Corporate Social Responsibility through Sport: The Community Sports Trust Model as a CSR Delivery Agency

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Biography

Geoff Walters, PhD, is Lecturer in Management at Birkbeck, University of London and a member of the Birkbeck Sport Business Centre. He received a three-year PhD scholarship from the Economic and Social Research Council to undertake a stakeholder analysis of the football industry. His main research interests are corporate governance and corporate social responsibility in sport.

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Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become an increasingly important priority for commercial organisations over the course of the last 25 years with many integrating CSR into the strategic management of their business to deliver a range of benefits. This paper draws on the theoretical framework developed by Smith and Westerbeek (2007), which argues that the unique role of sport within society can lead to sport CSR having the potential to realise greater benefits than CSR initiatives developed by commercial organisations. The theoretical framework is used to present the results of empirical qualitative case study research undertaken at two leading community sports trust organisations in the English football industry. A community sports trust is an independent charitable organisation with an explicit commitment to delivering a range of community-oriented initiatives. The case studies detail the range of health, education and social inclusion activities that each community sport trust is involved in. Given the growing importance of CSR, this research identifies the community sports trust model as an ideal delivery partner for a commercial organisation to meet their CSR objectives.

Keywords
Corporate social responsibility; Sport management; Football clubs; Community sports trust, Community stakeholders; Social inclusion

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Introduction

Over the last 25 years, it has become increasingly important for organisations to address the issue of corporate social responsibility (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Campbell, 2007). Many organisations have integrated CSR into the strategic management of the business to deliver a number of benefits including the protection and improvement of corporate reputation, competitor differentiation, and brand loyalty development, which can ultimately improve financial performance (Mullen, 1997; Dean, 2003; Porter and Kramer, 2006). At the same time, CSR has been a growing area within management literature. While the seminal work of Carroll (1979) broadly defines CSR as the responsibilities that a business has beyond profit maximisation, multiple interpretations such as corporate responsiveness, corporate social performance and corporate citizenship are used interchangeably, demonstrating that CSR, despite wide recognition, is still imprecise (Jonker and Marberg, 2007). This has led some to describe CSR as a tortured concept (Godfrey and Hatch, 2007).

Until recently, little academic attention has been paid to the role of CSR in sport organisations. This under-developed area within sport management literature is now beginning to be addressed (Babiak and Wolfe, 2006: Smith and Westerbeek, 2007; Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). However, despite the suggestion that CSR in sport will be a key future trend (Crow and Bradish, 2002) there is still a dearth of research in this field. It can be argued that because of the unique role of sport in society and an increased recognition of the ability for sport to address social issues, there is a close integration between CSR and sport. With commercial organisations increasingly

dedicating resources to CSR, there exists the opportunity for the development of a partnership approach whereby a sport organisation is the recipient of corporate funding to undertake the role of CSR delivery agency for the commercial organisation (Smith and Westerbeek, 2007). Such a partnership will enable a sport organisation to receive the necessary resources to deliver CSR programmes, while the profile of the commercial organisation may benefit from an improved public perception, increasing the potential for business success.

This paper draws on the theoretical article by Smith and Westerbeek (2007), which presents seven unique features of sport CSR to justify the claim that sport could be used as a vehicle for deploying CSR. The paper seeks to illustrate that the community sports trust model in the football industry is an ideal delivery partner for a commercial organisation to meet their CSR objectives by using the seven unique features of sport CSR as a framework to illustrate how a community sports trust can deliver on issues such as health, education and social inclusion. A community sports trust is an independent charitable organisation that delivers a range of community-oriented initiatives. The community trust model has become commonplace across local authorities in the UK since the creation of Greenwich Leisure Limited in 1993 as a not for profit organisation that manages a range of leisure services across the borough of Greenwich in London (Sesnan, 2001). Since then many local authorities such as Edinburgh City Council and Bristol Council have implemented the trust model as a way to manage and operate leisure facilities and reinvest profit into providing services to local communities (Sesnan, 2001). Since 2006 the community trust model has become more widespread within the football industry in England with approximately 40 independent community sports trusts associated with football clubs in the Premier League and the Football League.

This paper presents the findings from case study research undertaken at two leading community sports trust organisations in the football industry. The first is the Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) and the second is the Brentford Football Club Community Sports Trust (BCST). It considers the seven unique features of sport CSR in the context of the community sports trust model, drawing on empirical research undertaken at these two case studies. The paper begins with a brief discussion of CSR before focusing on the role of CSR in sport, introducing the seven unique features developed by Smith and Westerbeek (2007). It then provides a brief historical account of CSR in the football industry leading to the development of the community sports trust model. The case study methodology is summarised, before a brief background into the CACT and the BCST is presented. The seven unique features of sport CSR are then used as a framework for the analysis of the case studies before a discussion on the implications for management practice, in particular the potential benefits that might result from a partnership between a community sports trust and a commercial organisation. The applicability of the community sports trust model across the football industry in the UK is also considered before the paper concludes by recommending that commercial organisations should consider a community sports trust as the delivery agency for CSR initiatives in order to further their CSR commitment.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Over the last 25 years, CSR has become an increasingly important priority for organisations and business leaders (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Campbell, 2007). CSR deviates from the neoclassical economic view that the singular objective of the firm is to maximise shareholder value, leading Margolis and Walsh (2003: 273) to argue that "the challenge facing those who advocate corporate social initiatives then is to find a

way to promote what they see as social justice in a world in which this shareholder wealth maximization paradigm reigns". Organisations have responded to this challenge, resulting in a shift from the perception of CSR as a charitable activity to that of an integrated part of strategic management whereby an organisation incorporates CSR activities with business operations that add value to the business (Porter and Kramer, 2006). Implementing a strategic CSR approach can deliver a range of benefits including the protection and improvement of corporate reputation, competitor differentiation, and brand loyalty development, which can ultimately improve financial performance (Mullen, 1997; Dean, 2003; Porter and Kramer, 2006). These benefits underpin the increase in the number of organisations choosing to engage in, and report on, CSR activities (Margolis and Walsh, 2003).

CSR has subsequently become an important area within management literature, building on from the influential framework developed by Carroll (1979), which identified four types of obligation or responsibility that a business has to society. These included economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities, which collectively incorporate the entire range of business responsibilities and constitute "total CSR" (Carroll, 1991: 40). Economic responsibility refers to the obligation a business has to produce goods and services to meet the needs of society. The production of goods and delivery of services must adhere to the legal framework of the society within which the activity occurs. An organisation can meet its ethical responsibilities by adhering to standards of moral behaviour that are expected within society, while discretionary responsibilities refer to the voluntary social activities that an organisation undertakes as part of a commitment to philanthropic behaviour.

Despite the seminal work of Carroll (1979), over the course of the last 25 years, it has been argued that CSR has become a tortured concept due to multiple interpretations, resulting in inconsistencies, imprecision, and a lack of a specific definition (Windsor, 2001; Godfrey and Hatch, 2007; Jonker and Marberg, 2007). This leaves CSR open to interpretation (e.g. Friedman, 1970), which led to the development of alternative themes that embraced CSR thinking (Carroll, 1999). For instance, as Carroll argues (1999: 292) "in the 1990s, the CSR concept transitioned significantly to alternative themes such as stakeholder theory, business ethics theory, corporate social performance, and corporate citizenship". Similarly, Matten and Crane (2005) illustrate that CSR has become increasingly complex due to additional constructs such as corporate social responsiveness, which have further developed the CSR discourse. Godfrey and Hatch (2007) have argued that scholars have failed to achieve a common language with which to develop the concept of CSR, describing it as a tortured concept within academic literature. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the broad definition of CSR given by Carroll (1979) as the responsibilities that a business has beyond profit maximisation allows CSR to be built upon as the "base-point, building block, or point-of-departure for other related concepts and themes, many of which were compatible with it" (Carroll, 1999: 288).

Sport and Corporate Social Responsibility

The trend within the corporate sector for commercial organisations to engage in, and report on, their CSR activity has also become more apparent within the sport industry. A number of different types of CSR behaviour within sport can be identified (Babiak and Wolfe, 2006). First, individual athletes have set up charitable foundations (Kott, 2005). For instance, the US cyclist Lance Armstrong has created a foundation to fight cancer, having suffered from testicular cancer at the age of 25. Second, professional

sport organisations have engaged in different forms of CSR activity. In England, the development of the *Football in the Community* schemes and community oriented activities such as *Playing for Success*, which focuses on social inclusion, and the educational based initiative *Positive Futures*, show that football clubs can have a positive role to play in their communities (McGuire and Fenoglio, 2004; Brown et al, 2006). Third, professional sports leagues are increasingly implementing league wide programmes to address social concerns. In the US, the NFL, the NBA, the NHL, MLB and MLS have all put in place CSR schemes (Babiak and Wolfe, 2006). Fourth, governing bodies are in a strong position to implement CSR initiatives. For instance, FIFA, the governing body of world football runs the *Football for Hope* and the *Win in Africa with Africa* projects that aim to highlight the social impact that football can have on issues such as peace promotion, health, anti-discrimination and social integration. Fifth, it has also been recognised that sport events can make a contribution towards CSR. For instance, at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin there were a number of schemes implemented that were designed to address social and environmental issues (Cappato and Pennazio, 2006). Moreover, a range of projects were implemented throughout Detroit as part of the CSR commitment of the 2006 Super Bowl (Babiak and Wolfe, 2006).

Despite a number of different types of CSR behaviour within the sports industry, there is little academic analysis of the role of sport in the context of CSR, although this is emerging as a potential area of growth within sport management literature (e.g. Babiak and Wolfe, 2006: Smith and Westerbeek, 2007; Breitbarth and Harris, 2008). This future area for research can build on the growth in the number of academic studies that analyse the various social benefits that can be achieved through sport such

as improved physical health (Myers et al, 2004); improved psychological health (Scully et al, 1998); crime reduction (Witt and Crompton, 1996); community cohesion and social capital (Hague and Mercer, 1998; Jarvie, 2003); and improved education (Lambourne, 2006). For these reasons, it has been argued that sport occupies a unique role in society, and consequently that sport CSR can have a greater impact on issues such as education, health, the environment, and social and cultural enrichment than the development of CSR initiatives by commercial organisations and other industry sectors (Babiak and Wolfe, 2006). As Smith and Westerbeek (2007: 48) claim, "the nature of sport lends itself to being uniquely positioned to influence society in general and communities in particular. In other words, sport organisations are already implicitly woven into the society, an integrative characteristic limited in commercial business organisations".

In their theoretical article on sport CSR, Smith and Westerbeek (2007: 50-52) present seven unique features to justify their claim that sport could be used as a vehicle for deploying CSR. First, the popularity and global reach of sport can ensure that sport CSR has mass media distribution and communication power. Second, sport CSR has youth appeal. Children are more likely to engage in a CSR programme if it is attached to a sport organisation or a sports personality. Third, sport CSR can be used to deliver positive health impacts through programmes and initiatives designed around physical exercise. Fourth, sport CSR will invariably involve group participation and therefore aid social interaction. Likewise, this can also lead to a fifth benefit which is improved cultural understanding and integration. Sixth, particular sport activities may lead to enhanced environmental and sustainability awareness. Finally, participating in sport CSR activities can also provide immediate gratification benefits.

These seven features demonstrate that sport CSR represents an opportunity for both commercial organisations and sport organisations. The fact that sport is an integral part of society illustrates that there is potential for a commercial organisation to link in with a sport organisation to deliver CSR programmes. The financial resources a commercial organisation can make available for CSR programmes can be used by a sport organisation to deliver a wide range of community-related programmes. From the perspective of a commercial organisation, a CSR partnership with a sport organisation can lead to enhanced profile and reputation, in addition to an improved public perception of the brand. As Smith and Westerbeek state (2007: 52) "corporate managers and sport managers alike can enhance the economic prospects of their organisations and maximise the social benefits that they deliver to society by better harnessing the power of sport to deliver on social and community objectives".

Commercial organisations are beginning to recognise the opportunities that a partnership with a sport organisation can offer in the context of CSR. For example, Barclays have invested £30 million into grassroots sport since 2004 through their *Spaces for Sports* initiative. Working in partnership with Groundwork, an environmental regeneration charity, and the Football Foundation, the largest sports charity in the UK, more than 200 facilities have been opened in disadvantaged communities to allow better access to sport. More recently, Business in the Community, the organisation that supports commercial organisations improve their commitment to CSR launched the *Clubs that Count* programme. This programme aims to support the development of partnerships between sports clubs and commercial organisations, aiming to ensure mutual benefits. An example of a potential partnership

model for a commercial organisation involves a community sports trust; a model that is becoming more widespread in English football.

Corporate Social Responsibility in the Football Industry: The Community Sports Trust Model in English Football

The role of a football club within its communities was formally recognised with the development of Football in the Community (FITC) schemes at six clubs in the north-west of England in 1986 as a joint initiative between the Football League and the Professional Footballers' Association through the Footballers Further Education and Vocational Training Scheme. The success of the pilot projects led to the expansion of the schemes across almost all clubs in the Football League, and post 1992, the Premier League after its inception. FITC departments became the vehicle for clubs to engage with local communities, effectively functioning as the delivery agency for a range of coaching activities. Following election success in 1997, FITC departments were seen by the newly elected Labour government as a vehicle to deliver the 'third way' agenda, and were increasingly expected to demonstrate a stronger commitment to socially responsible activities (Mellor, 2008). Because of the unique link between sport and society, football clubs "came to have a special role to play in this respect which extended beyond other forms of corporate engagement with 'social agendas'" (Mellor, 2008: 320).

More recently, however, the increasing complexity of the environment in which FITC departments operate has been a key factor underpinning calls for a new approach in the way that football clubs engage with communities. A recent report (Brown et al, 2006) maintained that the notion of 'the community' has become more complicated; that increasing commercialism within the football industry has led to growing

confusion surrounding club-community responsibilities; that the increasing use of the term 'community' amongst academics, politicians and policy makers has made it more difficult for a football club to understand what is meant by the concept and how they should respond; and that central government has failed to deliver a cohesive strategy for football to address social issues.

A key recommendation in this report was that FITC departments should look to gain independence from a football club and convert to a community sports trust with charitable status, governed by a separate board of trustees (Brown et al, 2006). The community trust model has been used by many local authorities across the UK as a more efficient way in which to manage and operate leisure facilities (Sesnan, 2001). The benefits of a community sports trust in relation to a FITC department are clear. A community sports trust has a greater degree of structural autonomy, responsibility for its own strategic and financial direction, greater access to a wider variety of funding streams, and less need to balance the tension between commercial and community objectives. While the key aspects of many FITC schemes involve coaching in-schools, after-school coaching, soccer schools including holiday courses, and Saturday clubs (McGuire and Fenoglio, 2004), a community sports trust has more flexibility to oversee multiple activities addressing areas such as health, education, and social inclusion. Furthermore, a community sports trust can develop a more open and inclusive approach to community relations, develop stronger partnerships with local authorities, regeneration companies and commercial sponsors committed to CSR, and enhance the credibility with potential partners and funding agencies (Brown et al, 2006). At the same time, it is critical for a community sports trust to retain the

association with the football club to ensure that community initiatives continue to have a strong level of significance amongst the communities involved.

Whilst a small number of FITC departments had converted to the community sports trust model prior to the report by Brown et al (2006), over the course of the last two years this has become an increasing trend in the football industry. In part, this has been because of the dissolution of the Footballers Further Education and Vocational Training Scheme in 2007, which used to act as the central support agency for FITC departments. However, it also reflects an increasing awareness of the need to convert to a community sports trust as a means to progress beyond the traditional FITC department and deliver a stronger commitment to CSR. There are now approximately 40 football clubs from the Premier League and Football League where the FITC department has been converted to a community sports trust, albeit under a variety of different guises including community trusts, foundations, and community education and sporting trusts. This represents a step-change in the way that football clubs and FITC departments are addressing the issue of CSR.

Methodology

This paper seeks to illustrate that the community sports trust model in the football industry is an ideal delivery partner to aid a commercial organisation meet their CSR objectives. It uses the seven unique features of sport CSR (Smith and Westerbeek, 2007) as a framework for the analysis of two qualitative case studies to show how the community sports trust model can address health, education and social inclusion issues. Case study analysis was conducted involving the Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) and Brentford Football Club Community Sports Trust (BCST). Both community sports trusts were independent from their respective

football clubs and had charitable status. They were both chosen as they represent best-practice examples of community trusts with their work having been influential in helping their respective football clubs to win numerous awards relating to CSR and community engagement.

There were two stages of data collection in this qualitative case study research. The first method involved eight semi-structured interviews. At CACT, interviews were conducted with the chief executive of the community trust, the community scheme manager at FITC, the chief executive of the football club, and the supporter-elected director. At BCST the chief executive was interviewed, in addition to the study support manager from Hounslow Council (who works at the football club and in partnership with the BCST on initiatives) and the chairman of the supporters' trust, the organisation that owned the majority shareholding in the football club. The purpose of these interviews was to understand better the CSR initiatives that the community trusts were involved in. Interview schedules were prepared for each interview, although the direction of the interview would often be influenced by additional areas for discussion. In addition to the interviews at the community sports trusts, the chief executive of FITC at the now defunct Footballers Further Education and Vocational Training Scheme was interviewed. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed to aid the organisation and analysis of the data.

The second stage of data collection involved the analysis of secondary documentary evidence. The use of secondary sources of data is important within qualitative research to provide an alternative perspective to information gathered through the interview process. Benefits of secondary data can include the ease of access, low cost,

and the ability to provide a historical insight (Hodder, 1998). Secondary data sources from each football club and community sports trust included annual reports, financial statements, and website information. This was triangulated with the interview analysis.

Case Study Background

Charlton Athletic Community Trust

Charlton Athletic Football Club created the Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) in 2003 with the objective to bring together seven key aspects of community work under the responsibility of the trust. CACT is registered as a not-for-profit charitable organisation with structural, strategic and financial independence from the football club. Structural independence means that the community trust is governed by its own board of trustees who are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the trust. Implementing strategy is the responsibility of the chief executive of CACT who oversees a number of trading organisations. These include Community Scheme Solutions Limited (formerly the Football in the Community scheme); Charlton Athletic Race and Equality Partnership (CARE); Positive Futures; Community Facilities and Charlton Overseas. In total, CACT employs over 20 full-time staff supported by an additional 250 part-time coaches. The Community Scheme Solutions was, until 2006, the Football in the Community scheme before moving under the remit of the Trust. The Community Scheme Solutions is the key delivery agent for a number of community initiatives focused on social inclusion that aim to use football coaching and sporting activities as a way to address issues such as crime; education; sport development; substance misuse; health promotion; social inclusion; community integration; and community safety. The social inclusion work is funded through a

variety of partnerships with the local authorities in Greenwich, Bexley and Kent, public sector organisations, and commercial organisations including British Airways.

Brentford Football Club Community Sports Trust

The Brentford Football Club Community Sports Trust (BCST) was created in 2006. It was formerly the Football in the Community scheme (FITC) that had been in operation since 1987. The decision to convert to the BCST was a progressive move following the expansion of the FITC scheme between 2001 and 2005 from three full-time members of staff to 16, supported by an additional 50 volunteer coaches. While the FITC scheme was part of Brentford football club, the BCST is incorporated as a charitable organisation governed by a board of trustees, and has structural and financial independence from the football club. The majority of the work of the BCST is focused around the delivery of social inclusion based projects with the objective to use a range of sporting activities to engage youngsters, improve physical health, and reduce the potential for drug use and crime. These projects are funded by and delivered in partnership with a number of commercial organisations and local authorities in Hounslow, Ealing, Richmond, Spelthorne and Hillingdon.

The Seven Unique Features of Sport CSR: Case Study Analysis

The seven unique features of sport CSR outlined by Smith and Westerbeek (2007) include mass media distribution and communication power; youth appeal; positive health impacts; social interaction; cultural understanding and integration; sustainability awareness; and immediate gratification benefits. These seven features are used as a framework for the case study analysis of the CACT and BCST. The case study analysis illustrates how CACT and BCST address issues such as education, health, and social inclusion through sporting activities.

Mass Media Distribution and Communication Power

Smith and Westerbeek (2007) argue that the popularity and global reach of sport ensures that sport CSR has mass media distribution and communication power. While many commercial organisations are involved in CSR and community-oriented projects, the prominence of sport and particularly football within the media ensures that a community sports trust can offer a powerful communicative tool to illustrate an organisation's commitment to CSR. The prominent role of Charlton Athletic Football Club and Brentford Football Club within their respective communities ensures that the community sports trusts and the CSR-related projects, because of the association with the football clubs, receive significant levels of media attention. The media power of sport has been demonstrated at CACT through the numerous awards that the football club has won including being voted one of the top ten organisations at the National Business Awards in November 2005 in the corporate social responsibility category. The work of the CACT has been further recognised by government for engaging with contemporary government policy and deliver on social and health objectives. The work of BCST has also played a significant role in helping Brentford Football Club to win the Football League Community Club of the Year Award in 2006, the Football League Best Club Sponsorship Award in 2007, and the 2007 GlaxoSmithKline Local Health Award.

Youth Appeal

Smith and Westerbeek (2007) argued that sport CSR has youth appeal. The work of a community sports trust appeals strongly to children due to the association with a football club. This association helps to maintain a strong link between the club and the community, benefits the reputation of the club in the local area, and importantly,

ensures that the work of the community sports trust has the potential to have a significant impact. For instance, children are more likely to engage in community initiatives run by a community sports trust and respect the coaches because of the association with the football club than for activities run solely by a local council. CACT and BCST are involved in a range of sporting activities in addition to football that are designed to engage children including rugby, cricket, kayaking, table tennis, gymnastics and dance. This widens the potential participation base and encourages children to get involved that might not necessarily be attracted to football. Moreover, the community sports trusts are also involved in a range of education-based projects to engage children and encourage learning. For example, CACT is a partner in the *Youth Impact Project* which targets socially excluded 14 to 17 year olds to improve their skills and employment prospects. It also runs the *Kick into Education* programme across Kent and Bexley where community trust coaches deliver numeracy and literacy programmes. The CACT also works closely with the Study Support Centre at the Valley stadium in partnership with the football club, the local authority and *Playing for Success*, a government funded initiative. The Study Support Centre offers learning outside of normal school lessons focused on raising levels of education. BCST also works very closely with a Study Support Centre as part of the *Playing for Success* initiative. The centre is based at the Griffin Park stadium and is run in partnership with the local authority. In addition to the *Playing for Success* initiatives, the centre has been responsible for educational projects aimed at children with behavioural difficulties and young adults that left school without any qualifications.

Positive Health Impacts

The link between participating in sport and positive health benefits is well established. There are three key ways in which community sports trusts can have a positive health impact. Firstly, the majority of activities are sport-based, and so require that those involved are active. For instance, at CACT and BCST, the majority of the activities undertaken by the trusts involve sport-based initiatives for young people. However, the CACT is also a partner in the *Living Longer: Living Well* scheme - a multi-agency partnership that offers physical activities to older people to support the aim of living longer. Secondly, the community trust model can be used to raise awareness of healthy campaigns. The CACT was a partner in the *Kick the Habit project* that aimed to increase awareness and help residents to give up smoking via a range of incentives. Third, both CACT and BCST are involved in a number of local schools. Since 2005, schools have been required to give teachers time for planning, preparation and assessment. It is during this time that community officers are able to provide support to schools, and particularly through initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles. For instance, the CACT is involved in a *Kick Start for Life* scheme which aims to make children more aware of health living and covers areas such as nutrition, exercise, fitness and drug awareness.

Social Interaction

Sport CSR "offers a platform for encouraging social interaction in a functional way" (Smith and Westerbeek, 2007: 51). A community sports trust can do this in a number of ways. For instance, by encouraging children to participate in sport activities it can offer the means to get them working together and interacting. The range of sporting activities offered by CACT and BCST offer the opportunity for children to interact in different contexts. The educational initiatives through the Study Support Centre at the football club also encourage team working. For instance, the Study Support Centre

produces *The Buzz* newspaper written by and for children, with 20,000 copies distributed across primary schools in Hounslow. Another way that the community sports trusts' encourage social interaction is through the delivery of social inclusion programmes aimed at disengaged children. Both CACT and BCST are responsible for delivering a range of programmes throughout a number of London boroughs in partnership with *Positives Futures*, an initiative that was developed initially as part of the Home Office Drug Strategy Directorate. The programmes use football coaching and sporting activity as a way to make young people more aware of the dangers of drug abuse, while also looking to improve levels of self confidence, self esteem, and social responsibility. These initiatives look to improve community integration and reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and truancy. Both community trusts are also involved in the *KickZ* Project in partnership with the Metropolitan Police which uses sport as a way to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and encourage youngsters to volunteer to participate in projects within their neighbourhoods.

Cultural Understanding and Integration

Sport is seen as a way to promote understanding of different cultures and to strengthen community cohesion. The Charlton Athletic Race Equality (CARE) partnership run by the CACT and Greenwich Council aims to address the issue of racism, social exclusion and community cohesion. Through the delivery of sports and art initiatives in partnership with youth clubs and primary and secondary schools, CARE has become the most successful anti-racism projects in the country. Particular initiatives include the CARE Unity Cup, a football tournament which brings together members of different cultures and communities, and *Prevention with CARE*, a project that uses sport and art to promote dialogue and build positive relationships between different community groups. The social inclusion work of the BCST is also a way to

promote cultural understanding while the trust employs a designated ethnic minorities officer as a full-time member of staff.

Sustainability Awareness

With increasing attention on environmental issues, sport organisations and sport events in particular can be used to promote environmental and sustainability awareness (Smith and Westerbeek, 2007). For example, there were a number of schemes implemented at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin designed to address environmental issues associated with the Games (Cappato and Pennazio, 2006). The community sports trust model is a means through which environmental sustainability can be promoted. For instance, the BCST partnered Richmond Council in 2006 in the Big Recycle project aimed at encouraging residents and schools to recycle. However, at present the majority of the work of CACT and BCST is centred on social inclusion and therefore environmental sustainability is perhaps an area of future growth and presents further funding opportunities for both community trusts.

Immediate Gratification Benefits

Engaging in sporting activities can provide participants with immediate gratification in the sense that they are intrinsically satisfying. The range of activities that the CACT and BCST are involved in, from sporting activities to arts activities or educational based projects are all designed to be enjoyable so that those participating get some immediate satisfaction from taking part.

Discussion

In the context of the increasing importance of CSR over the past two decades, the seven unique features of sport CSR developed by Smith and Westerbeek (2007) have clear implications for management practice at both community sports trusts and

commercial organisations. In light of this paper, it can be argued that commercial organisations should look to develop partnerships with community trust organisations that can deliver community-oriented sport programmes to meet their CSR objectives. The development of a partnership between a commercial organisation and a community sports trust can lead to a number of potential management benefits for commercial organisations, community sports trusts, and football clubs (table 1).

Table 1: Potential benefits of a partnership between a community sports trust and a commercial organisation

Community Sports Trust	Commercial Organisation	Football Club
• Increased funding • Deliver health, education and social inclusion initiatives • Benefits in kind • Access to resources	• A means to address CSR • Reputational benefits • Customer loyalty • Employee commitment • Partnership development	• Minimise commercial and community tensions • Reputation management • 'Community' brand building • Commercial sponsorship

For a community sports trust, the extent to which it can deliver community activities is inevitably determined by the funding that it receives. Whilst the government provides funding for a number of initiatives that deliver on policy agendas such as social inclusion or educational projects, the level of funding is finite. Therefore community sports trusts are constantly looking to increase funding from a variety of sources in order to increase delivery. For those responsible for managing community trusts, commercial organisations are a key source of potential income. For example, with many commercial organisations having CSR budgets, they are in a position to provide the necessary funding which will allow the community sports trust to increase the numbers of employees (whether full-time of part-time coaches) in order to expand

the delivery of community initiatives and further the commitment to the community. A partnership might also benefit the community trust in that the commercial organisation could provide access to resources, expertise, and additional contacts, in addition to providing benefits in kind that support the work of the trust.

With increasing pressure on organisations to engage in, and report on how they are addressing, the issue of CSR, a partnership with a community sports trust through the funding of community programmes can be a way for a commercial organisation to achieve this. With potential limitations on the level of community integration that a commercial organisation is able to achieve (Smith and Westerbeek, 2007), managers need to be aware that a partnership with a community sports trust and the funding of worthwhile initiatives could help to improve the perception and reputation of a commercial organisation. For example, the association with the community activities of a community sports trust can result in increasing brand awareness, promote enhanced brand recall and lead stakeholders to develop favourable associations towards the commercial organisation; this in turn might lead to enhanced customer loyalty. An association with a community sports trust might also benefit a commercial organisation in building partnerships with organisations such as local authorities. Internal organisational benefits might include increased employee commitment, particularly if a commercial organisation allows employees to volunteer time to support the initiatives organised by the community trust. These potential benefits might help a commercial organisation to realise a competitive advantage and improve financial performance. However this is an area where further research is recommended. For example, determining whether a commercial organisation receives a positive financial return on their CSR investment in a community sports trust may

influence whether other commercial organisations engage in a partnership with a community sports trust.

It has also been argued that a partnership between a commercial organisation and a community sports trust can lead to potential benefits for a football club (Walters and Chadwick, 2009). While the creation of a community trust will help to minimise some of the tension that can exist between the commercial and community objectives at a football club (Brown et al, 2006: 24), the development of a commercial partnership can also enhance the profile and reputation of a football club. The increased delivery of community initiatives resulting from the partnership can result in a positive association between a community trust and a football club and have the potential to generate positive publicity at both a local and national level. This in turn will help a football club to build a 'community' brand. Whilst football clubs such as Charlton Athletic and Brentford cannot become global brands and compete with football clubs such as Manchester United, Real Madrid and Barcelona, the community trust model provides a way to develop an alternative brand identity associated with community stakeholders. A final benefit for a football club is the potential development of commercial sponsorship deals. In 2006 the work of the CACT was a critical factor in the decision by Llanera, a family oriented Spanish property company, to sponsor the football club. The sponsorship deal also provided funding for the community trust. This illustrates that a community sports trust has the potential to facilitate the development of a commercial income for a football club.

Despite these potential benefits, the key question remains 'to what extent the community trust model is applicable at other football clubs'? Charlton Athletic Football Club and Brentford Football Club are in many ways atypical professional football clubs. Board members at both football clubs demonstrate a strong commitment to community engagement and there is a clear community ethos running through the operations of each football club. This commitment manifests itself through a strong support of the work of the respective community trust organisations. It could be argued that these factors are a prerequisite for an FITC department looking to convert to an independent community trust and this model might not be as readily applicable at football clubs where there is a more commercial focus.

Nevertheless there are now approximately 40 football clubs from the Premier League and Football League at which an independent community trust exists, including Manchester United, arguably the most commercially developed football club in the world. The Manchester United Foundation is one of the more prominent community trusts and delivers a wide range of social and educational initiatives. Therefore a key factor underpinning the development of the community trust model might be the level of engagement and the strength of the relationship between the football club and the trust. At both Charlton and Brentford the level of engagement between the football club and trust is very strong. However where the relationship is more indicative of an arms-length and disengaged approach and a football club perceives the trust as a way to outsource community work it could potentially limit the development of the trust model. This is certainly an area in which further research is needed.

Conclusion

This paper has used the seven unique features of sport CSR developed by Smith and Westerbeek (2007) as a framework in which to present the results of qualitative case study research involving the Charlton Athletic Community Trust and Brentford Football Club Community Sports Trust. The case studies illustrate that the range of social and community-oriented initiatives that the trusts are involved in can have mass media and distribution power and youth appeal, and have the potential to contribute towards positive health impacts, social interaction, cultural understanding and integration, sustainability awareness and immediate gratification benefits. These seven factors underpin the unique relationship between sport and CSR (Smith and Westerbeek, 2007) and in the context of the growing importance of CSR, it has been argued that managers of commercial organisations should consider developing partnerships with a community trust that can deliver community-oriented sport initiatives to meet their CSR obligations.

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