



**UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE  
FACULTY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT AND  
QUALITY OF LIFE SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS ORGANIZATION  
AND MANAGEMENT**

MASTER'S THESIS

“OLYMPIC STUDIES, OLYMPIC EDUCATION, ORGANIZATION  
AND MANAGEMENT OF OLYMPIC EVENTS”

**- The Culture of Synergetic Branding -  
A Case Study on the affiliation between the  
Maltese Olympic Committee  
and its Stakeholders**

Matthew Azzopardi Meli

**Supervisor:** Prof. Benoît Séguin

Sparta, August 2012



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It was approved by the Advisory Committee on the .....

.....  
Prof. B. Séguin  
PhD

.....  
Prof. K. Mountakis  
PhD

.....  
R. Burton  
MBA

Sparta, August 2012

.....  
Matthew Azzopardi Meli  
Master's Degree Holder of University of Peloponnese

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# **Abstract**

**Matthew Azzopardi Meli**

## **The Culture of Synergetic Branding: A Case Study on the affiliation between the Maltese Olympic Committee and its Stakeholders**

Marketing is generally regarded as the tool which businesses require to help their brand be visible, recognized and distinguished from their competitors. Top-notch brands are determined according to their brand equity. Having a resilient equity requires businesses to be original and able to improvise and create a product which will stand out more than their competitors'. This will sometimes depend on how businesses create alliances and exploit their stakeholders to co-create value and enhance each other's brand equity. This study investigates the importance of relationships created with the various stakeholders of the Maltese Olympic Committee (MOC). It also examines the current equity of the Maltese Olympic brand and understands whether it is taking advantage of the relationships it has with its stakeholders to co-create value. The MOC and a representation of several stakeholders took part in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as a means for data collection. Data collected from this research was collated and analyzed. The findings of this research led to the conclusion that working jointly with the affiliated stakeholders can certainly co-create value. The MOC has a good existing network of stakeholders in place. It is perceived in a positive light and therefore offers great opportunities for its stakeholders. The MOC, must however, find ways and means of utilizing these resources and stakeholders wisely where all parties can work together to co-create value and thus enhance its brand equity.

**M.A. (Olympic Studies)**

**August 2012**

### **Keywords:**

**Branding**

**Co-Creation of Value**

**Maltese Olympic Committee**

**Marketing**

**Stakeholders**

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to thank:

Mr. Joseph Cassar, General Secretary of the Maltese Olympic Committee, for giving me the opportunity to conduct my study within the Committee and also all the participants who participated in this study: without their cooperation I would never have managed to complete my research.

Prof. Benoît Séguin Ph.D., M.Sc. and B.Sc. for his constant support and guidance during the research. I really admire the dedication he puts in the work he does and the passion he has for this subject. I consider myself very privileged to have worked with a person with a vast experience and knowledge in sports marketing.

Peter Mannyx for proof reading my thesis and for the encouragement he gave me. I do not have enough words to thank him for the time spent in editing my thesis.

God for the talents he embellished me with and the grace to participate in various sport disciplines.

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# Chapter 1

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*“Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind.”*

**Walter Landor**  
Brand Designer

## **- Chapter 1 -**

### **Introduction**

Today's society is marked with various types of businesses, where several individuals establish a small venture with the hope to grow and thrive. Their common aim is to make themselves as visible as possible, while offering a guarantee of high quality products. This guarantee and superiority is projected through brands people create. Firm designer Walter Landor once was quoted to say that, "*Products are made in factories, but brands are created in the mind*". Nowadays brands are created before products (Klein, 2000) and they do not only differentiate one company from another, but brands also deliver meanings and highlight various associations through their names and logos. In this day and age every object ranging from man-made technological equipment to natural grown fruit has a name or logo representing the brand, the organization and a set of differentiated promises.

To survive, brands try to make use of original marketing strategies by making themselves visible in order to capture the attention of potential customers and produce a product which reflects their promise. As society continues to develop and companies continue to crop up, the business world is becoming more competitive and difficult to penetrate. Therefore companies join forces and exploit each other's relationship to remain visible and competitive. This is done by using each other's resources to create one unique product which will excel over their respective competitors. This will eventually co-create value and will strengthen each company's image and quality. In fact the concept of branding is very simple; "whether a company is small or large, local or global, B2C or B2B, having a positive reputation for making relevant products that customers value helps ensure competitive success over the long term" (Davies, 2010: 18). In today's world, businesses at all levels require a certain level of strategic marketing in order to stay afloat and be competitive. Besides, having any strong relationships with various partners or stakeholders will be considered an asset.

This research will therefore endeavor to investigate how the Maltese Olympic Committee is distinguished as a brand, what marketing strategies it uses to market its brand and whether it makes use of its stakeholders to co-create value. Moreover, the study will investigate the importance of relationships created with the various stakeholders of the Maltese Olympic Committee (MOC). It also examines the current equity of the Maltese Olympic brand and understands whether it is taking advantage of the relationships it has with its stakeholders to co-create value.

The next chapter will present a review of the main literature related to this study, to better understand branding and marketing concepts. It starts by giving a definition and a clearer idea of what branding is all about, including brand equity. Consequently, the chapter focuses on marketing with special attention given to sport marketing. Afterwards, it presents and describes how the relationship of a company with its various stakeholders can help to co-create value.

Chapter 3 will then delve into the kind of methodology used to gather data. The MOC and a representation of several stakeholders took part in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as a means for data collection. Data collected from this research was collated and analyzed. Chapter 4 will consequently present the results and the analysis obtained from the interviews. The findings of this research will be described in the fifth and final chapter.

The results led to the conclusion that working jointly with the affiliated stakeholders can certainly co-create value. The MOC has a good existing network of stakeholders in place. It is perceived in a positive light and therefore offers great opportunities for its stakeholders. The MOC, must however, find ways and means of utilizing these resources and stakeholders wisely where all parties can work together to co-create value and thus enhance its brand equity.

## Chapter 2

*“To uncover hidden category needs, don’t ask ‘How can I differentiate my brand from its competition?’ but rather ask ‘What are the unmet needs that no brand is addressing?’”*

**Janine Keogh**  
Vice President, Consumer Insight and Strategy, Kraft

## *- Chapter 2 -*

### **Literature Review**

This section presents a theoretical account on how a company can strengthen its brand especially when it creates value among its stakeholders. The aim is to have a clear understanding of how co-creation of value can help a company strengthen its brand in a world where profit, success and good reputation are directly proportional to a company's survival. To do so, it is important to first understand some concepts of branding, marketing and the value which is co-created among key stakeholders, and therefore can help the company to strengthen its own brand.

#### ***2.1 Branding***

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Nowadays, everywhere we go and anything we look at is marked with a brand name or logo. Each product is distinguished not only by the design and colors, but also by who produced the product. In fact a brand is, 'intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors' (Kotler, 1991: 442). A brand therefore consists of: the name of the product (such as Nike), a trademark which refers to a symbol or logo (such as the Nike's swoosh) and also a phrase which typifies the brand (such as Nike's catch phrase 'just do it') (Aaker, 1991 & Healey, 2008). However during the last three decades the concept of branding has become more complex.

Brands are also distinguished by their own personality (Aaker & Fournier, 1995). A brand personality constitutes the character that is the 'inner core' of the brand (Allen & Olsen, 1995). In other words, a brand is given a personality, which means that it adopts a particular behavior followed by concrete actions to reach its goals and targets (ibid.). Through various marketing strategies such as advertizing, the consumers will not only understand and identify logos and names but also identify a brand by its actions (ibid.).

For example, Adidas build upon the idea that the brand's personality should be trustworthy. It therefore focuses on family expertise, performance, and being authentic and stylish. The

Nike Company, although it's also a sporting brand, has a different personality. It focuses on being cool, exciting, provocative, innovative and pursuing excellence (Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2005; Arora & Stoner, 2009).

In other words, branding is a process through which a company is trying its best to deliver a service, a promise and meaning to its customers (Healey, 2008). Consequently, this idea of brand personality leads to the concept of brand equity and hence brand loyalty.

In this ever-changing and fast living lifestyle, people do not have time to compare similar products and come with a firm decision regarding what product to purchase. Therefore, brands have to transmit messages of assurance that their product is trustworthy (Kapferer, 2008). To do so, marketers create brand strategies, services and associations which help customers differentiate one product from the other and ultimately help them develop a relationship with the product. This concept is interlinked with brand equity.

“On face value, brand equity is a relatively simple concept: the added value, or equity, that a certain product has by the virtue of its brand name. Coca-Cola, Disney, and ESPN are good examples. Put their name or image on a product and it is worth more than a generic product of similar quality” (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007: 169). Klein (2000), argues that in this day and age successful corporations are more focused on developing the brand first rather than the products themselves. Leuthesser (1988) states that brand equity involves a set of associations and behaviors focused towards the brand's customers, channel members and parent corporations with faith in the brand involved to earn greater quantity than it could without the brand name.

Keller referred to brand equity as customer-based brand equity and defined it as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993: 2). He breaks down brand equity to brand awareness which refers to the recall and recognition of a brand and brand image which refers to the strengths, uniqueness and favorability of the brand associations (Till et al, 2011). Customer-based brand equity is based on the customers' idea, judgment or knowledge and not through objective indicators (Lassar et al, 1995). Brand equity is also characterized by the assets and liabilities the brand possesses which are associated with the name and symbol which add or subtract to the

value which can either be a product or service the brand is offering to its customers (Aaker, 1991).

Assets refer to those resources which strengthen the brand over time and liabilities refer to those associations which weaken the brand's reputation (Kapferer, 2008). The concept of brand equity is built upon five main categories including; name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand associations and proprietary assets (Aaker, 1991). These five categories have an effect on the brand which can improve or/and deteriorate the brand.

Name awareness plays an important role in brand equity. It refers to the strength of the brand's presence in the consumers' minds (Aaker, 1991). Name awareness is believed to be a stepping stone to build strong brand equity. The brand's name helps to imprint perceptions, associations and loyalty in the minds of customers (Pappu & Quester, 2006). Throughout the 1980s, Nissan had to spend millions of dollars in advertizing due to the name change from Datsun to Nissan (Aaker & Biel, 1993). Their market share fell from 5.9% to 4.5% in two years because of this name change (ibid.). From a positive perspective football teams such as Real Madrid, Manchester United and AC Milan have, over the last two decades, increased their name awareness by acquiring well-known professional football players such as, Zinedine Zidane, Cristiano Ronaldo, David Beckham and Ronaldhino (Ferrand & Torrigiani, 2005). Having such prominent athletes playing with these teams strengthens the perceived qualities of the brand in the minds of customers.

Perceived quality refers to the significance customers give to the benefits and associations with the brand (Park & Srinivasan, 1994). This means that in their minds, customers build a certain idea of the product. For example in team sports, perceived quality is determined by the amount of wins and losses a team acquires (Milne & McDonald, 1999). If a team produces positive results throughout the whole season the perceived quality of the team (the brand) will be positive. Sometimes products use celebrities to market their brand because the perceived image of the celebrity is associated and reflected on the brand (Akturan, 2011). For example, if one thinks about golf, one would associate it with Tiger Woods and the latter might also be associated with Nike. On the other hand, the negative publicity can have the reverse effect. For example, when Tiger Woods admitted of having numerous extramarital affairs a few years ago, the brand was negatively impacted. While Nike



decided to continue its relationship with Tiger Woods, a number of long time sponsors decided to terminate their contracts.

Perceived quality is also judged but other factors. Aspects such as pricing (where pricing suggests quality), how the product is presented (with attractive packaging) and extensive advertizing campaigns (how well known the product is) are just but few examples of how quality can be perceived in the eyes of customers (Thompson et al, 2005). For example, Apple computers are known to have a good perceived quality and this is seen through its expensive products (when compared to other computer brands), original, high quality design and packaging as well as the extensive but also very original and attractive advertisements. Having a good perceived quality, Mac customers build up a brand loyalty for the Apple brand (Kumar, 2008).

Brand loyalty plays an important role in strengthening the brand's name. It is the capability to attract customers and keep faithful to the brand (Aaker, 1991). For example the Japanese are very loyal to Japanese brands such as motor vehicles e.g. Toyota and electronics such as Panasonic (Thompson et al, 2005). Having high brand loyalty means that companies invest a huge amount of money to establish brand recognition through promotions and advertizing, persuading customers that it's worth switching brand (ibid.). Companies have to attract new customers as well as encouraging their own consumers to remain loyal (ibid.). Retaining and attracting new customers are not only affected by a company's marketing strategies, but also by the brand associations with which it is linked.

Brand associations refer to the various meanings which surround a brand (Keller, 1993). It is the groundwork of brand value because brand associations differentiate one brand from another and they also create meaning to brands (Till et al, 2011). Associations might vary and include thoughts, perceptions, images, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and feelings related with the brand which ultimately helps the customer remember the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2006). In fact, Aaker referred to brand associations as the, "heart and the soul of the brand" (Aaker, 1996: 8) which is "anything linked in memory to a brand" (Aaker, 1991: 109). Brand associations help the consumers to differentiate brands and if they have a positive associations towards a brand, customers are more likely to buy one of the brand's products (Aaker, 1991). For example the Swedish automobile company Volvo is very often

associated with intellect and safety (Bayley, 1986), while Toyota is usually associated with reliability and Mercedes-Benz with prestige and quality (Keller, 2009).

Keller (1993) argues that brand associations are distinguished in three different ways being, strength, favorability and uniqueness. Strength refers to the, "intensity of the connection between the association and the brand node" (Till et al, 2001: 93). The associative network models state that the knowledge stored in our minds is retrieved through a process of nodes connected by links which are strengthened whenever two incidents co-occur (Van Osselaer and Janiszewski, 2001). Therefore when information is recalled and consequently one node is activated, it will eventually activate other linked nodes and recall occurs (Keller, 1993). Hence, the more associations a brand is linked to and the stronger the associations, the faster will be the ability to reactivate the information stored in the memory (Moreau & Parguel, 2011; Till et al, 2011). For example, in a study, the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team was viewed by customers as having strong associations with excellence, respect, masculinity, teamwork, commitment, tradition and humility (Motion et al 2003).

In fact, some authors (Henderson et al, 1998; Till et al, 2011) state that a brand is usually associated with a number of associations and not just one. This means that a brand is usually associated with various qualities. The number of associations is usually relevant to the brand's identity. Relevance is characterized by how consumers view the association as valuable, meaningful and significant to the point that the associations made on the product will be the decisive driving element which will motivate customers to purchase the brand's product (Campbell, 2002; Till et al, 2011). Consequently, some brand associations are more relevant and predominant to customers than others. Carvin is usually associated with guitars, but this association is not motivating enough to buy the product. However, musicians easily link Carvin with a more relevant association that is, guitars are custom made and produced and manufactured in the USA. For musicians, the place where the instrument is produced and manufactured is significant and may be the decisive element to whether or not they commit themselves to buying the product.

All brands are usually associated with positive and/or negative attributes. Favorability refers to how positive the associations are related to the brand (Keller, 1993). In fact a good marketing program is said to be successful on the basis of how marketers are able to

convince consumers that the brand's product has plenty of benefits which meet the consumers' needs and thus transmit positive connotations (ibid.). Favorability is at the foundation of brand equity and in order for brands to be successful they ought to work and build positive associations which will lead to high levels of brand equity (Dacin & Smith; 1994 & Krishnan, 1996).

Uniqueness is a fundamental attribute to distinguish a brand from other brands (Keller, 2003). It helps the brand to be conspicuous and different from other brands in the same product category (Till et al, 2011). Although many associations may be linked to various brands in the same product category, uniqueness helps the brand to differentiate the brand from the rest (ibid.). This differentiation will strategically allow the brand to be in a competitive advantage over other brands (Lu et al, 2008). For example, if a person wants to buy a good car, various brands will come to mind. However if s/he wants a safe and prestigious car the choice of cars will be limited to a small sector of brands. This concept of uniqueness leads to the idea of proprietary assets.

Aaker (1996) describes proprietary assets as being those possessions such as patents or trademarks which distinguish one brand from another. For instance, the Olympic brand is distinguished as having several proprietary assets which makes the Olympic Games unique from any other mega sport event in the world. These proprietary assets include; the Olympic Rings, the torch relay, Olympic flame ceremony, medal ceremony, etc. Consequently, these assets add value to the brand and thus giving it a competitive advantage over other brands (ibid.). Having unique proprietary assets will ultimately help in the positioning of the brand.

Positioning is usually referred to as how consumers perceive and think about the brands' presentation in the market (Perreault & McCarthy, 1999). Through various strategies, marketing managers use various associations to differentiate their brand from their competitors, with the intention of giving their brand a competitive advantage in their brand category (Gwin & Gwin, 2003; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). However creating a successful positioning strategy is not an easy task because a brand has to know how it is perceived in relation with other brands in their own product category (ibid.). Successful brand positioning are those which: create a distinctive image in the consumers' minds, are

oriented towards a customer-focused value proposition and have a clear reason why consumers are buying the product concerned (Kotler, 2003).

To better understand the concept of brand positioning a distinction should be made among intended, actual and perceived positioning (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010). Intended positioning is how the company wants its brand to be viewed and distinguished by its customers. Companies seek to identify a position where they can gain the, “highest utility for customers, touching the largest or most profitable customer segment, or being well differentiated from competitors” (Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010: 1765). Actual positioning refers to execution of the intended positioning and it is done through various marketing strategies such as advertizing and sponsorship (Papadimitriou et al 2008; Fuchs & Diamantopoulos, 2010). For example, through creative elements and messages of adverts, customers are directed towards the positioning of the brand (Easingwood & Mahajan, 1989). When an advert is created, customers will see the advert and perceived ideas will start to be implanted in the consumers’ minds. This is where perceived positioning comes into play. Customers start to obtain certain beliefs, feelings, thoughts and impressions about the brand and will start to compare them with the other brands (Ellson, 2004). To better understand the idea of brand positioning, the case of Puma will be taken as an example.

Puma is one of those sport brands which regained popularity thanks to its brand positioning (Thompson et al, 2005). Back in the 1980s Puma had developed a bad reputation and no one wanted to buy the black jumping cat. Puma’s philosophy always was to communicate fun and how unique it is to participate in sport using Puma apparel. To transmit enjoyment and uniqueness Puma had to reposition itself and use certain marketing strategies to execute these ideas. In order to transmit this philosophy, Puma sponsored Jamaican athletes. Although Jamaicans always played the role of underdogs, they were loved by spectators (ibid.). Jamaicans were always associated with sunshine, joy of living and as having an athletic spirit and were never expected to win any major competition such as a winter sport like bobsled. In other words, Jamaican athletes were always seen as different from other athletes and this is what Puma wanted (ibid.). Similarly, Puma also sponsors some of Africa’s best national football teams such as Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Ghana, which

follow the same story line of the Jamaican athletes. In 2000 Christy Turlington, model and yoga fan, created her own collection of Puma also known as Nuala (ibid.). By 2003 Puma's popularity rose so much that its products were exposed and positioned near luxuries brands such as Gucci and Prada and famous singer Madonna started to wear Puma without any extra cost (Thompson et al, 2005; First, 2009). Moreover during the last years Puma also positioned itself in the motor sport, by providing sport equipment to major sport teams such as Toyota and Ferrari (Thompson et al 2005). This idea of pairing with celebrities and well-established car brands is a strategy used by marketing managers known as co-branding.

There are various terms which are associated with co-branding and used interchangeably such as brand alliance and composite branding (Leuthesser et al, 2002). Co-branding refers to the merging or combination of two or more product brands to produce one single and unique product or service (Levin et al, 1996; Washburn et al, 2000). This strategy is used to introduce new products or services in the market using two brands (Leuthesser et al, 2002). There are various examples of brands which united their forces to produce a single and unique product. Adidas for example joined forces with the tire company Good Year and produced casual shoes, where the rubber outsoles of the shoes resemble a car tire. Adidas used this strategy to enter in the motorized sport marketing arena to compete with Puma. Staying in the motorized sport sector, Adidas co-branded with Porsche to produce fashion motor sport products, which in contrast to other Adidas products are slightly more expensive, thus attracting the more elite sector.

Usually co-branding is built on long-term relationship agreements, the main aim being to increase the market exposure in areas not usually associated with the brands (Washburn et al, 2000). However one question arises in this scenario that is, if two brands join forces to produce one unique product then who owns the product? In such situations there is usually the primary brand which controls the secondary brand (Leuthesser et al, 2002). What happens is that secondary brands usually act as suppliers or licensors and the primary brand would own the co-branded product (ibid.). However in the retail industry, for example, brands form a parallel relationship where profit is shared (ibid.).

As noted from the examples above co-branding gives the possibility for both brands to extend and widen their market. This brand extension will ultimately have an effect on brand equity of both brands. As mentioned earlier brand names are very important and customers will first evaluate the new co-branded product based on how customers view the two brands and if both brands have strong brand equity the sum will be greater than the parts (Rao & Ruekert, 1994). When co-branding takes place, the brand equity of some brands might be affected. In a study conducted by Washburn (et al 2000), it was found that brands with low brand equity tend to gain more from this alliance, while powerful and high equity brands are not affected by low equity brands. Therefore it seems like co-branding offers a win-win situation for both brands although low equity brands may end up gaining more from such alliances (ibid.). To put the concept of brand equity into the context of this research, the equity of Olympic brand will be examined.

The Olympic brand is known to have strong brand equity (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2007). Initially it is because of its name awareness. The Olympic Games or even the logo which depicts the five interconnected rings are very familiar to a large number of consumers worldwide. In fact, in a research which was conducted in 12 countries, 92% - 98% of the people taking part in the study recognized the Olympic rings (IOC, 2008a). Not only the Olympic brand is recognized, but it is also associated with positive attributes. In another study which was also conducted by the IOC (2006), revealed that consumers associate the Olympic brand with a vast range of positive associations and attributes such as; excellence, peace, unity, celebration and pride just to mention some. Although in the past years doping has become one of the biggest threats of the Olympics, the IOC has counterattacked this issue by establishing the World Anti-Doping Agency to protect not only its Olympic values but also its affiliated stakeholders such as sponsors (O'Reilly & Séguin, 2007; Séguin et al, 2008).

Perceived quality is another concept associated with brand equity and one which the Olympic brand has worked on, especially in the last decades, where the Olympic Games shifted from an amateur competition to a professional event. Having the best athletes participating in various sport disciplines highlights the Olympic Games as the best multidisciplinary event taking place in the world. Moreover, having Olympic symbols such

as the lighting of the flame, the torch relay and the athletes' oath allow the Olympic Games to be perceived as more than just a sporting event (Séguin et al, 2008). All these symbols and values have been recognized by various peoples around the world and hence contributed to create a unity and universality among all the nations on a global basis (ibid.).

Loyalty to the brand has also contributed to the strengthening of the Olympic brand's equity. In Sydney 2000 the viewership rate attracted 3.6 billion viewers in total and Athens 2004 increased to 3.9 billion viewers (Goldsmith, 2008). During Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, about one billion people around the world stood still to watch the opening ceremony organized by the Chinese Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (ibid.). Spectators are loyal and enthusiastic to watch the Olympic Games on global proportions. The sponsors' loyalty is displayed when year in and year out they invest millions of dollars in the Olympic brand. The Coca Cola company for instance has been loyal to the Olympic Movement by supporting the Games since 1928 (IOC, 2012). Even the Swatch Company, with the exception of three editions has been providing its timing services since Los Angeles 1932 (ibid.). One of the main reasons why companies such as the Coca Cola Company remained faithful and loyal to the Olympic brand is because it uses this relationship as a marketing strategy to market its brand which in turn is another tool which reinforces the company's own brand equity.

## ***2.2 Marketing***

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In 1985 the American Marketing Association defined marketing as, "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives" (American Marketing Association, 1985: 1). Marketing therefore involves the blending together of product, promotion, price and place, also known as the marketing mix or 4 Ps (McCarthy, 1960). In other words marketing strategy involves the understanding of what product is to be marketed, how it is going to be promoted, at what price it is going to be sold and also the place where it is going to be available for customers.

Through the marketing mix, and a well-designed marketing strategy, brands are activated. Brand activation is bringing the brand to life and this is done by using specific operations to act as catalysts to activate and promote the brand's image (Ferrand & Torrigiani, 2005). Advertising, publicity, sales promotion, personal selling and sponsorship, are all examples of marketing strategies which add value, "in a variety of ways together with participation, interaction and spectacle – key elements to a successful brand activation" (Anderton, 2011: 154).

Developing a marketing strategy is a dynamic process where marketing managers have to study and research the target market and by understanding the needs and wants of consumers, utilize the marketing mix to satisfy the customers' requirements (Rosenbloom & Dimitrova, 2011; Kotler, 1991). This defines the idea of marketing as a process of human activity which is directed at satisfying the customers' requirements through exchange processes. The latter, "is the act of obtaining a desired object from someone by offering something in return" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001: 11).

Sport marketing, for instance, is designed to meet the needs and wants of sport enthusiasts through exchange processes (Mullin et al, 2007). For example, in the 1990s soccer enthusiasts wanted to have a shoe which was able to strike a football and give it a certain spin. For this reason Adidas had developed and marketed the Predator soccer shoes, which are designed to give a certain spin to the ball making it easier for soccer amateurs to perform the same move. Sport marketing involves not only the marketing of sport products but also non-sports related products associated with sport (Shank, 2005). Gillette is a case in point. Shaving blades and foam have nothing to do with sporting apparel. Nevertheless, the brand uses sports and famous sport athletes, such as soccer players Thierry Henry and David Beckham, to market its brand.

The reason why many brands market their product through sport is that, contrary to other sectors such as international exhibitions and music and drama festivals, the sport arena offers emotions, passion and a unique experience which the consumer is attached to and the product (sport game) is consumed instantly (Holbrook, 1999). Marketing and selling a product in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become a more difficult task than before where only two or



three brands where competing against each other. Nowadays there are many brands competing in the same product category. In 2007 the American Marketing Association revisited the definition of marketing by stating that, “marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2007: 1). This means that marketing is not only a process of exchange but involves a good relationship with stakeholders such as consumers and other business corporations.

### ***2.3 Stakeholders***

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In today's society, where businesses are competing against each other to survive, they have to adopt certain strategies which will help them stay afloat and remain competitive. To do so, various companies are joining forces with the intention that this relationship will help companies and organizations reinforce their brand equity. Through stakeholders and relationship marketing, corporate organizations will eventually co-create value and strengthen their brand becoming even more recognized and competitive (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Merz et al, 2009).

To better understand the idea of stakeholders the Olympic Games will be used as an example. Staging a mega sporting event such as the Olympic Games requires the backing of numerous stakeholders to ensure its success. According to Carroll (1993) stakeholders are those individuals or groups of people with whom the organizers of the event relate and thus have an effect on the, “actions, decisions, policies, practices or goals of the organization” (cited from Merrilees et al, 2005: 1063). Freeman defines stakeholders as, “groups or individual who can affect or are affected by the achievement of an organization’s purpose” (Freeman, 1984: 25). Stakeholders have an influential effect on the organization and will definitely have an effect on its performance (ibid.). Interdependencies between the organization and each stakeholder will emerge (Merrilees et al, 2005; Hede, 2008). This means that both the stakeholders and the organization will depend on each other in order for the event to succeed: a ‘give and take’ relationship will be created.

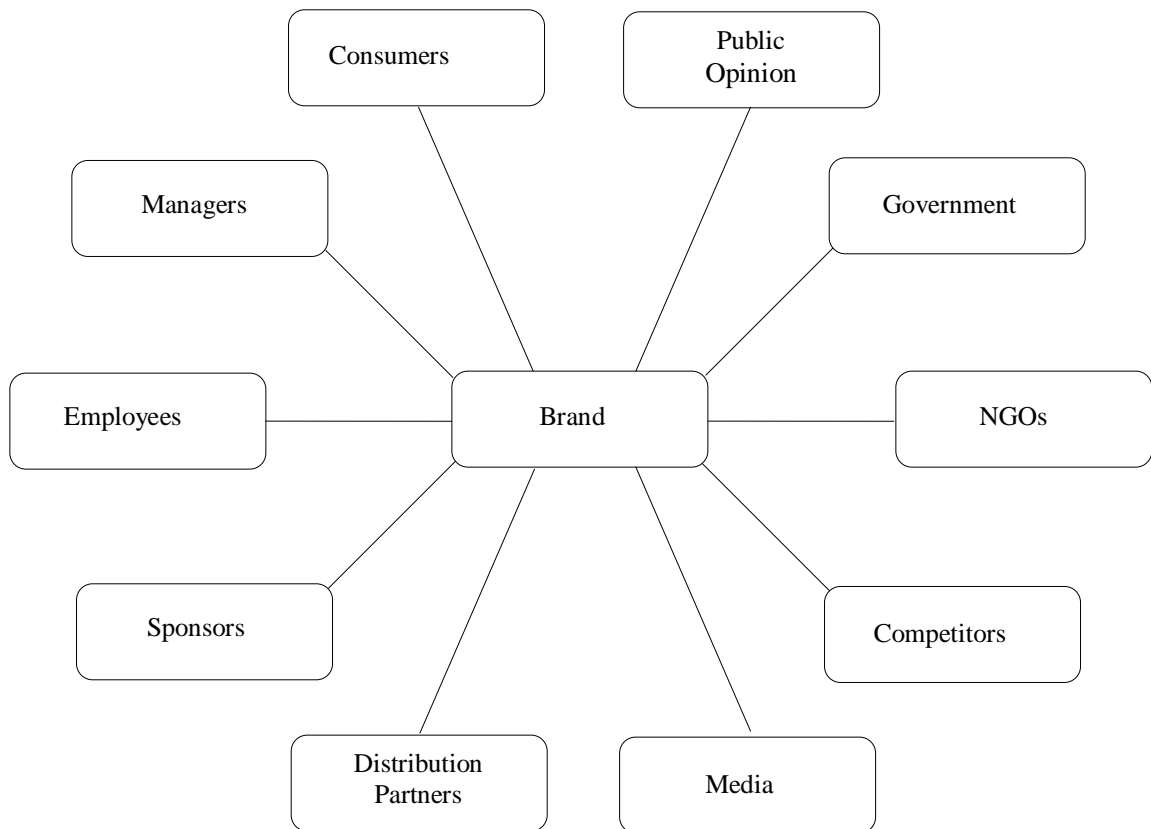
A mega event like the Olympic Games draws stakeholders from far afield; be it for profit, pleasure or community impact. Freeman (cited from Merrilees et al, 2005) argues that for an organization to function and develop a strategic planning process, stakeholders have to be identified. He proposed a four-step stakeholder management process:

Step 1: Identifying stakeholders - to seek those individuals or groups of people who will be linked with the event.

Step 2: Distinguishing the purpose of the stakeholders in relation with the mega event.

Step 3: To examine how and whether the requirements and prospects of the stakeholders are attained by the organization.

Step 4: To examine how to alter the event's plans in order to meet the needs of the stakeholders.



**Figure 2.1:** Daisywheel model of Stakeholders affiliated with a brand (Jones, 2005: p.50)

Figure 2.1 above shows those stakeholders which are usually affiliated with a brand. In the case of a sport brand such as a National Olympic Committee, stakeholders would include; athletes, sport federations, government, local municipalities, media, sponsors, coaches, suppliers, employees, volunteers and spectators. Moreover, Clarkson (1995) points out that there are two kinds of stakeholders; primary and secondary. The former are those stakeholders which are imperative and without them, the organization cannot function. Secondary stakeholders, though they are important and have an effect on the organization, are not considered to be crucial because they are not directly connected with the company's transactions (ibid.). Besides identifying different types of stakeholders and their relationship with the organization, it is also essential to identify their own interests and what their purpose is in being part of the organization (ibid.).

Hede (2008) identified economic, social and environmental interests as the main benefits or objectives as the reason stakeholders want to be part of a mega event such as the Olympic Games. A large number of stakeholders focus on the economic interest which they seek out of the mega event (ibid.). Mules & Faulkner (1996) state that stakeholders, in order to measure their profit or loss, focus on the financial effects that a special event like the Olympic Games can have on them. Stakeholders who seek social benefits are those who are interested in the community or the social interactions and/or effects the event will have on the local community (ibid.). In some studies conducted by Fredline and Faulkner (2000) and Wood (2002) it was established that a sense of pride among the local community was being created when a special event took place in their area. There are also some stakeholders who are interested in the environmental aspects of the event. This means that stakeholders are interested in the environmental effects that the special event will have on the area where the event is going to take place. Most of the mega events for instance create more pollution and traffic as well as increased security which will eventually have an effect on the local community (Hede, 2008).

For example during the staging of the Olympic Games, primary stakeholders would include the media, sponsors, athletes, volunteers and employees, Ministry of Education, International Sport Federations, International Olympic Committee and Municipal Authorities. Each stakeholder would have its own agenda. For instance, sponsors might

have economic and environmental interests at stake where their involvement lay in the 'Return On Investment' (ROI) measured in terms of purchases objectives and ensuring 'environmental friendly' events by promoting products which do not harm the environment (ibid.). Apart from the primary stakeholders there are the secondary stakeholders who are affected by or can affect the action to some degree: these include tourists, the general public, television viewers, schools, sporting clubs and so on. Although they are not an integral part of the financial or economic exchanges, they are still a necessary cog in the big wheel. President of the IOC Jacques Rogge remarked that, "Without the support of the business community, without its technology, expertise, people, services, products, telecommunications, its financing – the Olympic Games could not and would not happen. Without this support, the athletes cannot compete and achieve their very best in the world's greatest sporting event." (IOC, 2008b: 38).

In sport, sponsors are probably the most visible form of stakeholders easily identified at facilities, events and on sport teams' apparel just to mention a few. For many, sponsorship is seen as a strategic investment to build competitive advantage which will help the sponsors associate with the event and exploit this association for commercial ends (Amis et al., 1999; Meenaghan and Shipley, 1999). However, Blackett and Boad (1999) made a clear distinction between sponsorship, which is distinguished as a simple exchange transaction (where money is exchanged for image or reputation enhancement) and sponsorship as a co-branding relationship. The latter is perceived more as a partnership, where value is extracted from this relationship and use sponsorship as, "the basis for the construction of a co-branded identity that not only adds value to existing brands, but is also itself a source of value" (Motion et al, 2003: 1083). Co-branding must be based on a long-term relationship rather than a one off exchange process where the sponsored entity and the sponsor become involved in a symbiotic relationship; through various activities, values are shared and the birth of a new corporate co-branded relationship is established (ibid.). Apart from a long term agreement, a good relationship is developed when the brand and its stakeholders are mutually benefiting from the value exchange which is taking place (Bhattacharya and Bolton 2000; Christopher et al, 2002).

For example, the main reason why in 1997 the New Zealand All Blacks changed their main sponsor Canterbury (a New Zealand based apparel which had been sponsoring the team since 1905) to Adidas (a German based multinational company), is that Adidas not only offered a financial deal, but also a sturdy co-branding relationship which opened the gates for the New Zealand Rugby Team into the global market, making the All Blacks brand financially stronger and renowned (Motion et al, 2003). Even Adidas, on the other hand, gained from this situation. Having the support of one of the major rugby teams in the world, the All Blacks, helped Adidas expand in the rugby arena by promoting and selling more rugby attire and shoes. Building a good relationship with existing stakeholders can only help any particular brand to be successful and this existing relationship will eventually co-create value.

## ***2.4 Co-Creation of Value***

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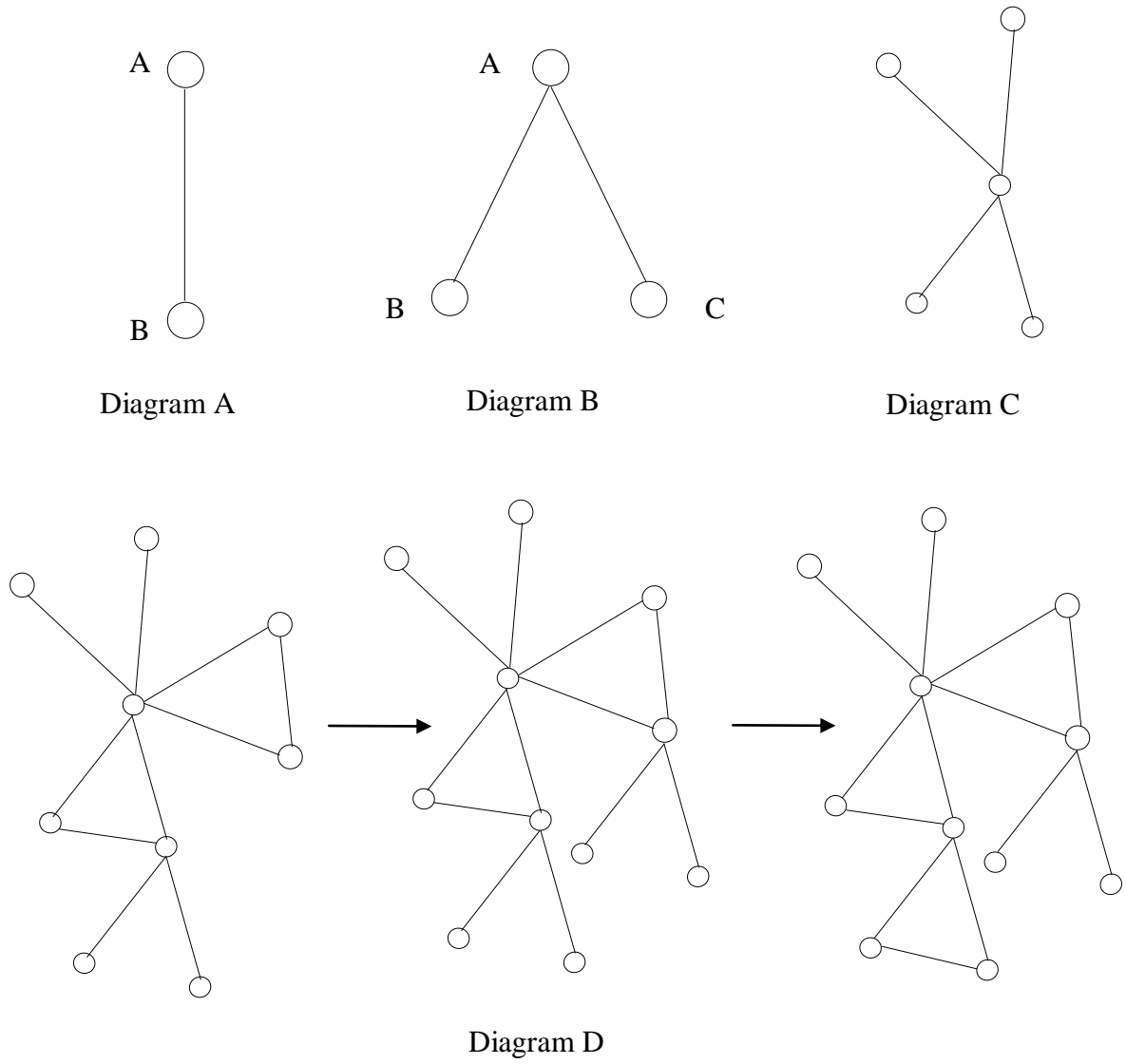
Initially marketing was based on the idea that value was established on the exchange of tangible objects or ‘goods’, which is referred to as the dominant logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). However, throughout the last years the idea of service dominant (S-D) logic appeared to be another source of exchange (ibid.). S-D logic is based on the idea that exchange is centered on services such as intangible resources, relationships and the co-creation of value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Frow & Payne, 2011; Vargo, 2011; Lusch & Vargo, 2011). Intangible resources involve the exchange of skills, information and knowledge among two or more stakeholders which will add value to the product (Vargo, 2004; Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Moreover, the S-D logic proposes that co-creation of value is created through a range of multiple stakeholders, which will eventually empower the brand’s own equity (Jones, 2005; Frow & Payne, 2011).

Here a distinction should be made between value creation and co-creation of value. The former consists of a brand which through its products and services creates value and this value is exchanged with its customers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Co-creation of value on the other hand is perceived as the brand, together with its affiliated stakeholders, working together and jointly co-creating value (ibid.). Value co-creation is said to be

achieved within a multiple network of stakeholders rather than a single actor where services are exchanged multilaterally because relationships are created on different levels and contexts (Nenonen & Storbacka, 2010; Chandler & Vargo, 2011). In fact, Chandler and Vargo (2011) identified four levels of context where exchange takes place referred to as the rethinking concept.

The first level is referred to as the Micro level (Figure 2.4 Diagram A) where exchange takes place between two individual actors or dyads. In this level two actors are present and a service for service exchange is present having both actors sharing their competencies and resources (ibid.). Both actors are serving each other and therefore exchange is reciprocal, for example, a sponsor (actor B) supplies equipment to a sport association (actor A) and in return the association offers exclusivity.

At the Meso level (Figure 2.4 Diagram B), exchange here still takes place between two actors/dyads where actor 'A' is serving actor 'B' and 'C' separately/independently. In other words there are three actors (a triad) where actors 'B' and 'C' are connected through 'A'. However the difference here relies on the indirect exchange of service-for-service which takes place between 'B' and 'C' through 'A' (ibid.). Following the example above, the sport association (A) is offering a service both to the sponsor (B) and its athletes (C). The sponsor is providing equipment to the sport association and indirectly the athletes are benefiting from the equipment obtained from the sponsors. On the other side of the coin, by using the equipment supplied by the sponsor, the athletes are promoting the sponsor's equipment and indirectly offering a service to the sponsor.



**Figure 2.4: Rethinking Concept**  
 (Chandler & Vargo, 2011: p. 43)

The third context identified by Chandler and Vargo (2011) is referred to as the Macro level (Figure 2.4 Diagram C) where it involves a multiple simultaneous network of direct and indirect service-for-service exchanges among triads. It involves a more complex network where dyads and triads exchange resources and competencies and work in synergy together, which is ultimately one of the core concepts of co-creation of value. For example, a sport association organizes a mega event and gives rights to some TV channels to

broadcast the event. By doing so, the media is accommodating the audience's needs and also indirectly promoting and advertizing the main sponsors of the event through its broadcast.

Meta-layer is the fourth and last level which according to Giddens (1979) also involves time and replication. This means that at this level, a multi-dimensional network is created and there is a development among dyads, triads and complex networks where exchanges take place over time, across various levels of contexts and through replication (Chandler & Vargo, 2011). When various actors/stakeholders simultaneously work together, over a period of time using and exchanging resources, value is co-created. Meta-layer is also referred to as a service ecosystem covering all areas of service-for-service exchanges.

The FIFA World Cup tournament and its multiple networks of actors or stakeholders, including spectators, sponsors, athletes and the media can be used as an example of the meta-layer. Staging the FIFA World Cup takes several years where agreements among stakeholders are reached to offer the best football tournament. Gaining a very popular reputation over a period of 80 years, the FIFA World Cup attracts a large number of spectators who visit the host country, which indirectly help the country's economy and directly creates an emotional, symbolic and cultural experience in stadiums, making the FIFA World Cup unique from all other football tournaments. The high quality football matches, having top notch football athletes taking part, attract various sponsors which in return support the tournament by providing financial aid and value in kind, which help FIFA deliver a more professional service to both athletes and spectators.

Other stakeholders such as: the national football federations and the local government hosting the tournament, employees who help create intangible resources such as organized events planning and logistics and volunteers who create a welcoming atmosphere and high quality customer service contribute to the co-creation of value of the brand FIFA. In other words, in value co-creation various actors are simultaneously building up value for the product (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Value co-creation is a process where stakeholders work hand in hand and by sharing their tangible and intangible resources co-create value, making the brand more established and boost its brand equity (Jones, 2005).



## ***2.5 Purpose of this Study***

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In order for a brand to remain competitive, companies must work and develop strong brand equity. Through marketing strategies and planned activation processes, brands strengthen their identity, become more renowned resulting in customers wanting to associate themselves with the brand. Moreover, by building strong long-term relationships with affiliated stakeholders, brands can co-create value and through this mutual exchange can empower the brand's equity.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the strategies used by the Maltese Olympic Committee (MOC) (Appendix 1 (iv)) to market its brand. The study also examines whether the MOC is taking advantage of its stakeholders to co-create value and thus strengthen its brand equity. Finally, this study explores the brand's activation processes and how the MOC may improve its brand equity and be a stronger brand in and also outside the Maltese shores.

## Chapter 3

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*“Ordinary people can spread good and bad information about brands faster than marketers”.*

Ray Johnson  
Collagist

*- Chapter 3 -*  
**Methodology**

In order to have a clear understanding of whether the Maltese Olympic Committee is marketing its brand through relationships built by its stakeholders, a case study was used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the task at hand. In marketing management, a case study is a technique used which bridges the gap between marketing theory and practical situations (Brennan, 2009). It is an excellent tool used to analyze and connect the theoretical marketing framework, written by researchers, with the practical marketing decision making carried out by marketing managers (ibid.).

### ***3.1 Case Study Research Design***

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A case study can be defined as, “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units” (Gerring, 2004: 342). In other words the purpose of a case study is to examine a phenomenon (a single unit) through the sample population which will be made up of several studied cases (larger class of units) (ibid.).

Case studies take a qualitative perspective which means that it provides an in-depth account of the phenomenon being studied (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Berg (2007) defines qualitative research as a process of investigation that seeks to arrive at an understanding of social reality using one of a number of distinct methodological traditions of inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as research that tries to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena by understanding the meanings that people ascribe. In fact, qualitative research is further recognized through analysis that does not convert data to a numerical format (Walcott, 2001) but instead relies on analysis of words, detailed reports of participants' views and the presentation of a complex and holistic picture. Hence, it gives a richer, more vital and greater depth to the research being conducted and is more likely to present a clearer and truer picture of what is being studied than quantitative research (data

in a numerical statistical form) (ibid.). Unlike quantitative research, conducting a qualitative study usually involves a small sample of the whole population.

In order to conduct a credible case study the fundamental challenge to the researcher is to select suitable case studies which reflect his/her ultimate goal. Like other data collecting techniques, sampling is an important variable to take into consideration because it has to be representative of the whole sample and must also be based on the dimensions of the theoretical framework (Seawright & Gerring, 2008.). For the purpose of this research, a stakeholder approach was used to generate the sample needed. Therefore a total of nine stakeholders were identified, together with the Maltese Olympic Committee at the core of the stakeholder model (discussed in the previous chapter) totaling ten main categories.

The stakeholders which took part in this study included; the national sport associations/federations, government, local councils (Appendix 1 (ii)), athletes, media, sponsors, volunteers, employees and spectators. Two entities from each stakeholder group were randomly chosen to take part in this case study, along with one each from the government and the MOC making a total of eighteen. This cross section made the study more reliable as it reflected all the stakeholders linked to the MOC and therefore it gave a wide representation of the whole population. For the purpose of this research, interviews were the basic method used to gather data and form conclusions.

### ***3.2 Interviews***

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A total of eighteen interviews took place. All stakeholders participating in this study were assured of complete confidentiality in order to be able to express themselves as they wished.

The interview questions were formulated both in Maltese and English and before the interview the respondents were told that the research was going to be about marketing and branding of the Maltese Olympic Committee. Respondents were given the option to speak in their preferred language which was either Maltese or English. The questions were open ended and the interviews took a semi-structured approach. The advantage of semi-

structured interviews is that they contain both elements of unstructured and structured interviews (Jorgensen et al, 1997). The former are non-directive and the interviewee can open the subject on what he or she wants because the questions are open-ended (ibid.). On the other hand, structured interviews are more directive and the interviewee has less room to open an argument (ibid.).

The questions for the interview were based on the literature review. Through the interviews the researcher acquired a better understanding of whether the relationships built with stakeholders help the brand (in this case the MOC) to co-create value. Although much attention was given to keep the questions the same for all stakeholders, some of the questions were tailored differently when interviewing the Maltese Olympic Committee and spectators. Some of the questions directed at the MOC have been altered in order to have a clearer picture of the relationships they built with their relevant stakeholders. The same thing was done when conducting the interviews with the spectators. The questions asked of the spectators were specifically designed to help the researcher get a better understanding of how the spectators (the main consumers of the MOC) perceive the Maltese Olympic brand. In fact three sets of similar interview questions were constructed; one for all stakeholders (Appendix 2), one for the Maltese Olympic Committee (Appendix 3) and another for the spectators (Appendix 4). The three sets of questionnaires were structured in three sections; A, B and C:

Section A: Focused on ‘relationship’ related questions.

Section B: Questions in this section were the same for all respondents focusing more on ‘branding of the MOC’.

Section C: Questions here were tailored according to the stakeholders taking part in the research.

Prior to the interviews a pilot study was carried out to determine the effectiveness of the interview questions. It is a preliminary study which is usually conducted prior to the main research in order to check the feasibility of the research design (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). A total number of three interviews were conducted; to a member of the Maltese Olympic Committee, another interview with a member forming part of the stakeholders

group and the last pilot study was conducted on a spectator. After the pilot study, some English technical words such as 'brand', 'stakeholders' and other words were not translated to Maltese as the respondents were more familiar with the English word. Some questions were simplified because they were still unclear. Moreover, some technical words were presented in layman terms so that the respondents would better understand the technical words and ultimately the questions asked. For example, the word 'stakeholders' was also referred to as members or partners.

When using semi-structured interviews as a tool to collect and collate data, it helps the researcher make his or her research more valid as interviews help to explore the phenomenon in great depth and flexibility in the process of inquiry (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Another advantage with interviews is that having a one-to-one encounter helps to create a relationship where questions can still be explained and explored deeper. Consequently, respondents surely understand the question and give a more valid answer (Hannabuss, 1996). Although a pilot study was carried out and questions were amended for clarity, there were still some instances where respondents did not understand the questions. The opportunity to explain the question during the interview helped to get a more precise response.

On the other hand, interviews tend to lack reliability since the interviewer might bias the respondents (*ibid.*). In fact to increase reliability, the respondents were not informed specifically about the subject matter. They were only notified that the theme of the interview was about marketing and branding of the Maltese Olympic Committee. Reality has also shown that a case study and interviews does not give a clear-cut answer to the research being conducted and rather it leaves ambiguity and tends to leave shades of grey realities (Gerring, 2004, 2007; Brennan, 2009). Due to the nature of the form of data gathering, answers which do not give a clear reply might be difficult to interpret (Greenbaum, 1998). Another setback when conducting interviews is that they are time consuming. In fact, there were instances when it was difficult for both the researcher and the respondent to find a suitable day and time to meet. Another time constraint is conducting the interviews themselves. The time taken to conduct the interviews ranged from 40 minutes to one and a half hours. During the interviews attention was given to probe

other questions (besides the set of questions prepared) which would give a more in-depth analysis and achieve a more precise interpretation of what the respondent wanted to say. The researcher, at all times, maintained his neutrality and objectivity throughout the eighteen interviews conducted.

### ***3.3 Ethical Considerations***

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Wellington (2000) poses that ethical considerations should be prioritized and should permeate throughout the design, methods, analysis, presentation and findings of any research. Throughout this study the researcher has considered various ethical issues associated with qualitative research. In fact all through the data collection period care was taken not to include names or any relevant information that might identify or implicate the people taking part in the study. Cohen et al claim that, "the research community and those using the findings of research have a right to expect that research be conducted rigorously, scrupulously and in an ethically defensible manner" (Cohen et al, 2005: 47). Permissions from the Maltese Olympic Committee and relevant stakeholders were taken first, in order to gather the necessary data.

The interviews were designed according to the Maltese law, which were subject to the ninth principle of the Data Protection Act (CAP 440) act XXVI of 2001, as amended in act XXXI in 2002. Therefore anonymity was assured and data was kept confidential. The respondents who took part in the interview were notified beforehand that they would be recorded. The interviewees also had the option of walking out at any time during the interview.

### ***3.4 Analysis of the Interviews***

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A total of eighteen interviews were transcribed and analyzed. The responses of the interviews were grouped together according to the questions asked. This will produce a picture that will help the researcher understand how the Maltese Olympic Committee is perceived from the stakeholders' point of view and whether the relationships it has with its affiliated stakeholders help to co-create value.

## Chapter 4

*“A business based on brand is, very simply, a business primed for success”.*

**David F. D’Alessandro**  
Former Chairman, CEO and President of John Hancock Financial Services



*- Chapter 4 -*

## **Results & Analysis of Data**

This section aims to collate and examine the data collected from the interviews. It is therefore important to delve into the following themes: the kind of relationships which exist among the various stakeholders affiliated with the MOC, how each stakeholder perceives the MOC as the local Olympic brand and finally what could be done to improve the MOC's equity. The transcriptions of interviews were translated from Maltese to English.

### ***4.1 About the Respondents***

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Of the twelve males and six female respondents taking part in this study two were foreigners (Employee 2 – Russian and Volunteer 2 – Serbian). This first section analyzes the respondent's involvement in sport. Table 4.1 is a summary of the responses.

<b>Table 1</b>		
<b>Sport Background of Participants</b>		
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Sport Practiced as Athlete</b>	<b>Involvement in Sport</b>
Participant 1	Shooting	Started shooting at 14 years of age
Participant 2	Athletics	Started athletics at 14 years of age
Participant 3	N/A	Sport Administrator
Participant 4	Ski Skating	Graduated in Sport Sport Scientist
Participant 5	Basketball	Coaching Basketball, Volunteer, Sport Administrator and involved in Management
Participant 6	Gymnastics & Netball	Coaching Gymnastics and Football Secretary of Football nursery Diploma in Sport
Participant 7	Basketball Football Water polo Marathon athlete	Basketball Official, Sport Journalist, Sport Administrator and involved In Management
Participant 8	Football as a hobby	Sport Editor
Participant 9	Futsal	Sport Editor
Participant 10	Football and Futsal	Football coach and volunteer
Participant 11	Aerobics	Sport Administrator
Participant 12	Basketball	Sport Administrator and Volunteer
Participant 13	Basketball	Sport Administrator
Participant 14	Shooting	Involved in Sports Management and Administration
Participant 15	Athletics	Involved in Sports Management and Administration
Participant 16	Football	Sport Commentator and volunteer
Participant 17	Handball	Handball Coach and volunteer
Participant 18	Aquatic Sports	Sport Administrator and Involved in management

## ***4.2 Stakeholders' Relationship with the MOC***

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### **4.2.1 Involvement and Contribution towards the MOC**

The Maltese Olympic Committee was founded in 1928 and some stakeholders, including two sport federations, were involved with the MOC from its inception. Of all the stakeholders interviewed only the athletes, the Government and sponsors have a formal agreement with the MOC. The athletes' agreement is renewed every two years while the Government renews its contract every year. With regards to sponsors their contract expires at the end of every Olympiad, that is, every four years. The two sport federations which took part in this study are both representing an Olympic sport. One of the sport federations indicated that the federation was established concurrently with the MOC while the other federation was established before the MOC was founded. Once the MOC was established the two organizations formed a working relationship. The two representatives from the Media also mentioned that from the time they started working in the media industry they always remember the involvement of the media with the MOC.

As it was mentioned earlier the government in this research is represented by the KMS (Maltese Council for Sport - Appendix 1(i)) where the latter was founded when the Sport Law was brought into effect. This started in 2002 and was brought into effect in 2003. The Government's representative said that the KMS is the main entity and the national authority of sport since it represents the Sport Law and the MOC is a member within the KMS. He also mentioned that the Sport Law also addresses the role of the MOC and its responsibility for the elite sport.

#### **4.2.1.1 Athletes**

Both athletes stated that their involvement with the MOC is mostly a participatory; one based on the various games in which they compete and that the MOC allocates a certain budget according to how they perform and what medals they achieve in certain competitions. In fact Athlete 2 stated that the MOC offers medical assistance, gym,

physiotherapy and a certain allowance to be spent on training camps and facilities. She also stated that such funding is only allocated to approximately 20 athletes and the budget differs according to whether the athletes win gold, silver or bronze medals at pre-determined competitions, such as the GSSE (Appendix 1 (iii)), Commonwealth Games, Mediterranean games, etc.

This was also confirmed by a sport federation who stated that the MOC has a strategy of rewarding certain athletes depending on the results they obtain. In fact, it was also mentioned that those athletes who win medals can benefit from some schemes offered by the MOC.

An athlete also stated that as athletes they attend business meetings, such as press conferences organized by the MOC. In addition, the athlete pointed out that last year, a week before the GSSE, a few athletes visited several schools to make them aware of the Small Nations Games. The other athlete who was interviewed mentioned that his image was used by the MOC to advertise on billboards and he also appeared on various television programs on behalf of the MOC prior to the Games.

#### **4.2.1.2 Employees**

The involvement of the employees with the MOC has to do mainly with their job description. One of the employees, who is a part time worker, is responsible for the Under 18 youth athletes who participate in some international events. Interestingly, prior to her tenure with the MOC, she was unaware of the MOC's existence.

The other employee is of Russian origin and together with 16 other Russians she came to Malta, 17 years ago, to raise the importance of sport and to help the National teams. She is responsible for athlete monitoring and provides them with recommendations on how to:

- Carry out their training programs
- Evaluate their efforts
- Improve their physical performance

#### **4.2.1.3 Local Councils**

Both local councils commented that their involvement with the MOC is mainly to participate in the Annual MOC Sport Awards event. In order to win the MOC Sport Award the local councils have to initiate and promote sport in their locality. In fact when asked what they need to do to win the award, one of the Local Councils mentioned that the MOC sends an application form and each local council has to list any activities related to sport, such as the creation of a monument, courses and activities.

Local Council 1 also mentioned that their Council also invites MOC members to their own sport awards' ceremony, where they give awards to those athletes who gave outstanding performances during that particular year. The reason why one of the Local Councils wants to work with the MOC is to foster Maltese sport and also encourage local athletes to participate in sporting activities. If any of their athletes represents Malta outside the Maltese Islands it will indirectly reflect on the locality where s/he comes from. A Local Council stated that although the relationship is very limited this association helped them to gain honors in sport and began to attain good results in local sports.

#### **4.2.1.4 Government**

The only involvement the Government has with the MOC is that every year the Government allocates funds to the Olympic Committee. The respondent mentioned that a certain amount of money is allocated annually to the MOC, under a contract, with parameters outlining how money is to be spent e.g. the technical preparation of the athletes. Invoices on monies spent must be provided in order to keep a tighter control on how money is allocated. The Government respondent also outlined the fact that the MOC is an autonomous body which has representatives on the KMS board.

#### **4.2.1.5 Media**

The Media respondents stated that they publish and broadcast any related material that has anything to do with the MOC. Moreover Media 1 has an agreement with the MOC where every Tuesday the MOC has a full page dedicated to promote its programs and inform readers on activities of the Committee. The MOC sends content deemed important and/or

newsworthy and the newspaper publishes it. It was also stated that whenever Malta participates abroad in competitions such as the GSSE, the MOC pays the Media travelling expenses. The media representatives also attend press conferences but do not have exclusivity in this regard. Media 2 stated that broadcasting stations try to promote the Olympic ideals and to encourage sport in Malta and support promising athletes by giving them more exposure.

#### **4.2.1.6 Sponsors**

The sponsors described their relationship with the MOC as being a positive one and mentioned that as an organization they are always keen to support and help Maltese talent. Sponsor 1 is a beverage supplier for events organized by the MOC “*...by sponsoring we are helping and therefore making a contribution to the promotion of sport in Malta*”.

Sponsor 2 is involved with the MOC by supplying and providing clothes and shoes to athletes and officials. One of the reasons for affiliating with the MOC was to create awareness of a sport brand which was recently launched by the company. Of note, both sponsors provide value in kind rather than financial assistance.

#### **4.2.1.7 Spectators**

Both spectators said that in Malta spectators cannot do much to involve themselves with the MOC except to lend their support and offer financial assistance wherever possible e.g. ticket price, attending functions, etc. Unfortunately, it was stated, that most of the sports linked to the MOC are not really spectator oriented. There is still the excitement generated by watching, but Malta is not yet to a standard with any real chance of achieving world records.

#### **4.2.1.8 Sport Federations**

Both sport associations mentioned that they have a representation in the Council meetings of the MOC and they attend general meetings as well as technical meetings held once a month. Sport Federation 1 indicated that they have a good relationship with the MOC as

their sport is one of the most successful sports on the Island. He also added that from 2000 to the present day, the MOC have been investing in their sport and this was one of the reasons why they have achieved so much success. However, he also remarked that the MOC allocated a certain amount of funds which is determined on how well their respective athletes perform in competitions.

Sport Federation 2 stated that their discipline is an Olympic sport and one which the MOC participates in every competition involved. By achieving good results in certain competitions, they consider themselves as having a certain degree of importance over others. He also mentioned that the financial assistance given to them is higher than when compared to other federations. Both federations also confirmed that since both represent an Olympic sport their affiliation with the MOC is a must; a requirement. In fact the two sport federations claimed that in order to be a member of the International Sport Federation, the local federation must first be affiliated with the National Olympic Committee.

#### **4.2.1.9 Volunteers**

Volunteer 1 mentioned that during the last five years his involvement and responsibilities with the MOC were mainly revolved around the GSSE where he would accompany the athletes from their hotels to the venues where they had to compete. The other person volunteers as a physiotherapist and said that his interest is in producing and helping top notch athletes. The NOC of every country offers this possibility to work with such athletes.

#### **4.2.2 How do the stakeholders describe their relationship with the MOC**

Table 4.2 provides an overview of how the participants replied when they were asked to list three words which came to mind when describing their relationship with the MOC. Some respondents limited their answers to one or two words or phrases. It can easily be noted that the majority of words describing the stakeholder's relationship with the MOC are positive. The word 'difficult', which was mentioned by one respondent, seems to have negative connotations. It was mentioned that in the past, one of the directors of the MOC was very dictatorial but fortunately this was no longer the case as the person in the position now is more considerate and listens to the needs of the federations.

<b>Table 4.2</b>		
<b>3 words to describe the stakeholders' relationship with MOC</b>		
<b>1st word</b>	<b>2nd word</b>	<b>3rd word</b>
They help	High expectations	Good relationship
They help	Comfortable	Overall positive
Youths	Exciting (during the Games)	Enthusiasm
Loyalty	Professionalism	Sport
Good relationship	Sustainable	They help
Honors		
Experience	Co-ordination	Co-operation
Personal	Friendship	Good relationship
Very Efficient	Know what they are doing	Use the sponsor very well
Panic but in a good way	Restricted with deadlines	Time consuming but ok
I know it's there	We know people personally	Involvement remains limited
Minimal relationship	No relationship	
Excellent		
Difficult		
Friendship	Continuity	Youthful Spirit
Love	Hard working	Top sports, the peak

Nevertheless, some respondents also mentioned that the MOC sets certain Minimum Qualifying Score (MQS) (Appendix 1 (v)), which makes them difficult to be achieved and may result in counter productiveness, that is, certain athletes might give up and do other sports such as football. In fact some participants added that the male sector is a problem since men are more attracted to do other sports where they have more chance of succeeding and earning money rather than staying in a sport where it's difficult to compete and achieve required standards. It was also suggested that when athletes do not perform and achieve the desired results the funds most likely diminish which in turn makes it very difficult to help athletes. In fact one of the sport federations concluded that their sport lost several athletes (who had a great talent in their sport) due to the MQS issue.

Some respondents also remarked that the MQS set by the MOC are sometimes greater than the MQS set by the International Federations. They also mentioned that there were also cases where an MQS was not achieved. One of the respondents mentioned an example when, before going to Cyprus for the GSSE, an athlete participating in a particular sport



category did not achieve the MQS and the MOC didn't want to send the athlete to participate in the Games. However, after some discussions, the MOC decided to send the athlete to the competition and consequently the athlete won a medal.

Several respondents also mentioned that due to some incidents which occurred in the past there might be a certain animosity between the KMS and the MOC. One of the respondents also believes that the relationship with the MOC could be better and he understands that the MOC had a negative perspective towards the KMS. He explained that when there is an organization that has been there as the sole authority in sports since 1928, it is difficult to accept changes such as the one implemented by the Sport Law that created a new organization (KMS) and mandated it as the National Authority for sports. This, of course, can create some animosity as previously suggested.

Other stakeholders also raised issues that are linked to the conflict between MOC and KMS. An issue existed between the Government and the MOC over the distribution of funds. The Government felt only Olympic sports should be the beneficiaries while the MOC wanted to allocate funds to Olympic and Non-Olympic sports. After a bitter standoff the Government accepted the MOC's idea to give the money to whom they wanted.

One of the Sport Federations did not agree that the MOC should allocate the money to Non-Olympic sport, but it should only be limited to Olympic sport. He believes that it is the MOC's responsibility to strengthen the Olympic Movement in Malta and this can only be done with strong financial support if better results are to be achieved. The MOC acts as an umbrella encompassing sport at all levels and its decisions have an effect on all the stakeholders especially the athletes. They must not only work with the elite sporting athletes but have to develop more initiatives with the KMS to foster a sense of positive aspirations where athletes can achieve their goals at all levels. Working with ambitious and capable youths will create a solid base for future development as well as a friendship network.

The MOC when asked how they describe themselves to an outsider remarked that:

- It is an umbrella organization and it incorporates all sport.

- It is only through the MOC that the sport federations can participate in the International Competitions such as the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Mediterranean Games and other international Games.
- The MOC is an autonomous organization.
- When the MOC takes part in a competition, it forms a contingent of different sports and not have just one sport taking part in competitions.

### **4.2.3 The Positive Aspects of the MOC**

*“If athletes and sport did not exist then the MOC would not exist”* (Volunteer 1)

Table 4.3 gives an illustration of what the stakeholders believe are the pros of the Maltese Olympic Committee. Obtaining good results and taking care of athletes are key factors when striving for success. Other factors which strengthen the MOC include volunteerism and a high level of organization and administration.

<b>Table 4.3</b>
<b>What are the Positive Aspects of the MOC</b>
They have a positive opinion about me and believe in my potential.
They care about athletes when the Games are approaching.
Mutual understanding.
I have no idea of how other Olympic Committees work.
The will to develop sport in Malta. Most of the work is voluntary and there's motivation to improve in every section. The way how they are structured: a director for every section and became more professional as time went by.
It encourages sport. An entity which helps in the sport sector.
They need to increase more awareness in localities.
Results improved dramatically during the last 17 years. Before we were happy to win a bronze medal: in this day and age we're upset because we won a silver medal.
Elite program for athletes to help them obtain certain results. Most of the work done is voluntary and therefore it involves a lot of dedication.
Although Malta is small there's the determination to do well. They are obtaining good results.
Their main strengths are the athletes when they represent Malta and obtain good results.
They represent the Olympic disciplines.
Their structure. Financial, technical and medical aid for our athletes.
Olympics and the relation with Sport and supporting Athletes.
People who are presently in the MOC have similar way of thinking. They are not just expecting medals from athletes but also helping them to get them.

#### **4.2.4 The Strengths, Weaknesses or Threats within this relationship with the MOC**

This section will present a detailed analysis of how each stakeholder evaluates the relationship created with the MOC. Most of them mentioned that they have a very good and satisfying relationship with the Maltese Olympic Committee (as shown in Table 4.4). It was however, mentioned that the MOC should be more accessible and be seen as a more proactive organization.

When the MOC was asked what type of relationship they try to create with their stakeholders the respondents answered that they try to create a win-win situation with everyone. When asked whether one stakeholder was more important than other the reply was:

*‘No, I see our stakeholders as a chain and if you isolate for example the parents you’re cutting off the link with the children and a certain age group. If you cut off the link with the Government it’s like you’ve sliced your head off! If you isolate the local councils they lose an impetus to do something for their citizens. Everyone is important and you cannot say one is more important than the other. You can create a hierarchy if you like but it’s not wise. The best way is to see them in a horizontal way or in a circle, one helping the other.’ (MOC)*

The MOC representative mentioned that the most important factor is to ensure that there is a happy, healthy, non-threatening atmosphere so all stakeholders can work for the good of all. Good communication is essential in all administration along with a reporting system to encompass all.

**Table 4.4****The Relationship between the MOC and its Stakeholders**

Participants	Relationship		
	Type	Strengths	Weaknesses
Participant 1	Positive	Relationship helped them to understand me and my sport	Puts pressure on performance
Participant 2	Positive	During the Games they give us attention	Didn't find support when injured
Participant 3	Positive	Most of them appreciate my work	Some don't appreciate my work
Participant 4	Positive	Discipline to achieve results and improve sport in Malta	No weaknesses
Participant 5	Could be better	Could be better	We could work more together
Participant 6	Cannot Say	Could not say	Could not say
Participant 7	Improving	Improving	Could be better
Participant 8	Positive	Receive positive feedback from my readers	No weaknesses
Participant 9	Positive	The personal relationship which I built with most of the members	No weaknesses
Participant 10	Positive	We know our boundaries and we understand each other	No weaknesses
Participant 11	Positive	Good communication and trust	No weaknesses
Participant 12	Cannot Say	Could not say	Could not say
Participant 13	Negative	No strengths	MOC needs to be more pro-active, accessible and entertaining
Participant 14	Positive	I hope to retain this relationship we have created	No weaknesses
Participant 15	Difficult	No strengths	Relationship is difficult due to various reasons
Participant 16	Positive	Good results helped us to build a good relationship	No weaknesses
Participant 17	Positive	Developed a relationship of friendship and trust	No weaknesses

#### **4.2.5 Value Gained from the Relationship with the MOC**

*'I don't feel it. Even when somebody asks me, "Where do you work?" Some of my friends are like me [referring to the fact that she never heard of the MOC until she started to work there]... "The Maltese Olympic Committee! What is that?" I mean if you're not in the world of sport you won't know about it. Then on the other hand, some would say, "Aaa that would be interesting!'*  
(Employee 1)

Some of the participants including a Local Council and both spectators do not feel they have a relationship with the MOC and as a matter of fact the three of them answered they do not gain any value from the MOC. Sponsor 2 claimed that although much effort was done to associate their brand with the MOC, still it didn't succeed because they didn't see any return on investment. Both foreign respondents derive some sort of pride and prestige by being associated with the MOC especially Volunteer 2 when he assists Team Malta during international Games. The two sport federations linked their values gained with the MOC with the Olympic Charter and to adhere to certain rules and regulations. The Government mentioned those indirect actions such as, courses and activities to promote a healthy lifestyle, which in the long run, will decrease the Government's costs and will create progress in certain sporting sectors.

When the MOC was asked about the values gained from the relationship which exists among its stakeholders the participant answered:

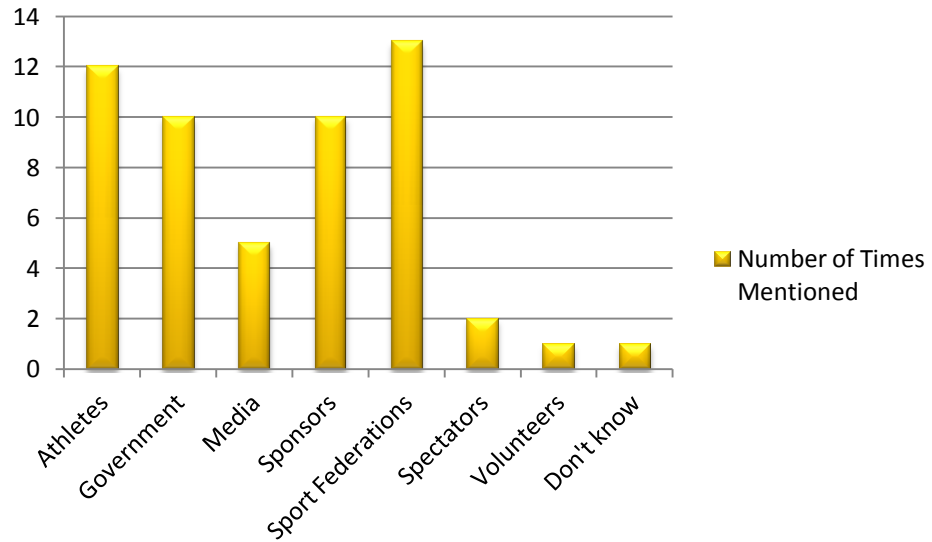
*'Apart from the satisfaction that from nothing you created a relationship you can also be creative. You get satisfaction when you have a sponsor and you are trying to organize something together, which matches the values and aims of your product and their product and you try to manage and organize an activity.'* (MOC)

The MOC representative also claimed that in this relationship everyone gains something.

<b>Table 4.5</b>	
<b>What is Valued most in the Relationship created with the MOC?</b>	
Participant 1	The MOC's appreciation for the hard work athletes do
Participant 2	The MOC's appreciation for the hard work athletes do
Participant 3	The Friendship created
Participant 4	Nothing
Participant 5	Both working for the good of sport
Participant 6	Nothing
Participant 7	Working together for the good of sport
Participant 8	The satisfaction of the work done together for the good of Maltese sport
Participant 9	The Friendship created
Participant 10	Co-operation
Participant 11	Responsibility of giving a good quality and service
Participant 12	Nothing
Participant 13	Nothing
Participant 14	The Friendship created
Participant 15	Our passion for sport
Participant 16	The Friendship created
Participant 17	Experience and Voluntary work

Some respondents confirmed the sense of being appreciated by the MOC. This boosts their ego and also maintains their efforts and will to succeed. Others expressed their idea of working together for the good of local sport. Four respondents mentioned friendship as being a key component of what is valued in this relationship. This idea of friendship goes hand in hand with what the MOC representative expressed when asked the same question. He amplifies his argument by saying that respect and friendship are at the core of every relationship. Although there might be some arguments and some stakeholders might share different points of view from what the MOC believes, at the end respect always prevails. They have the satisfaction of being respected as hardworking and creative in the work they do.

#### **4.2.6 Awareness of other Stakeholders working with the MOC**



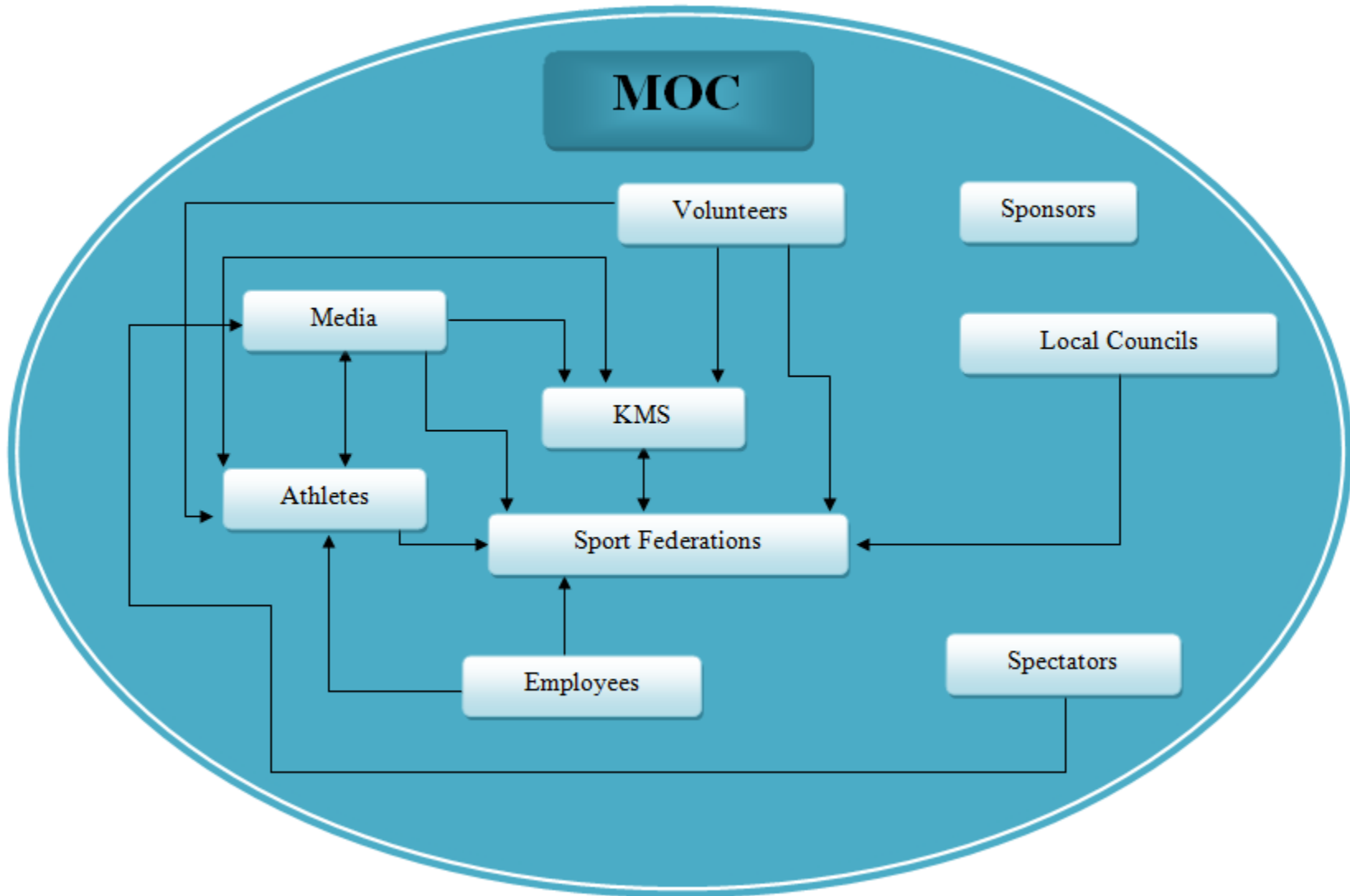
**Figure 4.1:** Stakeholders' awareness working with the MOC

1 out of 18 respondents (one of the sponsors) didn't mention any stakeholders and commented that they only deal and work with the MOC and are not in contact with any other member or partner and therefore did not know. Out of the 17 other respondents, 13 of them are aware that Sport Federations are the main partners of the MOC, followed by athletes having 12 responses. In fact most of the participants commented that the athletes are indirectly connected with the MOC through the Sport Federations. Both Sponsors and the Government are the two other stakeholders which the respondents deem to be part of the MOC having been mentioned 10 times each. It is also interesting to note down that Media 2 and Sponsor 1 consider spectators as stakeholders of the MOC.

When the MOC was asked who they see as their stakeholders the respondent listed; media, parents, children, sport industry, sponsors, athletes, sport federations, Government, doctors, and physiotherapists. He then added that in actual fact the whole society forms part of the MOC's family.



**4.2.7 The Stakeholders' network**



**Figure 4.2:** Stakeholders connected with each other

Most of the stakeholders associated with the MOC have other indirect connections with other members affiliated with the MOC. From Figure 4.2 it is clearly seen that sport federations and the KMS are in contact with other various stakeholders affiliated with the MOC. Both Sport Federations claimed that they also have other relations with other sport federations especially with those federations which share similar sports.

Only the sponsors kept one relationship, that is, with the MOC. Both sponsors stated that:

*'We deal directly with them [MOC]. Only them. Neither with the athletes nor with the federations...we don't deal with anyone else.'* (Sponsor 1)

*'I deal with [name of director]and the other directors only...Neither with athletes nor others.'* (Sponsor 2)

#### **4.2.8 Co-Creation of Value through other relationships**

All stakeholders who replied mentioned they had a relationship with the MOC be it directly or indirectly. These relationships created with other stakeholders will surely help the MOC to co-create value. Both athletes mentioned that through participation in the Federations' competitions athletes hope to fulfill their dreams by gaining selection and ultimately participating in the Olympic Games. This of course will depend on favorable results required for qualification. The MOC will be promoted through media coverage.

Employee 1 stated that having a good relationship with the sport federations will directly help her to obtain the necessary information more efficiently and this will indirectly help the MOC to be seen as a professional entity. Employee 2 mentioned that their knowledge shared with the athletes and their respective coaches will, in the long run, help in the performance of athletes and thus to achieve better results. Therefore the MOC, though indirectly, will be seen as a Committee which is delivering positive and successful results.

The Government confirmed that their financial support, given directly to the MOC creates the opportunity for elite athletes to apply for various schemes. This certainly heightens the MOC's image and value. Some of the schemes available to elite athletes include:

-Full time professional athletes: the government gives a salary to athletes and their job is to exercise and train.

- 20/20 scheme: instead of working 40 hours a week, athletes work for 20 hours a week and the other 20 hours are spent in training sessions.

- AFM scheme: having athletes enrolled in the Armed Forces of Malta and their job is to exercise and train for competitions.

*'The KMS will benefit, the MOC will benefit because there is a high probability to have more athletes of a certain caliber. At the end of the day not only will the KMS and the MOC benefit but also Maltese Sport and that is what we must aim for - together we are able to achieve real development in Maltese Sport.'* (KMS - Government)

Both local councils representatives agreed that the relationship they have with the sport federations will help develop local talent. By developing programs at the local level it will hopefully inspire many more to participate with the ultimate goal of representing the Maltese Islands in foreign/international competitions.

Both Media representatives remarked that when they publish or broadcast an athlete's positive achievements they are indirectly promoting the MOC. This was also supported by the Sports Federations stating that they are investing their time and money in athletes to help them achieve good results and creating a positive image for the MOC. Having a good relationship will not only help the MOC but also help to, "...*bring success to Maltese Sport*" (Sport Federation 2).

The work done by the volunteers certainly emanates a positive impression based on friendship and cooperation which further highlights the MOC as a competent entity.

*‘Going back to friendship and voluntary work, where they work together, and without any doubt they give a good image in this respect, irrelevant of the result obtained.’ (Volunteer 1)*

Volunteer 2 also believes that having a relationship with other stakeholders will help to co-create value. However, he also emphasized that the MOC has to work more on having closer relationship with its stakeholders. He mentioned that:

*‘Yes, that’s one of the main things which we should all work on, and that’s the way how this organization should work. You know how it feels, like football – if your football club is sponsored by this kind of company, every member of the club will buy from that company and not from another one. So relationships with sponsors etc... and if you want to run successful organization you have to be very close.’(Volunteer 2)*

### ***4.3 The Maltese Olympic Committee Brand***

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#### **4.3.1 Associations with the Olympic Brand**

The various words associated with both the IOC and the MOC brand highlighted many similarities. In most instances those words associated with the IOC were also reflected to the MOC but adapted more on a local sphere. The IOC brand was mainly associated with the Olympic Games, sports and unity while the MOC brand was primarily associated with national identity. Although when compared to other countries the MOC and Team Malta do not obtain successful results in significant competitions, the Maltese Olympic brand is still associated with positive aspirations and associations.

### **4.3.2 The Strengths and Weaknesses of the MOC brand**

From the results obtained it is evident that participating abroad and achieving good results by the athletes are those variables which strengthen the MOC brand (see Table 4.6). For those stakeholders who mentioned good results, they were not only referring to winning medals but also giving a good performance and possibly produce a personal best. Participation in International Games, especially the Olympic Games, certainly puts Malta in good stead and therefore strengthens the MOC Brand: the greater the number of athletes participating, the greater the exposure. It is up to the athletes to rouse the interest of the Maltese public through exemplary performances and become role models so others can follow in their footsteps. The MOC would certainly benefit if the Maltese people barracked for their countrymen as opposed to foreign sportspeople.

Several respondents argued that Malta's main problem with producing world standard athletes is its size. With a population of around 400,000 its opportunities are certainly limited. One of the participants stressed that the MOC has to step up and provide the resources necessary to develop and improve the performances of its talented athletes. He also insisted in setting up an Institute of Sport and provide world class coaches in the sports where it has possibilities of success. Turn the weaknesses into strengths and move forward to bigger and better things. He concluded by stating that it is always easy to find excuses where there are no real reasons.

Table 4.6

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the MOC brand**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Strengths of Brand</b>	<b>Weaknesses of Brand</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	Victories and medals	Bad results
<b>Participant 2</b>	Athletes & Sport Federations	Athletes & Sport Federations
<b>Participant 3</b>	Authority & Prestige abroad	No weaknesses
<b>Participant 4</b>	Being part of a huge international community	Size of Malta
<b>Participant 5</b>	Good Results & Affiliations of various stakeholders	No weaknesses
<b>Participant 6</b>	Taking part in International Games	Awareness of brand is limited in Malta
<b>Participant 7</b>	Rights on Team Malta	Financial Constraints
<b>Participant 8</b>	Representation of Malta abroad	Some cases when athletes do not deliver
<b>Participant 9</b>	Good performance of athletes	No weaknesses
<b>Participant 10</b>	Good Results	Malta is limited in obtaining good results
<b>Participant 11</b>	Athletes	Did not comment
<b>Participant 12</b>	The Maltese Cross related with the Rings	Marketing
<b>Participant 13</b>	Being to some extent recognizable	Marketing and Public Relations People within the MOC
<b>Participant 14</b>	Participating in high levels of Games Representation of Malta abroad	Limited access in high level Games
<b>Participant 15</b>	Athletes	Marketing
<b>Participant 16</b>	Unity of the associations	Conflicts within the associations
<b>Participant 17</b>	It is a problem	Marketing Maltese Spectators appreciating more foreign sport

### **4.3.3 Challenges of the MOC Brand**

Almost half of the participants kept on insisting that the MOC must develop a marketing strategy ‘*to be out there*’. One of the spectators mentioned that people need to know what is happening: a lack of information creates apathy and apathy creates laziness. He insisted that the MOC needs to advertize, televise and publicize more to ensure the MOC brand is out there for all to encompass. Having financial constraints was another issue mentioned by the rest of the participants, where they remarked that it limits the MOC in carrying out certain activities.

The MOC representative argued that the main challenge is to keep the image of the MOC. He continued by explaining the problem of having someone who is elected as a director of marketing, which is a specialized field and has no idea of what he ought to do. He kept on explaining that funds are limited and employing someone would be difficult. The only solution would be to have someone elected as a director with a sound knowledge of marketing. He mentioned that elections take place at the end of every Olympiad and he mentioned that this year there will be some comprehensive discussions on what to do on this regard.

### **4.3.4 How the MOC is Perceived as a Brand by Public Opinion**

*‘Personally, a committee is perceived as effective and functional only if can reach out to the public. I’m not saying that the MOC is not functional because, it often happens that an outsider does not always see what’s going on. However, it’s how you sell yourself, based on trust and credibility, which is important.’* (Spectator 1)

Both spectators argued that the MOC must create greater public awareness in marketing its brand. There needs to be a positive drive to get out there: be known and recognized. More activities need to be created at ground level and professional exhibitions to motivate the public’s attendance, even if it’s free entry. Spectator 2 mentioned that entertainment at the grounds could be a further incentive to attend e.g. a popular singer, a noted sportsperson/s

who will sign autographs or give impromptu displays. It all goes to winning the public's support. To sell a product it must be out there: people need to know it exists so they can become regular consumers/customers. Table 4.7 gives a summary of what the stakeholders believe the public's perception is about the MOC brand.

<b>Table 4.7</b>
<b>Respondents' perception of the MOC</b>
Top local sport brand
Few athletes and a lot of officials present during Olympic Games
People involved in sport appreciate the work done by MOC
Don't know
Not top of the pops but not bad
Related with Competitions and Olympics
The general public associate the MOC with Olympics
Presently general public is more interested in other sports rather MOC and its Games
Depends on the amount of medals and success it obtains during the Games
It's elevated and positive
Not very high depending on whether its GSSE or Olympics
Don't know
Don't know
Depends on the amount of medals and success
Depends on the amount of medals and success
It's been there for quite a long and therefore recognizable

#### **4.3.5 Value gained from being associated with the MOC brand**

There were mixed feelings and responses regarding whether stakeholders gain value from being associated with the MOC brand. Most of the respondents were very vague about this concept. One of the athletes mentioned that some value may be gained at international outings but most agreed that very little value was gained at the local level because the MOC had such a low profile. The Local Councils mentioned that only during Awards Days is its presence felt.



The majority of the respondents argued that the MOC must employ strategies which will create win-win situations for all its stakeholders to ensure everybody benefits. For instance both sponsors have to see some return on their investment as both of them mentioned they don't see any results from their affiliation with the MOC.

## ***4.4 MOC's Brand Equity***

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### **4.4.1 Strategies to Improve the MOC's Brand Equity**

Most of the respondents hammered the point that the MOC needs to reach out more to the public and create a greater awareness of the work done. So how can it sell itself? Some of the respondents mentioned:

- More media exposure.
- More public programs: involve public in activities/outreach programs to students.
- Maintain a continuity of events – be more visible all year round.
- Use social networks e.g. Facebook.
- Introduce elite sporting programs so talented athletes can be full time professionals.
- Invest in “young” talent and create schools where sporting talents coincide with studies.

### **4.4.2 The effect of Stakeholders on the MOC's Brand Equity**

Most of the stakeholders participating in this research agreed the resources which are exchanged between the MOC and its various stakeholders help the MOC improve its brand equity. Stakeholders such as employees, media, volunteers, the Government and sponsors believed that the MOC can only improve its quality, image or reputation by having certain affiliations with them as stakeholders. Getting more schools and spectators involved can only help the MOC to enhance its equity.

Some of the stakeholders claimed that a negative effect on the MOC's equity could result if the sport federations make poor decisions and/or if athletes keep producing unfavorable

results in competitions. All agreed that a greater infusion of funds would go a long way to achieving the MOC's objectives.

## ***4.5 Summary of Results***

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This chapter focused on the MOC's relationships with its stakeholders to determine the value gained from these associations and how best to strengthen its equity.

It is clear from the findings that most of the stakeholders have built up a positive relationship with the MOC. However, the MOC still has a low profile on the islands of Malta due mainly to poor marketing and lack of strong organization and administration. It must therefore address these issues to become a viable entity.

It was generally agreed that the MOC focuses its energy more on International Games rather than promoting and creating activities for the public at the local level. The MOC must be decisive in its administration if it wants to achieve results at high levels of competency. It just cannot take a 'middle of the road' approach. The drive must be to concentrate on the talented/ elite athletes and allow the Local Councils administer at the local level under the umbrella of the MOC. Negative undercurrents may affect its stakeholders and actually hinder the development of elite sport in Malta.

Marketing of the MOC brand obviously requires a lot more exposure if it is to be encompassed by the Maltese public. Programs and activities have to be organized throughout the whole year not just weeks prior to major events. The MOC brand and logo have very positive connotations with a major cross-section of the stakeholders so it must take advantage of these strong points and use them to strengthen its equity.

Lack of funds is an ever existing problem to help the MOC achieve its goals and objectives, but this too can be overcome when a much higher profile is established.

## Chapter 5

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*“A product is something made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by the customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless.”*

**Stephen King**  
Writer

## - Chapter 5 -

### **Discussion & Conclusion**

Having reviewed, collated and analyzed all available data, some conclusions can now be ascertained on the MOC's equity and marketing strategies. Correlations among the various stakeholders will be noted but the major focus will be on the branding of the MOC and how the MOC can improve its brand as the local Olympic brand and eventually co-create value.

#### ***5.1 The National Olympic brand - is it 'National'?***

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From all the data gathered, it is obvious that marketing is one sector which is lacking in the MOC's make-up. It is difficult as even one of the respondents claimed having never heard of the MOC until getting employment with the Committee, even though Malta and the MOC had twice hosted the GSSE in the country. It was also noted that people who are not involved in sports might not be aware that there is a National Olympic body. Although, when shown the MOC logo all stakeholders interviewed recognized the MOC logo, those who are not directly involved with the MOC might not recognize the symbol. This notion was highlighted by several of the participants interviewed.

Aaker (1991) claims that name awareness plays an important role and is one of the stepping stones in creating resilient brand equity. From the interviews conducted it appears that there is a missed opportunity on the part of the MOC to strengthen their National Olympic brand. Although, previous IOC research conducted in 2008 shows that most of the people in various nations recognize the Olympic rings (around 92%-98%) this might not be the case for the Maltese Olympic Committee. The MOC needs to take advantage of the parent brand, which in this case is the Olympic brand and develop a marketing program to market its own brand in the local community. Having a National Olympic body, which is unknown or unfamiliar with the locals who are not involved in sport, creates a setback for any brand and in this case it might weaken the MOC's equity.

However, let's for the sake of the argument, consider that the MOC wants to target its local sport enthusiasts only:

- Do these local sporting enthusiasts know what the MOC is doing?
- Are the Maltese sport supporters aware of what it entails to prepare and organize a contingent to participate in Foreign Games?
- Do local sport fans know why only few athletes participate in the Olympic Games yet for the GSSE there is at least one representation in every discipline?

Another respondent, who is very much involved in sport (former player on the Maltese National Basketball Team in the GSSE), didn't even know the MOC had a Facebook page or that the MOC had changed its Facebook name. If a national representative is unaware of what's happening, how then can sport enthusiasts who are not directly involved in sport know how much sacrifice and hard work is needed to prepare for certain Games?

***“If spectators or local citizens are not aware of how certain things work, some actions might be misinterpreted and give the wrong impression such as, having more officials than athletes present in the Olympic Games” (Athlete 2).***

From the data analyzed only those who have a close relationship with the MOC know and appreciate what the MOC is really doing and truly know the meaning of being part of the Olympic Movement. Most respondents suggested that not enough is done to increase the awareness of the MOC and to promote the brand to the local consumers (that is, the Maltese population). They are the potential spectators and possibly supporters of the MOC.

Although many of the stakeholders appreciate the work done by the MOC (because most of them know the people involved in its administrations personally), there are mixed feelings on how the brand is perceived, which is another aspect of brand equity. Almost half of the stakeholders involved confirmed what Milne and McDonald (1999) stated that the quality of the MOC is determined according to the successes they obtain, whilst the other half believed that marketing strategies have an impact on the perceived quality of the brand (Thomson et al, 2005). Having almost half of the respondents suggesting that one of the

challenges of the MOC's brand is to promote its marketing program, then this is most likely an area the MOC should work upon.

Although name awareness and perceived quality of the MOC brand was weak, its brand associations have a rather high and positive perception among the stakeholders. In fact another characteristic of brand equity is brand associations which create meaning to brands (Till et al, 2001). Overall the MOC's brand associations are positive highlighting 'Malta' referring to national identity as the main association linked with the MOC followed by the word 'Olympics'. However the question here is; how can locals be proud of and be part of something they hardly know anything about? The next stage is marketing the brand in the local context.

## ***5.2 Marketing begins at Home***

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Having a national body which represents a country in International Games suggests that its brand should be synonymous with national identity for all. However, this is not always the case in Malta, as it was suggested that many locals are rarely involved and therefore have no sense of belonging. The MOC does organize an annual Olympic Day Run as a national activity. However, other things must be done to involve more than just the affiliated stakeholders. From the results obtained sponsors (as shown in Figure 4.2) are not involved and integrated with other stakeholders. Spectators also stated that, unless they buy a newspaper or watch sport news on television, they do not consider themselves as having any connections with the MOC's stakeholders. Therefore, more activities could be organized through the Local Councils, which would involve the local communities and thus promote the MOC brand. All this could be done by involving other stakeholders associated with the MOC which in turn would co-create value.

### **5.2.1 More Involvement of stakeholders**

Vargo and Lusch (2004), Frow and Payne (2011), Vargo (2011) and Lusch and Vargo (2011) state that exchanges of intangible resources and close relationships with

stakeholders help to co-create value and eventually empower both sides' brand equity creating a win-win situation. The MOC has worked (and was able to create positive relationships) with stakeholders who are closely involved with it: but unfortunately it stops there. The results indicate that the MOC and its partners haven't yet organized marketing strategies to create mutual exploitations and leverage to strengthen their own brands. Some stakeholder groups felt left out from this national Olympic family. One of the participants believes there is no relationship with the MOC, while two other respondents from the same stakeholder group remarked that apart from working exclusively with the MOC, felt they were not gaining anything out of this relationship. Therefore the MOC has to act upon suitable strategies which will reach out to the locals and use these relationships to further strengthen its cause. The MOC and its marketing sector have to take care of their consumers/spectators by making them part of their agenda. Both spectators interviewed spent their money to attend various editions of the Olympic Games and both remarked that they would be willing to take part in MOC related activities. Therefore one way how the MOC can reach the locals is by involving the various Local Councils.

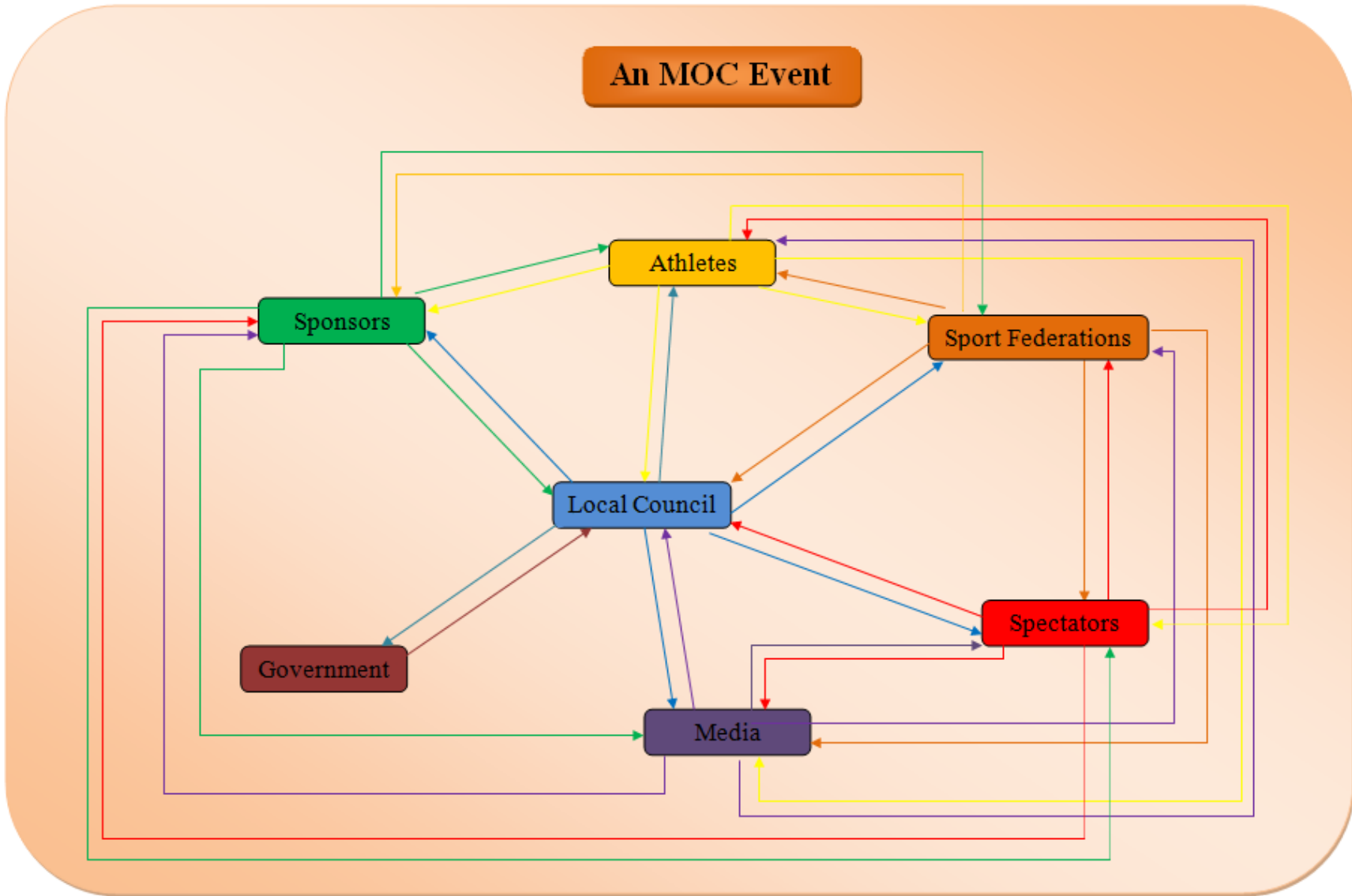
Creating activities in various local councils would surely help to increase the brand awareness of the MOC and involve the spectators. Organizing events which involve stakeholders and the MOC can effectively combine to organize activities which can co-create value. Examples of these follow:

- National teams promoting sport through exhibition matches would attract people (both sport and non-sport enthusiasts) because activities would be both practical and also entertaining.
- Local Councils are seen in a positive limelight as they organize interesting and fun activities for all social strata.
- Athletes would feel more a sense of belonging and prestige performing in front of their potential spectators.
- Sport Federations would promote their sport and might have people starting to practice the sport concerned.
- Sponsors would have the opportunity to sell some merchandise linked to the MOC throughout the course of events.

- Media would have more articles or stories to broadcast which satisfies the public's interest.
- Indirectly helps the government to promote a healthier lifestyle and thus fight obesity especially in children (according to the OECD (2010) Malta has the highest rate of obesity in children in Europe with a proportion of 29.5%. The other countries do not have a proportion higher than 20%).
- Ultimately helps the MOC be more visible by having stands to distribute information about its events and venues.

From only one activity and with the co-operation of seven stakeholders and the MOC itself, value is co-created and such an activity will surely not cost thousands of Euros because the sport federations and sponsors will cater for their own equipment. The MOC would only be responsible for organizing and delegating the work. Figure 5.1 illustrates an example of how an event organized by the MOC together with a Local Council, having close relationships with various stakeholders, helps to co-create value.





**Figure 5.1:** Co-creation of value created among various stakeholders affiliated with the MOC

Almost every stakeholder has a symbiotic relationship meaning that every stakeholder, although giving a service is also gaining from this event and the relationship. Since the Local Council is jointly organizing an event with the MOC, it will have the opportunity to interact with most of the stakeholders affiliated with the MOC creating more networks, not only for itself but also helping other stakeholders co-creating value among themselves. Having a multiple network of stakeholders will ultimately help the MOC in its co-creation of value and thus leading to strengthening its own brand equity (Jones, 2005; Frow & Payne, 2011).

From this research it is very clear that relationships do have an effect on brand equity and value co-creation. When the Government refused to give funds to the MOC due to a disagreement regarding the allowance of funds to Non-Olympic sport, sport federations were indirectly suffering from this issue. During the 14<sup>th</sup> ‘World Conference on Sport for all’ which took place in Beijing 2011 and organized by the IOC there was an emphasis for sport organizations to co-operate and build partnerships as much as possible. The IOC (2011) stressed on the ideas to build sustainable relationships and co-operate with governmental and non-governmental organizations to increase participation in sport and physical activity and also work closely with the educational sector having young people getting more involved in sport. The more stakeholders are involved and are closely working together, the more the costs are shared. Not to mention that during such an activity (mentioned above), the MOC together with its sponsors can sell MOC related material helping the MOC to gain some sort of revenue to help athletes in their training sessions or competitions or by organizing similar activities. Moreover, by having these small activities taking place around the country, will indirectly help to increase publicity and continuously promote the MOC through media broadcast and also word of mouth comments.

When would such activities take place? Some respondents have argued that the MOC is only active prior to the Games with its promotional activities. Having such activities taking place throughout the year will help the MOC’s image thus giving it a higher profile for the forthcoming Games. Organizing such activities in different localities will also help create a greater awareness about the Olympic movement and get people more interested in the Games where the MOC is involved.

Other marketing strategies:

- Show a greater presence in schools to create more awareness of the Olympic Movement.
- Create an educational section on the MOC's website targeted for schools. Have Olympic educational programs thus promoting the Olympic spirit.
- Activities and competitions related to health promotion campaigns.
- Involve social groups such as scouts and girls guides in various sporting activities.
- Develop broadcasting programs which are aired and accessible to everyone.
- Sporting banners with messages of the Olympic Movement in venues where various sport federations affiliated with the MOC compete.
- Organizing competitions on social networks such as Facebook to get people involved. Have the page more active and at the same disperse information related to the activities which are on the MOC's agenda.
- Working with other Olympic Committees and organize events, festivals or competitions.

These are a few but effective suggestions of how the MOC can be more visible in the public eye and very cost effective. Moreover, having stakeholders working more jointly together will surely help co-create value where the latter is achieved by a multiple network of stakeholders rather than single actors and services are exchanged multilaterally (Nenonen & Storbacka, 2010; Chandler & Vargo, 2011). Nevertheless, it's useless to think of certain activities unless a conscious decision is made to invest in the marketing sector. There must be knowledgeable people who are able to create a marketing strategy and implement marketing programs which are effective and consistent throughout the year. In a study conducted by Séguin and O'Reilly, it was stated that most of "the NOCs do not have sufficient marketing expertise and lack the core skills necessary to bring the brand alive" (Séguin and O'Reilly, 2008: 74). The authors also suggested that such inexperienced personnel do not only damage the NOC itself, but also the Olympic brand (ibid.). Then again, having a meticulous marketing team and then not having funds to invest in marketing programs can slow down the ideas and strategies of the MOC. From this

research it was very obvious that apart from marketing the other main challenge of the MOC was funding.

### **5.2.2 Issue of Funds**

Although some of the ideas mentioned above do not constitute great expenditure, the issue of money is a problem. Where will the MOC get the money needed to invest in marketing? As shown in the results the government's money and the IOC and Commonwealth funding have to be invested in athletes and training programs for athletes. Therefore, the only other way to obtain other funds is from sponsors and other stakeholders. As it has already been discussed in the previous chapter, both sponsors give value in kind. Therefore a strategy has to be outlined to determine what other avenues are open to obtain some revenue from the sponsors.

From this research it was revealed that sponsors of the MOC act as suppliers and only supply their products to the MOC. It seems like the sponsors are not inclined to activate their brand through their relationship with the MOC. Several authors claim that for every \$1 spent for sponsoring a property, another \$3 is needed in activating and leveraging the sponsorship (Crompton 2004; Woodside et al, 2006). Sponsorship activation would include: traditional advertizing, public relations activities, business to business communication, internal communications, hospitality and sales promotion are among effective ways how to activate a sponsorship (Weeks et al, 2008).

When interviewing the spectators, both mentioned that they would consider buying merchandize linked with the MOC, being of good quality and associated with well-established brands. In fact co-branding is usually used to introduce and promote new products on the market. The goal of each brand involved is to increase its market exposure (Washburn et al, 2000). The MOC can use its sponsors and together create a product where both brands are exposed.

One might ask; where would such products be sold? Fuchs and Diamantopoulos (2010) argue that organizations seek to position themselves in segments where they have the highest and largest sector of customers. Malta, having an economy based on tourism and

attracting over a million of tourists every year (three times the population of Malta), the MOC can use this opportunity to sell such products. Both foreigners interviewed see the Maltese Olympic Committee as the top notch local sport organization on the Island. Having merchandize sold in tourist areas might be a strategy where the MOC can gain some much needed revenue.

Moreover, some Maltese sport enthusiasts might also be interested in buying some MOC related items because most of the participants involved in this research expressed their sense of nationalism towards the country. Having merchandize and apparel available for the locals will ultimately create a greater sense of belonging, exposure and promotion of the MOC brand. The costs of the products would be shared between the MOC and its sponsors and if products are sold, both will gain from this merger.

After probing these possibilities the next quest would be: How much will the items cost? Perceived quality is in fact another matter which needs to be considered. Thompson et al (2005) argue that pricing, presentation of the product and advertizing campaigns are the basics of how quality is perceived in the eyes of consumers. One of the spectators mentioned that, if items are to be sold by the MOC, they should not be cheap but not too expensive, and therefore, suggesting a moderate price for the items. However, the cost of certain merchandize might also be affected by the co-branding done. If the MOC is working on and consequently producing a product with a high quality brand, then the perceived image of the MOC would be rather high and therefore the price would ultimately be somehow pricey. This has its pros and cons. Washburn et al (2000) concluded that low equity brands which merge with more powerful and high equity brands tend to gain more from the alliance, while the powerful brands are not affected by this alliance. Therefore, producing a product with a brand which is perceived as a well-established brand will indirectly help the MOC to be associated with high quality and thus improving its brand equity. On the other hand if the product is too expensive the customer might not buy the product produced.

In sport, perceived quality is also measured by the results obtained. In the previous chapter, funds and results seem to be directly connected and money seems to have an effect on

results. Having more funds seem to be directly proportional to achieving better results and achieving better results indirectly has an effect on the perceived quality of the brand. One question which was raised during the interview was: Should the MOC, being an **Olympic** Committee, invest its money in Non-Olympic sport? Most of the stakeholders involved in this research argued that the MOC having various limitations, were always able to use their funds wisely and try to obtain as much value as possible from the funds received. However, respondents also argued that the main reason for not achieving good results was that not enough funding is invested in sport disciplines in which the MOC competes. Therefore, should the funds being invested in non-Olympic sports be invested only in Olympic sport? Would this help the Olympic sports achieve better results and thus help to improve the image of the MOC? What are the reasons why the MOC is funding non-Olympic sports when the government two years ago had approved schemes and funding exclusively for non-Olympic sports? While these important questions have been debated by the MOC in the past, the result of this study suggest that it may be worth revisiting them while considering the priorities of the National Olympic Committee. What are the priorities of the MOC? Is it about showing solidarity with all affiliated sport federation or is it about trying to invest and obtain results and medals in the competitions in which the MOC participates in?

Marketing campaigns and exposure do make a difference in the brand's equity and present the brand in a convincing way. However, in sport, it goes hand in hand with the results obtained which are also one of the active ingredients which will shape the brand's quality. Even though soccer clubs like Manchester United, Barcelona F.C. and A.C. Milan have an aggressive marketing campaigns, their brand success is revolved around their achievements and victories.

### **5.2.3 Olympism: A Marketing Strategy**

Although the Maltese Olympic Committee cannot focus all of its marketing and branding strategies on achievements and victories, there's still another tangible tool through which the MOC can market its brand, namely Olympism. The Olympics and the Olympic Movement were founded on principles and values such as respect, excellence, tolerance, equality, friendship, education and peace just to mention a few, which go beyond just results and medals. The Olympic Games do not only represent an event which takes place every four years and comprises various sports and nations. It also represents the climax in sport competition, unity in diversity and a set of symbolic actions which promote values and human dignity. The Olympic Charter stipulates that, "The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity." (IOC, 2007: 11). Olympism is the main ingredient which distinguishes the Olympic Movement from any other sport associations or committees in the world and which makes the Olympic Games more prestigious than any other sport competition in the world.

The MOC can therefore take advantage of Olympism and through Olympism promote the MOC brand. Schools and education should be an important component of the MOC's marketing agenda. Through Olympism the MOC can mobilize its stakeholders by making them more visible and having them associated with positive attributes. The MOC directors should strive at making the educational sector a fundamental stakeholder. Although Olympism is a concept which could reach all parts of society, children and adolescents should be the primary target. Teaching values through sport is a concept which the IOC has been working on for a long time to the extent that Rogge, president of the IOC, initiated the Youth Olympic Games and stated that, "Sport is a powerful tool for reaching out to today's youth on all continents and for educating them early on about healthy and responsible behaviors." (Rogge, cited from ICDD, 2010: 13).

Even one of the volunteers stated that there is a need to invest in our youth stating, ***"...that's why they organize the Youth Olympic Games to keep the children interested in sports. Because people are disappearing, they stay till a certain level and then continue their studies etc, etc"*** (Volunteer 2).

Developing Olympic Education programs in schools will not only help the MOC market its brand, but also indirectly act as a third party in helping the IOC disseminate its Olympic values. Ultimately having Olympism as a strategy to promote the MOC brand will attract various stakeholders because the idea in itself only promotes positive messages and associations. Having a structured, serious and consistent outreach program in schools, through athletes and other qualified staff, would help the MOC gain prestige among students and schools. It will highlight the importance of sport and the values it entails. Although the focus should always be to invest in promising athletes who are ultimately the main tangible products of the MOC, highlighting Olympism and the values of sport would certainly support and reinforce this concept.

No matter what the prevailing situation may be, marketing is an integral and essential part of an organization which is aiming to strengthen its equity and wants to be seen as a prestigious and high quality brand. Although the MOC is seen in a very positive light, by not focusing on marketing, branding and exploiting the relationships it has with its affiliated stakeholders to co-create value, the MOC's equity is not reaching its potential. The Maltese Olympic Committee should be pro-active and invest in its marketing sector and work closely with its stakeholders and try, as much as possible to exploit these relationships in a positive way to co-create value together.

### ***5.3 Limitations and Further Recommendations***

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When interviews are used as a tool for data collection, results tend to be high in validity but then score low in reliability. This makes the research not representative of the whole population and therefore general deduction could not be inferred. To increase reliability other data collection methods could have been used to co-relate data such as distributing structured questionnaires on a larger scale. More participants could have been included in this research to be able to generalize and have a broader idea of the branding of the MOC. Unfortunately, the time and space constraints posed by the regulations of this Masters thesis limited the amount of research done. The data collected reached a certain degree of saturation and highlighted unanimously such aspects as a weak marketing sector and



insufficient funds. Therefore, the study was probably accurate on many counts and serious attention should be directed towards these areas of concern. However, with more time, a larger population and a greater cross section of participants such as non-Olympic sport federations, other directors of the MOC (including the marketing director), athletes, local councils and spectators would have produced more beneficial and more in depth results. This in turn would open up more areas for future investigation and research.

Although the research sheds light on the present situation within the MOC, it is still not complete and further research could be done. It would be interesting to include other stakeholders who were mentioned during this research but were not part of this study, such as, non-Olympic sport federations and previous stakeholders who terminated their contract with the MOC. The involvement of non-Olympic sport federations would help to understand the reason why these sport federations are affiliated with the MOC. Moreover, by involving stakeholders whom once were part of the MOC such as previous sponsors, would help to give some thoughts and suggestions on what were the main issues involved in the termination of their contract with the MOC.

Even though the MOC is the only Olympic organization represented on the island, it would be interesting to co-relate the MOC with other Olympic Committees, having similar population size of Malta such as Iceland, Luxemburg and Montenegro. Investigating other Olympic Committees would help to understand and scrutinize the importance of elite sport and branding of an Olympic Committee in similar countries. It would be interesting to investigate:

- The amount of funding which is given from outside sources.
- Different marketing strategies used.
- The relationship with their various stakeholders.
- Results in competitions.
- The sources which affect their brand equity.
- The perception of locals/spectators towards their respective Olympic brand.
- Brand management.

Other possible and useful recommendations would be to conduct a consumer and brand research on a larger scale, targeting a larger population, related with the MOC brand. These studies would help the Maltese Olympic Committee understand how consumers perceive the MOC and what actions the Olympic Committee could do to reach out more its audience. In fact, when interviewing the spectators, both mentioned the lack of Public Relations within the MOC. This suggests that there is a need to create more communication and identify those strategies which will help to reinforce and strengthen those messages related to nationalism, unity, Maltese identity in sport and ultimately the sense of pride among the Maltese citizens.

This study has endeavored to show the importance of marketing and branding of an organization such as the MOC and how building sustainable relationships with the multiple networks of stakeholders can help to co-create value. In some way or another, the MOC:

- Has an existing and developed network of stakeholders.
- Is perceived as the National sport entity on the Maltese Islands.
- Developed very positive relationships with its various stakeholders.
- Offers great opportunities to create joint activities.

Then again, having a marketing sector that is partly non-existent impeded the Maltese Olympic Committee in exploiting these relationships to co-create value with the result that the brand is not being leveraged, spectators do not feel part of this national Olympic family and sponsors are not gaining anything out of this relationship. Having a weak marketing sector may in the coming years have an effect on existing stakeholders such as sponsors, who having gained little out of this relationship, may decide to move on to other ventures in the future. Furthermore, this research supports the literature which suggests that having close relationships with various stakeholders can help organizations co-create value and together with planned marketing strategies and branding helps strengthen one's own brand equity.

This research is only the 'tip of the iceberg' seeking to create an awareness of the MOC's role in the development of sport in Malta so that it can eventually be recognized as a serious contender in international competitions. This will require a lot of hard work,

cooperation and sufficient resources to achieve this goal. With its already established stakeholders, the MOC has the chance to be received in a truly positive light to provide great opportunities for its stakeholders and thus ensure reinvestment. However, to maintain strong relationships the MOC must utilize resources wisely.

In today's society, due to economic fluctuations, interdependence among various business corporations has become synonymous to survival. In order to survive in this fast-growing and competitive business world, companies have to join forces to produce products which attract customers' attention and produce something innovative. Furthermore, marketing strategies have to be built on this same principle that is, having the sum greater than the parts will generate more value for those entities joined together. This joint effort among companies whether it's directly or indirectly connected will affect the brand's equity of the main company, where value and quality is assured by the brand and commitment, trust and loyalty are forthcoming from its consumers.

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## Appendix 1

(i) KMS (Kunsill Malti għall-iSport) – Maltese Council for Sport. In January, 2003 the Sport Law was brought into effect and this gave the KMS, "the responsibility to promote sport, to implement Government Policy on Sport, to register Sport organizations and to establish dispute resolution structures. The KMS is the main public promoter of health, social and economic benefits by sport to society"<sup>1</sup>. In this study the KMS will represent the government as it represents the Sport Law and every sport body in Malta works directly with the KMS.

(ii) Local Councils - In 1993 the Local Government was approved by the Maltese Parliament and presently 68 Local Councils are set up which serve as a regulatory mechanism for Councils' operations. According to Act No. XIII of 2001 established that: "The State shall adopt a system of local government whereby the territory of Malta shall be divided into such number of localities as may by law be from time to time determined, each locally to be administered by a Local Council elected by the residents of the locality..."<sup>2</sup>

(iii) Logħob tal-Pajjiżi ż-Żgħir - Games of the Small States of Europe also referred to as G.S.S.E. These are Games which are held every two years for European countries with a population of less than one million inhabitants<sup>3</sup>.

(iv) MOC - The Malta Olympic Committee was established in 1928 having, "supreme and exclusive authority on matters relating to representation of Malta at the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, the Mediterranean Games, the Games of the Small States of Europe and other international Games, which fall under the jurisdiction of the MOC. Our main commitment is that of encouraging, promoting and funding Maltese athletes'

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<sup>1</sup> KMS. (2012). *Mission Statement*. Retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012 from [www.sportmalta.org.mt/about-us](http://www.sportmalta.org.mt/about-us)

<sup>2</sup> Government of Malta. (n.d.). *Department for Local Government*. Retrieved on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2012 from <https://opm.gov.mt/dipartiment-gvern-lokali?l=1>

<sup>3</sup> LieGames 2011. (n.d.). *History of the Games of the Small States of Europe*. Retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012 from <http://www.liegames2011.li/Kleinstaatenspiele/Geschichte/tabid/713/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

participation at these Games and through support programs to improve their level of competitiveness"<sup>4</sup>.

The MOC is run by a Council which is made up of the:

- Executive committee composed of 13 members each having a specific role and;
- 2 members from each of the 47 affiliated national sport associations.

(v) MQS (Minimum Qualifying Score) – Score needed in some sports to participate in the international Games in which committees (such as the MOC) takes part. They are set up by the committee and are handed to the respective sport federations. In order for athletes to participate in international games they have to obtain a score which satisfies the requirements of the committee.

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<sup>4</sup> MOC. (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012 from [www.nocmalta.org/page.asp?p=4740&l=1](http://www.nocmalta.org/page.asp?p=4740&l=1)

## Appendix 2

### Interview Questions: Sponsors, Media, Sport Associations, Government, Volunteers, Workers and Athletes

#### Section A: Relationship

**1. Can you please tell me about your background (jobs, experiences, sport involvement ...)?**

Tista' jekk jgħoġbok tgħidli fuq il-*background* tiegħek (xogħol, esperjenzi, l-involvement tiegħek fl-isport...)?

**2. How long have you been involved with the MOC?**

Kemm ilek jew ilkom involuti ma' l-MOC?

**3. Please describe your company's/ personal/ federation's involvement with the Olympics/MOC?**

Tista' tiddiskrivi l-involvement tal-kumpanija/ personali/ tal-federazzjoni ma' l-Olympics/MOC?

**4. What are three words that come to mind to describe your relationship with the MOC?**

X'inhuma tlitt kelmiet li jiġuk f'moħħok meta tiddiskrivi r-relazzjoni tiegħek ma' l-MOC?

**5. What are your main contributions towards the MOC?**

X'inhuma l-kontribuzzjonijiet/dmirijiet li tagħmel lejn l-MOC?

**6. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma dawk l-aspetti li jsaħħu l-MOC?

**7. Can you please explain the type of relationship that you have developed with the MOC? Long term, short term, positive, negative, etc.**

Tista', jekk jgħoġbok, tispjega r-relazzjoni li żvillupajt/żviluppajtu ma' l-MOC? *Long term, short term, pożittiva, negattiva, eċċ.*

**8. Are you satisfied with your relationship with the MOC? Why? What are the strengths? Weaknesses? Threats? Opportunities?**

Sodisfatt b'din it-tip ta' relazzjoni ma' l-MOC? Għaliex? Xi jsaħħahjew idgħajjef? Tgħeddiet jew biża'? Opportunitajiet?

**9. What are the reasons of your association with the MOC?**

X'inhuma r-raġuni għaliex ridtu/ridt tigi assoċjat ma' l-MOC?

**10. What kind of value do you get from your relationship with the Olympics and MOC? Explain.**

X'tip ta' valur jew kwalitajiet tibbenefika minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-Olympics jew MOC? Spjega.

**11. What do you most value in the relationship? Why?**

X'tgħożż l-iktar minn din ir-relazzjoni? Għaliex?

**12. Who do you see as stakeholders of the MOC? (Have respondent list them).**

Lil min tara bħala *stakeholders* (membri oħra li b'xi mod huma assoċjati) ma' l-MOC?

**13. Are you in contact with other stakeholders who are affiliated with the MOC? (If yes) Can you kindly give some examples (school programs, athletes, media, sponsors, government, spectators, sport associations, etc)? (If yes) how do you work with other stakeholders? Please explain each relationship. Do you feel these relationships create value for your company? Why/How? (Perhaps I will need to get them to explain each one).**

Qieghed f'kuntatt ma' l-*stakeholders* l-oħra li huma affiljati ma' l-MOC? (Jekk iva) tista' jekk jgħoġbok ittni ftit eżempji? (Jekk iva), kif taħdem ma' l-*stakeholders* l-oħra? Tista' tispjega kull relazzjoni? Tahseb li dawn ir-relazzjonijiet jgħinu biex jinholq ċertu valur u image lill- kumpanija? Għaliex/Kif?

**14. Do you think those relationships with other stakeholders create value for the MOC (why/how)? Look for links and interrelationships and be prepared to ask other questions depending on answer.**

Tahseb li daww ir-relazzjonijiet li toħolqu intom bħala *stakeholders* bejnietkom jgħinu biex toħolqu valur jew image lil MOC? Għaliex/Kif?

### **Section B: Brand questions**

**15. What are three words that come to mind when you see the Olympic brand (show the rings by themselves)**

X'inhuma tlitt kelmiet li jgħuk f'moħħok meta tara d-ditta/*brand* ta' l-Olympics?

**16. What are three words that come to mind when you see the MOC brand? Show the MOC brand.**

X'inhuma tlitt kelmiet li jgħuk f'moħħok meta tara d-ditta/*brand* ta' l-MOC?

**17. What do you feel are the strengths of the MOC brand? Weaknesses?**

Xi thoss li huma daww l-affarijiet li jsaħħu l-MOC bħala ditta? Djufijiet?

**18. How do you think the MOC is perceived as a brand by the consumers/public opinion?**

Kif tahseb li n-nies/l-konsumaturi jipperċepixxu (iharsu lejn/ l-impressjoni) l-MOC bħala ditta?

**19. What are the key challenges which the MOC faces as a brand?**

X'taħseb li huma *ċ-challenges* li l-MOC taffaċċja bhala brand?

**20. Do you feel you get value from being associated with this brand?**

Taħseb li int jew il-kumpanija tiggwadanjaw ċertu valur jew image billi tkunuassoċjati ma' din id-ditta?

**21. What strategies can the MOC adopt to improve its brand?**

X'taħseb li huma dawk l-istrategġiji li l-MOC għandha taddotta biex issaħħaħ l-*brand* tagħha?

**22. Do you think that stakeholders, who are affiliated with the MOC, can improve or damage the brand's quality/equity [image, perception, reputation, etc]? Why?**

**Examples.**

Taħseb li, dawn l-*stakeholders* (membri) li huma affiljati ma'l-MOC, jistgħu, jgħinu jew jiddamigjaw l-kwalita/ekwita' tal-brand? Għaliex? Eżempju?

**23. Do you think that the resources which are shared and exchanged, between the MOC and its stakeholders, can contribute to create value? Why?**

Taħseb li r-rizorsi li jiġu maqsuma jew skambjati bejn l-MOC u l-istakeholders jikkontribwixxu biex jinħoloq ċertu valur? Għaliex?

**24. Would you like to add other comments related to what we have just discussed?**

Trid iżżid xi kummenti oħra relatati ma' dak li ddiskutejna?

## Section C

### Sponsorship Questions

**Do you have a formal plan related to your sponsorship of the MOC (i.e. strategies, objectives, tactical programs, evaluations, ambush plan, etc.)? Please elaborate.**

Għandkom xi pjan formali relatat ma' l-*sponsorship* ma' l-MOC?

**In your opinion, what are the main benefits in being a sponsor of the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li tkun *sponsor* ta' l-MOC?

**What do you feel are the key components that pushed your company to sponsor the MOC?**

Xi thoss li huma dawk ir-raġunijiet li heġġew l-kumpanija tiegħek tkun *sponsor* ta' l-MOC?

**In your opinion, what are some of the weaknesses of sponsoring the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-iżvantaggi li tkun *sponsor* ta' l-MOC?



**What do you feel are the biggest threats which can have an effect on the sponsorship and marketing agreement with the MOC?**

Xi thoss li huma l-ikbar beżat jew theddid li jistgħu jkollhom effett fuq l-*sponsorship* jew *marketing agreement* ma' l-MOC?

**Any other comments related to improving relationships, brand, sponsorship or overall value gained from your relationship with MOC?**

Tixtieq iżżid xi kummenti relatati ma' kif tista' issaħħaħ ir-relazzjoni, *brand*, *sponsorship* jew x'valur tiggwadanja minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-MOC?

### **Media Related Questions**

**Do you have a formal plan related to the media coverage of the MOC (i.e. broadcasting rights, features programs, strategies, objectives, evaluations, etc.)? Please elaborate.**

Għandkom xi pjan formali relatat ma' kif tkopru l-media fuq l-MOC? Elabora.

**In your opinion, what are the main benefits of broadcasting or publishing material related with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li xxandar jew tippublika materjal relatat ma' l-MOC?

**In your opinion, what are some of the weaknesses of broadcasting or publishing material related with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma dawk l-izvantaggi li xxandar jew tippublika materjal relatat ma' l-MOC?

**Do you have exclusivity or special rights over other local media agency? Why? Examples?**

Għandkom xi tip ta' eskklusivita' jew drittijiet speċjali fuq l-*media* lokali l-oħra? Għaliex? Eżempji?

**Any other comments related to improving relationships, brand, or overall value gained from your relationship with MOC?**

Tixtieq iżżid xi kummenti relatati ma' kif tista' issaħħaħ ir-relazzjoni, *brand* jew x'valur tiggwadanja minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-MOC?

### **Questions asked to Sport Associations**

**In your opinion, what are the main benefits of being affiliated with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li tkun assoċjat ma' l-MOC?

**Do you see any weaknesses or disadvantages being associated with the MOC? Why?**

Tara xi żvantaggi li tkun assoċjat ma' l-MOC? Għaliex?

**What do you feel are the biggest threats which can have an effect on the relationship you have with the MOC?**

Xi thoss li huma l-ikbar beżat jew theddid li jistgħu jkollhom effett fuq ir-relazzjoni li hloqti ma' l-MOC?

**Any other comments related to improving relationships, brand or overall value gained from your relationship with the MOC?**

Tixtieq iżżid xi kummenti relatati ma' kif tista' issaħħaħ ir-relazzjoni, *brand* jew x'valur tiggwadanja minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-MOC?

**Questions asked to the Government**

**Do you have a formal plan or agreement with the MOC ( i.e. sport programs on a national level, strategies, objectives, evaluations, etc.)? Please elaborate.**

Għandkom xi tip ta' pjan formali jew *agreement* ma' l-MOC? Jekk jgħogbok elabora.

**In your opinion, what are the main benefits of being affiliated with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li tkun assoċjat ma' l-MOC?

**In your opinion, what are some of the weaknesses or disadvantages working with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek tara xi żvantaġġi li taħdem u tkun assoċjat ma' l-MOC? Għaliex?

**What do you feel are the biggest threats which can have an effect on your relationship with the MOC?**

Xi thoss li huma l-ikbar beżat jew theddid li jistgħu jkollhom effett fuq ir-relazzjoni li hloqti ma' l-MOC?

**Any other comments related to improving relationships, brand or overall value gained from your relationship with MOC?**

Tixtieq iżżid xi kummenti relatati ma' kif tista' issaħħaħ ir-relazzjoni, *brand* jew x'valur tiggwadanja minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-MOC?

**Questions related to Volunteerism**

**In your opinion, what are the main benefits volunteering with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li tkun voluntir ma' l-MOC?

**In your opinion, what are some of the weaknesses being a volunteer with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek tara xi żvantaġġi li tkun voluntir ma' l-MOC? Għaliex?

**Any other comments related to improving relationships, services, volunteerism or overall value gained from your relationship with the MOC?**

Tixtieq iżżid xi kummenti relatati ma' kif tista' issaħħaħ ir-relazzjoni, *brand* jew x'valur tiggwadanja minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-MOC?

### **Questions related to Employment**

**Do you have a formal plan or agreement related to your employment with the MOC (i.e. work contract, terms and conditions, objectives, tactical programs, evaluations, etc.)? Please elaborate.**

Għandekxi tip ta' pjan formali jew *agreement* relatat max-xogħol tiegħek ma' l-MOC? Jekk jgħoġbok elabora.

**In your opinion, what are the main benefits working with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li taħdem ma' l-MOC?

**In your opinion, what are some of the main disadvantages or setbacks working with the MOC? Why?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek x'inhuma l-iżvantaġġi prinċipali li taħdem ma' l-MOC? Għaliex?

**What do you feel are the biggest threats which can have an effect on your employment with the MOC?**

Xi thoss li huma l-ikbar beżat jew theddid li jistgħu jkollhom effett fuq ix-xogħol li għandek ma' l-MOC?

**Any other comments related to improving relationships or overall value gained from your relationship with MOC?**

Tixtieq iżżid xi kummenti relatati ma' kif tista' issaħħaħ ir-relazzjoni, *brand* jew x'valur tiggwadanja minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-MOC?

### **Questions asked to Athletes**

**Do you have a formal plan or agreement related with the MOC (i.e. rules and regulations, code of conduct, obligations, contract, tests, etc.)? Please elaborate.**

Għandek xi tip ta' pjan formali jew *agreement* relatat ma' l-MOC? Jekk jgħoġbok elabora.

**In your opinion, what are the main benefits being associated with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li tkun assoċjat ma' l-MOC?

**In your opinion, what are some of the weaknesses being an athlete associated with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma l-iżvantaġġi li tkun atleta assoċjat ma' l-MOC?

**Any other comments related to improving relationships with the MOC?**

Hemm xi kummenti oħra relatati ma' kif tista' timpruvja r-relazzjoni li għandek ma' l-MOC?

## Appendix 3

### Interview Questions: Malta Olympic Committee

#### Section A: Relationships Questions

**1. How long have you been involved with the Maltese Olympic Committee?**

Kemm ilek involut mal-Kumitat Olimpiku Malti

**2. Can you please tell me about your background and responsibilities within the MOC?**

Jekk jgħogbok tista' tgħidli dwar il-*background* tiegħek u r-responsibilitajiet fi ħdan l-MOC?

**3. What are the reasons why you wanted to be involved with the MOC?**

X'inhuma r-raġunijiet għaliex ridt tkun involut ma' l-MOC?

**4. What are three words that come to mind when describing the MOC to an outsider?**

X'inhuma tliet kelmiet li jgħuk f'moħħok meta diddiskrivi l-MOC lil xi hadd barrani?

**5. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'inhuma dawk l-affarjiet li jsahhu l-MOC?

**6. Who are the main stakeholders affiliated with the MOC?**

Min huma l-*stakeholders* prinċipali li huma affiljati ma l-MOC?

**7. How do you work with your stakeholders? Please explain each relationship.**

Kif taħdmu ma l-*stakeholders* tagħkom? Jekk jogħogbok spjega kull relazzjoni.

**8. Can you please explain the type of relationship you try to create with your stakeholders?**

Jekk jgħogbok tista' tispejga x'tip ta' relazzjoni tippruvaw toholqu ma' l-*stakeholders* tagħkom?

**9. Are there any stakeholders who you think are more important than others? Who? Why?**

Hemm xi *stakeholders* li huma iktar importanti minn oħrajn? Min? Għaliex?

**10. Are you satisfied with your relationship with your stakeholders? Why? What are the strengths? Weaknesses? Threats? Opportunities?**

Sodsifatt bir-relazzjoni ma' l-*stakeholders* li għandkom? Għaliex?

**11. What kind of value do you get from your relationship with your stakeholders? Explain.**

X'tip ta' valur jew gwadan tiehdu mir-relazzjonijiet li ghandkom ma l-*stakeholders*? Spjega.

**12. What do you value most in these various relationships? Why?**

X'tgħożż l-iktar minn dawn ir-relazzjonijiet? Għaliex?

**13. What else could be done to improve your relationship with your stakeholders? Can you give some examples?**

X'iktar jista' isir biex ittejjeb ir-relazzjonijiet li għandek ma l-*stakeholders*? Tista' issemmi xi ftit eżempji?

**14. Are you aware if any of your stakeholders indirectly communicate and/or work together? Can you kindly give some examples (school programs, athletes, media, sponsors, government, spectators, sport associations, etc)? How do you see these relationship?**

Int konxju jew taf jekk hemmx xi *stakeholders* li indirettament jikkomunikaw jew/u jaħdmu flimkien? Tista' ssemmi xi eżempji? *school programs, athletes, media, sponsors, government, spectators, sport associations*, eċċ.

Kif thares lejn dawn ir-relazzjonijiet?

**15. Do you think those relationships with other stakeholders create value for the MOC (why/why not/how)? Example athletes and school visits, sponsors and media, etc. Look for links and interrelationship and be prepared to ask other questions depending on answer).**

Taħseb li dawk ir-relazzjonijiet li jeżistu bejn l-*stakeholders* tiegħek b'xi mid joħolqu ċertu valur jew kwalita lil MOC? Għaliex? *Example athletes and school visits, sponsors and media*, eċċ.

### **Section B: Brand Related Questions**

**16. What are three words that comes to mind when you see the Olympic brand (show the rings by themselves)**

X'inhuma tlitt kelmiet li jiġuk f'moħħok meta tara d-ditta/*brand* ta' l-Olympics?

**17. What are three words that come to mind when you think about the MOC brand? Show the MOC brand.**

X'inhuma tlitt kelmiet li jiġuk f'moħħok meta tara d-ditta/*brand* ta' l-MOC?

**18. What do you feel are the strengths of the MOC brand? And Weaknesses?**

Xi thoss li huma dawk l-affarijiet li jsaħhu l-MOC bhala ditta? Djufijiet?

**19. How do you think the MOC is perceived as a brand by the consumers/public opinion?**

Kif taħseb li n-nies/l-konsumatur jipperċepixxi (iharsu lejn/ l-impresjoni) l-MOC bhala ditta?

**20. What are the key challenges which the MOC faces as a brand?**

X'taħseb li huma *c-challenges* li l-MOC taffaċja bhala *brand*?

**21. Do you feel you get value from being associated with other stakeholders?**

Taħseb li l-MOC tiggwadanja ċertu valur jew image billi tkunu assoċjati ma' l-*stakeholders*?

**22. What strategies can the MOC adopt to improve its brand?**

X'taħseb li huma dawk l-istrateġiji li l-MOC għandha taddotta biex issaħħah l-*brand* tagħha?

**23. Do you think that stakeholders, who are affiliated with the MOC, can improve or damage the brand's quality/equity? Why? Examples?**

Taħseb li, dawn l-istakeholders (membri) li huma affiljati ma' l-MOC, jistgħu, jgħinu jew jiddamigjaw l-kwalita/ekwita' tal-*brand*? Għaliex?? Eżempju?

**24. Do you think that the resources which are shared and exchanged, between the MOC and its stakeholders, can contribute to create value and improve your reputation? Why?**

Taħseb li r-rizorsi li jiġu maqsuma jew skambjati bejn l-MOC u l-istakeholders jikkontribwixxu biex jinholq ċertu valur? Għaliex?

**25. On the other hand do you think the MOC produces certain value to the affiliated stakeholders?**

Min-naħa l-oħra, taħseb li l-MOC tipproduċi ċertu valur lil l-*stakeholders* tagħha?

### **Section C: Stakeholders Related Questions**

**26. Do you have formal plans, agreements related to your stakeholders (i.e. strategies, rules and regulations, terms and conditions, objectives, tactical programs, evaluations, ambush plan, etc.)? Please elaborate.**

Għandkom xi pjan formali, *agreements* relatati ma' l-*stakeholders* tagħkom?*i.e. strategies, rules and regulations, terms and conditions, objectives, tactical programs, evaluations, ambush plan, etc.*). Elabora.

**27. In your opinion, what do you think are the main benefits which your stakeholders gain from being associated with the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, x'taħseb li huma l-benefiċċji prinċipali li l-*stakeholders* tagħkom jiggwadanjaw billi ikunu assoċjati magħkom?

**28. Do you feel that the MOC is one of the leading local sport brands on the island? Kindly explain.**

Thoss li l-MOC hija wahda mil-*leading local sportbrands* fil-gżira? Spejga.

**29. In your opinion, do you see any weaknesses or drawbacks regarding the agreements or relationships with your various stakeholders? Explain.**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, tara li hemm xi żvantaġġi jew nuqqasijiet dwar *agreements* jew ralzzjonijiet mad-diversi *stakeholders* li għandkom? Spejga.

**30. What do you feel are the biggest threats which might have an effect on your stakeholders' decision to terminate their association with the MOC?**

Xi thoss li huma l-ikbar beżat jew theddid li jistghu jkollhom effett fuq d-deċiżjonijiet ta' l-*stakeholders* biex itemmu din l-assoċjazzjoni minn ma' l-MOC?

**31. Any other comments related to improving relationships, brand or overall value gained from your relationship with your stakeholders?**

Tixtieq iżżid xi kummenti relatati ma' kif tista' issaħħah ir-relazzjoni, *brand*, *sponsorship* jew x'valur tiggwadanjaw minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-*stakeholders* tagħkom?

## Appendix 4

### Interview Questions: Spectators

#### Section A: Relationships kind of questions

**1. Can you please tell me about your background related to sports?**

Jekk jghoġbok tista' tghidli fuq l-*background* tiegħek relatat ma' l-isports?

**2. How long have you been following and/or supporting the Olympic Team?**

Kemm ilek issegwi u/jew żżomm mat-tim Olimpiku?

**3. How do you involve yourself and contribute to the MOC and/or the Olympic Team?**

Kif tinvolvi ruħek jew tagħti l-kontribut tiegħek lejn l-MOC u/jew it-tim Olimpiku?

**4. As a spectator can you mention three words to describe your relationship with the MOC?**

Bħala spettatur, tista' issemmi tlitt kelmiet li tiddiskrivi r-relazzjoni tiegħek ma' l-MOC?

**5. Are you satisfied with your relationship with the MOC (why or why not)? What are the strengths? Weaknesses? Threats? Opportunities?**

Sodisfatt bir-relazzjoni tiegħek ma' l-MOC? Għaliex? Xi jsaħħaħ din ir-relazzjoni? jew idghajjef? Jew jhedded? Jew x'opportunitajiet issib?

**6. What are the main reasons why you follow the Olympic Team?**

X'inhuma r-raġunijiet principali għaliex issegwi t-tim Olimpiku?

**7. Do you follow a specific sport or the Olympic Team in general? Example? Why?**

Issegwi xi sport partikolari jew it-tim Olimpiku, ġenerali? Eżempju? Għaliex?

**9. What kind of value do you get from your relationship with the Olympics and the MOC? Explain.**

X'tip ta' valur tigwadanja minn din ir-relazzjoni ma' l-Olympics jew MOC?

**10. What do you value most in this relationship? Why?**

X'tgħożż l-iktar minn din ir-relazzjoni? Għaliex?

**11. Who do you see as partners or stakeholders of the MOC (have respondent list them).**

Lil min tara bħala *partners* jew *stakeholders* ma' l-MOC? (Semmihom)



**12. Are you in contact with other stakeholders who are affiliated with the MOC? (If yes) Can you kindly give some examples (school programs, athletes, media, sponsors, government, spectators, sport associations, etc)? (If yes) how do you work with other stakeholders? Please explain each relationship.**

Qieghed f'kuntatt ma' l-*stakeholders* l-oħra li huma affiljati ma' l-MOC?(*school programs, athletes, media, sponsors, government, spectators, sport associations, etc*) (Jekk iva) tista jekk jgħoġbok ittini ftit eżempji? (Jekk iva), kif taħdem ma' l-*stakeholders* l-oħra?Tista' tispjega kull relazzjoni? Taħseb li dawn ir-relazzjonijiet jgħinu biex jinholq ċertu valur u *image* lil kumpanija? Għaliex/kif?

**13. Do you think those relationships with other stakeholders create value [i.e. improve its image and reputation] for the MOC (why/why not/how)? Look for links and interrelationships and be prepared to ask other questions depending on answer).**

Taħseb li dawk ir-relazzjonijiet li toħolqu intom bħala *stakeholders* bejnietkom jgħinu biex toħolqu valur jew *image* lil MOC? Għaliex/Kif?

### **Section B: Brand questions**

**14. What are three words that come to mind when you see the Olympic brand (show the rings by themselves)**

X'inhuma tlitt kelmiet li jiġuk f'moħħok meta tara d-ditta/*brand* ta' l-Olympics?

**15. What are three words that come to mind when you see the MOC brand? (Show the MOC brand)**

X'inhuma tlitt kelmiet li jiġuk f'moħħok meta tara d-ditta/*brand* ta' l-MOC?

**16. What do you feel are the strengths of the MOC brand? Weaknesses?**

Xi thoss li huma dawk l-affarijiet li jsaħħu l-MOC bħala ditta? Djufijiet?

**17. How do you perceive the MOC as a brand?**

Bħala ditta, kif thares jewtipperċepixxi (l-impressjoni) l-MOC?

**18. What are the key challenges which the MOC faces as a brand?**

X'taħseb li huma *c-challenges* li l-MOC taffaċja bħala brand?

**19. Do you feel you get value [reputation or prestige] from being associated with this brand?**

Thoss li tigwadanja ċertu valur (reputazzjoni jew prestiġu) billi tkun assoċjat ma' din id-ditta?

**20. What strategies can the MOC adopt to improve its brand?**

X'inhuma dawk l-istrateġiji li l-MOC għandha taddotta biex issaħħaħl-*brand* tagħha?

**21. Do you think that stakeholders, who are affiliated with the MOC, can improve or damage the brand's quality/equity? Why? Examples?**

Taħseb li l-*stakeholders* li huma affiljati ma l-MOC, jew itejbu jew iħassru l-kwalita/ekwita ta l-MOC? Ghaliex? Eżempji?

**22. Do you think that the resources which are shared and exchanged between MOC and its stakeholders, can contribute to create value? Why?**

Taħseb li r-riżorsi li jiġu maqsuma jew skambjati bejn l-MOC u l-*stakeholders* jikkontribwixxu biex jinħoloq ċertu valur? Ghaliex?

### **Section C: Product Related Questions**

**23. As a spectator do you feel you are contributing something to the MOC?**

Bħala spettatur taħseb li qiegħed tikkontribwixxi xi haġa lil MOC?

**24. Have you attended some events to support the Olympic or national teams? Why? Examples?**

Ġieli mort f'xi avvenimenti biex tagħti support lit-tim Olimpiku jew Nazzjonali? Ghaliex? Eżempji?

**25. Are you satisfied with the product which the MOC provides? Why?**

Inti soddisfatt mil-prodott li l-MOC toffri? Ghaliex?

**26. In your opinion what could be done to improve the product or services of the MOC?**

Fl-opinjoni tiegħek x'jistax isir biex l-MOC ittejjeb l-prodott u s-servizz tagħha?

**27. Given the opportunity, would you buy MOC related merchandise? Would you expect the products to be relatively cheap, moderate or expensive? Why?**

Jekk ikollok l-opportunita, tasal biex tixtri oġġetti relatati ma' l-MOC? Bħala prezz, tistenna li l-prodott ikun relattivament irħis hafna, moderat jew għoli? Ghaliex?

**28. If you had to attend an international sport event taking place in Malta, are you prepared to pay or do you expect to enter for free? Why?**

Li kieku kellek taddendi xi kompetizzjoni internazzjonali li ssir Malta, lest li thallas jew tidhol b'xejn? Ghaliex?

**29. Would you like to add other comments related to the MOC, partners, Olympic Team, etc?**

Hemm xi affarijiet oħra li trid iżżid li huma relatati ma' MOC, partners, tim Olimpiku, eċċ?