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### **Leveraging Olympic Sponsorship to Engage Employees: Evaluating Employee Engagement Tactics within the Canadian Tire Corporation**

Linda Margaret Aziz

*University of Windsor*, [azizl@uwindsor.ca](mailto:azizl@uwindsor.ca)

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**TITLE:** Leveraging Olympic Sponsorship to Engage Employees: Evaluating Employee Engagement Tactics within the Canadian Tire Corporation

**ABSTRACT:** Employee engagement (EE) is an internal marketing concept that aids in developing emotional commitment and shared values between the employee and the organization (Farrelly, Greyser, & Rogan, 2012). Using sport sponsorship, organizations can use sponsorship assets and a sports-inspired identity to improve EE and internal business performance. Although researchers have identified benefits and tactics (e.g., ticket incentive programs, meet and greets, merchandise programs) for engaging employees (e.g., Kuo & Shao, 2008; Papadimitriou, Dimitra, Apostolopoulou, Artemisia, & Theofanis, 2008), there is limited research evaluating the return on investment for these programs (Farrelly et al., 2012; Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2011). As part of its sponsorship of the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC) uses various tactics to engage employees via its sponsorship assets, such as: athlete appearances, Olympic viewing parties, and employee hosting trips to the Olympics.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of current Olympic-focused EE tactics used by the CTC. To accomplish this, a mixed methods approach involving a document analysis of past EE campaigns during the Sochi 2014 and Rio 2016 Olympic Games at CTC, a review of academic literature on EE evaluation practices, and semi-structured interviews with employees at CTC will be employed. Approximately two employees from each of the Internal Communications, Human Resources, Internal Events, and Sport Partnerships departments who are involved in EE planning and execution at the CTC Corporate Head Office ( $n \approx 8$ ) will be interviewed to determine areas of improvement for the current EE tactics. These combined learnings and evaluations will aid in developing recommendations for future Olympic-focused engagement programs orchestrated by the CTC.

## Reviewer #1

**Thank you for reviewing my abstract and providing helpful feedback, it is very appreciated!**  
**Please see some of the changes below that I have made to the abstract.**

One suggestion would be to include the target number of employees that are going to be interviewed in order to get an overall scope of the magnitude of the project.

- One to two individuals will be interviewed in each department at CTC in order to receive feedback from multiple departments in the organization. See (n ≈ 8) added to the abstract.

“Using sport sponsorship, organizations can use sponsorship assets and a sports-inspired identity to drive employee engagement and internal business performance.” Is this a driving factor or a factor used for improvement purposes? Maybe replace drive with to improve.

- I have replaced “drive” with “improve” as sport is being used to improve existing employee engagement.

“As part of its sponsorship with the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC) is seeking ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the various tactics used to engage employees via its Olympic sponsorship assets, such as athlete appearances, viewing parties, hosting trips, and so forth.” The “and so forth” in this sentence probably isn’t necessary. Please remove.

- I have removed “and so forth” from this sentence.

There was one inconsistency noted with the formatting of the references. There is a comma before the “&” sign in the reference (Farrelly, Greyser, & Rogan, 2012), whereas there was not a comma in the same place in the reference (Papadimitrou, Dimitra, Apostolopoulou, Artemisia & Theofanis, 2008). I have highlighted the two areas to show the difference. I would suggest changing one of these to keep the formatting consistent throughout the abstract. Please review all references to make sure it is consistent throughout.

- Thank you for pointing out the inconsistency with my references. I have ensured that all of the referencing follows the same format.

The reference (Macey, Schneider, Barbera, Young, 2011) should have a “&” sign between the authors Barbera and Young.

- I have added the “&” to this reference. Thank you for pointing this out [this omission](#).

Suggestion – Change the sentence to, “As part of its sponsorship agreement with the Canadian Olympic Committee ...”

- I have changed this sentence to reflect this suggestion. Thank you.

Suggestion - add the word “the” before the CTC acronym in the sentence, “By interviewing employees of the Internal Communications, Human Resources, Internal Events and Sport Partnership departments at CTC ...”

- Thank you for pointing this out – I have added “the” before CTC.

I don't think the word "key" is necessary in the sentence, "key areas of improvement for employee evaluation tactics will be identified". Please remove.

- I have removed the word "key".

When writing academic pieces, try to stray away from phrases using "I" or "We". Try to restructure the following sentence in such a way that the "We" is taken out. This is not a huge issue, just something to consider when completing a piece of academic writing ... "In addition, we will attempt to identify an alternative tool(s) or instrument(s) to evaluate employee engagement practices for future Olympic-focused employee engagement programs orchestrated by CTC through both quantitative and qualitative means."

- Thank you for the feedback here. I have ensured that personal pronouns are no longer included the abstract.

"In addition, we will attempt to identify an alternative tool(s) or instrument(s) to evaluate employee engagement practices for future Olympic-focused employee engagement programs orchestrated by CTC through both quantitative and qualitative means." Suggestion - Maybe replace means with methods to make it clearer.

- Thank you for the suggestion. I have replaced "means" with "methods".

## **Reviewer # 2**

It is unclear how the CTC is "seeking ways to evaluate the effectiveness of various tactics used" – how are they "seeking"? - How is employee engagement currently evaluated in the literature? What are some examples of tools or instruments used?

- The phrase "seeking" has been removed. The methods being used in this study, as well as the purpose of the study have been stated in order to clearly show what we are attempting to evaluate. Due to limited space, current evaluation tactics in literature will be outlined in the study, and this literature review is also being used as a method for this study.

What are viewing parties? Trips to where and with whom? More details are need here to clarify these engagement activities for the Reader

- I have added a bit more detail to this area. Thank you for pointing this out.

Avoid slang – e.g., "so forth" – be specific by listing specific examples

- Thank you for pointing this out – I have removed this to avoid the use of slang in the abstract.

How exactly is employment engagement explored via "sport sponsorship"? How many employees will be sampled? How many stores? Is this Nationwide? This is not clear. How are you "assessing" current evaluation techniques – via interviews? Who is conducting the interviews? Are the questions standardized? How will the answers be evaluated? What statistics will be used? Will the data then be used to identify alternative tools?

This study has not yet been completed. My faculty mentor and I will use current research in the area, best evaluation practices in the industry, as well as interviews from 1-2 employees from each of the departments to provide suggestions of improvement for the organization. The study will only evaluate the corporate employee engagement practices,

not on the retail level. Due to the limited amount of space and characters for this abstract (250-300 words), further detail into the exact methods being used are difficult to portray.

I have added that three different methods will be used in this study.

What is the central hypothesis of the work? What are the anticipated results/conclusions?

- As this is an exploratory study, no working hypothesis have been established at this time.