology have transformed the way companies communicate and enabled the use of digital and interactive promotional tools. Thanks to this evolution, marketers can reach consumers directly through email marketing, social media and mobile applications. The use of online marketing is also very useful for companies, since it enables them to track users and identify their habits and desires, thus it becomes easier to target their promotional activities and adapt the content according to their audience. Public relations are also very useful to promote brands as it enables companies to be visible through media exposure. Salesperson and influencers are the more direct promotional tools. The former engages customers using assertive selling techniques and the latter are prominent people who favor the products of the companies.

The promotions mix has evolved as the marketing mix and can today be seen as the “partnermix”. T. Bettina Cornwell (2014) defined as “the selecting and combining of relationships across the network of entities in an organization’s environment to forward strategic goals”. This new way of thinking relies on a partner-based point of view that consider the contextual realities and the inter-organizational relationship. Naturally, this vision can be applied to sponsorship since when dealing a sponsorship contract companies need to consider the existing relationship of the individual athletes with their own sponsors.

Thus, companies need to implement a selective strategy based on their objectives and goals to focus on the best deals possible.

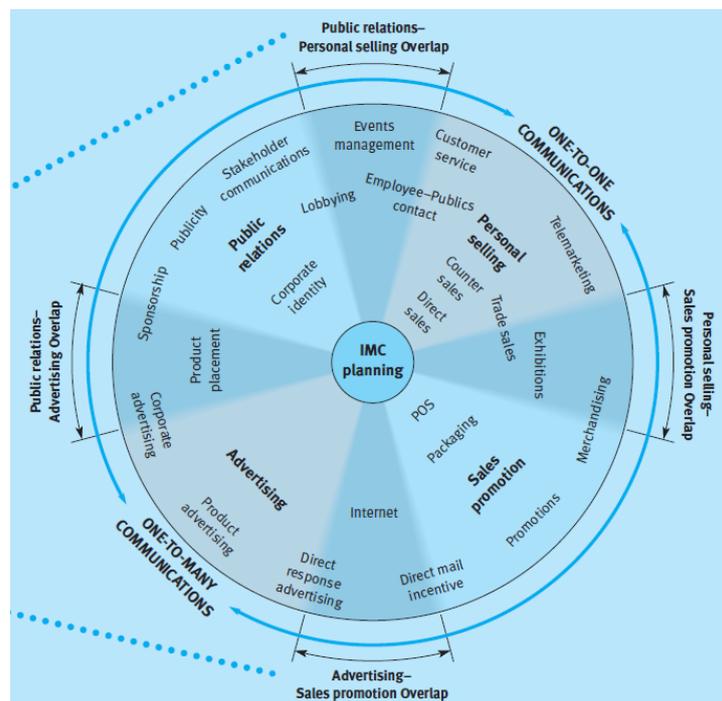
#### II. 2. 1 b. A unified and consistent mix

Sponsorships can be considered as a marketing communications medium since it is closely linked to other marketing activities that are used to influence customers and strategic partners (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). Companies see it as a new form of communication that can be used to promote or sell products but also as a strategic means that can enhance corporate reputation (Jackson, 2013). However, sponsorship alone might not be that effective and it needs to be part of a whole strategy. As the vice president of Nielsen Sport, Nigel Geach, stated in 1998, successful sponsorship requires a “total marketing package”.

Cornwell proposed a sponsorship development model (1995) that encompasses the different dimensions that needs to be considered when assessing the potential of a deal. First, the future sponsor needs to analyze the situation by assessing the market, the competition but also the characteristics of the specific sponsorship. Then, it needs to define its corporate but also marketing objectives in order to determine the target market (see part II. 2. 2). As sponsorship plays a dominant role in the marketing mix decisions it is crucial to look at the effects on the product, price, place and promotion. Indeed, it might influence the decisions of product offering as licensed products have become an integral part of sponsorship-linked marketing, but also the decisions regarding product and service distribution, especially the location, timing and magnitude of product demand.

Sponsorship investments begin with a promotion mix decision as managers need to determine how to use sponsorship and to divide the budget between sponsorship, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity (Cornwell, 1995). This is why promotional tools need to be integrated into a unified whole and work in synergy in order to create opportunities that will improve the effectiveness of the total marketing communications effort and to have a greater impact on consumer. Thus, companies try to implement Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) defined as “the process of integrating all the elements of the promotional mix” (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). Figure 8 shows that there are several elements to consider when establishing a marketing and communication strategy and it is important to notice that some elements of the promotional mix can be used in different ways.

For example, sponsorship can be used for public relations but sometimes it can also be related to advertising. Those elements are complementary and articulated in order for the company to have a consistent mix that answer to its objectives. A successful integrated marketing communication mix enables companies to achieve different benefits such as creative integrity, operational efficiency, consistent messages, cost savings, unbiased marketing recommendations, high-caliber consistent service, better use of media, easier working relations, greater marketing precision and greater agency accountability (Linton and Morley, 1995).



Source: Pickton, D. and Broderick, A. (2005). *Integrated marketing communications*.

**Figure 8: The Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Mix Model**

Unifying the whole strategy behind a sponsorship investment is crucial and marketing decisions need to be consistent with corporate objectives. But sponsorships cannot work on their own and it is essential to leverage and activate in order for them to succeed. The next part will cover why and how to do it.

### II. 2. 1 c. Leveraging a sponsorship deal

Sponsorship leveraging is “the use of collateral and sponsorship-linked marketing communications and activities – advertising, promotion, public relations, social media,

sampling, direct marketing, internal marketing, hospitality, online and business-to-business communications – to develop the marketing potential of the association between a sponsee and sponsor” (Cornwell, 2014). In other words, leveraging is related to the marketing communications collateral to the sponsorship investment. It can be distinguished from activation that encompasses communications that promote the audience’s engagement with the sponsor (Weeks et al. 2008). Most companies leverage sponsorships with additional expenses for three main reasons. Firstly, leveraging sponsorship enables companies to tell their own brand story thanks to the assistance of their partners who seek to maintain long-term relationships. Secondly, sponsors who actively leverage their role with meaningful marketing will maximize their investment. This requires additional material and financial resources, but it will diminish the risk of being ambushed. Consequently, leveraging can be used to protect the brand from competitors (Farrelly et al. 2006). Finally, it offers the company opportunities to be visible and to communicate messages as sponsorship deals present opportunities to expose the logo and display various signage.

Cornwell identified different types of spending linked to sponsorship that could be considered as leveraging such as social media, technology and hospitality.

Social media defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of users’ generated content” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) are part of people’s daily life and rise up new challenges. According to a study led by Statista (2018a), more and more people use social media in France as fifty-six percent of respondents reported using social media during 2016 against thirty-six percent in 2010. Furthermore, the phenomenon is even more important among younger people. Indeed, ninety-four percent of respondents aged between 18- and 24-year-old and eighty-two percent of people aged between 25- and 39-years-old declared to use social media. This innovative hybrid element of the promotion mix changed the way companies address their audience. As a traditional tool, it firms to communicate with customers but as a nontraditional tool, customers are able to talk directly to one another (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). Considering those elements, companies have focused their efforts on the development of social media in order to promote their brand, events, products and to leverage their sponsorship deals. This can be achieved through different forms of social media as paid media, owned media being the organization’s-controlled media network and earned media being unpaid and not controlled (Cornwell 2014). The latter, which encompasses word-of-mouth, is the most interesting for sponsors as it is

powerful, viral and costless. However, the social amplification that results from social media can be risky and needs to be controlled carefully to avoid scandals. Technology-based leveraging is more and more developed, which is in line with the digital trends. Accordingly, mobile applications are developed for big events and it enables companies to interact instantaneously with the participants. Last but not least, hospitality is an important way to leverage a sponsorship. The hosting of business guest enables companies to build business activities and/or relationships with a selection of attendees. It will help people to remember the name of the brand and it can enhance their experience. Therefore, entertaining clients and stakeholder needs to be part of the marketing strategy of the company when implementing a sponsorship deal.

The leverage ratio is “the amount spent on leveraging relative to the amount spent to engage in the sponsorship” (Cornwell, 2014). The ideal goal is the 1:1 ratio in order for a sponsorship to be exploited at its full potential, meaning that for every dollar spent in a sponsorship deal, the same amount should be spent on leveraging. In reality, the leverage ratios depend on the amount of the contract, the means of communication considered as leveraging, the brand equities of the sponsor and the sponsee, the duration of the relationship and the objectives of the sponsorship.

However, the combination of promotional tools depends on the objectives of the company and on the audience which is addressed. In order to reach potential customers, sponsors need to adapt their strategy to their target.

### **II. 2. 2. Audience and strategy**

As Steve Sleight (1989) pointed out, sponsorship is really efficient because it allows a particular audience to be targeted with a specific message. Therefore, it can be used to influence strategic partners, employees, government representatives but also customers (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). In this part we will explore the different audience at which a sponsorship can be targeted, how to reach them then, we will focus on the millennials.

## II. 2. 2. a. The choice of audience and the objectives of the company

In her conceptual framework, T. B. Cornwell (1995) has listed five broad types of audiences: consumers, channel members, financial institutions, governments and community leaders and employees.

On the one hand, consumers and channel members are related to marketing objectives. The former audience is targeted depending on demographic characteristics such as the age, the gender, or the geographical location. Sponsorship enables companies to target a specific audience as it appeals the brand audience but also the one of the sponsored property. Thus, companies can choose their deals depending on the people they want to target and determine the specific message they want to communicate. Regarding the sport context, companies may choose carefully which property they want to sponsor. It could easily engage the fans of the sponsored team, but the risk is that fans of the rival team could make a negative transfer or take distance with the brand if the sponsee was making a poor performance. Companies can also target their channel members through trade-focus events. This enables them to reach distributors and suppliers at one event.

On the other hand, financial institutions, governments, community leaders and employees are related to corporate objectives. Targeting communities can allow companies to bond with local populations and soften their image. More and more companies began to invest in arts and entertainment and the corporate foundation giving grew very fast around 2011 (Cornwell, 2014). Sponsorship can also target financial institutions, governments and NGO through cause-linked sponsorships in areas of social concern. The difficulty here is those stakeholders may have different objectives thus finding a common ground may be complex.

As sponsors often have multiple audiences and different marketing objectives, it is important to define the target of a sponsorship deal and its objectives. Meryl Gardner and Philip Shuman (1988) worked on a framework that shows the effect of sponsorship depending on the public. Consumers are usually the main target as they have a direct impact on sales. Thus, the aim here is to raise brand awareness and enhance the brand image. Concerning the channel member, the final goal is to facilitate relationships with them while financial institutions are targeted to find potential investors and to bring capital. Sponsorships may also be addressed to government and community leaders in order to improve the company's reputation or to

employees because it can increase their enthusiasm and by extension their productivity. But new challenges arise, and companies have to adapt to the changing environment. One big issue, especially for insurance companies, is to reach the millennials.

#### II. 2. 2. b. A new challenge: reaching the millennials

Generation Y is viewed as one of the most valuable segments of the population mainly due to the size of this group and to its strong purchasing power (Comscore, Inc., 2012). In France, people aged between 19 and 39 years old represents about 23,7% of the population (Statista, 2019b) thus, companies try to reach the millennials through their marketing strategy to sell their products or services but also to find new talents. But in order to reach them, it is crucial to understand who they are and what are the characteristics of this generational group.

Firstly, it is important to underline that they share a cultural context that influenced characteristics, values, and consumer preferences (Young and Hinesly, 2012). This generation is the first one not knowing a life without the internet or cell phones (Comscore, Inc., 2012) and to grow with social media and digital technologies. According to a study conducted by Statista (2018b), about 97% of millennials uses the Internet daily. Therefore, they are used to accessing information instantaneously and they easily adapt to the accelerating level of innovation of today's world (Dutt, 2019). Moreover, computers and mobile phones are essential tools for Millennials who can communicate and buy products and service from all over the world (Smith, 2011). Amy M. Young and Mary D. Hinesly (2012) identified several common characteristics of millennials such as confidence, openness to change and diversity, closeness in relationships and effectiveness at multitasking.

Secondly, millennials are more complex than other generations and brands find them difficult to please and attract. Compared to the other generations, they have a stronger sense of community and they are highly loyal to a few brands (Dutt, 2019). Brands need to find new way to fit into their lives and promote their products or services conveniently. Those types of customers are looking for engaging and authentic experiences that enable them to connect with the brand.

In this context, brands need to follow the fast-evolving environment, adapt to the trends and use all the resources possible to keep up with their competitors. Digital marketing refers to “the use of digital distribution channels to promote products and services, it is commonly

knowns as e-marketing and it includes digital or online advertising” (Smith, 2011). Considering the characteristics of the generation Y, its usage of e-commerce will keep growing as its discretionary income. Thus, it is important to be aware of the channels they use.

Katherine Taken Smith (2011) conducted a survey that shows that Millennials prefer certain forms of online advertising, thus, in order to reach them, it is crucial for sponsors to use them. The preferred advertising means appear to be side-panel ads and coupons, advertisement on YouTube and email updates come second, however pop-up advertising clearly disturb Millennials. In order to grab attention, brands should use graphics, interactive features and intense colors and to prompt repeated visits on a website, they can use personalization, competitive prices and good shipping rates. Finally, Word-of-Mouth has a huge impact on Millennials as they care about what they peers think. Thus, encouraging them to write online reviews will help to raise product awareness and build the reputation of the company. Most of today’s company have integrated social media in their strategies and use new ways to reach their target market as social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Pérez Curiel and Luque Ortiz, 2017). Thus, using those communication channels with opinion leaders and influencers help brands to raise awareness and to target the public they want to reach.

As Millennials look for engaging experience and unique content, marketing strategies need to consider those new demands in order to be able to gain customers. This might help them to gain a competitive advantage and overcome the competition.

### **II. 2. 3. Objectives and risks**

In the end, all companies try to obtain a competitive advantage in order to differentiate themselves from the competition and this can be achieved through the marketing strategy. This part will review the existing literature about the components of a brand, the competitive advantage gained thanks to the implementation an integrated marketing strategy and the risks companies take when trying to implement sponsorship.

#### **II. 2. 3. a. Building a strong brand**

Philip Kotler (2003) defined a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller and to

differentiate them from those of competitors”. During the last decades, branding has emerged as a top management priority and is one of the most important intangible assets of a company, thus marketers aims to raise awareness and build brand equity (Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

The brand equity concept appeared in the 1970’s and has been studied by numerous researchers (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Heding et al., 2009). It refers to “the set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand’s name and symbol that adds to the value provided by a product or service to a firm or a firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1991). Brand equity is perceived as a “mechanism for achieving competitive advantage for firms, through differentiation” (Wood, 2000) and it encompasses two aspects namely, a strategic and subjective one that refers to the consumers’ perceptions of the brand and a financial one which is also very important as it allows managers to account for how much value the brand holds (Heding et al. 2009).

Brand equity is divided into five elements: name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary brand assets (Aaker, 1991).

The basis of brand equity appears to be brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991) and corresponds to the fact that consumers keep purchasing the brand even if competitors present products or services with superior features, price, and convenience. It is a “behavioral construct relating to intentions towards repeat purchase” (Nam et al., 2011) that enables companies to measure the customers’ attachment to a brand, thus it is closely linked to the potential profits a firm can make in the future. According to David Aaker (1991), several levels of loyalty can be distinguished. First, there are the non-loyal buyers or price buyers who are totally indifferent to the brand. The brand name won’t influence their purchase decision and they will decide to buy the cheaper product or service. Then, the second level concerns habitual buyers. They don’t look for alternatives as long as they have no reasons to change their habits. On the third level, there are switching-cost loyal who buyers that are satisfied and who may have switching costs when changing brands. The fourth level consists of the friends of the brand. They develop an emotional attachment and are fond of the brand. Finally, the top level includes committed customers. As they are proud of using this brand, they will advocate its use. Since loyal customers represent a revenue stream on a long-term period, companies try to retain them. Moreover, it can lead to the gain of competitive advantage that might help the brand to grow and raise awareness.

The second component of brand equity is brand awareness, also known as brand knowledge, which relates to “the likelihood that a brand name will come to mind and the ease with which it does so” and depends on two factors known as brand recognition and brand recall performance (Keller, 1993). The former is the consumers’ ability to remember that they have already been exposed to a brand when they see or hear its name (Keller, 1993) and it is the lowest level of brand awareness (Aaker, 1991). The latter is the next level of awareness and relates to the ability to generate the brand name from memory when the product category is given (Keller, 1993). The highest level of brand awareness is called the top-of-mind and refers to the brands that are first-named by a customer. Brand recall is crucial in purchasing decision as it will impact the brands that are included in the consideration set of the customer (Aaker, 1991). Therefore, being the most well-known brand can give the company an important competitive advantage to stand out from competitors.

Brand equity also relies on perceived quality which is defined as “a consumer’s appraisal of a product’s overall excellence or superiority” (Zeithaml, 1988). It is an intangible, overall feeling about a brand that is relative to customers’ personalities, needs and preference, thus it cannot be objectively determined (Aaker, 1991). According to Valarie Zeithaml (1988), the evaluation of the quality is done in a comparison context as the consumer judge the attributes of the product or the service as high or low depending on its evoked set. In the service context, perceived quality depends on several elements that can be assessed. Performance is related to the competence of the service people and concerns the delivery of the basic function being sought by the customer. The tangibles encompass the quality of the physical facilities, equipment and the appearance of personnel whereas reliability concerns the accuracy of the accounting work. Finally, responsiveness, empathy, credibility, trustworthiness, and courtesy relate to the interaction between the service firm and the customer.

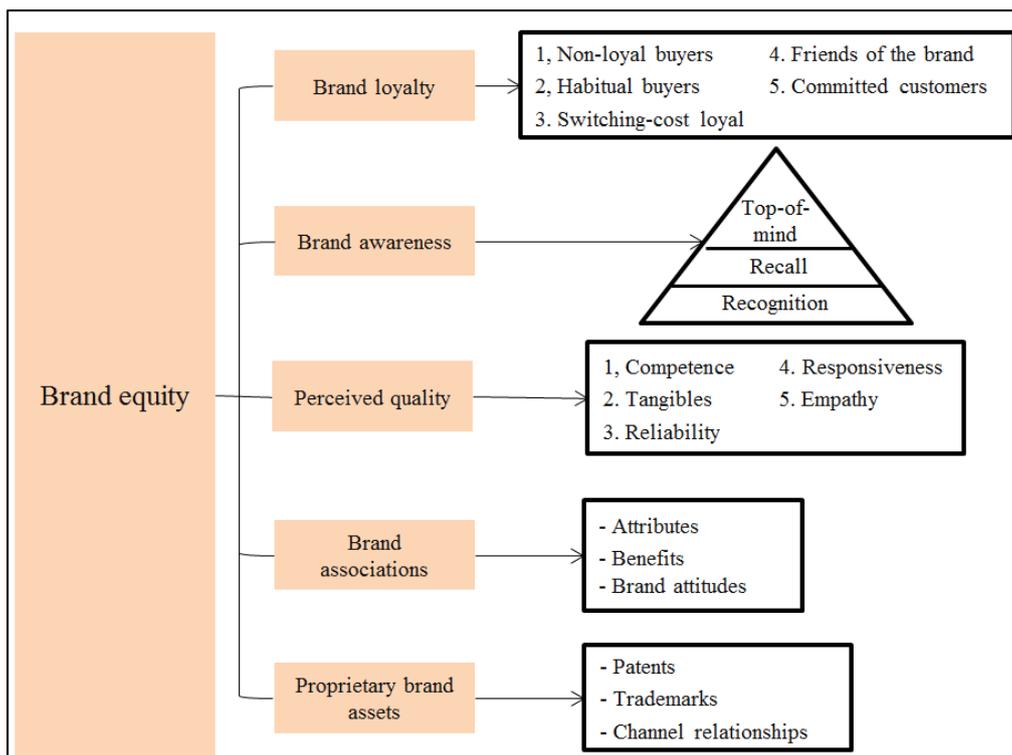
Brand associations are a key stone in brand equity and refer to anything “linked” in memory to a brand (Aaker, 1991). They affect the customer purchase decision and help a brand to become well-positioned. Many scholars have tried to classify the different types of brand associations and no consensus has been reached. According to Kevin Lane Keller (1993); brand associations can be divided into three major categories namely attributes, benefits and attitudes.

- Attributes are the descriptive features of a product or service and they can be directly related to it (product-related attribute) or not (non-product related attributes).

- Benefits are the subjective value consumers give a product or a service attribute and they are divided in three groups: functional benefits that are related to intrinsic advantages, experiential benefits which correspond to the feelings of the consumers and symbolic benefits that are the extrinsic advantages associated to the needs of social approval and personal expression.
- Brand attitudes are the basis for consumer behavior and reflect the mindset of a customer about a brand.

David Aaker (1991) listed nine other types of brand associations such as: intangibles, relative price, use, customer, celebrity, life-style, product class, competitors, and geographic area.

The fifth element related to brand equity is the other proprietary brand assets which are unique and legally protected. There are different types of proprietary assets as patents, trademarks and channel relationships. They are a powerful source of competitive advantage in order to overcome the competition and have a great value for the company.



Source: Adapted from Aaker (1991)

**Figure 9: The dimensions of brand equity**

The five dimensions of brand equity are important to consider in order for companies to adapt their strategy to their intended objectives. Figure 9 summarizes all those aspects. However, another element to consider is brand image which is closely related to brand associations. Scholars has not agreed yet on a definition (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990) but in this paper brand

image will be referred as “the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory” (Keller, 1993). Indeed, brand image contribute to brand equity (Aaker, 1991) and is a crucial for marketers. Since brand image depends on the communication and marketing strategies, it is essential for companies to evaluate how the brand is perceived in order to adapt the actions taken (Srivastava 2011). Indeed, brand image have an impact on brand equity and on consumer purchase decision (Toldos-Romero and Orozco-Gómez 2015), therefore marketers should find some ways to enhance perceptions and engage the audience.

#### II. 2. 3. b. Creating an experience and engaging the audience

Consumers are perceived as emotional beings who look for sensitive experiences (Maffesoli, 1990), thus companies adapt their strategies to engage customers and there has been a change from traditional marketing to experiential marketing (Schmitt, 1999). Indeed, engaged customers play a key role in viral marketing activity by recommending product, services and brands to others. (Brodie et al., 2011). Experience is defined as “a communicative, historic and cultural phenomenon that involves an interaction between a human being and the world” (Hohr, 2012) and that occurs in a given situation, at a given time (Roederer, 2012). Indeed, brands try to provide their customers with emotional and experiential benefits (Keller, 1993) in order to reinforce the existing memory associations (Toldos-Romero and Orozco-Gómez 2015) and to increase engagement.

Schmitt proposed a framework that encompasses the four dimensions of experiential marketing (1999). First, instead of focusing on functional features of products or services, experiential marketing focuses on customer experiences. The aim of this strategy is to provide “sensory emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational values” (Schmitt, 1999). Then, marketers intend to provide a holistic experience meaning that it is valuable for the customers. The third dimensions is about the nature of customers who are defined as “rational and emotional animals” meaning that they are rational human beings but they can also be driven by their emotions and take irrational decisions. Last but not least, experiential marketing tools and methods are eclectic and chosen depending on the situation and the objectives. They can be either intuitive and qualitative or analytical and quantitative. Therefore, in order to engage customers, sponsored events should consider those dimensions, involve affect, emotion, and cognition. (Close et al., 2006) and focus on consumer experiences (Schmitt, 1999).

Sponsorship is a way to change consumer behavior (Cornwell, 2014) and is used by marketers to connect with customers (Close et al., 2006). Indeed, sponsoring specific lifestyles or passions enables the company to engage with stakeholders and to connect with the brand community (Meenaghan, 2013). Moreover, sponsors may create associations and hands-on experiences through events sponsorship in order to spread specific messages in order for consumers to consider them as part of the event rather than as a business-oriented communication (Close et al., 2006).

Finally, engagement can be achieved through a rising phenomenon that has been studied by several scholars (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999; Abreu Novais and Arcodia, 2013) which is the transfer process. Matching an event and a brand is a way to enhance the impact of the partnership on both the company and the customers (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999). According to Stéphane Ganassali and Laurence Didellon (1996), this transfer encompasses two dimensions, one of them is cognitive and the other one is affective. The former relies on the sponsee's attributes meaning that the sponsor benefits from the connotations generated by the sponsored event. For example, if one company decides to finance a sport event, it may be associated to the different values of sport such as performance, risk-taking tendencies, youth, healthiness, and combativeness. Furthermore, sponsorship has a direct impact on the affective dimension of attendees. Indeed, they may transfer the feelings they had when attending an event to the benefactor and develop and emotional attachment for the brand.

Nevertheless, if sponsorship can be beneficial for brands in terms of image and engagement, it can also be dangerous. As, everyone is digitally connected, all the sponsor's efforts can be jeopardized by a small mistake. The next part will highlight the different risks related to sponsorship.

### II. 2. 3. c. Sponsorship risks

Sponsorships are sometimes more complex than it looks, and companies need to be aware of the limits and risks before engaging in one investment of this type. According to John L. Crompton (2014), risks related to sponsorships can be divided into two categories, namely operational and reputational risks.

On the one hand, operational risks are the most important focus in the short term and occur for two main reasons. Firstly, sponsors may insist on changing the sporting event in order to make it more attractive or more exciting. Those changes are strongly influenced by media pressure as media coverage are a huge issue for sponsors, but it can lead to the transformation of the sport itself (Crompton, 2014). Indeed, the rules of some sports have been modified to attract more people and improve broadcast audiences: games are shortened to speeding up the action as it is the case for tennis and American football, competitive balance are ensured to keep outcomes uncertain and dramatic moments are maximized (Coakley, 2004). Radical changes like those mentioned above may offend traditionalists who are the core of sport's supporters and who are the one that may promote the event they attended and by extension the company that sponsored it. Therefore, modifications should be thought carefully in order not to lose the main target audience of the sponsor. Secondly, operational risks can also result from the sponsor's excessive influence on events. Sometimes, the core nature of a sporting event can be endangered by the needs of the sponsor and athletes can be pressured to perform at the expense of their welfare. In order to please the sponsoring firm, they may have to compete more often or to endure extreme conditions as intense heat (Crompton, 2014).

On the other hand, reputational risk is a longer-term concern due to controversies or to the over-commercialization of an event. Indeed, corporate social responsibility is a growing concern and people are more regarding concerning the impact of a company's actions on society. Thus, when firms choose business over human beings it can generate a public scandal (Crompton, 2014). For example, the company Citigroup faced a huge controversy in 2009 during the Recession crisis as they laid off 50,000 people but decided to sign a naming-stadium-deal of 400 million dollars the same year (Buxbaum, 2009). The other source of reputational risk is over-commercialization which can undermine the passion of true fans. The power of persuasion of sponsorship in elite sport associated to the commercialization of sport may turn the emotional bond developed between the fans and the club into a classic entertainment. In the case of naming rights deal, supporters might feel reluctant as facilities names are often associated with history and memories, thus it can be perceived as a loss of ownership (Crompton, 2014).

Another risk that companies face when entering a sponsorship agreement is uncertainty as the association between a sponsor and a sponsored entity can also have consequences on the sponsor's brand image. Thus, when scandals arise, sponsors often try to dissociate themselves

from the sponsees as it was the case Lance Armstrong and Cristiano Ronaldo (Selectra, 2019). However, sometimes, they may also intend to take advantage of scandals as Nike did with Colin Kaepernick, the former NFL player who knelt during the national anthem to protest against police treatments. One year after this controversy, studies show that Nike remains a popular brand, sales have grown up, shares are up, and the company has positioned itself as a corporation who take a stand on political issues (Halzack, 2019). However, if scandals may have negative outcomes it is also the case of the sport performance of the sponsored entity. Tiger Woods, one of the greatest golfers in the history, faced several personal scandals that tarnished his image and many injuries that questioned his ability to win again. Lots of his sponsors decided to drop him after those issues but Nike decided to stick with him. The decision paid off when Tiger Woods won the Masters Tournament in 2019, eleven years after his last victory. Nike's brand exposure was valued at more than 22.5 million dollars (Kennedy, 2019).

Last but not least, ambush marketing is a big concern for sponsors. It appears to be effective but quite controversial and refers to the unauthorized association of a company's name, brand, products or services with a sports event through a marketing activity (Townley et al., 1998). T. Bettina Cornwell (2014) differentiate four types of ambush marketing. The first one consists in predatory ambushing which is illegal and intentional. The aim is to gain market share by confusing consumers and by appearing as the official sponsor (Chadwick and Burton, 2011). The second category is perceived as a creative strategy that is intentional and legal. The organization try to allude to customers that it is sponsoring the event without making any specific statement in order to gain exposure (Chadwick and Burton, 2011). The third type is incidental ambushing which is unintentional and legal. The last one is unintentional and illegal and occurs when a brand violates laws without knowing it, by associating itself to a protected event for example. However, it is possible for a brand to prevent ambushing. Protection strategies can be divided into four categories (McKelvey and Grady, 2008). First, companies can educate consumers before an event in order to position themselves as the official sponsor. They can also establish zones on-site where other brands are excluded and where access is controlled. Sponsors may also use specific contractual language to limit ambushing. Finally, legal protection can be reinforced on trademarks to avoid competitors to use words, symbols and images associated with the event.

From operational risks to ambush marketing, companies have to consider the different potential risks of sponsoring before engaging in one contract of this type. Thus, it is important to evaluate each possible deal and to assess the eventual drawbacks.

In this part, we answered the two following sub questions: “*How do companies integrate sponsorship into their marketing strategy?*” and “*What do companies expect from sponsorship?*”. Then, we discussed the different risks of sponsorship. The final part of the literature review will offer a broad perspective on the tools that exist in order to measure the performance of the marketing strategy, the effectiveness of sponsorship and the actions taken by companies to improve it or to change it.

### **II. 3. From the marketing strategy to measuring the performance**

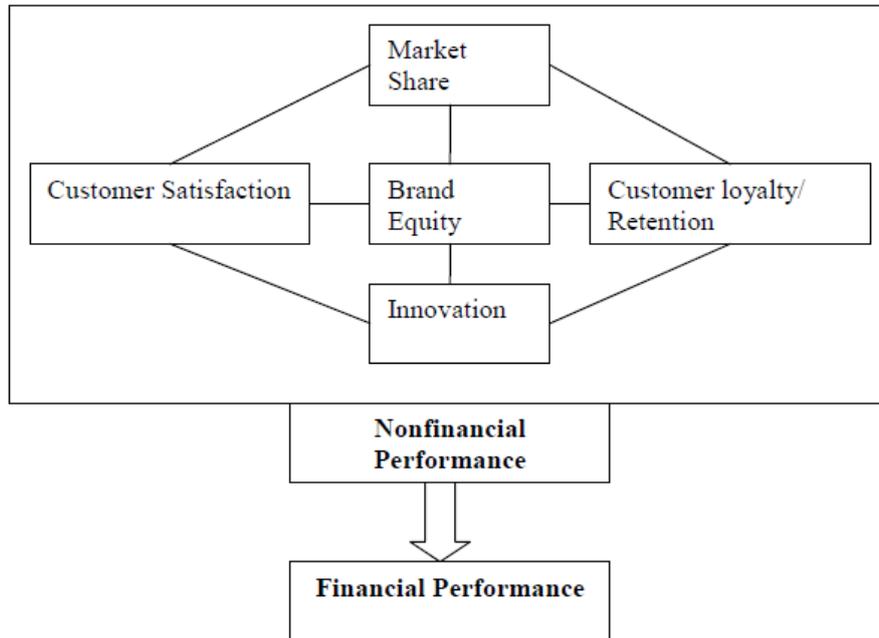
The study conducted by Meryl Gardner and Philip Shuman (1987), revealed that at least half of the companies they interviewed don’t assess the results of the sponsorships they implement. There are no standardized methods to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship (Cornwell, 1995; Tripodi et al., 2003), however, as part of the marketing strategy, it is important to justify sponsorships with results and if companies don’t assess the performance results of their investments, it highlights a fundamental question: how does top management make decision concerning sponsorships? (Meenaghan, 2013). Thus, some techniques have been developed in order to assess the effectiveness of sponsorship and by extension the effectiveness of the company’s marketing strategy.

This last part of the literature review will first explain how to measure the overall marketing performance of a company. Then, it will provide the lector with information about how to assess the sponsorship’s impact on consumers and on the company. Finally, it will tackle the different difficulties that companies may encounter when implementing a sponsorship.

#### **II. 3. 1. Evaluating marketing performance**

Nowadays, marketers are asked to demonstrate how they contribute to the firm’s performance (O’Sullivan and Abela, 2007). Therefore, implementing marketing measurement processes is essential for managers in order to justify their expenses (Gao, 2010) and to adapt their strategy to the fast-evolving environment and the customer demand (Dibbo, 1993).

Marketing performance is a multidimensional process (Clark, 1999; Gao, 2010) that evaluates the link between marketing activities and the company’s overall performance (Clark and Ambler, 2001). It includes the three dimensions of “effectiveness, efficiency and adaptability” but there is no consensus about its measurement (Gao, 2010).



Source: Yuhui Gao (2010)

**Figure 10: Model for Measuring Marketing Performance (MMMP)**

As shown in figure 10, Yuhui Gao (2010) developed a Model for Measuring Marketing Performance (MMMP) based on the existing literature, that links nonfinancial performance (market share, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty brand equity, and innovation) and financial performance measures (profit, sales and cash flow). The following section will investigate those indicators and review the existing theories about the assessment of marketing performance.

### II. 3. 1. a. Non-financial performance

Non-financial indicators are very useful for marketers as they provide information about the long-term performance of firms (Clark and Ambler, 2001). First, we will study customer satisfaction and retention, then we will review market share and innovation. Finally, we will provide more details about how to assess brand equity.

## **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

In order to assess marketing performance, it is important to study customer satisfaction and to define if there is a gap between what the customer want and what he or she receives. Ray Chambers (2002) proposed a framework based on six dimensions in order to evaluate customer satisfaction and to identify opportunities for improvement. It encompasses: “timeliness, responsiveness, convenience, location, availability and overall quality”:

- *Timeliness* measures if the work or transaction has been completed as scheduled and, in the required time. Customers need to think that the timeliness was acceptable in order to be satisfied (Cleverism.com, 2015).
- *Responsiveness* is “the ability to combine being right for the customer in terms of decisions, ideas and initiatives with being fast in response, or proactive” (Meehan and Dawson, 2002). Companies must be able to provide customers with goods and services that meet their needs and answer their concerns (Chamber, 2002) but it is important to recall that the speed with which the response is produced strongly influences customers satisfaction.
- *Convenience* focus on the customers’ ease of using your services. It relates to the resources (time, energy) that consumers give up buying goods and services (Berry, et al., 2002)
- *Location* refers to “the physical place of the point of contact” (Chamber, 2002).
- *Availability* is the extent to which a good or service is accessible when the customer wants it. It depends on the hours of opening of the firm’s points of contact, the inventories and the staffing schedules of the company (Chambers, 2002).
- *Overall quality* depends on customer expectation and relates to the global appreciation of the customers. Companies can also assess it by comparing the quality of its products or services to quality standards and processes. (Cleverism.com,2015).

Therefore, surveys that are used to assess customers’ satisfaction should balance positive and negative questions, be clear, relevant and specific. Moreover, liker-type scoring, which allows the respondent to select level of satisfaction, is usually used to facilitate the analysis of the responses (Chambers, 2002).

## **CUSTOMER LOYALTY**

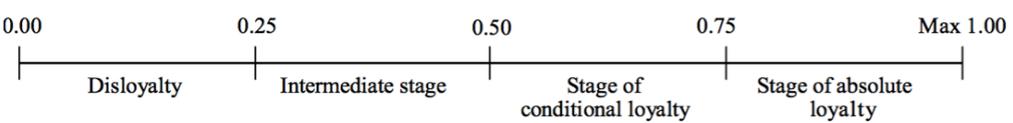
Achieving customer loyalty is crucial for companies, thus it is a primary marketing goal (Watson et al., 2015). However, it is hard to estimate and there is no standardized method.

Scholars agree on the fact that there are several dimensions to loyalty that can be assessed (Evanschitzky and Wunderlich, 2006; Bobâlcă et al., 2012; Skačkauskienė et al., 2015).

In their work, Claudia Bobalca, Cosmina Gatej (Bradu) and Oana. Ciobanu (2012) focused their measurement scale on three dimensions. Affective loyalty deals with the customers' emotions while conative loyalty measures the behavioral intention of the customer to continue to buy and its commitment to the company. Finally, action loyalty evaluates the active customers who recommend the brand to others, express a preference and keep purchasing from it. It helps companies to assess customer retention and to detect if their marketing strategy is effective or not.

Those dimensions are also used by Ilona Skačkauskienė, Neringa Vilkaitė-Vaitonė, Sergej Vojtovic (2015) who focused on the service industry. According to them, behavioral loyalty, which was quoted as the action loyalty of the previous section, matches the specificities of services but is inseparable from the attitudinal loyalty, evoked previously as the affective loyalty. It is important to define a specific research period depending on the frequency of purchases. Then, companies can calculate customer loyalty using the equation detailed in Table 2 and assess in which stage the customer is. The intermediate stage is quite unstable as customers are still in a decision-making process and can change their mind at any time. In the conditional loyalty stage, customers are not absolutely loyal yet.

This model offers companies the opportunity to measure and quantify loyalty and thus to have a more precise idea of their marketing performance concerning retention.

<b>Equation</b>	$L_{ijk} = f(v_{ijk}, d_{ijk})$
<b>Variables</b>	<i>L</i> : loyalty <i>v</i> : value of purchases <i>d</i> : frequency of purchases <i>i</i> : customer ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, m$ ); <i>j</i> : type of a service ( $j = 1, 2, \dots, n$ ); <i>k</i> : service provider ( $k = 1, 2, \dots, p$ ).
<b>Scale of measuring</b>	 <p>0.00                      0.25                      0.50                      0.75                      Max 1.00</p> <p>Disloyalty                      Intermediate stage                      Stage of conditional loyalty                      Stage of absolute loyalty</p>

Source : Skačkauskienė, I., Vilkaitė-Vaitonė, N. and Vojtovic, S. (2015).

**Table 2: Customer loyalty measurement**

## **MARKET SHARE**

Market share is the firm's percentage of an industry's total sales calculated on a specified period. It is used to position one company compared to the overall industry and can be divided by sector, product category, or specific product. (Myaccountingcourse.com, 2019). It is also possible to use compare the market share growth of different companies over a specified period to look at the company's performance. In order for companies to dominate the market, they need to set up different strategies to appeal more people. (Nickolas, 2018)

Moreover, marketing strategies enable firms to investigate customers' needs and to offer them a product or service that answer their demand. Thus, it is a crucial prerequisite for them if they want to increase their market share and stand out from the competition (Adewale, 2013).

## **INNOVATION**

Innovation can be seen as a key factor of performance. It is a continuous process that concerns the introduction of new or improved products, services, processes, marketing method or organizational method (Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center, 2011). Innovation activities refers to the scientific, technological, organizational, financial and commercial steps of the innovation cycle (OECD and Eurostat, 2005). Firms continually look for changes and for new knowledge, thus it is quite hard to measure such a dynamic process. However, scholars have studies two types of indicators: innovation inputs that relate to the resources devoted to the Research and Development including intellectual, human and technological capital and innovation outputs that refers to the realized success of innovative activity including "patent numbers and rates, patent quotes, number of new products, percentage of sales with innovations and other patent statistics" (Carayannis and Provan, 2008).

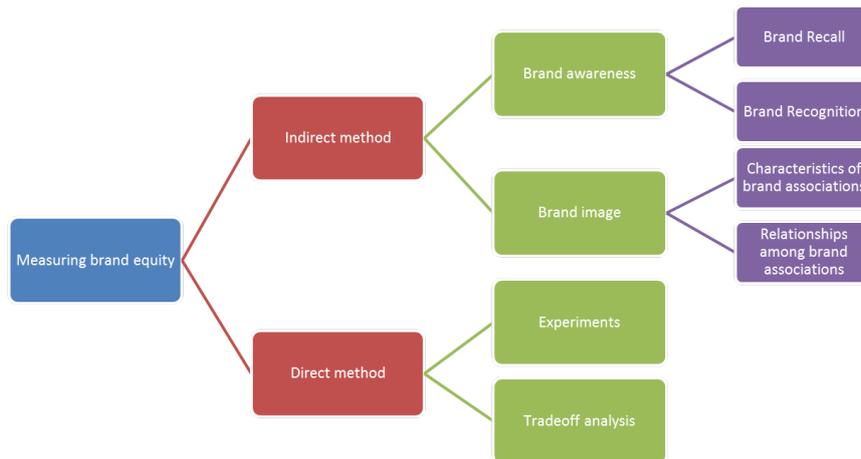
Different models have been developed over years in order to measure innovation. One of them is the innovation diamond, described by the doctor Robert G. Cooper (2011) during an interview. This innovation model is based on four areas namely product innovation and technology strategy, portfolio management, idea-to-launch new product development process and the right climate and culture for innovation. This enable companies to have a visual representation of their actual position on the different elements and to be aware of what they should improve.

## **BRAND EQUITY**

Last but not least, brand equity is a key performance indicator. David A. Aaker (1996) defined a few criteria to assess this element. It is important that those measures reflect the different dimensions of brand equity and the asset value of the brand, but they should also be related to the aspects that drive sales and profit. The measures need to be sensitive and applicable in various situations, independently from the product categories and the markets. However, brand equity is a very complex concept and many researchers have developed methods to assess and measure it. (Keller, 1993; Tripodi et al., 2003; Crompton, 2004; Cornwell, 2014).

As shown in figure 11, Kevin Lane Keller (1993) identified two methods to measure customer-based brand equity which refers to the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the different marketing elements of a brand. One approach is indirect while the other one is direct.

The indirect technique consists in evaluating the potential sources of brand equity through the measurement of brand knowledge. This can be achieved through the assessment of brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness consists of brand recall and brand recognition and is evaluated with aided and unaided memory measures. On the one hand, companies can test brand recall with cues as the product category (Cornwell, 2014) to define the accessibility of the brand in memory (Keller, 1993). On the other hand, brand recognition is evaluated in order to assess the potential availability of the brand in memory (Keller, 1993). For example, individuals could receive a lists of brand names and be asked to identify which one is a sponsor (Cornwell, 2014). Brand image is related to the characteristics and relationships among brand associations (Keller, 1993). Thus, companies define the characteristics of brand associations and compare them to understand what aspects influence the differential responses, then, they ask consumers for information relevant to the congruence, the competitive overlap and the leverage in order to determine to which extent brand associations are shared or not and if secondary associations exist. In a sponsorship deal, congruence is critical. When the sponsor and the sponsee fit together, people will accept and remind the association more easily (Crompton, 2004; Cornwell, 2014).



Source: Adapted from Keller (1993)

**Figure 11: Measurement of brand equity**

The second approach is more direct and aims to assess how brand knowledge influences consumer response (Keller, 1993). In order to obtain a concrete overview of this phenomenon, companies conduct experiments on two different groups of customers. In both groups, customers need to interpret different elements of the marketing programs. However, for one group those elements are associated to the brand that needs to be evaluated and for the other one, people are given an unfamiliar brand name. This helps sponsors to realistically estimate the effects of brand knowledge on how the brand is perceived. Another direct method is the tradeoff analysis that is used to explore the impact of the brand name and the interaction between the brand name and the others marketing mix elements (Keller, 1993).

In the end, those approaches enable the company to better understand how to assess brand equity and the marketing performance. Indeed, when implementing a sponsorship, companies need to consider customer responses.

### II. 3. 1. b. Financial performance

Financial measures, or financial ratios, are still the most important marketing performance measurements (O’Sullivan and Abela, 2007). They are the most considered by top management because they help companies to measure and identify their strengths and weaknesses and contributes to the development of the organization’s sustainability over time (Chris and Gerhard, 2016).

Gungor Hacıoglu and Osman Gök (2013) categorized financial metrics into two categories: basic and advanced financial metrics. On the one hand, basic financial measures provide global information concerning the firm performance and include sales, gross margins and profitability. Sales are the operating revenues earned by firms from their transactions of products or services. Sales analysis consists of measuring actual sales in relation to goals. Two methods exist including sales variance analysis that measures the impact of different factors to a gap in sales performance and the micro-sales analysis that evaluate specific products that did not produce the expected sales (Subramaniam, 2009). The gross margin is the ratio of gross profit to sales which reflects the company's ability to make profits with its products or services (Berk and DeMarzo, 2014). Profitability is a complex concept resulting from decisions on investment and strategies but also from constraints including economic regulation, level of competition and economic growth (Reynaud and Thomas, 2013). There are two types of profitability ratios including margin ratios that assess the ability of firms to turn sales into profits and return ratios that measure the ability to generate returns to shareholders (Kenton, 2019).

On the other hand, there are advanced financial measures that include Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), Economic Value Added (EVA) and Return on Investment (ROI).

- Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) is an indicator of customer profitability and can be used to allocate marketing resources (Kumar et al., 2008). It is “The sum of cumulated cash flows – discounted using the weighted average cost of capital (WACC) – of a customer over his or her entire lifetime with the company” (Kumar, 2008). It enables manager to evaluate client's Lifetime Value (LTV) over time and to identify the most and least profitable customers, to design profitable marketing actions and to computing market position and overall firm value (Vkclv.com, 2019)
- Economic value added (EVA), also known as economic profit, measures companies' financial performances and capture their true economic profit. It is computed by deducting the cost of capital from the operating profit, adjusted for taxes (Chen, 2019).

$$\text{Economic Value Added} = \text{Net Operating Profit After Taxes (NOPAT)} - \text{Invested Capital} * \text{Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC)}$$

To improve the EVA, firms need to increase the return on the invested capital (Lai and Shad, 2019). If the EVA is negative, it means that the funds invested into the company

doesn't generate value. Conversely, if it is positive, this means that the company is producing value from the funds invested in it (Chen, 2019).

- Return on Investment (ROI) is a financial metric that is used to measure the gain from an investment. It is “a ratio of the gain from an investment relative to its cost” that enables companies to evaluate the potential returns from a specific investment. (Beattie, 2019) It is often expressed in percentage in order to facilitate the interpretation. A positive ROI means that total returns exceed total costs and a negative figure shows that total costs are more important than returns, thus the investment is producing a loss.

Measuring marketing performance is becoming more and more challenging and companies have difficulties to assess the marketing returns. According to Sexton (2009), companies rarely define what marketing return constitutes. Little time and resources are dedicated to the measurement of marketing performance and people are not always trained to do this task. Moreover, there is no collaboration between the marketing and finance departments and inertia is common in companies, meaning that managers do not feel the need to change their strategy and methods. Finally, it is difficult for marketers to accurately define which marketing tool is effective and which one is not as acquiring new customers can be the result of a combination of coordinated activities and not of a single action (Luke, 2013).

Companies are looking new methods to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of their marketing strategy. One solution could be to develop metrics for each marketing tool. In order to better understand the effect of sponsorship on the marketing strategy, the next part will focus on its measurement.

### **II. 3. 2. Measuring sponsorship impact**

Sponsorship may have a positive or a negative impact on the overall marketing strategy, thus it is important to measure its effect and to analyze it. Tony Meenaghan (1991), identified three methods employed by companies to measure the effects of sponsorship: communication effects, media coverage or exposure gained and sales effectiveness.

Sponsorship programs can also be evaluated with the scale developed by Heckler and Childers (1992) that rates expectancy and relevancy. Thus, it assesses if the relationship between the sponsor and the sponsee makes sense and if consumer could expect this association.

#### II. 3. 2. a. Measuring sponsorship's impact on awareness

Awareness of sponsors is one of the easiest measures to get in order to assess the sponsorship effectiveness (Garland et al. 2008). But first, defining some levels of sponsorship awareness is a crucial step to determine if the consumer has memorized the association between the sponsor and the sponsee (Meenaghan and O'Sullivan, 2013). It can be achieved through a two-part survey conducted before and after the exposition to the sponsored event, athlete or facility which has been done by the Cornhill Insurance Company which decided to associate itself with cricket. Before this deal, less than 2% of the English people knew about the company but this number increased of nineteen points in five years. Benefits were huge in terms of brand awareness since the name of the company was present everywhere on television, radio, national press and provincial press. Over the five-year sponsorship, the investment generated about £10 million profits. (Crompton, 2004).

Longitudinal design is also a way to identify how much image has been transferred from an event. Based on the first year of sponsorship, it measures incremental shifts and helps to assess changes over time (Crompton, 2004). This method was used to assess the brand awareness of the credit card firm's Visa that sponsored the Olympic Games of 1992. People were asked to name the best credit card service at different time periods: three months prior to the Games, during the Games and one month after. The study showed that the firm's advantage over its competitor MasterCard was about fifteen points in the first survey, that it doubled during the games and that it kept its superiority with twenty points in the last survey. (Crimmins and Horn, 1996). Therefore, longitudinal design is a good way to measure awareness over time and to position one company compared to its competitors.

However, sponsorship doesn't work the same way for all brands. Janet Hoek (1998) advocates that sponsorship's effectiveness can be evaluated the same way as advertising effectiveness based on the fact that advertising reinforce brand awareness for actual users of the products and services in question. Sponsorship, recognized as a brand builder, is really working for well-known brands.

Awareness may also be measured by the number of visits made to websites. Traffic can be analyzed before, during and after a sponsorship deal which will provide a useful information to the sponsor as it demonstrates people's awareness through their engagement in a concrete action (Crompton, 2004). Likewise, media audit is an indicator of the exposure and publicity generated through a sponsorship. It assesses the quality and quantity of media exposure gained through the sponsorship involvement. Media exposure, which includes print and broadcast, quantify the exposure gained by making a comparison with the exposure that could have been gained through advertising (Tripodi et al., 2003). Thus, sponsors are able to measure how profitable their investments are. Different tools have been developed to measure media coverage. Media monitoring is a tracking method that consists of quantifying the number of times the brand is mentioned in the press, on the television, on the radio or on the Internet (Windels, 2015). In France, the Kantar Media firm created a reference indicator, the UBM ("Unité du Bruit Médiatique") to measure the impact of both offline and online media on a news topic or a celebrity. Thus, this metric is used to analyze the media coverage in terms of time or number of pages, of a specific topic over time and to compare it to the score of other topics (Bathelot, 2018). Last but not least, the Gross Rating Points is a metric that indicate how many times the firm reached its target, and at which cost. It quantifies impressions related to the target population, however it doesn't measure the size of the audience reached (Farris, Bendle and Reibstein, 2010).

In the end, the linkage between awareness and purchase behavior is very tenuous and is a first step toward the purchase decision. Thus, it is important to measure the persuasive impact of sponsorship on people's behavior.

### II. 3. 2. b. Persuasive impact and purchasing decision

Sponsoring events that appeal to the firm's target audience helps to shape buying attitudes and generate a positive reaction, but little research has been done about the factors that influence intentions to purchase a sponsor's products (Ngan, Prendergast and Tsang, 2011), therefore it is quite hard to evaluate how sponsorship impact the purchasing decision and persuade customers.

According to James Crimmins and Martin Horn (1996), sponsorship is an indirect means of persuasion that can lead to a purchasing decision. Contrary to advertising, it improves the perception of a brand without trying to change it and enables companies to link their brand to

an entity in which the target audience is interested. The persuasive impact of sponsorship on consumers can be described as a combination of:

- *The strength of the link* between the brand and the entity which is measured by exclusive awareness. Thus, this link is strong when the target recognizes the brand as the sponsor, but it is necessary for companies to communicate about their sponsorship.
- *The duration of the link* is also important as every link is perishable. Thus the longer is the link the better it is for the company.
- *The gratitude felt due to the link* strongly influences purchasing decisions. A brand that creates a strong link with an event or a sport team will benefit from consumer gratitude.
- *The perceptual change due to the link* is variable. The link created between the brand and the sponsee can lead to more positive perceptions of the brand but it not always the case.

Purchasing decisions are influenced by “moods, situations, availability, price, promotion and advertising recency” (Harvey, 2001). Sponsorship is one factor that can enhance purchasing decision because customers only select brands that are present in their consideration set. Indeed, customers exposed to sponsorship operation will more likely memorize the sponsoring brands and it will influence their intention to purchase (Chebli and Gharbi, 2014).

Billy Harvey (2001) confirm the existence of a persuasion effect and investigated the effect of sponsoring on the purchasing decision. The study showed that sponsorship has an effect on the intent to purchase, indeed customers who think that a brand is sponsoring an event, or a product will have a higher purchase intention. Results are even higher for people who used the brand in the past. In the end, it highlights that sponsorship increases willingness to consider and intent to buy brands.

The purchase decision making process suggests that potential customers move first from awareness to interest, then to intent to purchase and finally they buy the product or service. Thus, John L. Compton (2004) highlights the importance of intent-to-purchase studies that give useful insights of the impact of sponsorship on future sales. Moreover, it can help companies to attract and retain customers but also to set up objectives and to develop new products. The purchasing decision is influenced by a cognitive and an affective dimension. Customers may be influenced by sponsorship when buying a good or service (Garland et al., 2008; Gardner and Shuman, 1988). One phenomenon that reflect this affective dimension is

team identification which refers to one's level of attachment to a particular sports team. Indeed, fans will buy sponsored item as caps or jersey whether the team loses or wins but sponsoring a winning team will have a positive impact on the brand as they will be proud to support the winning side (Ngan, Prendergast and Tsang, 2011). Thus, it has been shown that there is a correlation between sponsorship and purchase decision and that the affective component influence customers' involvement, but scholars have difficulties to demonstrate how it acts (Garland et al., 2008).

### II. 3. 2. c. Sponsorship's effectiveness on sales

As part of marketing, sponsorships need to be justified with results. Therefore, marketers developed some tools to prove that objectives are being achieved. Unsurprisingly, one of main objectives of sponsorship is to develop the company's turnover and to increase sales (Crompton, 2004), thus managers are increasingly under pressure to measure return on investment (RoI) from marketing activities (Hieggelke, 2005). Nevertheless, it has been quite hard for companies to measure the direct impact of sponsorship on sales as it is difficult to isolate its effect from the other factors and/or marketing tools that can be implemented at the same time (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998).

Measuring direct and indirect audiences provides a first indication about the effect on sales. The direct audience is the one that attend the sponsored event and will be exposed to the logo, the brand name on the athletes' clothes, the billboards on site. The indirect audience is the one that follow an event through the media (press, television, radio, Internet) and will be exposed to TV ads and images that remind the spectator the association between the sponsor and the event (Abbassi and Chandon, 2017). The former can be measured through the study of the box office sales and the visitor numbers. Four indicators can be used to assess the direct audience: the number of paid entries, the occupancy rate, the number of entries per season ticket and the ratio of the number of people invited that attended the event. In France, sport events ticketing represents a turnover of 1,6 billion euros, being 32% of the whole French sport industry benefits (Sporsora.com, 2018). The latter can be measure through consultancy agencies which provide consumer panels and detailed studies (Abbassi and Chandon, 2017).

John L. Crompton (2004) detailed three ways through which sales objectives may be expressed. First, goals may be reached by boosting traffic at retail points of sale. Second, companies can use a less direct method by comparing the number of retailers that took part to

a sponsored event with the number who use to participate in a non-sponsorship promotion. This can be done at sponsored events where salespeople may find new leads. It was the case for the Xerox Corporation that sponsored professional golf tournaments and signed new clients thanks to those events. The last type of sales effect is an increase in sales gain associated with a sponsorship. Two methods were developed to track sales gains. Companies can give coupons during a sponsored event and assess the redemption rate with proof of purchase. Or, they can compare the sales for a two-month period around the sponsorship to sales during the same period one year before.

### **II. 3. 3. Evaluation and challenges**

The post-measurement phase in sponsorship is evaluation and adjustment. Indeed, results should be analyzed closely by managers in comparison with the objectives that have been fixed (Pham, 1991) and strategies should be adapted depending on the situation. However, scholars reveal that is not always the case.

The major problem is that there is no standardized method to implement sponsorship successfully. Tony Meenaghan (2013) stated that sponsorship is not as credible as advertising and that it is said to be “wasteful and ineffective”. Hence, sponsorship does not provide enough “proofs” about its effectiveness and is not as attractive as other promotional tools like advertising. However, if sponsorships results are not assessed, thus it is difficult for executives to realize that their investment is not profitable. So how do managers decide if sponsorship worth the cost?

The first bias that can intervene in this decision is someone’s personal needs. The story of Vidéoton, a telecommunication company, highlights the fact that involvement in sponsorship is not always rationale (Seguin et al., 2005). Indeed, the company was sponsoring sport because of the CEO’s personal interest in sport and his believes. As the deal was matching the company’s values, it has been perceived as corporate philanthropy. However, financial decisions should not be taken based on personal interest. It questions the integrity of CEOs and underlines another problem namely, the consequences related to ending a sponsor-ponsee relationship. Indeed, studies show that when a brand terminates a contract with a favorite team, it leads to negative attitudes towards the sponsor (Cornwell, 2014).

Therefore, companies' executives need to implement evaluation processes in order to have feedback on their sponsorship investments. New methods are still developed in order to better assess and understand sponsorship and the following sections will provide insights about how sponsorship is perceived today and what are the trends in the insurance sector.

### **III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

This research has a double purpose. First, the aim is to better understand how sponsorship is integrated in the marketing strategy of the company and how it is considered by top managers. Second, based on the customers' perceptions of sponsorship and sponsors, the study will present reasons why companies should consider sponsorship as a powerful marketing tool.

Before analyzing the results of the study and presenting the research findings, this third part of the study will outline the methodology that has been applied along the empirical part. Firstly, it is necessary to present the research context and the approach used to carry out the study. Then, the data collection and data analysis methods will be detailed. Finally, the reliability and validity of the study will be discussed.

#### **III. 1 Research context and approach**

This subpart will first describe the context and then explain the approach adopted for the study.

##### **III. 1. 1. The context**

The French insurance sector is very complex and highly competitive. Indeed, as everyone needs to be insured, there are 67,8 million (INSEE, 2019) current and potential consumers, which is huge but there are a lot of service providers, thus, many different offers. Because of those elements, insurance companies are facing a huge challenge in order to differentiate themselves from competitors and traditional advertising is not enough anymore to stand out.

Moreover, every decision needs to be justified with results and marketing actions have to be integrated into a global strategy. One solution can be to appeal customers through new ways including sponsorship. Indeed, this strategy allows company to engage consumers and to retain their attention by associating themselves with something that interested them. While

there are a lot of scholars that studied on sponsorship, none of them really investigated which place sponsorship has in the marketing strategy and to what extent it impacts decisions.

### **III. 1. 2. The approach**

The research takes an exploratory approach as it is defined as a valuable way to find out “what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light’ (Robson, 2002). It is useful to investigate unknown or little-known phenomenon and encompasses three methods namely, the search of the literature which has been done in the previous chapter, the interview of experts which will be detailed in the following sections and the focus group interview that has been replaced by surveys in this study in order to get statistical data. Moreover, exploratory research is very flexible and adaptable to change, thus it enables to narrow the study step by step while giving a strong direction to the enquiry (Saunders et al. 2009).

An inductive method has been adopted. Indeed, the purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of a specific phenomenon: the integration of sponsorship into the marketing strategy of companies. Thus, qualitative data are collected, and the structure of the study evolved along with the researches.

When investigating decision-making process in sponsorship, Tony Meenaghan (1999) advises to adopt a qualitative methodology prior to quantitative analysis. Many scholars have followed this path (Gardner and Shuman, 1987; Amis, 1999, Meenaghan, 2001) and this paper will be constructed this way. Indeed, qualitative research process is dynamic and allows to adapt the investigation along the research (Saunders et al., 2009). The semi-structured interviews aim to get useful information about people experience and behavior and were adapted in real time.

Then, the quantitative research was useful to get concrete numbers and make statistics.

In order to highlights practices in the insurance sector concerning sponsorship and marketing strategies, this research adopts a flexible exploratory qualitative research methodology and will be coupled with a quantitative research in order to analysis customers’ perception.

### **III. 2 Research design**

Research design is the general plan for “the collection, measurement and analysis of the data” of the empirical part (Saunders et al., 2009).

Scholars makes a distinction between qualitative and quantitative research. On the one hand, qualitative research is useful to explain how and why things happen as they do. On the other hand, quantitative research measures consumer behavior, knowledge, opinions, or attitudes (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Both models have their strengths and weaknesses thus, the empirical part of the study will follow a mixed-model design as it combines both data collection techniques. Indeed, the complementary design which is the use of two or more research strategies, is a way to fill in the gaps of one another (Bryman, 2006).

This paper will present two case studies in order to provide the reader with a more contextual analysis (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). The semi-structured interviews conducted will provide great insights and will be review following a qualitative analysis method. The surveys will help to better understand the market trends; thus, the quantitative analysis will help to better understand consumers point of view. Details about the analysis will be provided in the fourth subpart of this section.

By choosing one single sector, the aim is to compare accurately the different visions and actions of the insurance companies. The one thing they have in common is to sell assurances but their strategy, their distribution channels, their organization within the company are quite different from one company to another.

### **III. 3 Data collection**

Case study is a research strategy involving “the empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, using multiple sources of evidence” (Saunders et al. 2009). It combines interviews with record analysis in order to obtain different perspectives. Thus, several data collection methods were used in this paper: semi-structured interview, survey and secondary data.

### III. 3. 1. Semi-structured interviews

For this research, interviews will be individual and semi-structured. The aim is to conduct only face-to-face interview in order to observe people's body language and facial expressions. It will provide us quantitative data referred to as "non-numeric data or data that have not been quantified and can be a product of all research strategies" (Saunders et al. 2009). Semi-structured interviews are advised when respondents have a strong knowledge regarding the subject and are referred to as "qualitative interviews" (Adams, 2015). It takes the form of an open discussion, guided by an interview grid that cover the different themes that need to be tackled. The discussion is adapted to the respondent; thus, some questions are omitted, other are added and their order can vary depending on the flow of conversation (Saunders et al. 2009).

Between the 15<sup>th</sup> of July and the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, ten sponsoring and marketing managers were contacted through emails and phone calls. They were selected in their professional capacity, but the challenge was to find how to get in touch with them. I found their contact on LinkedIn and also used my professional network. However due to the period of the year, the response rate was very low. In the end, two managers took part to this study and another one accepted to answer the questions, but the timeline was too tight to collect his answers. Questions were sent before the interviews. This allowed managers to prepare their answers and to define if they had the necessary knowledge to answer.

In order to obtain valuable information, the top managers were asked if sensible information needed to be undisclosed and they verbally accepted to be recorded. Indeed, it was easier for them to speak freely. Benoit Gilles, sponsoring manager at Generali answered the questionnaire during a one-hour face to face meeting and Marie-Jo Ninine, Public Relations and sponsoring manager at GMF, accepted to schedule 45-minutes phone call to do the interview. Both interviews were conducted in French as it was their native language and took place in September 2019. All the interviewees were in charge on sponsorship in different companies.

The questions were developed around three main topics: overview of the insurance industry and sponsorship, insights about the marketing strategy and promotion in the insurance sector. Questions remain as neutral as possible in order not to influence answers. Those interviews

were conducted with the following objectives. The first goal was to get a clear picture of the insurance sector's organization and the challenge it is facing. Then, it was to determinate how sponsorship is linked to the firms' marketing strategy. Finally, the study aimed to look at the strategies developed to reach millennials.

### **III. 3. 2. Questionnaires to consumers**

Questionnaire can be defined as a data collection technique in which people are asked to answer the same set of questions in a predetermined order (deVaus 2002). This method is efficient to obtain responses from a large sample prior to quantitative analysis (Saunders et al. 2009).

Primary data has been collected through a survey that has been elaborated in the beginning of July. A pilot test has been done in the beginning of August and questions were adjusted thanks to the feedback of sponsorship experts. The questionnaire was published on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August on Google forms. Questions were published in French as the target audience of this study is the French people and was addressed to two types of people: Millennials and the Generation X.

Different types of questions were included in the questionnaire: single-answer multiple choice questions, open-ended questions, rating scale questions and Likert scale questions. It was divided into three parts. First, respondents had to answer socio-demographics questions, then they had to give information about their experience with sport and sponsoring. Finally, they had to give insights about how they perceived the impact of sponsoring.

The survey was shared on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) and through social networks. The aim was to collect at least one hundred answers, in the end, one hundred and fifty-two answers were collected. However, due to the audience target that was studied, all answers won't be exploited (see part IV. 3)

### **III. 3. 3. Secondary data**

Secondary data includes both raw data and published summaries and is either quantitative or qualitative (Saunders et al., 2009). There were collected in order to support the primary data collection and to provide more insights about the main topics of the study. Those data contributed to the definition of the research questions and were extracted from different

sources including books, academic articles, surveys, quantitative data and statistics, survey and theoretical articles, books, conferences, broadcast interviews and media articles.

### **III. 4 Data Analysis**

Quantitative and qualitative research can be combined at different stages of the research process including data collection and data analysis (Bryman, 2006). Thus, in this paper, the collected data will be analyzed through a mixed method: the complementary design which aims to enhance and clarify the results of the quantitative research with the results from the qualitative research. In the case of our study this can be really useful as strategies may be disconnected from results. Thus, the qualitative research will help to understand the insurance practices and what is the aim of their use on sponsorship. Then, the quantitative research will provide clear results about what is happening on the market and how consumers perceive sponsorship strategies. In the end, we will be able to determine how sponsorship is integrated in strategy and how it could be improved thanks to this mixed design method.

Firstly, the case study methodology will provide great insights about what is happening in the insurance sector. In order to conduct a qualitative analysis, interviews have been transcribed. The first questions have been developed in order to understand the industry's organization and their practices. Then, the aim is to get insights about the relationship of sponsorship and marketing in those companies. Finally, the last questions will be helpful to better understand what has changed for those companies in order to reach the Millennials.

However, this won't be sufficient to answer the research question, thus the data collected from the interview will be cross analyzed with the results of the survey. The survey's results will be disclosed and some of them will be analyzed with a Likert scale which is a method used to assess people's attitudes. This method considers that the intensity of attitudes is linear and that they can be measured (Likert, 1932). We decided to use a 5-point Likert scale. We will tabulate the results and find the mode in order to find out what is the most frequently occurring answer. Bar charts will display the results.

Those methods will be useful to provide the lector with new insights and will contribute to answering the last sub question.

### **III. 5 Reliability and validity**

Reliability refers to “the extent to which the data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings” (Saunders et al., 2009), while validity is concerned with whether the findings accomplish their claims (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). In order to assess the level of reliability and validity of the work accomplished, the external validity defined as the extent to which the research results from a particular study are equally applicable to other research settings (Saunders et al., 2009), the internal validity which is the extent to which findings can be attributed to interventions rather than any defect in the research design (Saunders et al., 2009), and the reliability of the study will be looked into.

According to Baxter and Eyles, cited by Vicent N. Anney (2014) confirmability is one aspect of reliability and can be referred to as “the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or corroborated”. Thus, in order to show transparency and insure the integrity of the research findings, transcribed interviews and quantitative data collected from the survey will be accessible to the people who would like to consult them.

#### **III. 5. 1. Reliability and validity of the interviews**

The selection of the interviewees was based on their professional experience and their occupation; thus, they had the required background to answer the questions.

There is always a risk of bias due to comments, tone and body language (Saunders et al., 2009), but the questions were phrased as clearly as possible and with a neutral tone. Moreover, the use of open questions contributes to reduce the risk of bias (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Last but not least, it is important to highlight the fact that those interviews were conducted in real-time, thus they reflect reality at the time information were collected and are hardly repeatable.

#### **III. 5. 2. Reliability and validity of the survey**

The survey aims to provide insights about the perception of sponsorship and about consumers' habits. Thus, it has been spread to as much people as possible in order to have a large panel of respondents. Sharing the survey on the social media was a way to reach many

people with different educational and social backgrounds. Moreover, the composition of the sample was representative of the generation Y and of the generation X.

According to Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill (2009), response rates, validity and reliability can be maximized by:

- Careful conception of individual questions
- Clear and enjoyable layout of the survey
- Comprehensive description of the purpose of the study
- Pilot testing to be sure that instructions were correct and clear enough, so the respondent are able to answer

Two testers filled in the survey before its publication in order to control that it was working correctly. Then, they gave the researchers some feedbacks to verify it was consistent with the primary goal of the questionnaire. In the end, the important total number of answers collected will provide helpful insights to the study. Results will be presented in the following chapter.

## **IV. FINDINGS**

The following chapter will present the empirical results and will be divided into three subparts. First, we will introduce the two company cases in order to better understand the research context. Then, we will present the results of the semi-structured interviews that will provide the reader with insights about the reality of sponsorship in the insurance industry. Finally, we will disclose the results of the consumers' surveys.

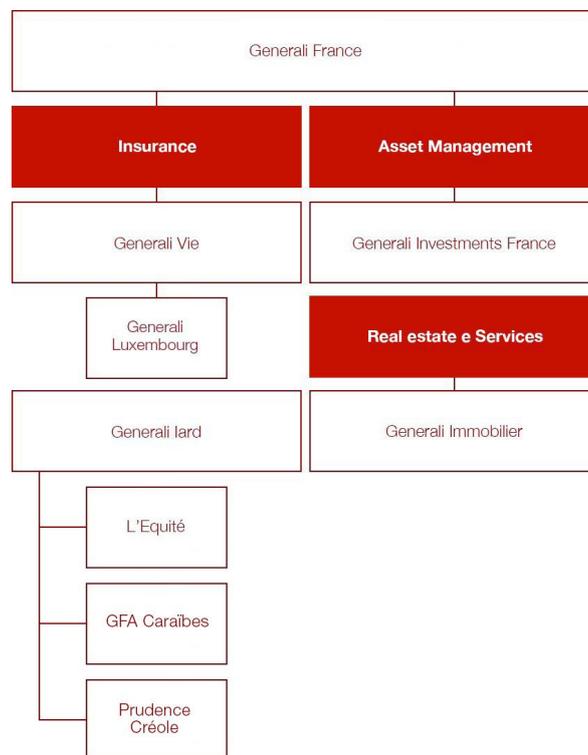
**Some information remain confidential, thus, they cannot be published or commercialized.**

### **IV. 1. Companies cases presentation**

#### **IV. 1. 1. Some background about Generali**

Generali is the largest Italian insurance company and third in the world. The company was founded in 1831. Generali France operates with a multi-channel approach working with agents, sales persons, brokers, financial advisors, banks, direct channels and affinity groups (Generali, 2019). As shown in Figure 12, Generali France encompasses different entities and

operates on different fields including insurance, asset management and real estate services. The turnover of the company was 12,1 billion euros in 2015.



Source: Generali (2019b)

**Figure 11: Generali France organization's structure**

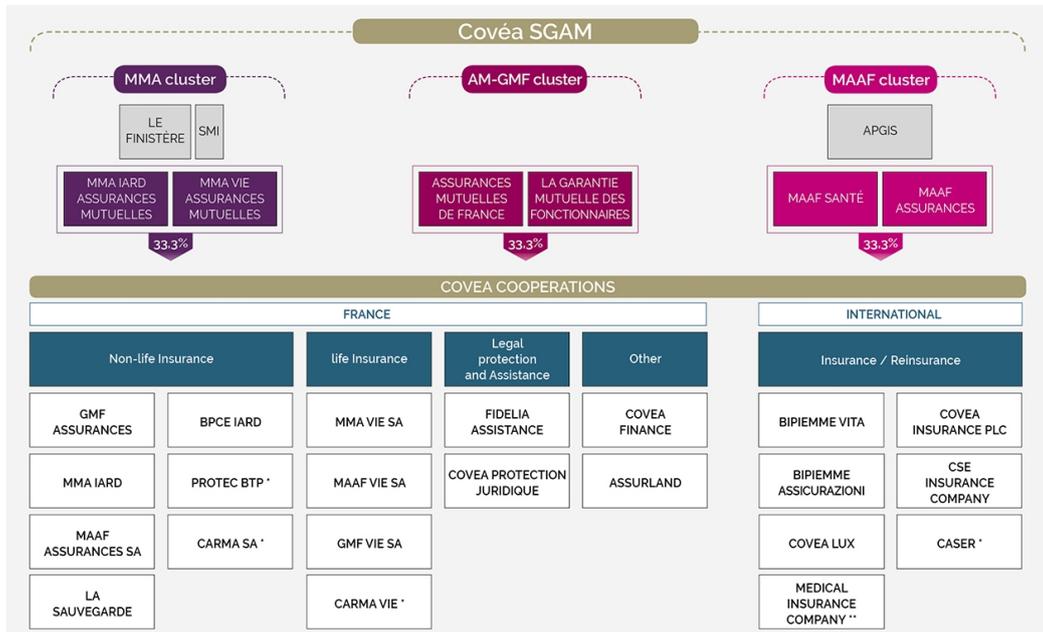
The company grew in importance, becoming one of the largest insurance operators both in Italy and in Central Europe. Generali's major international and local competitors are AXA and Allianz.

Benoit Gilles has been working for the communication direction in quality of event and sponsorship manager at Generali for about ten years. He is in charge of the internal and external events of the firm as well as for all types of sponsorship including image-driven and business-driven partnerships. He will be referred as manager A.

#### IV. 1. 2. Some background about GMF

The *Garantie Mutuelle des Fonctionnaires*, known as GMF, is a French insurance company, more precisely a mutualist company, that was founded in 1934. GMF is the leading insurer for Public Servants. They offer property, savings and life, health and protection insurances and also assistance and legal protection solutions. The turnover of the company was 98,5 billion euros in 2015.

As illustrated in Figure 14, GMF is part of the French group Covéa consisting of GMF, MAAF and MMA. The turnover of the group was 14,7 billion euros in 2015.



Source: Covéa (2019)

**Figure 12: Covéa organization’s structure**

Marie-Jo Ninine has been working at GMF for seventeen year and is now rugby sponsorship manager at the communication direction. She is in charge of the rugby partnership and contributes to leverage of the partnership. She will be referred as manager B.

## IV. 2. Business point of view

The following section will provide insights about those two companies. The analysis of the primary data collected will help to emphasize how sponsorship is used within those firms.

### IV. 2. 1. **Current status of sponsorship in the French insurance industry**

This part will provide useful insights about sponsorship and practices within the insurance industry. As explained in the introduction part, there is a growing interest for sponsorship, especially in the insurance sector. We will primary focus our attention on sport sponsorship as the sector is very attractive today and the opportunities around the sport business are countless.

Nowadays, sport is a lucrative communication channel for brands. In 2007, 15,9 million French people were member of one of the 119 national sport federations which is a rather broad potential marketing for companies. Many insurers are involved in sport sponsorship and are broadcasting television advertisements. Indeed, there are a lot of companies in the sector and new competitors are entering the market with the development of the digital market. Thus, it is important to develop strong partnerships.

As shown in Table 3, both companies are historically related to sport. On the one hand, Generali has always been perceived as an insurer of the sporting industry. They were insurer and partner of golf, volley-ball and sailing athletes. Currently, they are the insurer of the French Horse-Riding Federation since 1998 and sponsor major events. In 2002, they have signed naming rights sponsorship deal and became the sponsor of the “Generali Open de France”, which is the world biggest equestrian competition according the Guinness World Records (2012). It gathers about 15 000 riders and 350 000 spectators. Generali is also the insurer and the partner of the French Badminton Federation since 2015.

	Horse-riding	Ski	Golf	Volley-ball	Rugby	Sailing	Badminton
Generali France	YES	NO	PAST	PAST	NO	PAST	YES
GMF	PAST	PAST	NO	NO	YES	PAST	NO
<b>CAPTIONS</b>							
<b>YES</b>	Actual sponsor and insurer						
<b>PAST</b>	Old sponsor and insurer						
<b>NO</b>	No commercial relationship.						

**Table 3: Sport sponsorships’ historic of both companies**

On the other hand, GMF had sponsorship deals in ski and horse-riding. They became the official sponsor of the French Rugby Federation and of the national rugby union team in 1985. In 1989, the company became the official insurer of all the members of the federation and was named as the official sponsor of two major events that took place in France: the 2007 Men Rugby World Cup the 2014 Women Rugby World Cup. In 2008, they became the official assistance company on every national team’s games in France and three years ago, GMF resigned a six-year sponsorship contract with the Rugby Federation (Manager B).

**IV. 2. 2. Sponsorship objectives**

Three objectives can be underlined from our qualitative analysis, but they are not prioritized the same way depending on the company:

- Associating the sport values with the company
- Gaining brand awareness and improving brand image
- Finding new business opportunities

#### IV. 2. 2. a. Values and brand awareness

As investigated in the literature review, sport is part of French people's and sponsoring sport is today a way to reach people. Consequently, when a company sponsors a sport, it expects that a brand image transfer operates (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999). Here, brand associations operate in order to change people perceptions. This phenomenon was mentioned by both managers:

*“When we sponsor a sport, we are trying to transfer its values to our company. For example, if you sponsor sailing and boats, you expect people to associate the values of the sport with your company and by extension with the service that we offer to consumers”*. Manager A

*“As we are the historic partner of the Rugby Federation, people are now associating the rugby values with the values of our company”*. Manager B

According to Kantar Media (2014), GMF ranks first for the following values: Respect, Solidarity, Conviviality and Proximity. French people associate the company to the rugby and by extension to the national team, the Top 14 and also the clubs. The firm is perceived as a popular and solidarity brand due to its core target.

Therefore, it shows that insurance companies which are evolving in a “cold” sector are trying to associate themselves with values that people understand, support and share. Sponsorship appears to be a good tool for insurers, however, this can also be an issue when there are public relations problem.

*“Of course, the sport image needs to fit the brand image. When cycle is looking for sponsors and that there are a lot of issues of doping which is linked to health. It is complex for us to accept to become partner as we sell a lot of health insurances”*. Manager A.

#### IV. 2. 2. b. Gaining Brand awareness

There is no doubt about the main objective of sponsorship which is raising brand awareness. Indeed, sponsorship can reach big audiences.

*“The aim of sponsorship is to reach people with new means and to generate brand preference and brand awareness, insurers may have a negative image and it can be overcome with sponsorship”* Manager B.

The interviews revealed that sponsorship has direct consequences on brand awareness. For example, the Vendée Globe (a sailing competition) highly impacted Generali brand awareness as the name of the company was everywhere and that everyone talked about the competition. Moreover, according to a study conducted by Kantar Media (2014), rugby is the only sport that gets the best scores in every category compared to twenty other sports practiced in France. It is ranked fourth for the global interest and second for the people interested in sport, third for the image. It is the second most followed sport in media. Thus, people are highly exposed to signages and brand advertisements. Moreover, YouGov published a study with the support of BrandIndex (2015) that designated GMF as the only brand that evolves on three main topics: memorization, word-of-mouth and brand image. The analysis has been done before and after the Six Nations Championship and shows that GMF was the company which benefits most from the sport event. Indeed, they gained 12 points in terms of brand image and one French person out of two was naturally associating GMF to the French national team.

In the end sponsorship has a real interest for company when they manage to stand out from the competition and raise awareness. This can be achieved through original actions. Generali was sponsoring the French volley-ball Federation and sailing. The company decided to associate both partnerships by organizing a sailing trip for the coach and some volley-ball players. The initiative has been broadcasted on national television and had a real impact on brand awareness. Indeed, it is important to leverage a sponsorship deal and find new ways to exploit it. The aim is to remain in people’s mind, in other words, to be in their consideration set and this can be complex when the market is saturated (Chebli and Gharbi, 2014).

#### IV. 2. 2. c. Finding new business opportunities

Both firms are following a business and image logic when taking decisions about sponsorship. Indeed, both companies are only sponsoring the sport federations that they insure. This

underpins that sponsoring is also following a business strategy. Accordingly, it appears that companies and organizations are looking for a win-win situation:

*“When we had to renew our sponsorship deal with the horse-riding federation, we asked ourselves why we always had to talk about the insurance contract and it is quite obvious that if there is no sponsorship deal, we would lose the insurance deal.”* Manager A

Sponsoring a sport federation is a way for companies to gain access to their members’ data. Thus, it can be a very useful resource in order to reach new customers.

#### **IV. 2. 3. Marketing insights**

The main finding here is the fact that in both companies, sponsorship is managed by the communication direction and not by the marketing service. However, at GMF, decisions concerning sponsorship are only taken by the communication department, therefore, manager B was not able to provide answers concerning this part. However, it is in the objectives of the company to relate sponsorship with the marketing department.

*“Quite recently, we started to discuss with the marketing department in order to implement common objectives and to see how we can target people specifically. But today, sponsorship is totally independent for the marketing strategy”.*  
Manager B.

As evoked in the literature review, executive decisions are not always driven by business objectives (Seguin et al., 2005) which can be quite problematic when they choose to satisfy their personal interest. To overcome this issue, one solution could be to implement objective tools that assist to take decisions without being influenced by personal tastes and subjective bias. It can encompass different criteria such as: if the sponsorship fits the DNA of the company and partnerships already signed, what the business opportunities are, what the cost is, what the duration is.

*“When we take a sponsorship decision, we try to stay objective. For example, I don’t like running but it was a deal that fitted all the criteria established so it was in line with our strategy and we accepted the deal”* Manager A

*“This sponsorship deals started because the company wanted to support a sport and rugby carried out values that fitted the ones of the company”* Manager B.

Nevertheless, the interview conducted with manager A provided useful insights to understand how sponsorship is integrating marketing strategies.

*“Decisions are taken by the communication direction with the marketing and the technical service. First, the technical service evaluates the risks associated with the insurance contract in order to determine if we can sign the deal or not. Then, the marketing is consulted, and they assess the potential of the market audience. In the end, the communication direction takes the final decision, but two out of three services need to agree with the decision. The aim is to get different point of view and to take a global decision”* Manager A.

The distribution service is also involved in the decision to determine which distribution channel will be able to activate the partnership on the field. Thus, marketing strategies need to be designed in association with other company's departments in order to define: What are the needs of the company? Who is the target? What is the cost? Is the company capable to deal with the consequence of brand awareness? Generali decided to be present on different communication means such as Internet, the press and specialized media in order to have an integrated strategy. However, it important to point out that Generali France, as part of a group, also receives some global directions. Thus, some decisions are taken independently and some needs to fit the global strategy.

The purpose of integrated the sponsorship into the marketing strategy is to take the best decision as possible and to build relationships on a long-term. It refers to the loyalty of consumers evoked in the literature review (Aaker, 1991; Watson et al., 2015). The aim is to mix business and image in order to reach as much people as possible.

#### **IV. 2. 4. Reaching the Generation Y: promotion and strategies**

The core business of GMF is Public Servants, thus some studies have been conducted in order to better understand what the relationship between rugby and those persons is. According to Barosport (2016), Public Servants are more interested in sport than the rest of the population and especially in rugby. They are also following competitions and follow rugby-related news

through digital tools. However, as the target audience of GMF is quite specific, it is difficult to reach other types of people and sponsorship can help in overcoming this issue:

*“The main target of GMF are public servants, however we also try to reach new targets, and this can be done through sponsorship” Manager B.*

Moreover, GMF is also sponsoring a students’ event called the “GMF Challenge for schools” which aims to mingle student of the French Public Service’s schools. Those students have the possibility to present their project and to participate to a sport competition. Indeed, this show that GMF is trying to be present with different types of audiences and this naming operation is a way to meet Millennials and to be visible.

Generali is also trying to reach the Millennials. First through the implementation of new tools. They adapted their systems by launching an app that enables consumers to contact their insurer and to get information in real time which is important for them (Dutt, 2019). And they are also present on the media used by this generation. Indeed, the company is now very active in the press but also on the Internet. Social networks including Facebook and Twitter are really useful to build a relationship with young adults and to engage them because community managers answer them. The new challenge for insurers appears to be the omnichannel distribution. Nowadays, Millennials are spending a lot of time on their mobile phones and computers, but they are also looking for experiences and companies need to evolve in order to keep up with the fast-evolving environment. This issue was underlined by manager A:

*“The ultimate goal that we would like to achieve is the model implemented by the Fnac. Indeed, the client would be able to ask for a quote online, to ask for advice in a physical agency and to reach the call center to get more information. Thus, you go from your computer, to the physical point of sale and you can contact someone at any time. This is what young people are looking for today and we need to adapt our strategy to this trend” Manager A.*

The main issue remains that Millennials are less interested in the insurance products than older people. Thus, the company tries to reach them with two objectives. First, there is a business purpose. It is important to reach younger people as they will have to subscribe an insurance, so it is important to be visible within this population. But, the problem is that the company products may not be directed to the Millennials as Generali is not positioned in the

low-cost market. Thus, it is important to align the firms' position with the target audience in order to reach them. Second, insurers have difficulties in appearing as attractive employers due to the activity sector. Indeed, the firm is participating to Career Days in order to recruit young people and it is not always easy in this sector:

*“I remember that I was participating to a Career Days for business schools and our stand was just next to Danone's. There were like fifty persons queuing at Danone's stand and we had only two persons. So, I went over them to ask them what they were looking for. They told me that they wanted a marketing position. Thus, it is our responsibility to show that we can offer them that same marketing position at Generali.”* Manager A.

Thus, it underlines that brand image is crucial in terms of direct business but also to attract new talents. This can be done through new types of sponsorship. Indeed, Generali has been partnering the “Challenge of the Business School” for a few years. It was a sport competition that gathered people from different schools and companies had the opportunity to make job dating. However, the competition was transformed into an e-sport tournament and I was not accepted by everyone at first.

*“In the beginning I was perplexed, and I started to consider quitting the partnership. But, on second thought, I realized that it could be a real opportunity to reach the new generation. In conclusion, it is important to evolve and to adapt your strategy to your environment and not to stay on your positions”* Manager A.

#### **IV. 2. 5. Measuring sponsorship effects**

Last but not least, measuring the effects of sponsorship are still a big issue for companies. The literature review evoked the different challenges that firms may face when trying to assess the effect of sponsorship and the qualitative study showed that both companies are struggling to get specifics measures.

*“Sponsorship is quite hard to measure, and it was one of the major reproaches we had in the last few years”* Manager B.

*“It is always difficult to quantify the effects of sponsorship”* Manager A

However, the interviews provide some insights about what is actually implemented in companies to assess the effect of sponsorship. Both of them are studying social network performances, audiences and media coverage. Moreover, they are also working with media agencies as Kantar who provide studies about the firms’ performances. Those documents analyze the communication strategies and people’s perceptions. Thus, it provides information about brand awareness and brand image. In the end, the main challenge is to measure financial performances especially in the insurance industry:

*“We get very few information from what is happening on the field, thus it is hard to determined how sponsorship profits to the company in terms of business. And the problem is that if I am not aware of those performances, neither is the board of executives and it becomes quite hard to justify the investment”*. Manager A.

In the end, companies are still trying to find ways to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship, but the implementation of those tools are also dependent of the firms’ strategy. Indeed, in our study case, one company is only focused on the image performances while the other one has an image and a business orientation.

### **IV. 3. Sponsorship from the consumers’ point of view**

This part will be dedicated to present and analyze the results obtained from the consumers’ survey. An analyze will be presented question by question in order to highlight the different answers.

#### **IV. 3. 1. The population**

The first part of the survey introduced the topic and aimed to get information about who was taking the survey. Indeed, it was necessary to be sure that the right target had taken the survey. Moreover, it was really helpful to analyze the answers globally and individually. Asking for demographical details permitted to select only the relevant data to the study.

The purpose of this questionnaire was also to compare the answers of Millennials with the ones of the Generation X. However, only sixteen persons were from the Generation X (10,4%) and it was not enough to do a comparison. Thus, in order to be sure that the results of

the survey would be useful for answering the research topic, the answers have been selected in order to only keep the answers of Millennials, which correspond to one hundred thirty-eight out of one hundred fifty-four persons (89,6%). Thus, the population studied through this survey is French people between nineteen and thirty-nine years old as attracting them is one of the difficult challenges that insurance companies are facing, the study will be useful to better understand their perceptions.

In the following part we will only study the Millennials' answers. Thus, Table 4 displays the demographic indicators of the Millennials who took the questionnaire. The majority of the people who answered the survey were either employees (42%) or students (19,1%). More women answered the survey. This can be explained by two factors: women are more easily taking the time to answer surveys and they are more willing to express their opinion.

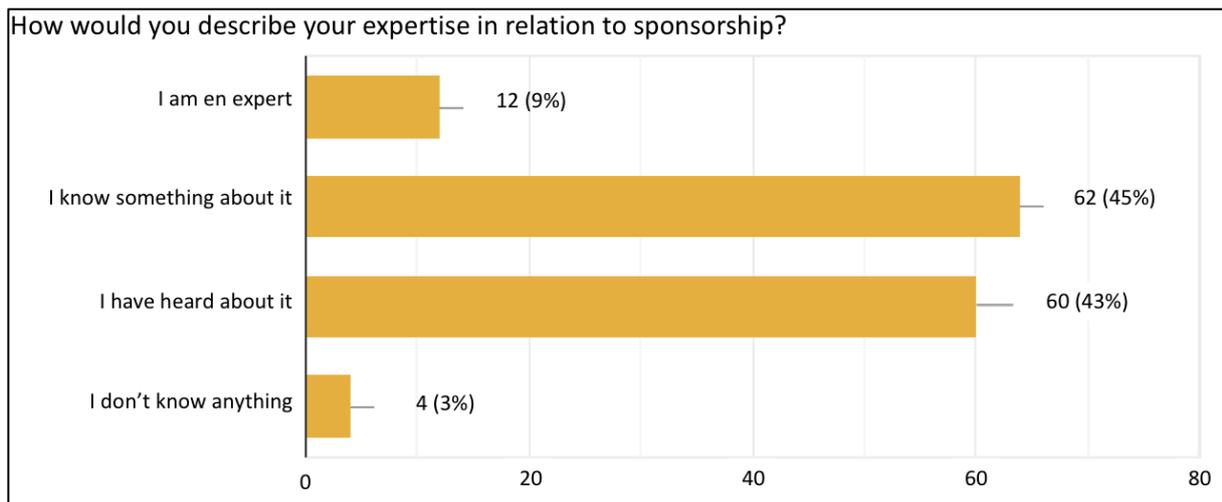
Gender	Women – 56,5%		Men – 43,5%	
Occupation	Employee – 42%	Entrepreneur – 8,7%	Student – 19,1%	Inactive – 10,2%
Nationality	French 100%			

**Table 4: Respondents' demographic indicators**

Moreover, as shown in Figure 13, a question was asked to assess the respondents' level of knowledge about sponsorship. It appears that only four persons out of one hundred thirty-eight (3%) declared that they did not know what it was. However, people are exposed to sponsorship signs in their daily life and those respondents may not know the term "sponsorship" but picture clearly what sponsorship is. However, nine percent of the respondents were experts and eighty-eight percent knew what we were talking about.

In order to be sure that the results would be reliable, a definition of sponsorship and examples (pictures, naming rights illustrations) were provided in the beginning of the second part of the survey. Therefore, all the respondents were given the same information to be sure that they did not misunderstand the topic of the study and that they would be able to answer to the questions of the survey.

This first part of the survey was necessary in order to be sure that the respondents were the ones that were targeted and to select a representative sample. The next part will be focused on consumers habits and experiences.

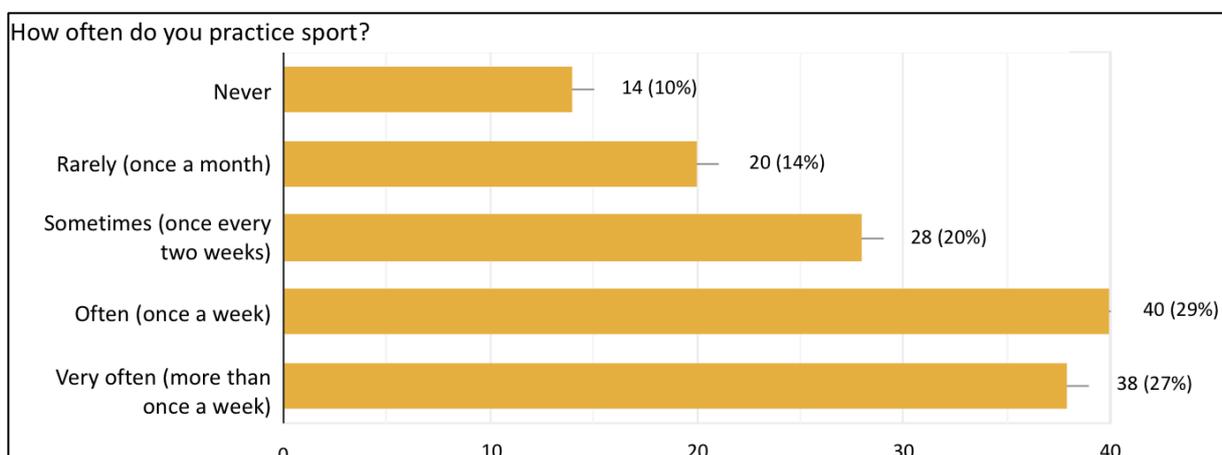


**Figure 13: Knowledge about sponsorship**

### IV. 3. 2. Consumers' experiences

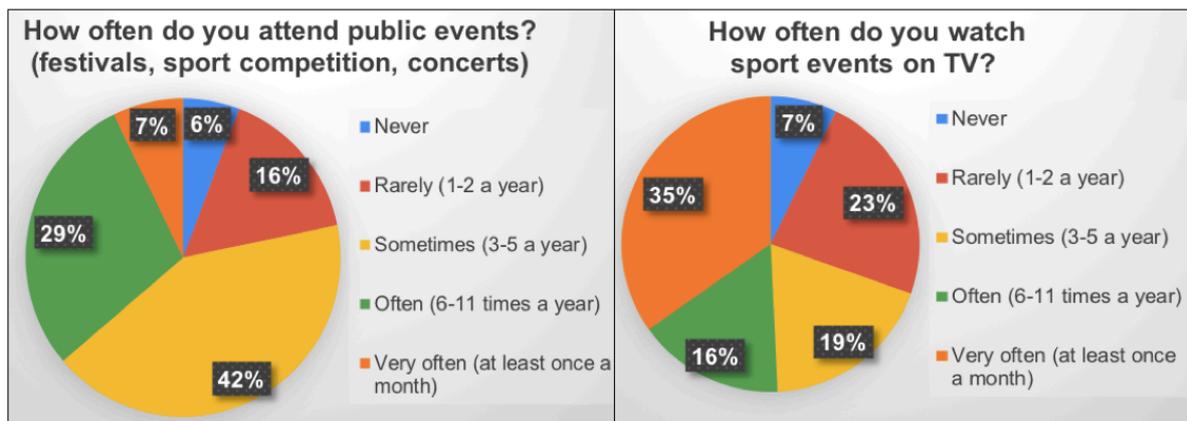
This second part of the survey aims to understand what the connection between people and sport is and to understand sponsorship from customers' point of view. The questions were about personal experience. In other terms, the purpose was to find out if Millennials were exposed to sponsored events (through live experiences or through television), if they were looking for information about sponsors and if their purchase decision were influenced by sponsorship. The last question of this part aimed to assess people knowledge about the connection between sponsorship and insurance companies.

The survey revealed that ninety percent of the respondents were practicing sport. Thus, it shows that Millennials are active and practice sports. It is interesting to see that fifty-six percent of the respondents practice sport at least once a week which can be considered as a regular activity.



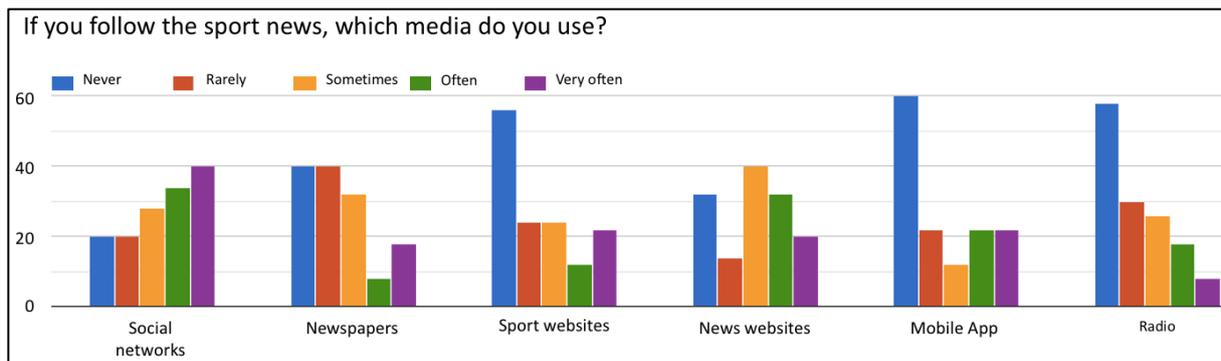
**Figure 14: Sport practices**

The next two questions aimed to determine if people were exposed to sport sponsorship. Indeed, when assisting to public events or watching the television, people are exposed to brand advertisement. In the case of public events as concerts or festival, it can be a stand, a billboard, a label on a flyer or an eco-cup. Concerning sport competition and sport on television, people might see the name of the sponsor on clothes, billboards, screens, or sport equipment (see Appendix 3). The two charts pictured in Figure 15 show that very few people never attend public events (6%), the percentage is also very low for the persons who never watch sports (7%). However, the study of individual data revealed that there is no correlation between those two variables. Indeed, the persons who never watch television, attend some public events and the ones who never attend public events are watching sport on television. Therefore, it means that the one hundred thirty-eight respondents are exposed to sponsorship advertisement through one way or another.



**Figure 15: Exposure to sponsorship advertisements**

Then, we investigated which media are used by people who consult sport news. The survey revealed that seven percent of the individuals were never following the sport news. On the contrary, ninety-three per cent are looking sport news at least once a year. Thus, sport is following by most of our respondents. Figure 16 shows that respondents use different media to consult sport news. Indeed, twenty-nine percent of the individuals use social networks very often and twenty-five of the individuals often use them. This can be related to today trends as Millennials are a digital generation, it is quite logic that this media is the first medium used to consult sport news. A lot of them never use sport websites (41%), mobile App (43%) and the radio (42%).



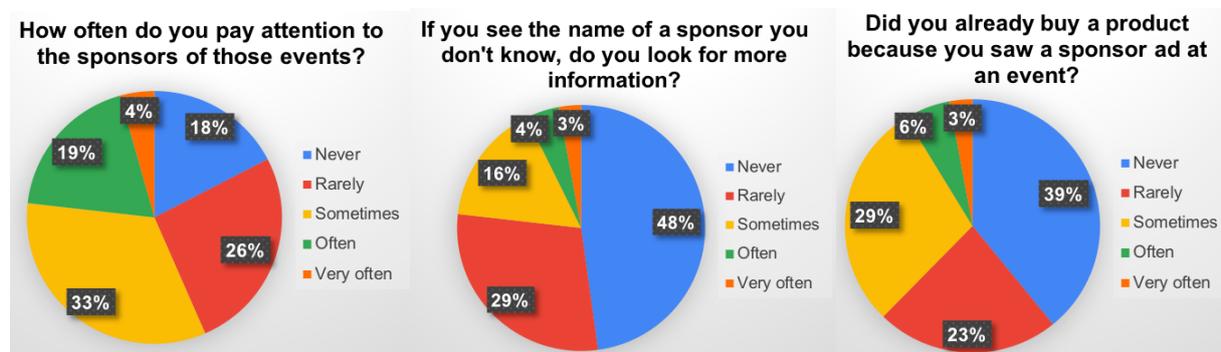
**Figure 16: Media used to follow sport news**

Based on those results we can say that individuals are not specifically looking for sport news and may be exposed to them through general media, thus they are more passive fans rather than proactive fans. However, true sport fans are using all communication means to follow sport but with different intensities. Thus, it is evident that Millennials are still using different types of communication channel to find information even if some of them are preferred. Thus, it has also an impact on brand strategies as they need to be present on those different media.

The three questions that followed aimed to understand what attitudes consumers have towards sponsors. Results are pictured in Figure 17. Firstly, we determined that people are globally paying attention to the sponsors of public events. Indeed, eighteen percent of the respondents never pay attention to sponsors which is quite encouraging for companies. Secondly, the next question's purpose was to determine if people look for more information when they are facing a sponsor's brand that they don't know. Here, forty-eight percent of people never look for more information and twenty-nine percent rarely do it. Finally, the first question aimed to see if sponsorship is influencing customers' purchasing decision. As depicted below, sponsorship sometimes impacts individuals' decisions. Three percent of the respondents are very often influenced sponsorship, six percent are often influenced, and twenty-nine percent of those Millennials sometimes buy a product after being exposed to an advertisement at an event.

Indeed, those results are quite interesting for our study. Indeed, sponsors do have an impact on consumers attitudes and purchasing decision. But the results of the second question highlight one major challenge for brand. Accordingly, people are not looking for more information when they do not know a brand, thus sponsorship may only work for brand that are already known. Considering the marketing strategy approach, it might be difficult for new entrants to raise brand awareness with sponsorship. Thus, not all brand would be able to

improve their brand image through sponsorship and companies need to consider this element when setting their marketing strategy.



**Figure 17: Consumers' attitudes toward sponsors**

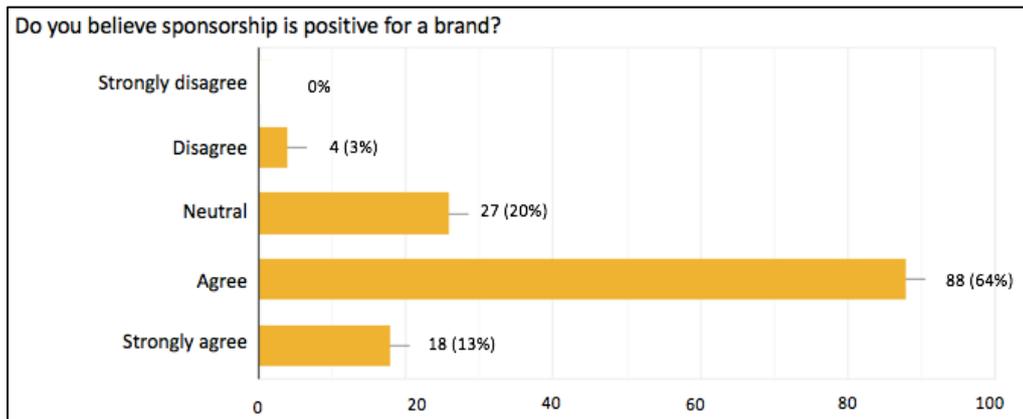
The last question of the second part was an opened question which aimed to assess the consideration set of consumers and to see if they were aware of the different sponsorship deals that exist. Results show that the first brand considered is Allianz which was quoted by twenty-nine percent individuals. It was associated to the Allianz Riviera Stadium. In second place, comes Groupama (23%), associated to sailing and to the Groupama Stadium and in third place, there is Axa (12%), however people were not able to give an example of what they sponsor. Ten percent of the individuals were not able to answer the question. Surprisingly, people who declared to be experts in sponsorship were not able to give accurate answers and only seventeen percent of the respondents were able to name three insurance companies and examples of what they are sponsoring.

This shows that people are not always aware of what companies are sponsoring and it is even more obvious in the insurance sector as some people were not able to name three insurance companies. It underlines the fact that the main objective of companies is to be present in consumers' minds.

### IV. 3. 3. Sponsorship impact

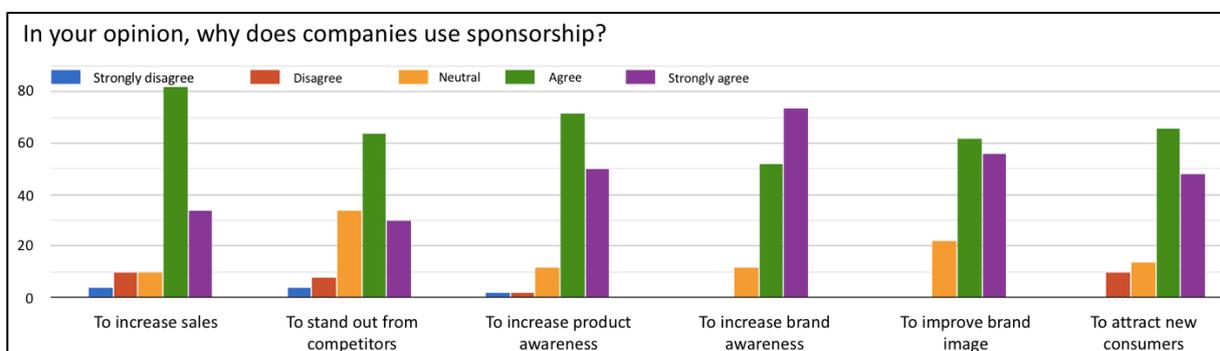
The last part of the survey aims to find out how sponsorship is perceived from the consumers' point of view. What are its objectives? What are its success factors? Why interest for sport sponsorship has grown? Results are displayed below.

The aim of the first question of this third part of the survey is to determine how sponsorship is perceived by consumers. According to Figure 18, the answer is quite clear as sixty-four percent of the Millennials interviewed think that it is positive for brand and thirteen percent strongly agree. Only four percent of the respondents disagree. We can deduce from those results that people have a positive image of sponsorship.



**Figure 18: Sponsorship’s effect on brands**

The second question aims to identify why companies use sponsorship according to Millennials. Consumers consider that the main goal of sponsorship is to increase brand awareness. Fifty-four percent of the respondents strongly agree that companies are using sponsorship in order to increase brand awareness, thirty-eight percent agree and the other are neutral. Concerning improving brand image, respondents also agree to say that it is one goal of sponsorship. However, for the other goals namely increasing sales, standing out from competitors, increasing product awareness and attracting new consumers, respondents do not share the same opinion and some of them strongly disagree. All the results are displayed in Figure 19. This shows that globally for the Millennials that answered the survey, sponsorship is business oriented.



**Figure 19: Companies objectives related to sponsorship**

In order to determine which factor has the most influence we assessed the influence of five different factors on sponsorship's success: the use of advertising and other promotional activities to support the sponsorship, how well 'matched' the sponsoring brand's image is to the sponsored entity, the level of appeal the brand has to the consumer, the visibility of the logo/name of the sponsor during an event, how well the brand is already known. Consumers rated those factors from one to five. One means that the factor does not have any influence on sponsorship's success while five means that it has a very high level of influence. By multiplying this score by the number of answers and by dividing by the total number of answers, we obtained the average.

	1	2	3	4	5	Average
The use of advertising and other promotional activities to support the sponsorship	0	16	40	50	32	3,7101
How well 'matched' the sponsoring brand's image is to the sponsored entity	6	12	28	50	42	3,7971
The level of appeal the brand has to the consumer	0	16	26	66	30	3,7971
The visibility of the logo/name of the sponsor during an event	4	2	20	48	64	4,2028
How well the brand is already known	0	12	24	54	48	4,0000

**Table 5: Factors that influence sponsorship's success**

As displayed in Table 5, consumers consider that the visibility of the logo during an event is the determining success factor of sponsorship (4,20). The notoriety of the brand comes second (4,00) while the three other factors namely the use of advertising and other promotional activities (3,71), how well 'matched' the sponsoring brand's image is to the sponsored entity (3,80) and the level of appeal the brand has to the consumer (3,80) obtained almost the same score.

We used the same technique to evaluate the visibility of different types of sponsorship. One means that the type of sponsorship was not recognizable while five means that it is very recognizable. Table 6 shows that the more recognizable sponsorship type is teams' or athletes' sponsorship (3,97), closely followed by sport event sponsorship (3,94) and stadium naming rights (3,84). Then, there is festival and concert sponsorship, track signage and finally

broadcast sponsorship. Indeed, athletes are famous and often promote their sponsorship deals, thus it offers a huge opportunity for the brand to be noticed. Likewise, big sport events are broadcast on television and offer a lot of brand visibility.

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Stadium naming rights	8	14	26	34	56	3,8405
Sport event sponsorship	4	4	28	62	40	3,9420
Festival/concerts sponsorship	2	28	34	56	18	3,4347
Broadcast Sponsorship	16	28	40	40	14	3,05797
In Stadium/Track Signage	6	24	44	38	26	3,3913
Team/athletes Sponsorship	2	18	20	40	58	3,9710

**Table 6: Visibility and recognition of different sponsorship types**

Then we assessed the influence of four different factors on the growth on sport sponsorship. The aim of this question was to get consumers' insights about the reasons why companies invest in sponsorship. We assessed four different factors. As displayed in Table 7, the one that has the most influence according to the individuals is the media coverage of sport event (4,28), then it is the financial advantages that sponsor and sponsee get from the partnership (4,10). New strategic opportunities to expose the brand are third (3,96) while the increased number of people interested in sports is the less impactful factor (3,49).

Nowadays, the media coverage of sport events is even more important than before as it is possible to watch them on the television but also to find live streaming on the Internet. As highlighted by the results of the survey, financial profits can be huge in sponsorship and this drives company to find new sponsorship deals.

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
The media coverage of sport events (TV, radio, newspapers...)	4	4	18	36	76	4,27536232
The financial advantages for the sponsor and the sponsee	0	6	28	50	54	4,10144928
New strategic opportunities to expose the brand	2	8	26	60	42	3,95652174
An increase in the number of people interested in sports	16	16	26	44	36	3,49275362

**Table 7: Factors' influence on the growth of sport sponsorship**

Last but not least, we assessed the influence of five factors on the development of relationships between sponsors and consumers. Five different factors were assessed. According to the individuals' answers, the fact that brands influence attitudes and behavior is the main driver of relationships development (3,25). The second factor that influence relationships is that the brand value its consumers (3,16). The last three factors: goodwill, emotional attachment and the fact that the brand meets the consumer needs were almost ranked the same.

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
A goodwill feeling	16	22	64	30	6	2,91304348
Emotional attachment	34	20	40	36	8	2,73913043
The brand influences attitudes and behaviors	14	26	34	40	24	3,24637681
The brand meets the consumer needs	16	30	48	30	14	2,97101449
The brand value its consumers	14	24	34	58	8	3,15942029

**Table 8:** Factors' influence on the development of sponsor-consumer relationships

## V. DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The last part of this paper will present the main findings of the study and the main research question will answered. Then, the study's implications will be presented. In the end, we will present the limitations of the research and the suggestions for further research.

### V. 1. General discussion

The overall purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of promotional tools on the marketing strategy of an insurance company. The research question was formulated as followed: *To what extent sponsorship can impact the marketing strategy of an insurance company in France?*

In order to answer the main question, we will answer the four sub-questions.

*SQ1: What is sponsorship and why it has gained the interest of insurance companies?*

This question has been investigated in the literature review and also during the semi-structured interviews with managers.

The literature review revealed that sponsorship was a good investment in terms of image but also in terms of business. It is a way to convey messages, to communicate with the audience and to transfer values. Moreover, companies that use sponsorship can target specific audiences. For example, GMF is targeting Public Servants and the study case showed that this audience is specifically interested in rugby. Thus, the company manage to reach its core target through sport and sponsorship.

Moreover, one part of the semi-conducted interview questionnaire as well as one part of the consumers' survey were dedicated to the advantages of sponsorship. Insurance companies but also consumers recognize that sponsorship is a good way to raise awareness. Thus, companies' objectives are in lines with Millennials perceptions. This promotional tool enables companies to remain in customers' set of consideration. In the end, insurance firms' interest for sponsorship can be justified by the survey's results. Accordingly, customers were asked to name insurance companies and some of their sponsorship deals and many of them managed to name different companies and identify their partners accurately.

*SQ2: How do companies integrate sponsorship into their marketing strategy?*

The literature review highlighted that all marketing decision should be aligned with the company's global objectives and that all promotional tools that are implemented need to be complementary with each other. If all firms tend to integrate sponsorship in their marketing strategy, the managers interviews revealed that not all companies are doing it. Insurance companies are choosing the sponsorship contracts depending on the values that are carried out by the sport or the athlete and if the image of the sponsee fit with their brand image.

The study case presented two different realities that underline the fact that there is no unique strategy. Indeed, GMF has an historic partnership but sponsorship is not integrated yet in the marketing strategy. Hence decisions are independent from business performances. Whereas, sponsorship is deeply anchored in Generali's marketing strategy and different departments are involved in sponsorship decisions, thus choices are more business-oriented.

The consumers' survey revealed interesting information that companies should consider in their strategy if they want to reach Millennials. Indeed, Millennials are present on different media, consequently, companies need to be present on those tools in order to engage the Generation Y and to create relationships with it. This requires developing and integrating all different marketing tools.

*SQ3: What do companies expect from sponsorship?*

First of all, sponsorship is about brand image and communicating values. When firms decide to support an event, a sport team or a facility, they try to create brand associations and to increase their visibility. For insurance companies, the purpose of sponsorship is to communicate differently and to reach new targets. Behind this strategy, there is also the will to create new business opportunities. The companies that have been studied follow the same strategy: they are sponsoring the sport federations that they insure. Indeed, they both know that insurance comes with sponsorship in order to create a win-win situation.

Moreover, the consumers' survey revealed that Millennials are attentive to sponsorship advertisement and that it sometimes influences their decision-making purchase intention. Indeed, it is important for companies to select carefully the type of sponsorship they want to invest depending on which audience they want to reach. This is why companies are also present in student sport competition, the purpose is to attract new consumers but also new talents.

*SQ4: How to measure the impact of sponsorship?*

Measuring sponsorship impact is currently one of the main challenges that companies are facing. Indeed, new methods are developed but they sometimes remain theoretical. Both companies are implemented tools to evaluate the effects of sponsorship. For GMF, tools are more oriented toward the brand image and the media coverage as partnerships are not related to the marketing strategy. For Generali, the measurement tools are used to assess the effect on image and media coverage but also to evaluate business performances. The distribution channels are contributing to activate the sponsorship deals and the aim is to exploit them as much as possible.

Some agencies are also specialized in sponsorship studies and often give insights to company about their brand image, their legitimacy in the sport industry and about their position compared to competitors.

One other big challenge in evaluating sponsorship, is when executives need to take decisions. Indeed, subjective bias may intervene, and the decision could be influenced by their personal interest when choosing or not to sponsor a sport.

Finally, sponsorship is deeply anchored in insurance companies' practices, at least in the top French firms: Allianz, Axa, Matmut, GMF, Generali, all those companies are present on the sponsorship market and are always looking for new opportunities. Usually, sponsorship deals are win-win situations, thus every decision should be taken with the marketing department approval. Companies are more and more integrating sponsorship in their Marketing and Communication Mix in order to have consistent strategies. As the industry is highly competitive, firms' are looking for new ways to stand out and sponsorship can be used to differentiate themselves and raise awareness.

## **V. 2. Limitations and suggestions for further researches**

The first limitation of this study was the timing. As the topic needs to be related to our end-of-study internship it is possible to start working on the thesis only when the contract has been signed. As I started my internship in July and that everyone in the firm was on holidays, I was able to really start getting insights and answers from my interviewee at the end of August. Thus, the last two months have been quite intense, and I feel I could have deepened the topic even more with a little extra time.

Moreover, finding people willing to share their firm's practices is quite hard when you don't really know anybody. People are afraid that you might reveal critical information and are not always willing to give some of their time. The study was carried out in September, this is also one reason why managers may not have been available to answer the survey as it is a busy period in the insurance sector. Thus, conducting more managers interviews would have been helpful.

There are limitations to semi-structured interviews as the direction of the interview is pre-defined and personal bias may intervene from the interviewer but also from the interviewee. Indeed, this needs to be considered when interpreting findings. Accordingly, as in a lot of studies, limitations are inevitable. Consumer researches are not always very accurate and replicating the study in another context, another industry or another country could change the results. More women than men answered the survey, hence the respondent population was not homogeneous, and results could have been slightly different if it would have been the case.

Concerning the suggestions for future research, the sponsorship topic could be further investigated as well as insurer practices in order to deepen our knowledge. First, the sample could be enlarged as only two insurance companies accepted to take part to this study. Second, this thesis was focused on global strategies meaning that we investigated two big insurance firms. However, it could be interesting to investigate sponsorship decision-making at a local level, in local agencies for example. Moreover, the research could also be conducted in other types of insurance companies such as brokers agencies or digital insurers.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Survey for consumers

**Part 1. Introduction.** As a double degree student in International Marketing, I am writing a thesis to complete my studies. I chose to study the use of promotional tools (especially sponsorship) and its impact on the marketing strategy of companies. In order, to get more insights here are a few questions.

1. Gender:
  - Male
  - Female
  - I prefer not to say
2. Year of birth:
3. Occupation:
  - Employee
  - Entrepreneur
  - Student
  - Inactive
4. How would you describe your expertise in relation to sponsorship?
  - I am an expert
  - I know something about it
  - I have heard about it
  - I don't know anything

**Part 2. Experience and consumers.** Sponsoring can be defined as any material or financial support to an athlete, a sport team, an event (sport competition, artistic event, cultural event) or a facility (stadium, concert room) from a company or an organization with a publicity goal.

5. How often do you practice sport?
  - Never
  - Rarely (once a month)
  - Sometimes (once every two weeks)
  - Often (once a week)
  - Very often (more than once a week)
6. How often do you attend some public events? (festivals, sport competitions, concerts)
  - Never
  - Rarely (1-2 a year)
  - Sometimes (3-5 a year)
  - Often (6-11 times a year)
  - Very often (at least once a month)

7. How often do you watch sport events on TV?

- Never
- Rarely (1-2 a year)
- Sometimes (3-5 a year)
- Often (6-11 times a year)
- Very often (at least once a month)

8. How often do you follow the sport news?

- Never
- Rarely (1-2 a year)
- Sometimes (3-5 a year)
- Often (6-11 times a year)
- Very often (at least once a month)

9. If you follow the sport news, which media do you use?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Social media					
Newspaper					
Sport websites					
News websites					
Mobile App					
Radio					

10. Do you pay attention to the sponsors of those events? (sport events, concerts,...)

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

11. If you see the name of a sponsor you don't know, do you look for more information?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

12. Did you already buy a product because you saw a sponsor ad at an event?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

13. Give the name of three insurance companies and an example of what they sponsor.

**Part 3. The impact of sponsorship.** This section will help to highlight how sponsoring is perceived by consumers.

14. Do you believe sponsorship is positive for a brand?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

15. In your opinion, why does companies use sponsorship?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
To increase sales					
To stand out from competitors					
To increase product awareness					
To increase brand awareness					
To improve brand image					
To attract new consumers					

16. On a scale of 1-5, how would you grade the influence of those factors on the success of a sponsorship? (1 = No influence and 5 = Very high level of influence)

	1	2	3	4	5
The use of advertising and other promotional activities to support the sponsorship					
How well 'matched' the sponsoring brand's image is to the sponsored entity					
The level of appeal the brand has to the consumer					
The visibility of the logo/name of the sponsor during an event					
How well the brand is already known					

17. On a scale of 1-5, how would you grade the visibility and recognition of those types of sponsorship? (1 = Not recognizable 5 = Very Recognizable)

	1	2	3	4	5
Stadium naming rights					
Sport event sponsorship					
Festival/concerts sponsorship					
Broadcast Sponsorship					
In Stadium/Track Signage					
Team/athletes Sponsorship					

18. More and more companies contract sponsorship deals. On a scale of 1-5, how would you grade the influence of those factors on the growth of sport sponsorship? (1 = No influence and 5 = Very high level of influence)

	1	2	3	4	5
The media coverage of sport events (TV, radio, newspapers...)					
The financial advantages for the sponsor and the sponsee					
New strategic opportunities to expose the brand					
An increase in the number of people interested in sports					

19. On a scale of 1-5, how would you grade the influence of those factors on the development of a relationship between a sponsor and consumers (1 = No influence and 5 = Very high level of influence)

	1	2	3	4	5
A goodwill feeling					
Emotional attachment					
The brand influences attitudes and behaviors					
The brand meets the consumer needs					
The brand value its consumers					

## **Appendix 2: Semi structured-interview questions for brand managers**

### **1. Overview of the insurance sector and sponsorship**

- Can you tell me about your experience in the insurance sector and sponsorship?
- What are the main actors and the brands' positioning?
- How do you sell an insurance rather than a tangible product?
- What is your personal experience with sponsorship?
- According to you, what are the advantages and disadvantages of sponsorship?
- Does your company have sponsorship agreements? Which ones (events, athletes, celebrities, places)?
- How many events does the company sponsors? In what fields? Why those ones?
- If the companies invest in sport, why? Does the company historically related to sport?

- What are the main buying criteria in the insurance market?
- Which service is in charge of sponsorship?

## 2. Insights about the marketing strategy

- According to you, what is a good marketing strategy?
- Would you say that the company consider sponsorship as part of its marketing strategy?  
How does it impact the marketing strategy?
- How is it integrated into the marketing strategy?
- Which other promotion tools are implemented?
- Is this a decision taken mutually with other services?
- Which criteria influence the company when choosing their sponsorship contracts?
- How much of the marketing budget is given to sponsorship?
- What is the objective of sponsorship in your company?
- Do you think sponsorship has an impact on the brand image of the company? How?

## 3. Promotion in the insurance sector

- What is the best promotional tool to sell insurance?
- Is sponsorship a tool that insurance companies use more than before?
- How do you measure the outcomes of sponsorship? Does it help sell more? Does it raise brand awareness?
- How would you define millennials' relationship with insurance brands?
- Which other means are implemented to reach this target?
- What role do sponsorship play in millennials' consumption behavior?

### Appendix 3: Pictures of sponsorship





#### **Appendix 4: Sample of sponsorship manager interview transcript**

- **D’après toi, quels sont les principaux acteurs du secteur assurantiel dans le sponsoring et le positionnement des autres entreprises ?**

On a été partenaire de la voile jusqu’en 2016 et c’est vrai que dans ce sport en particulier, tous les assureurs sont présents comme la MACIF et la MAIF par exemple. Mais plus globalement, on peut dire que la MAIF, se positionne sur les mêmes sports que nous et apparaît donc comme un concurrent direct en termes d’image et de partenariats avec les fédérations.

- **Selon toi, quels sont les avantages et les inconvénients du sponsoring ?**

Chez Generali, on sponsorise uniquement les fédérations dont on est l’assureur, donc finalement c’est assez facile à expliquer. Par exemple, nous sommes partenaires de la Fédération Française d’Équitation parce que nous sommes leur assureur depuis vingt ans, il y a donc une certaine légitimité dans ce partenariat. De même pour la voile, on sponsorisait des bateaux car nous avons créé des assurances pour la navigation de plaisance en France. Le sponsoring a donc l’avantage de pouvoir expliquer assez facilement pourquoi nous faisons les choses. De plus le sponsoring c’est aussi beaucoup de retombées médias, notamment grâce à toutes les plateformes web qui décuplent le nombre de retombées.

Les inconvénients sont toujours les mêmes. La mesure de l’efficacité reste malgré tout complexe. Certes, il existe des outils qui permettent de calculer l’équivalent achat espace, mais selon moi ce n’est pas l’aspect le plus important. Ce qui m’intéresse c’est de pouvoir quantifier l’apport en termes de business et de notoriété. Qu’est-ce que le sponsoring apporte à mon chiffre d’affaire ? Comment ça impacte le nombre de contrats signés ?

- **Pourquoi l’entreprise à choisit d’investir dans le sport ?**

Ça rejoint ce que je disais tout à l’heure sur les points forts du sponsoring, à partir du moment où on a été l’assureur d’une fédération on se dit que finalement il y a une logique à ce qu’on s’engage encore plus à leurs côtés.

- **Quelles sont les différences, selon toi, entre vendre une assurance et vendre un produit plus tangible ?**

C'est ce que Philippe Coste [responsable de l'animation des engagement sociétaux chez Generali] dit toujours : on ne vend pas une assurance, on propose des garanties. On est sur du service et de l'accompagnement, donc avec le sponsoring, on va faire valoir la valeur de l'humain et la valeur de l'entreprise dans l'accompagnement que l'on peut apporter. C'est difficile d'évaluer la qualité d'un produit intangible comme un contrat d'assurance, on va plutôt montrer quelle sont les valeurs de l'entreprise et par conséquent la valeur des hommes et des femmes qui y travaillent. Si on est dans un sport et qu'on montre qu'on est ambitieux, cela signifie qu'on sera ambitieux dans ce qu'on peut apporter au client, on était dans les bateaux, cela montrait qu'on était dans l'innovation, dans l'esprit d'équipe. Ce que l'on veut faire, c'est caler les valeurs d'un sport dont on est partenaires avec les valeurs de l'entreprise. Ce que vous retrouvez dans la voile, vous allez le retrouver dans l'entreprise et par extension dans l'accompagnement qu'on va avoir auprès de vous.

- **Au niveau du sponsoring quel service prend les décisions ?**

C'est plutôt mon service qui prend plus les décisions, mais le marketing est bien sûr impliqué. Comme ces décisions sont prises en fonction des fédérations sportives, on travaille à trois avec le service technique et le marketing. Le service technique évalue les risques du contrat d'assurance afin de déterminer si on peut signer ou pas. Ensuite, on sollicite le marketing pour savoir si les licenciés de la fédération sont une cible intéressante d'un point de vue stratégique. En fait, on passe des étapes et après c'est à nous de déterminer si c'est intéressant en termes d'image. Il faut qu'on soit au moins deux sur trois à trouver un intérêt. Au final, comme c'est nous qui payons et que nous avons la capacité d'analyse des dossiers de sponsoring alors qu'eux ne l'ont pas, c'est plutôt la communication qui prend la décision finale mais toujours en consultant le marketing.

- **Selon toi, qu'est-ce qu'une bonne stratégie marketing ?**

C'est une stratégie qui prend en compte tous les médias et qui a pris son temps pour consulter chaque entité concernée de l'entreprise. En ce moment, le marketing veut lancer une nouvelle campagne publicitaire, mais on sait qu'il ne faut pas brûler les étapes car cela risque d'augmenter notre trafic sur les réseaux Generali, il faut donc qu'on soit capable de le gérer. Si demain on doit répondre à cent-milles personnes qui se connectent, demandent des devis simultanément et veulent signer, il faut qu'on ait le back office adéquat. Donc une bonne stratégie marketing doit être réfléchi par rapport aux besoins de l'entreprise, par rapport au marché mais aussi par rapport à la capacité de l'entreprise en back office à répondre aux demandes. Il faut être sûr de ses forces et de ses faiblesses et anticiper.

- **D'après toi, le sponsoring est-il considéré à part entière dans la stratégie marketing ?**

Oui, parce que c'est lié au business. Par exemple, l'équitation est un gros montant de partenariat mais c'est effectivement aussi beaucoup de retour business. Lors du renouvellement du contrat (qui a lieu tous les quatre ans), on s'est posé la question de savoir pourquoi on parle toujours d'assurance et c'est évident que s'il n'y a pas le sponsoring, on perd l'assurance. Donc, à un moment, on étudie le dossier de la fédération d'équitation en termes de business et on se demande : Est-ce que ça mérite qu'on dépense les x centaines de

milliers d'euros en face ou pas ? Du coup oui, cela a clairement été pris en compte. De la même manière, le badminton a accepté de repartir avec nous sur l'assurance, mais nous on s'était d'abord posé des questions : Est-ce qu'on y retourne ? Quel est la cible ? Quel est le réseau de distribution qui va prendre en charge la chose ? Donc avec la distribution on a consulté le marketing en leur présentant le dossier et on leur a demandé quel réseau allait s'occuper de cette fédération. Et ensuite, quel est le discours qu'on va tenir ? Et du coup le marketing dit : d'accord, c'est tel cible, donc avec la distribution on estime que c'est plutôt tel réseau qui va prendre parce que c'est eux qui s'adressent à cette population de clients potentiels. Donc oui, systématiquement on va les voir parce que ce ne sont pas que des partenaires d'images, ce sont aussi des partenaires business avec beaucoup de de potentiel et il y a un relationnel à bâtir donc il faut qu'on travaille tous ensemble.

- **Sais-tu quels autres outils promotionnels sont mis en place chez Generali ?**

On est très présent sur le web avec tous les outils qui sont mis à notre disposition. Du coup, la présence payante et non payante sur internet est un média fort pour nous. La presse est aussi un média fort, dans le sens où tu es plus sûr du contenu qualitatif, tu peux faire passer un message et construire une relation avec ces gens-là. Je trouve ça intéressant, et il y a aussi des annonces presse dans la presse un peu spécialisée qui sont lus par une population cible. Après on va certainement revenir à la télévision pour taper fort sur la notoriété qui aujourd'hui est autour de 50% en France, ce qui ne correspond pas à ce qu'est Generali dans le monde ou en Europe. C'est surtout parce qu'il y a beaucoup d'intermédiaires, c'est-à-dire qu'on est vendu par des gens qui vendent des assurances, mais pas sous le nom Generali, ce qui n'est pas un problème puisqu'au final, ce sont des clients, mais cela signifie que les gens ne nous connaissent pas forcément. Moi, avant d'arriver chez Generali, si on me demandait le nom de mon assureur, je donnais le nom de mon courtier, et peut-être que c'était Generali derrière, je ne sais pas. Donc, il faut aussi travailler sur la notoriété si on veut passer un cap, et quoi qu'on en dise, la télévision aide beaucoup. Certes pas toute seule, il faut faire des rebonds entre le web, la presse et la télévision, à un moment on parlait même de cinéma. Encore une fois, c'est le marketing qui mix, on ne met pas tout dans la télévision, pas tout dans le web, pas tout dans la presse, mais on répartit. Là où Generali est vraiment présent aujourd'hui, c'est les médias sociaux, les relation presse, et un peu dans les annonces presse aussi. Est-ce que demain on fera de la radio ? Peut-être.

- **Est-ce que Generali a déjà fait de la télévision dans le passé ?**

Oui, on en a déjà fait, mais encore une fois c'est toujours une question de budget. On a un ratio d'un à dix par rapport à ce que dépensent nos concurrents. Quand nos concurrents dépensent soixante à cent millions, nous on dépense six à dix millions d'euros.

- **Les stratégies marketing sont-elles décidées indépendamment du siège ?**

Oui et non. Pour la campagne télévisée, comme il s'agit d'un budget qui nous arrive du groupe, c'est le groupe qui a donné son accord. C'est donc une agence groupe qui va être choisit et ensuite, vu qu'il s'agit d'une agence internationale, elle aura une antenne dans chaque pays et le projet sera fait au niveau du global. Cela n'a pas toujours été le cas, notamment en sponsoring.

- **Quels sont les critères majeurs qui influencent ta décision dans les choix des contrats de sponsoring ?**

Évidemment que c'est l'image en adéquation avec ce que l'on veut faire. Rien de personnel dans ce que je vais dire, mais quand on vient nous chercher avec du cyclisme qui a beaucoup souffert d'histoires importantes de dopage, c'est forcément lié à la santé, or nous faisons beaucoup d'assurances santé, donc c'est compliqué en termes d'image. Il y a ce premier fil de se dire, est-ce que spontanément il y a un risque ?

Ensuite, nous avons créé une grille d'étude il y a quelques années pour étudier les différents partenariats par rapport à son adéquation avec l'ADN de Generali groupe et France, puis aussi avec les autres partenaires qu'on peut avoir au niveau groupe et France, ensuite il y a d'autres critères plus concrets comme les opportunités en termes de business direct et indirect. Quelle est la visibilité ? Quel est le prix ? Quel est la couverture ? Est-ce que ça va être un évènement simple à Paris, une tournée nationale ou internationale ? On a donc créé cette grille avec des codes couleurs pour savoir si on le fait ou pas. Et par la suite, on arrive à voir si ça mérite qu'on le présente au Comité Directeur. On essaie de sortir du choix personnel, par exemple, le running n'est pas ma tasse de thé, mais ça coche toutes les cases pour plein de raisons. Donc, il faut avoir ce genre d'outils pour rester objectif. Il faut aussi que ça corresponde à Generali, à ce qu'on est, que ce soit adapté à nos outils. Ce qui est important par rapport à ça, c'est que ça nous permet de répondre à toutes les sollicitations que l'on reçoit. Parce qu'on estime que si les gens nous ont trouvé, ils ont fait l'effort de chercher à qui envoyer leur dossier et qu'ils ont fait l'effort de faire un dossier. Et qui nous dit que cette personne-là, demain ne sera pas dans une autre fédération et qu'elle ne nous enverra pas un autre dossier plus intéressant, plus abouti ? Par correction, nous traitons donc tous les dossiers équitablement.

- **En termes de sponsoring, tu sponsorise des fédérations, mais aussi des clubs ?**

Non, mais on est très sollicité et ce qui compliqué chez Generali, c'est qu'il y a plusieurs types de sponsoring. Il y a ceux qu'on fait au niveau de Generali France et qui se chiffrent en dizaines de milliers d'euros ou même en centaines de milliers d'euros et il y a ceux que je maîtrise moins, c'est-à-dire les contrats des agents en local. Ils vont être partenaires d'un club de basket, de hand ou de la ville par exemple parce que pour eux ça leur permet de créer leurs réseaux pour faire du business. Ils sont totalement autonomes car souvent entrepreneurs et on ne peut donc rien leur dire. Tu vois, c'est ça la complexité, c'est que moi je peux te dire ce que je maîtrise, mais si tu vas en France au niveau des agents, tu verras des choses différentes. Là par exemple, il y a une femme qui m'a appelé par rapport à un conseiller commercial qui lui avait assuré d'être partenaire de son club de pétanque, mais je n'étais pas au courant. Ce qui est normal, parce que lui a estimé que c'était important pour son business.

- **Penses-tu que le sponsoring à un impact direct sur l'image de l'entreprise ?**

Si on parle d'un point de vue quantitatif, oui c'est une certitude parce que sur la notoriété ça joue forcément, par exemple, à l'époque du Vendée Globe en 2008, on avait été très affiché et très vu. Après pour le quantifier c'est plus compliqué.

- **A l'heure actuelle, l'objectif principal de sponsoring c'est plus en termes d'image ou de business ?**

C'est un mix, je ne peux pas dissocier les deux. Il y a un moment où c'était un peu trop dissocié à mon goût et je trouve ça dommage. Parce que le business permet un voyage local, quand je parle de business ça veut dire que les agents en région vont aller voir les clubs d'équitation ou les clubs de badminton (car nous sommes leur assureur), ce qui veut dire que

quelque part ils vont aussi se montrer en tant que Generali auprès de gens. Les deux sont tellement liés, qu'évidemment, l'image va servir le business, mais le business servira l'image aussi, parce que si on a tous les réseaux en France qui vont voir les cent quatre-vingt mille licenciés de badminton, ils se montrent en tant que Generali, donc c'est lié.

- **Selon toi, quel est l'outil promotionnel le plus approprié pour vendre des assurances ?**

Ce qu'on voit aujourd'hui, c'est que les assureurs sont très présents en pub télé car le secteur est très mature et presque saturé et du coup tout le monde essaye de sortir du lot. Mais sur le sponsoring on est très présent aussi. On est de gros annonceurs dans le secteur de l'assurance, parce qu'il y a une grosse concurrence et qu'il y a des nouveaux acteurs qui arrivent avec internet et qu'ils ont besoin de faire parler d'eux. Du coup ils utilisent pas mal la télévision. Encore une fois, ce sont des positionnements très différents, par exemple, Assurpeople qui sont principalement sur du low-cost, c'est une guerre à laquelle on participe peu, on n'est pas sur du low-cost, on est plutôt sur des garanties qui vont bien couvrir.

- **Est-ce qu'aujourd'hui les entreprises arrivent à se différencier par le sponsoring même si tout le monde en fait ?**

Cela dépend des disciplines et comment tu le fais, moi je crois que le principal c'est : le côté image mais aussi ce que tu proposes à tes clients BtoB ou BtoC. Le sponsoring permet ça, par exemple quand on sponsorisait la voile, on proposait aux distributeurs d'aller naviguer avec des skippers. Tout ce qui est « Money can buy » est important, cela nous permet d'entretenir nos relations avec les courtiers. A l'époque où on avait voile et le volley, l'équipe de France de volley jouait à Saint-Nazaire donc on a fait venir notre bateau et notre skipper à Saint-Nazaire et on a fait naviguer le coach et quelques joueurs. Résultat, en retombé presse, on avait eu un reportage sur France 3, ce qui est un peu inespéré quand tu fais de la voile et du volley. Le fait de faire se rencontrer des sportifs de haut niveau sur des sports différents des leurs, ça crée de l'intérêt donc ça nous différencie.

- **Et sur les événements qui sont sponsorisés aujourd'hui, est-ce qu'une activation est mise en place ?**

Oui, l'activation Business suit. Là-dessus, on essaie toujours de faire le petit truc en plus. Sur le rugby par exemple, on a une loge au stade français pour que les gens se souviennent de nous. L'objectif c'est que le jour où le client doit choisir entre un concurrent et nous, et bien quelque part il y a un petit clignotant qui s'allume et qui fait qu'on se rappelle nous plus rapidement. Il faut toujours que l'on soit présent dans la tête des gens avec qui on doit travailler.

- **Par à rapport ce que tu disais tout à l'heure, arrives-tu à mesurer les résultats du sponsoring ?**

Je me donne les moyens pour. On a lancé des pilotes business avec la fédération de badminton l'année dernière, donc j'ai plus d'informations sur les remontées business. Ensuite, ça reste compliqué pour l'équivalent achat espace. Mais on valorise assez facilement les

retombées presse et ce qui apparaît. Ça reste toujours compliqué concernant la remontée d'information du terrain. Aujourd'hui, on n'est pas en mesure de déterminer si le client qui a signé un contrat est affilié à la fédération de badminton ou pas. La tâche de mon équipe est de dire, « ok, on vous a donné le fichier des licenciés du badminton pour aller faire du business. C'est votre responsabilité de nous tenir au courant en faisant un reporting mensuel pour nous dire où vous en êtes ».

Cela étant, ce que l'on veut aussi, ce n'est pas que le business, c'est de dire que j'ai X rendez-vous par rapport au badminton parce qu'il ne faut pas oublier que dans ce secteur quand tu fais un rendez-vous, tu peux attendre six mois avant que le client signe. Mais, au moins on a un retour sur le nombre de rendez-vous généré et parfois sur le chiffre d'affaires réalisé. Ça nous permet aussi de dire : « ok, on a payé X milliers d'euros à la fédération de badminton cette année, mais combien on a signé de contrats grâce à ça ? ». Aujourd'hui, on travaille beaucoup là-dessus, et on pousse les agents à nous tenir au courant. Le problème, c'est que si moi je ne suis pas au courant, le comité directeur non plus. On est toujours dans des exercices budgétaires très tendus et du coup il faut des résultats chiffrés pour que je puisse justifier l'investissement.

- **Comment définirais-tu la relation des personnes de moins de trente ans avec les compagnies d'assurances ? Sont-elles aussi concernées que les personnes plus âgées ?**

Non, clairement pas. Parce que justement longtemps on a eu ce positionnement de dire : « on va vous vendre nos produits, mais on ne va s'adapter à vos besoins. » Donc les personnes plus âgées le faisaient parce qu'il le fallait, mais les plus jeunes se disaient « je ne le fais pas parce que je dois le faire, mais je le fais parce que j'ai envie de le faire, que ça correspond à mon mode de fonctionnement, mon mode de vie. » Donc aujourd'hui, les médias sociaux nous permettent d'avoir une relation plus proche, plus proactive avec les Millennials. Si tu as un problème sur ton contrat d'assurance, ce n'est pas hyper facile de tomber sur quelqu'un dans les cinq minutes qui suivent. Nous on a maintenant de plus en plus de monde qui passe par les médias sociaux, Facebook un peu mais surtout Twitter, du coup on a des community manager qui répondent dans les dix minutes. Donc il y a aussi cette relation à créer et il faut montrer qu'on est plus à l'écoute. Mais ça nécessite d'avoir les gens derrière qui peuvent répondre. Parce qu'aujourd'hui, il y a deux personnes qui sont derrière le compte twitter, mais si demain tu as cinquante mille personnes qui envoient un message sur un mois par exemple, comment ils gèrent les cinquante mille demandes ? Cette relation est intéressante parce que justement on crée des nouveaux contacts avec une nouvelle population plus jeune mais il faut pouvoir l'assumer en back office. C'est sûr que Generali fait beaucoup d'assurance vie, beaucoup de produits financiers donc la génération Y est un peu moins impliquée. Mais surtout, Generali ne se positionne pas dans le low-cost, ce qui veut dire que les jeunes ne vont pas directement venir vers nous.

Malgré tout, on recule un peu l'âge des premiers acheteurs. Je me souviens avoir fait des forums de l'emploi dans des écoles, on avait notre stand Generali à côté du stand Danone, il y avait une queue de cinquante personnes chez Danone et seulement deux personnes chez nous. Je suis donc allé poser la question dans la file de Danone en demandant ce qu'ils cherchaient, ils m'ont répondu qu'ils cherchaient un poste dans le marketing. Donc charge à nous de montrer que l'on peut faire exactement le même métier en marketing chez Danone et chez Generali. Il y a aussi un travail de marque employeur pour travailler les Millennials et donner envie aux gens de venir chez nous. Il faut montrer comment ça se passe chez nous, montrer qu'on n'a pas que des anciens, qu'on propose des nouveaux métiers et qu'on recherche aussi des jeunes.

- **Cela peut être lié au manque de notoriété de l'entreprise ?**

Non, c'est un désamour du secteur. Generali est connu par une personne sur deux, mais surtout par des professionnels en réalité. Une fois que tu as passé le cap du fait que Generali est un assureur, ça va déjà mieux. On a la chance d'avoir un Comité Directeur qui est top et qui rajeunit, ça montre aussi qu'on fait de la place aux jeunes. Donc il y a aussi ce genre de signaux que j'aime rappeler aux jeunes qui arrivent dans l'entreprise ou sur des forums. L'entreprise rajeunit, on se dynamise, on se modernise, on est sur les médias sociaux et sur internet. Notre fantasme ultime c'est : si demain un client veut obtenir des informations pour assurer son scooter, il se connecte sur le site, en deux clics il obtient son devis. Le lendemain, il passe devant une agence Generali en disant qu'il a fait une demande de devis, le conseiller peut le retrouver directement en ligne et de même, le soir il a pris sa décision, il appelle un call center qui a lui aussi accès au devis. Et du coup, on est passé de l'ordinateur, au physique puis au téléphone et du coup tout ça c'est une facilité que les jeunes ont. Le parcours n'est pas uniquement digital, comme pour la Fnac. Et il faut qu'on s'adapte à ces usages.

- **Est-ce que l'entreprise est en train de s'adapter à ces usages ?**

Oui, je ne dis pas qu'on y est arrivé, mais l'objectif c'est d'être en multicanal, pour être au niveau d'Amazon. Bien sûr que c'est compliqué de se dire qu'on sera au niveau d'Amazon demain, parce que c'est des pure players, mais en tout cas on essaye de se rapprocher de leur service avec des applis et d'autres outils. Cela permettra aussi de toucher la jeune génération qui a l'habitude de vivre comme ça aujourd'hui : entre le digital et le physique.

- **Selon toi, est-ce que le sponsoring joue un rôle dans l'attrait de la génération Y ?**

Oui, ça rejoint un petit peu le côté marque employeur, tu vois, on est partenaire depuis cinq ans du Challenge du monde des grandes écoles. C'était un événement sportif où toutes les grandes écoles et universités se retrouvaient et tu avais huit partenaires présents pour faire passer des entretiens. L'année dernière, ils ont transformé le format en compétition e-sport. Au début, j'étais un peu perplexe mais en fait, c'est ce qui touche le plus les nouvelles générations. Et du coup c'est là que tu vois, qu'il faut se forcer un peu aussi. On était sur un truc cool puis le mec a voulu changer et en fait il a eu raison. Tu touches une autre population, il faut donc réfléchir à qui on vise, qui va participer et qu'est-ce qu'on essaye de faire. Il faut aussi que ça nous corresponde mais tu peux vite faire le rapprochement car ici on a tout un service dédié à l'Intelligence Artificielle. Donc tu vas travailler la marque employeur et essayer de toucher une population plus jeune grâce au sponsoring.

## Appendix 4: Overview of consumers' surveys data

Horodateur	Genre	Année de naissance	Profession	Comment définiriez-vous vos connaissances sur le sponsoring	Pratiquez-vous le sport?	Assistez-vous à des événements publics (festivals, compétitions sportives, concerts)?	Regardez-vous le sport à la télévision?	Suivez-vous l'actualité sportive ?
8/26/2019 17:10:21	Féminin	1994	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Rarement (une fois par m	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/27/2019 14:28:52	Masculin	1995	Etudiant	Je suis un expert	Souvent (une fois par sei	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/28/2019 10:42:33	Féminin	1995	Etudiant	J'ai quelques notions	Parfois (une fois toutes le	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:05:54	Masculin	1996	Salarié	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Très souvent (plus d'une	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 11:13:56	Masculin	1996	Etudiant	J'ai quelques notions	Souvent (une fois par sei	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 11:15:10	Féminin	1995	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Très souvent (plus d'une	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Jamais	Jamais
8/29/2019 11:18:44	Masculin	1994	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Souvent (une fois par sei	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:21:58	Féminin	1992	Etudiant	J'ai quelques notions	Très souvent (plus d'une	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:32:18	Féminin	1994	Salarié	J'ai quelques notions	Parfois (une fois toutes le	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:35:38	Féminin	1995	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Souvent (une fois par sei	Rarement (une à deux fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par ar	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:37:13	Masculin	1995	Salarié	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Parfois (une fois toutes le	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:41:24	Féminin	1995	Etudiant	J'ai quelques notions	Souvent (une fois par sei	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par ar	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:49:15	Féminin	1995	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Rarement (une fois par m	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par ar	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/29/2019 11:57:41	Féminin	1995	Salarié	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Jamais	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/29/2019 12:07:37	Masculin	1984	Inactif	J'ai quelques notions	Très souvent (plus d'une	Très souvent (au moins une fois par m	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 12:07:54	Masculin	1984	Inactif	J'ai quelques notions	Très souvent (plus d'une	Très souvent (au moins une fois par m	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 12:23:10	Masculin	2004	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Souvent (une fois par sei	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 12:25:43	Féminin	1998	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Souvent (une fois par sei	Rarement (une à deux fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/29/2019 12:27:35	Féminin	1986	Salarié	J'ai quelques notions	Parfois (une fois toutes le	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par
8/29/2019 12:32:03	Masculin	1996	Etudiant	J'ai quelques notions	Très souvent (plus d'une	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 13:05:35	Masculin	1994	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Très souvent (plus d'une	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 13:10:26	Féminin	1995	Salarié	J'ai quelques notions	Très souvent (plus d'une	Rarement (une à deux fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par ar	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)
8/29/2019 13:18:13	Féminin	1994	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Jamais	Rarement (une à deux fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par ar	Jamais
8/29/2019 13:18:32	Masculin	1995	Etudiant	J'ai quelques notions	Rarement (une fois par m	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)
8/29/2019 14:06:44	Féminin	1981	Entrepreneur	Je suis un expert	Très souvent (plus d'une	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Jamais	Rarement (une à deux fois par
8/29/2019 14:23:00	Masculin	1997	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Parfois (une fois toutes le	Très souvent (au moins une fois par m	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 14:55:29	Féminin	1998	Etudiant	J'ai quelques notions	Souvent (une fois par sei	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 15:14:36	Féminin	1995	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Très souvent (plus d'une	Rarement (une à deux fois par an)	Jamais	Jamais
8/29/2019 15:20:02	Féminin	1984	Entrepreneur	Je suis un expert	Souvent (une fois par sei	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)
8/29/2019 15:58:18	Masculin	2004	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Souvent (une fois par sei	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 16:38:51	Féminin	1990	Inactif	J'ai quelques notions	Très souvent (plus d'une	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 17:21:48	Masculin	1995	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Souvent (une fois par sei	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par
8/29/2019 17:50:29	Masculin	1989	Inactif	J'ai quelques notions	Parfois (une fois toutes le	Parfois (trois à cinq fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois
8/29/2019 17:54:40	Féminin	1996	Etudiant	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Rarement (une fois par m	Rarement (une à deux fois par an)	Rarement (une à deux fois par ar	Rarement (une à deux fois par
8/29/2019 18:02:52	Féminin	1994	Salarié	J'en ai déjà entendu parlé	Souvent (une fois par sei	Souvent (six à onze fois par an)	Très souvent (au moins une fois	Très souvent (au moins une fois