4

The game is the product

Proposition 2 will discuss, how managerial efforts, off the field, between the matches, can and will affect the outcome of the game, ‘During the match/on the field’. The match is the product, which is delivered by individuals that have to be well integrated to beat the competing team. Normally, a well thought through playing style, a good culture and a positive attitude are necessary elements to secure success. Without an advanced understanding of the conceptual ‘scientific’ framework and its practical implication the team will not win.

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Introduction to the game

Assuming that there are two different types of activities, the activity on the pitch (Science) – ‘do things right’ – and the activity off the pitch (Administration) ‘doing the right things’, then it is the players on the pitch that produce the ‘physical service’ (Science), while off the pitch it is the Administration that produces the ‘intellectual service’. On the pitch the team is performing a ‘playing style’ and off the pitch the Administration performs a ‘thought style’. The interface between these activities presents the challenge to success for football clubs. ‘Science’ shall have the ultimate power.

The ‘match’ is an event (see (f) in Chapter 3’s value captures), which means many different things. How will the game be perceived by the spectators and provide the right mood? The experiences are unique and very varied in football. A new Volvo car owner is satisfied in a different
way to the neighbor who is experiencing their fifth Volvo car purchase. Different users have different views of the new power plants supplied by ABB. The experience can certainly be perceived in different ways. It is important to note that while experience is created (it must be produced and delivered), the players of a football club prepare and develop their products and services.

It is not obvious what the status of a product is within the ‘entertainment’ sphere because different types of products and services are consumed simultaneously and their parts are difficult to discern as they are entangled and embedded with each other. The experiences of individual consumers vary. Psychologists believe that the five senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch – are important variables for describing and explaining experiences. The big worry is that no systematic attempt to operationalize the variables and to validate the measurements has been made.

A soccer club sells its product: the ‘match’. For many, the perception of the product is constantly changing, i.e. the perception of a fan is different before, during and after the match. What should marketers prioritize? In this book, the product is often just ‘match’ or the game. But even the players’ dribbling is typical of the ‘entertainment economy’. This chapter is therefore based more on description, variation, and providing relevant examples, rather than prediction and prescription.

In chapter 1.3 we discussed the different characteristics of three separate ‘industries’:

1. **Production**: this type of activity concerns the manufacturing of tangible products, which can be stored or made to order. Examples also may include service contracts or warranties stipulating that the delivered product performs according to given specifications, for instance, a mobile phone and its warranty. One tangible element in soccer is the arena/stadium (value capture (f)).

2. **Service**: this type of activity is generated and delivered simultaneously like cleaning, education and legal services. The quality of service is important and can often be analyzed as a series of events, which strengthen or weaken the reputation, the Brand.

3. **The experience industry**: this type of activity provides an adventure, an ‘experience’, which is characterized by the bounce/oscillation between the provider and recipient. For example, when a football player dribbles off an opponent, he hears the audience (or recipient of service) scream with joy. The player becomes bolder and tries the next time to dribble away two or three opponents and the crowd screams even more. This is a typical example of ‘experience oscillation’.