

Weakness in AS Monaco FC's Brand Promotion and Strategies to Revitalize the Club

Xingjian Liang

Nanjing Foreign Language School, 210008 Nanjing, China

1911511224@mail.sit.edu.cn

Abstract. AS Monaco FC, having a long history and various honors, is a club in Ligue 1. No matter how successful it is in the league, the attendance rate of Louis II Stade, the club's home stadium, is only about 40 percent, which is extremely low. The low attendance rate represents weak support and low passion of local fans, creating a gap in fandom, which will affect the future development of the club. There must have been some problems in the club's brand image, leading to such a negative situation. To discover the weaknesses and create some rational ways to revitalize AS Monaco FC, marketing strategies and brand-related knowledge are used to act as the theoretical basis. After analyzing, this paper discovers that AS Monaco FC's brand image and brand equity are negatively affected by its old stadium, local flourishing gambling industry, local famous F1 Prix industry, and poor relationship between the club and local rich people. To fix the problem, this paper summarized 3 strategies, including renovating the stadium and cooperating with local flourishing industries.

Keywords: Revitalize AS Monaco FC, gap of fandom, brand image, marketing strategies, renovate the stadium.

1. Introduction

Fandoms play an important role in a club's development. It truly can determine a team's success. Fans' support in the stadium can bring more passion to players on the pitch. Also, the purchasing ability of fans can help the club gain a huge number of economic revenues, including season tickets, jerseys, and club-related products. Thus, it is seriously critical for a team to create a positive fan base and relieve the gap in fandom. With the development of society, there are more ways but also more obstacles when the leader of a club tries to solidify the fan base and promote the brand. During this process, some football clubs reach success. Football clubs like Real Madrid, Manchester United, and Manchester City perform extremely well on brand promotion, allowing them to enlarge fan base and improve brand association. However, some football clubs meet troubles, failing to resemble fandoms. One of them is AS Monaco FC, which has the lowest attendance rate in Ligue 1, showing that there is a huge gap in fandom [1]. Analyzing recent conditions and figuring out several available marketing ways can help these teams earn more fandom and achieve revitalization. This paper focuses on helping AS Monaco FC solve its problem on the gap of fandom and brand promotion, using some marketing strategies, the concept of Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT), and brand knowledge to revitalize AS Monaco FC.

2. History of AS Monaco FC and Brief Information of Concepts

2.1. History of AS Monaco FC

Figure 1 shows AS Monaco FC's history from its establishment to now.

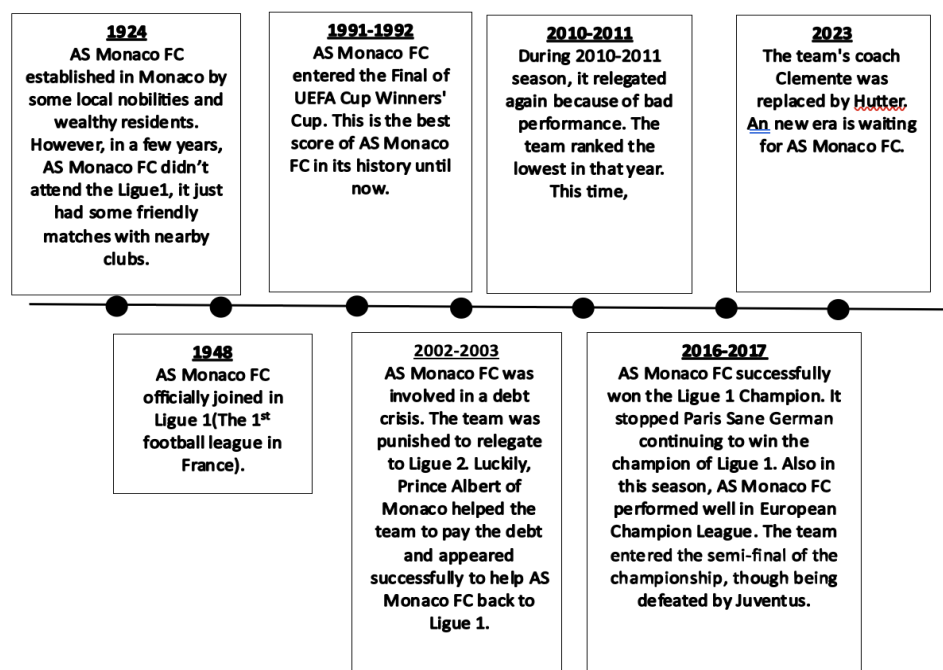


Figure 1. Timeline of AS Monaco FC's history

2.2. Brief Information of Concepts

2.2.1 Spectators and types of fandoms

Spectators and fans are both people who are there to watch and enjoy the performance of a team during matches. However, there are significant differences between spectators and fans. Spectators are individuals who attend sports events. They watch and experience the match, but sometimes they are not emotionally active toward the match. They may attend the sports event because their friends attend it, or they enjoy the social atmosphere there instead of coming to support the team. Compared to spectators, fans have stronger passion, interest, preference, enthusiasm, and emotional attachment to a particular team or player [2]. They play a more passionate role in supporting and they will think of the players as their idols and heroes. Also, they will actively be engaging in discussions and debates related to their favorite team or player.

There are several types of fandoms, dividing fans into different groups based on their motivation and enthusiasm. Fans are classified into 5 types: temporary fans, local fans, devoted fans, fanatical fans, and dysfunctional fans [3].

Temporary Fans: They are fans whose interest in the team is time-restricted. After a period, they will show less interest in the team and behave indifferently on events related to the team. In conclusion, there is a time boundary for temporary fans. The time boundary can be extremely short but also can last for several years. Usually, a person who visits a new place or a person who is a fan of only one player will become a classical temporary fan.

Local fans: They are fans who support the team in their living places. In other words, local fans are geographically restricted. If a local fan moves away from the city where the club is located, their passion for the team will diminish quickly.

Devoted fans: At first, devoted fans may be temporary fans or local fans. During attending matches, they are attracted by the team and begin to search for more information about the team. This process will break the boundary of time and geography. Devoted fans have more permanent emotional attachment to the team since they may discover social identification and association from the team. Also, they have many fan-like behaviors.

Fanatical fans: They have more emotional attachment toward the team than devoted fans. They will spend more money and time on the team, paying more effort to support the team. For example, if devoted fans just go to see the match, fanatical fans will wear jerseys, paint their face into the team's color, and wear the team's scarf.

Dysfunctional fans: They use their team's target as the top meaning of their life. Unlike the fan-like behavior of devoted fans, dysfunctional fans will even do some anti-social behaviors. They engage in violent events including fighting, destroying, and abusing. Their behavior is a kind of disruption for the team instead of supporting. The government and teams are trying to restrict their behavior, preventing them from affecting the harmony of the match.

2.2.2 Brand equity

Brand equity is the added value of a brand's name or logo contributes to a good or a service. It can be determined by comparing the additional cash flow generated by a product with a brand name to the cash flow that might not have been generated. Brand equity consists of 4 parts -- brand awareness, brand quality, brand association, and brand loyalty [4].

2.2.3 Marketing mix theory – 4V's, and 7P's

4V's: For a differentiated market, the marketing mix theory is 4V's, including variation, versatility, value, and vibration [5]. Enterprises should implement differentiated marketing, finding each potential consumer's need and providing them with unique services.

7P's: For a service market, the marketing mix theory is 7P's, 7P's contains price, product, physical evidence, people, process, place, and promotion [6]. Enterprises should focus on the whole process of providing services to consumers.

2.2.4 Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT)

Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) can reflect supporters' loyalty in a great way. Fans who support a team with loyalty have an attitude bias that is both hard to overcome and enduring over time. Figure 2 shows that based on the Psychological Commitment to Team, fandom's loyalty can be separated into 4 levels, including high loyalty, latent loyalty, low loyalty, and spurious loyalty [7].

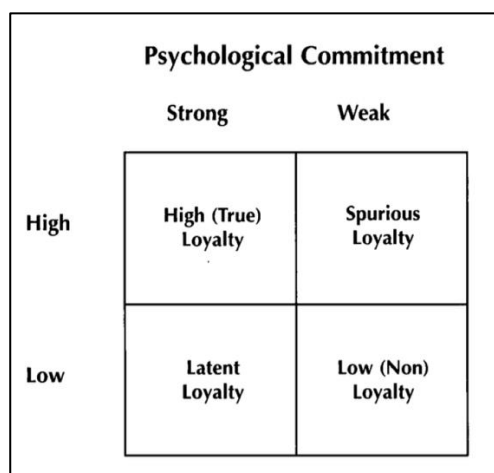


Figure 2. Relationship between Psychological Commitment and loyalty

3. Weakness in AS Monaco FC's Brand Promotion and Some Equipped Advantages

3.1. Equipped Advantages of AS Monaco Fc

AS Monaco FC has strong brand promotion in Asia countries especially in China. The club cooperates with several aspects in Chinese market, including esports, soccer academy, and product advertisement, helping the development of China's sports industry while improving its brand promotion. AS Monaco FC took part in the fourth China International Import Expo (CIIE) in 2021, achieving collaboration with companies in China's football industry [8]. What's more, AS Monaco FC has built an office in China, operating football academies and media spreading work.

3.2. Weakness in AS Monaco FC's Brand Promotion

3.2.1 Old and Unprofessional Stadium

Stade Louis-II, the home of AS Monaco FC, is located in the Fontvieille district, Monaco. It is the home of AS Monaco FC and the place to hold the Dimond League. Stade Louis-II was first opened in 1939. With the development of the country, Prince Rainier II decided to rebuild a new one in the Fontvieille district. The new stadium was finished in 1984, containing 16360 seats, multi-usage fields, and underground facilities. Although it is a great stadium in the 20th century, its facilities and functions cannot satisfy the needs of a modern football club. On one hand, the stadium has not been overhauled since 1984, leaving old seats and an outdated layout of Curva Nord. According to 7P's marketing strategy, if a brand wants to perform well in a service market, it should show satisfying physical evidence to its target consumers, providing consumers with better service to attract their attention [6]. Monaco is a place full of rich people and wealthy visitors. If the physical evidence like the seat's comfort level and the stadium appearance cannot match their premium, they will not show interest in attending sports events there.

3.2.2 Flourishing gambling industry and F1 Racing Championship industry in Monaco

Gambling industry and F1 Racing industry in Monaco are both pioneers in the world. When people think of Monaco, luxurious casinos and exciting car racing will appear in their mind, instead of the football industry there. Also, most people visit Monaco to enjoy Casinos and F1 races.

Gambling industry in Monaco: In 1848, Menton and Roquebrune broke away from Monaco, reducing Monaco into a country with a smaller size. Princess Maria Caroline Gibert de Lametz was searching for ways to help Monaco gain revenues. In 1853, after failing several times, Caroline decided to turn Monaco into a gambling resort, which is the origin of Monaco's gambling industry. From then on, Gambling industry in Monaco survived various changes and difficulties, finally making the country become the most well-known gambling heaven in the world. Now, Monaco is famous for its Monte Carlo Casino, and modern bars adjacent to it [9]. Each year, there is an average of 6,500 million dollars in revenue of gambling industry in Monaco, which is a huge number.

F1 Racing Championship Industry in Monaco: Every year, Monaco hosts the Monaco Grand Prix, a Formula One racing competition. It has been one of the most important and renowned auto races in the world since it began in 1929. The race holds on the Circuit De Monaco in late May or early June. Three generations of the Monaco royal family have supported the Grand Prix, all showing strong interest in the competition. Also, as a tax haven, Monaco is home to numerous millionaires, including several Formula One drivers. The F1 Racing industry attracts many tourists from all over the world. Table 1 shows the incredible number of transportation and people entering Monaco during the 2022 Monaco Grand Prix.

Table 1. Number of transportation and passengers arrived in Monaco during 2022 and 2019
Monaco Grand Prix

Transportation	2022 (year)	2019 (year)
Helicopter	5075 passengers (+4%) 2400 helicopter trips (+21%)	4880 passengers 1983 helicopter trips
Trains	106,683 arriving passengers	96721 arriving passengers
Boats	142 boats	129 boats
Vehicles	86,831 vehicles	89,467 cars vehicles

Source: Tanti C. In numbers: Monaco hails Grand Prix a huge success. Available at <https://monacolife.net/in-numbers-monaco-hails-grand-prix-a-huge-success/>, 2022.

3.2.3 Failing to attract the rich

Monaco's population is really wealthy, nearly a third of residents are millionaires. The Gross Domestic Product Per Capita of Monaco is 234.3K dollar, ranking 1st in the world [10]. Rich people usually attend events that can represent their wealth, including luxurious journeys, gambling, and up-class hotels. Thus, AS Monaco FC is so normal that cannot attract those wealthy people.

Unfortunately, in this country with a small population and huge wealthy people percentage, losing support from wealthy people will directly lead to a low attendance rate of the stadium. What's more, visitors to Monaco also contain a large percentage of rich people, failing to catch their eyeballs will cause a slow increase of temporary fans.

4. Strategies to Revitalize AS Monaco FC

The revitalization of AS Monaco FC cannot leave the word "rich". Because of the unique local industry, residents and visitors, combining more "rich" elements in different aspects of the club is a great way to achieve revitalization. Thus, the strategy to improve the club's brand promotion is to make the whole club "premium". "Premium" can make a club seem unique from others, creating differentiated markets for consumers [5]. Here are several rational strategies based on the analysis above.

4.1. Solution 1: Stadium Renovation

Since Stade Louis-II is old and unprofessional, turning the stadium's Curvas and facilities into more premium ones can greatly improve Manacan's watching experience, attracting more wealthy people's attention. This solution will be divided into two parts, for the rich, and for ordinary residents (2/3 of Monaco's population), which can concern both types of fan bases.

Firstly, for the rich people, there are three renovating ways.

Seat reduction: Instead of adding seats to allow more audience capacity, Stade Louis-II can reduce the number of seats from 17 thousand (the number of seats now) to 13 thousand. In this way, AS Monaco FC can change old and narrow seats to much more comfortable ones, maybe with sofa and technological services. This can improve people's watching experience. In addition, this can become attraction for fans and improve their psychological commitment, which can increase their attitudinal loyalty and finally promote their behavior loyalty [7].

Rebuild Runway: Since there is a runway around the pitch, the club can change the runway into several swimming pools or hot springs. People can enjoy it better while watching matches. This improvement will enhance the stadium's environmental function. Functional and environmental quality can significantly affect the brand's service quality in consumers' mind [11]. In this way, people will enjoy an excellent service and indirectly approve the brand image [4].

Invite Michelin Restaurant: The club can invite Michelin restaurant to open outside the pitch, allowing fans to have a wonderful and luxurious meal before or after watching a match.

Secondly, for those ordinary residents who are not rich, two ways can maintain their support.

Remain Normal Seats: The stadium will remain an area of normal seats, so local fans can still show their passion and will not be hindered by the price of the ticket. This setting can help ordinary residents feel social integration, helping them maintain social well-being [12].

Lottery Activities: There will be lottery activities to provide free tickets of luxurious seats for local fans. There are several kinds of benefits in the brand association, the lottery activity belongs to experiential benefit [5]. This can improve the brand association and finally have an admirable effect on the brand image and brand equity [4].

4.2. Solution 2: Creating Cooperating Relationship with Local Gambling and F1 Racing Industry

Monaco's gambling industry and F1 racing industry are two famous industries in the world. Cooperating with these two local industries can quickly improve AS Monaco FC's awareness and attract more potential fans.

Firstly, the club can cooperate with local gambling industry in following ways.

Create Sponsor Relationship: The club can provide local Casinos like the Monte Carlo Casino some sponsor fees, letting casinos add some "AS Monaco FC" elements to facilities and buildings of

casinos. In this way, people who enter the casino may notice the elements of AS Monaco FC, which can increase the publicity of the brand.

Become a privilege or a reward for VIPs in Casino: Each casino has VIP customers; they are usually extremely rich and will purchase a huge amount of money in casino. Monaco's casino has already provided several privileges for this group of people, such as a VIP gambler of Monte Carlo Casino can just make a phone call to set up a seat immediately at Le Louis XV, Alain Ducasse's three-Michelin star restaurant in Paris. A chance to enjoy a premium football match experience can also become such a privilege [9]. In this way, the club can attract more wealthy people, creating potential ticket buyers.

Secondly, the club can cooperate with local F1 racing industry by inviting famous F1 racers to attend matches as speakers, first-kickers, or soccer commentary guests of a match. This can attract more F1 fans to watch AS Monaco FC's matches and improve the brand association at the same time.

5. Conclusion

AS Monaco FC faces several difficulties on the way of revitalization, including out-fashioned stadium, local flourishing gambling industry, F1 Racing industry, and so on. To eliminate these obstacles, the club can focus on stadium renovation and creating a cooperating relationship with local Gambling and F1 Racing Industry. Specifically, reducing seats, changing runways, inviting Michelin restaurants, remaining normal seats, and holding lottery activities can become methods to renovate the stadium. What's more, creating sponsor relationships, becoming a privilege or reward for VIP gamblers, and inviting F1 racers to attend matches might work when constructing cooperating relationships with local Gambling and F1 Racing Industry.

References

- [1] Average matchday attendances in Ligue 1 in France in 2021/22, by club. Available at <https://www.statista.com/statistics/937543/ligue-1-average-stadium-attendance-by-club->, 2022.
- [2] Sloan L.R. The motives of sports fans. *Sports, Games, and Play: Social and Psychological Viewpoints*, 1989, 2: 175-240.
- [3] Hunt K.A, Bristol T, Bashaw R.E. A conceptual approach to classifying sports fans. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 1999, 13 (6): 439-452.
- [4] Keller K.L. Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of marketing*, 1993, 57 (1): 1-22.
- [5] Deng R, He X, Liu Y, Fu Y, Hu X. Analysis on the application strategy of "4V" marketing mix theory: based on the perspective of the perceived value of agricultural products consumer. 5th International Conference on Economics, Management, Law and Education (EMLE 2019), 2020, 501-504.
- [6] Bitner M.J, Booms B.H. Deregulation and the future of the US travel agent industry. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1981, 20 (2): 2-7.
- [7] Mahony D.F, Madrigal R, Howard D. Using the psychological commitment to team (PCT) scale to segment sport consumers based on loyalty. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 2000, 9 (1).
- [8] Available at <https://www.ciie.org/zbh/bqxwbd/20221104/35137.html>, 2022.
- [9] Horowitz D. Monaco, Las Vegas and Macau: gaming resorts of the past, present and future. 2015.
- [10] GDP Per Capita by Country. Available at <https://wisevoter.com/country-rankings/gdp-per-capita-by-country/>.
- [11] Kang G.D, James J. Service quality dimensions: an examination of Grönroos's service quality model. *Managing Service Quality: An International Journal*, 2004, 14 (4): 266-277.
- [12] Wann D.L, Weaver S. Understanding the relationship between sport team identification and dimensions of social well-being. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 2009, 11 (2).