

12 GIANT MEN: AS A SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE FOR THE SPORTS SPONSORSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Sports play a significant role in the development of societies and in the introduction of countries as an important resource enabling the organizational management to exhibit the social responsibility understandings and to achieve the sponsorship activities. Sports is in such a point that it can be used for the purposes such as reaching the target audience, drawing the attention to the organization and the brand and having an impact on sales as a concept of social reality constituting the focal point of the sponsorship activities. The campaign of 12 Giant Men, which started when Garanti Bank became the main sponsor of A National Basketball Team, can be considered as an important case study in respect of the marketing communication discipline. It is obviously seen that the said 12 Giant Men Campaign, which may be qualified as an effort with the purpose to take benefit from the popularity of sport and a successful marketing communication strategy designed by Garanti Bank on the basis of social responsibility awareness which has provided the Turkish basketball and Turkish public with many benefits. By relying on these facts, this study involves a detailed analysis of 12 Giant Men Campaign that creates an outstanding model guiding the organizational management as a successful marketing strategy of communication and at the same time offering Turkey the opportunity to integrate with the contemporary and global thought on contemporary bases

Key Words: Marketing Communication, Sponsorship, Sports Sponsorship, Basketball, Garanti Bank, 12 Giant Men.

ÖZET

Toplumların gelişiminde ve ülkelerin tanıtımında önemli bir rol üstlenen spor, örgüt yönetimlerinin toplumsal sorumluluk anlayışlarını sergilemeleri ve sponsorluk faaliyetlerini gerçekleştirmeleri için önemli bir kaynak konumundadır. Bu noktada toplumsal gerçekliğe yönelik bir konsept olarak hedef kitleye ulaşma, örgüte ve markaya ilgi çekme, satışları etkileme

gibi amaçlar uyarınca kullanılabilen spor; sponsorluk faaliyetlerinin odak noktasını oluşturmaktadır. Garanti Bankası'nın A Milli Erkek Basketbol Takımı'na ana sponsor olmasıyla başlayan 12 Dev Adam Kampanyası'nın, pazarlama iletişimi disiplini açısından önemli bir *vak'a incelemesi (case study)* olduğunu ileri sürmek olanaklıdır. Garanti Bankası'nın toplumsal sorumluluk bilincini temel alarak geliştirilen başarılı bir pazarlama iletişimi stratejisi ve sporun popülaritesinden yararlanmayı hedefleyen bir çaba olarak niteleyebileceğimiz 12 Dev Adam Kampanyası'nın Garanti Bankası'na, Türk basketboluna ve Türk toplumuna pek çok kazanımından söz edilebilmektedir. Tüm bu gerçeklerden hareket eden bu çalışma, Türkiye'ye modern ve küresel düşünce ile bütünleşme fırsatı sunan ve aynı zamanda başarılı bir pazarlama iletişimi stratejisi olarak örgüt yönetimlerine yol gösteren bir model yaratan 12 Dev Adam Kampanyası'nın ayrıntılı bir analizini içermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Pazarlama İletişimi, Sponsorluk, Spor Sponsorluğu, Basketbol, Garanti Bankası, 12 Dev Adam.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations trying to survive in the highly competitive business environment provide sponsorship services for improvement of corporate and brand images in various areas ranging from art to education, and sports to health. The organization's management, being aware of the effective role the sponsorship activities performed on professional bases, play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of the corporate and brand images. They accept sponsorship as an investment and they are conscious of the relative significance of it in their acts. At this point, sports, the effectiveness of which can be felt in every area of the society life and the mass-related side of which predominates, draws attention as an area the sponsorship activities are focused on. The sports sponsorship, which brings the sports and marketing communication together in a melting pot, has recently appeared on the spot as a rising value and is preferred more frequently compared to the other types of sponsorships.

I. SPORTS SPONSORSHIP AS A POPULAR AND KNOWN SPONSORSHIP TECHNIQUE

Sponsorship; is providing resources for events or activities which are not parts of the organization's regular work, but which the organization may benefit commercially upon participation. The sponsorship which is considered as a business arrangement conducted between the person who supports financially and the person whom is supported in such a scope to reach the specified purposes can be defined as the supportive series of activity providing

the groups with significant incomes due to the reflection of the corporate culture of the corporate body having valuable contributions in the public. The sponsorship mentioned above is basically a process taking part in favor of the grantor and grantee ensures the brand awareness, increases the sales, strengthens the corporate image and also creates the competitive advantage. In this sense, the most important function of the sponsorship is to provide the organizational management with the new and updated communication platforms.

Sponsorship now represents “one of the most rapidly growing sectors of marketing communications” (Meenaghan, 1999: 19). It has been claimed that there is now a greater understanding in corporations of the benefits and pitfalls of sponsorship. In this regard, it is known that the size of the marketing communication budget saved for sponsorship expenses by the organizations has been rapidly increasing in the recent years. Also in addition to this, expenditures have increased by 12% between the years of 2000 and 2001. According to the data received from the Sponsorship Report of the International Event Group - IEG-, while the sponsorship expenses added up to 22 billion dollars in 2000 all over the world, this rate has risen up to 24.5 billion dollars by a 12% increase in 2001. This figure has reached to 26 billion dollars in 2002 (<http://www.sponsorship.com>, 16.10.2004).

Growth in sponsorship expenditure has been driven by factors such as corporate desire for cost effective access to target markets, technological change as manifested in media development and increasing event and leisure-oriented society. For the corporate user, sponsorship represents a highly versatile method of communication, capable of achieving a variety of objectives, largely in terms of communication effects, with a diversity of corporate publics (Meenaghan–Shipley, 1999: 328).

In parallel to the changes in the business life and the requirements of competition, the aims and the area of applications of sponsorship is also changing. “Sports are most frequently used type of activity for commercial sponsorship” (Griffin, 1993: 376). Sports is the area that sponsorship, which is actually a business agreement based on mutual benefits, is applied most frequently and most effectively today. In this regard, examination of the total sponsorship expenses in the organizations reveals a rate of 69% for sports, 9% for social responsibility, 6% for culture and arts, 9% for festivals, and 7% for other activities (Tamer, 18.04.2004).

Sports, which has been started to be evaluated in a different dimension as a life style and to be accepted as a part of the everyday life today, constitutes the focal point of the sponsorship activities and carries the sports sponsorship

on to display as a concept. "Sponsorship has become a core issue in sport marketing and a critical concern for event management" (Brown, 2000: 71). Upon such meaning, it is possible to suggest that the sports sponsorship is the most popular and known sponsorship technique. "Sport marketing literature makes the distinction between marketing of sport and marketing through sport, although the two are increasingly interlinked through sponsors. Promotional licensing associated with sport has been increasingly used by companies as part of their communications process. This can include special event sponsorship and/or sponsorship of a competing team" (Hare, 14.10.2004) .

Sports sponsorship, can simply be defined as the commercial relation between a sports event and an organization. In this regard, sponsorship is an agreement between a company and an event organizer where the company gives money -or the equivalent in kind- in exchange for rights to associate the company name with the event. This association can include the company name on team shirts, on advertising banners, in press advertisements or whatever is agreed in order to improve the awareness or image of the company

Although there is no consensus on its historical origin, sports sponsorship means to invest to a sports formation which can be defined as a sportsmen, league, team or event, to reach the organizational objectives. "Sponsorship is often a very cost-effective way of promoting a corporate brand nationally, and can provide additional brand exposure, as all related membership communication will carry the sponsor's logo and endorsement. and externally to existing members, potential participants and investors in the sport" (<http://www.size10design.co.uk/basketballscotland/downloads/21UP.pdf>, 14.10.2004).

Sponsorship has a fairly loose meaning in sport, covering everything from the traditional patronage of sporting endeavors to highly technical, multiparty arrangements, contractually having more in common with joint ventures, which are now becoming the norm. Where the prestige of some general association with a sports team used to be sufficient to achieve requisite levels of funding, increasingly more advantages must be offered to an ever-wider field of potential sponsors (Felt, 2002). Thus, sports sponsorship can be defined as an institution or a corporation's providing resources, which can be defined as money or equipment, for a sportsman or a team or a sports organization to carry on its activities, in return to various benefits it expects to reach the previously determined targets.

"Sponsorship is a brand equity-building strategy which is used for positioning the brand so the value of the brand's image is enhanced, thus its perceived superiority over competitors is established. This is achieved by the creation of a strategic partnership between the sponsoring brand and the sports

property” (Tripodi, 14.10.2004). Sports sponsorship, which can be defined as a commercial agreement based on mutually benefited relations between a corporation and a sportsman, or a team, or a sports event in this regard, enhances power of the brand besides facilitating the reaching of the organization to the present and the potential target audience.

Sports sponsorship involves the allocation of scarce resources with the intent of achieving certain organizational objectives. Consequently it has frequently been described in the marketing communication literature as a strategic activity. In this context, a sports sponsorship opportunity should be assessed as to its potential of helping a firm to secure a position of competitive advantage (Amis - Slack - Berrett, 1999: 250 – 252).

II. SPONSORSHIP UNDERSTANDING OF GARANTI BANK AS A CAMPAIGN CREATOR OF 12 GIANT MEN

The banking sector which draws attention as a highly competitive sector, is known to use sponsorship, which is a developing area of marketing communication, quite frequently. The combination of new legislation, technology, consumer sophistication and competitive intensity has focused attention on strategic and tactical marketing. Greater emphasis has been given to issues such as segmentation, branding, service quality, new product development, distribution channels and corporate identity.

It is against this background of change and experimentation that a number of financial services providers have invested in new forms of communication as a supplement to more traditional elements of promotional mix. Historically, customers have perceived financial institutions as conservative, faceless and to some extent, unapproachable. This feeling of isolation and remoteness is exacerbated by the use of bandit screens, automated tellers and home banking. Sponsorship therefore offers a mechanism for promoting human face and modern image (Thwaites, 1994: 747)

In this regard, banks across the world have been quick to link themselves to the excitement and glamour of cultural spectacles and sporting events, and to highlight their social credentials through support for their local community. As competition in the banking sector becomes increasingly international banks have been forced to step up their marketing efforts and look for new ways to differentiate their products. Banks offerings are becoming more and more similar to each other and as it becomes more difficult to compete in material ways, banks have started to compete with personalities. For sustained

long-term growth, they need to entice increasingly savvy consumers into long-term relationships, a process which involves developing their brands (<http://www.findarticles.com>, 01.03.2003).

Sports, which has an important role in the development of societies and introduction of countries, represents one of the areas where the sense of social responsibility of Garanti Bank comes to life, and constitutes the base of the Campaign of 12 Giant Men, which draws attention by successful application of sports sponsorship. The relation between the product and its quality and the quality of life constitutes the starting point of the sensitivity and contribution of Garanti Bank in subjects such as culture, art, education, sports and environment. Garanti Bank, which acts by the fact that the sense of social responsibility which symbolizes the intersection point of the profit and non-profit activities of organizations plays a complementary role on organizational philosophy, aims to set an example for the society, while having supported the activities in the areas mentioned above for long years with consciousness of social responsibility (<http://www.garanti.com.tr>, 28.08.2004).

While the sponsorship activities of Garanti Bank vary, long-term approach attracts attention as the common point. The continuous support in the stated areas also implies that Garanti stands forth as a protector for these areas. What Garanti understands from sponsorship is in parallel with its mission declared as: *to increase the value continuously and prominently that it contributes to the society and the environment*. Consequently, the bank's understanding of sponsorship can be defined to have acquired a shape and come to life towards its mission. Garanti Bank's selecting certain areas in its sponsorship activities implies long-term supporting, contribution to the value of the brand in the mentioned areas, and sharing all these with society. For this reason, the Bank names its sponsorship activities as *Societal Sharing Projects*.

The Campaign of 12 Giant Men, which was selected as one of the brightest marketing ideas of the year in a survey by Power Magazine in 2001, was initiated when Garanti Bank, which is known by its contributions on societal areas such as culture, art, environment, and sports, became the main sponsor of Basketball National A Team, and the national sponsor of the 32nd Men's European Basketball Championship. This process, which lead to the formation of the *12 Giant Men* brand and its belonging to all public, has come to life also with the support of the side corporations which display activity under Doğuş Group, namely Garanti Portfolio Management, Garanti Leasing, Garanti Investment, Garanti Insurance, and Garanti Life Insurance. Garanti Insurance Group has contributed to the Campaign of 12 Giant Men, which can be described as an important support to Turkish basketball, by providing life insurance to the National Team players and the technical staff.

“Ergun Özen the General Manager of Garanti Bank stated that their faith for the team and the contributions that Eurobasket 2001 was to bring to the advertisement of Turkey lied under the support they provided to the National Team” (Erk, 21.08.2001). It can be thought that Garanti has headed for Basketball National A Team sponsorship because it has a corporate culture based on the elements of team work, faith, confidence, and discipline, and similar themes constitute the basics of basketball, which is a collective sport. In this aspect, it is possible to claim that Garanti, which aims to provide support for the society and sports, has chosen basketball because it is a sport that does not attract much attention in the society under the shadow of football, and that it aimed to fill the gap in this field.

This choice related to the sponsorship practices of Garanti Bank can be seen that it has a close relation with the specific context of basketball as a sport branch. Basketball is a sport whose target audience is comprised mostly of young adults. Furthermore basketball is representative of a number of ball-based team sports where the audience attention is directed to a focal object -the ball- and/or the players, as opposed to any peripheral cues (Lardinoit – Quester, 2001: 49).

On the other hand, basketball is a virgin field compared to football. Its potential to bring competition advantage along with the elimination of the needs of the society in this field, and basketball audience being more sophisticated compared to the football audience also determined the direction of this heading. Besides all these, it is possible to say that because the fact that the majority of the Garanti Bank executives have played basketball professionally, they think that there are a lot of similarities between basketball and banking such as being a team work, relying on speed, tactics and strategy. Furthermore, their wish to create public support with the faith that the National Team is a champion candidate, was effective in their sponsoring such an organization.

III. A SUCCESSFUL MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: 12 GIANT MEN

The success of the sports management process is linked to its being carried on a professional basis, in other words to its being administered properly. An effective sponsorship management process in this regard consists of the stages of management process, planning of activities, application and control of activities. Lots of benefits for the sponsored organization can be acquired out of the sponsorships appropriately chosen for the target audience and that are successfully performed. The sports sponsorship process in this regard starts with evaluation of sponsorship offers which may come from sportsmen, sports team or organizations who are searching for support; from a

person, institution or a corporation which is eager to give support, and from a consultancy firm or agent which takes the mission of mediatorship.

It is known that the Basketball National A Team has applied to a lot of big corporations including Koç Group one year before Garanti Bank, that Koç Group has refused going into such a business due to the possibility of being misunderstood, as it closed Tofaş Basketball Team because of 15 million dollar bill, and it missed such a big opportunity (Munyar, 10.10.2001). Consequently, it is possible to say that appropriately made sponsorship decision and the risk taken lies under the success of the Campaign of 12 Giant Men.

The effectiveness of the sponsorship management process is possible by a successful management of sponsorship activity after the evaluation of the sponsorship offer and decision-making. The Campaign of 12 Giant Men differs also by the professional perspective dominating all the stages of the sponsorship management process. It can be said that Garanti executives, which executed the Campaign precisely, which drew attention as a successful marketing communication strategy, has invested a great deal to the brand value and received a significant payback.

Garanti Bank, which took on the 2001 European Basketball Championship -Eurobasket 2001- national sponsorship and the main sponsorship of Basketball National A Team, has initiated a publicity campaign with the '*12 Giant Men*' slogan to draw public attention and support to the tournament hosted by Turkey which is one of the most important sports events of the year. The mentioned campaign, where public relations activities and tools were also used intensely and efficiently, was supported by the advertising film* specially produced by Young&Rubicam/Reklamevi and press advertisements with the slogan '*The Pride of Turkey, the Honour of Garanti*' used on from 09 September 2001.

The *12 Giant Men* song written and composed by music group named Athena, besides gaining great sympathy in public, had a doping effect on the campaign and provided high popularity. In concordance with this, Athena group itself participated in the games of Turkish National Team in the championship and has sung the song 12 Giant Men with the audience in half times. 12 Giant Men song was also used as the Bank's Head Office Operator's hold tone.

* Identification of the creative team of the advertisement film 12 Giant Men is as follows: **Advertisement agent:** Y&R/Reklamevi; **advertisement given by:** Garanti Bank; **product/service:** Garanti Bank-12 Giant Men; **producer:** Charles Richards; **customer relations group:** Necmiye İşgören, Anet Tokathoğlu; **creative producer:** Uğurcan Ataoğlu; **creative group:** Barış Akbaş; **creative team:** Serdar Erener, Pemra Ataç, Işıl Doneray, Esra Kuşçu, Hamza Çukuryurt, Vedat Yılmaz; **music:** Athena.

The Garanti Bank administration, acting with the consciousness that the success in sponsorship activities requires developing long-term approaches, has extended the sponsorship of Basketball National A Team three more years. Consequently, the support initiated in the 32nd European Basketball Championship has continued in the 14th World Men's Basketball Championship in Indianapolis and in European Men's Basketball Championship in Sweden on 05-14 September 2003. It is possible to say that the '*12 Giant Men*' slogan appearing in all these long-term sponsorship activities as the common point of all championships now belongs to the society and to basketball. In this regard, it has to be emphasized that the advertisement film the Mask executed during World Championship, based on the concept that '*Everyone is 12 Giant Men*', is a successful application, which brought great sensation by reaching the target audience with low cost and with maximum effect.

During this process, which lasted approximately four years, Garanti Bank's website has been used as an effective communication tool. Those who were interested had the opportunity to load 12 Giant Men themed screensavers to their computers, to download the 12 Giant Men song as an Mp3, and to reach 12 Giant Men and the Mask advertisement films, besides reaching detailed information on the National Team and the championship programs. The activities held in this regard can be given as interesting examples on the utilization of modern technology for public relation activities.

The contribution of Garanti to basketball was not limited to National Team official sponsorship and kept on gaining continuity with candidate projects. Such activities held in parallel to the Campaign of 12 Giant Men and which complement each other can be summarized as follows:

- **12 Giant Men Basketball Schools Sponsorship:** Garanti Bank has sponsored the *12 Giant Men Basketball Schools* initiated by Turkish Basketball Federation -TBF- to create the future basketball players, in other words the future 12 Giant Men and to raise champion basketball teams. The above mentioned project aims the establishment of 12 Giant Men Basketball Schools in twenty-two provinces and in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to spread the love of basketball all throughout Turkey and set higher standards for success.

- **12 Giant Men Basketball Schools Stars Feast:** The *12 Giant Men Basketball Schools Stars Feast* has took place on 28 January 2004. Sixteen teams constituted by ninety-six young basketball students from all over Turkey has participated in the feast carried out in Abdi İpekçi Sports Complex, which lasted for three days.

- **12 Giant Men Basketball Schools End-of-Year Feast:** 12 Giant Men Basketball Schools Feast has took place under the sponsorship of Garanti Bank in between 16-19 May in Kuşadası. The 2002-2003 winter season of the project, which was initiated by cooperation of Garanti Bank and Turkish Basketball Federation, and which provided basketball education to two thousand and seven hundred kids until today has ended with the mentioned tournament.

- **Little Giant Men Semester Basketball Tournament:** *Little Giant Men Semester Basketball Tournament* organized by Garanti Bank and Turkish Basketball Federation took place on 06-08 February 2003 in İstanbul Abdi İpekçi Sports Complex.

- **The Sponsorship of the Basketball Without Borders Camp:** Garanti administration, moving by the belief that sports is one of the most effective ways for friendship and peace, has taken on the sponsorship of the Basketball Without Borders Camp initiated with the cooperative effort of NBA and United Nations. Forty-eight basketball players from Turkey and Greece have gathered in the camp where stars like İbrahim Kutluay, Hidayet Türkoğlu, Mirsad Türkcan, Mehmet Okur and Peja Stojoković coached.

- **12 Giant Men and Dream Team Friendship Game:** The 12 Giant Men has played with the American Dream Team in Turkey on 08 and 10 August 2004 in Abdi İpekçi Sports Complex in two friendship games.

The campaign of 12 Giant Men, which is a successful case study of the marketing communication discipline and sports sponsorship, draws attention with the important mission it took over on behalf of basketball sports and Turkey, as well as Garanti Bank. “This sponsorship has gone beyond to be an event of Garanti Bank, and has become the image of Turkey, and has contributed a great deal as well to the image of Garanti Bank” (Erk, 08.10.2001). This campaign, going beyond a sponsorship activity in this regard, can be evaluated as a micro example to the fact that success is possible if the sources are used efficiently and strategic thought is valued.

“It is possible to state that Turkey has gained a lot by the campaign of 12 Giant Men, which emphasized one more time the cooperation of the government with the private sector and which is based on efficient use of sponsorship establishment which is a concept related to liberal economy, and has had the opportunity to integrate with modern and global thinking” (Toros, 01.10.2001). The Basketball Men’s National Team’s receiving the special award in Skal 2001 Quality Awards, where the bests of tourism sector are selected, because they represented Turkey the best way possible, can be

evaluated as a proof of the intense acceptance of this assertion in public opinion.

CONCLUSION

Sponsorship, which is a business agreement between the sponsor and the sponsored, is a marketing communication tool that promises lots of yields to the organizational management such as strengthening of corporation and brand, enhancing brand awareness, and increasing the sales. Sponsorship, which requires the establishment of a benefit-based relationship between the supporter and the supported, has to take place based on win-win philosophy, and should occur in a professional perspective. Those sponsorships that are appropriately selected according to the target audience are known to contribute significantly to establishing relations with society. At this point, the campaign of 12 Giant Men initiated with Garanti Bank's becoming the main sponsor in National Men's Basketball Team and the national sponsor in the 32nd Men's European Basketball Championship draws attention as a successful example to sports sponsorship, and proves that sponsorship is a process requiring expertise.

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