ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY CSR POLICIES IN FOOTBALL: THE CASE OF MANCHESTER UNITED FC

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1. CSR and Professional Football Clubs

2. Historical Background of the Manchester United approach to implement accessibility and disability for spectators with disabilities as part of their business operations over the period 1980-2013

3. Implementing Accessibility at Old Trafford in action: Manchester United vs Swansea (12th May 2013)

4. Conclusions and Managerial Implications
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1. CSR and Professional Football Clubs

In the 21st century, all types of sport organisations, including professional football clubs as the case of M United will show, offer an appropriate context for developing and implementing a CSR approach (Breitbarth and Harris, 2008; Walters, 2009, 2011; Paramio Salcines, Babiak and Walters, 2013)

Football clubs cannot ignore CSR given that this managerial concept has gradually been integrated with strategic management and corporate governance in most countries (Carroll, 2008)

Football clubs have to implement CSR within their activities and programmes without losing their competitive advantage (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Drucker, 1999; Jones, 2012)
1. CSR and Professional Football Clubs

As stakeholder theory claims, football governing bodies and clubs should recognise the interests of a wide range of constituents, as people with disabilities and their companions, that have a stake in the organisation (see Walters, 2011)

However, the ‘multidimensional nature of CSR in football clubs’ in Europe (see Walters and Tacon, 2011), makes the issue of CSR complex (Downs and Paramio-Salcines, 2013)

There is no universal agreement on what areas professional football clubs in Europe can be involved in when developing and implementing CSR initiatives.
1. CSR and Professional Football Clubs

Promoting accessible environments to SwD to stadiums should not be considered isolated or ‘ad hoc’ practices (Paramio et al, 2011; Grady, 2010; Grady and Paramio-Salcines, 2012), but instead accessibility and disability must be conceived as fundamental values embedded within the club.

Football clubs in the main leagues in Europe do very little to promote access to their SwD at their stadiums (Paramio-Salcines and Kitchin, 2013).

This issue is not considered part of the majority of the football industry in Europe related CSR programmes nor is it ranked high on their agendas (Downs and Paramio-Salcines, 2013)
1. CSR and Professional Football Clubs

In trying to further theoretical development of CSR, it is extremely relevant to incorporate the views of practitioners (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010) as in the case of Phil Downs, DLO and one of the pioneers in the area and currently in charge of the operations for all Manchester United events and services for disabled fans at Old Trafford.

As Walters and Tacon (2011, p. 25) argue “there is a need to know more about how sport organisations think about, implement and measure CSR”.

2. Historical Background of the Manchester United approach to implement accessibility and disability for spectators with disabilities as part of their business operations (1980-2013)

Understanding and reasoning of how and why accessibility has become part of Manchester’s business culture and CSR approach
M United is probably one of the most prestigious professional clubs worldwide in terms of Sporting Performance, Financial Performance, National and International Fan Support, and Management. Most of these developments have attracted the attention of academics, business schools or consultant companies.
Ferguson’s Formula
by Anita Elberse with Sir Alex Ferguson

Some call him the greatest coach in history.

Before retiring in May 2013, Sir Alex Ferguson spent 26 seasons as the manager of Manchester United, the English football (soccer) club that ranks among the most successful and valuable franchises in sports. During that time the club won 13 English league titles along with 25 other domestic and international trophies—giving him an overall haul nearly double that of the next-most-successful English club manager. And Ferguson was far more than a coach. He played a central role in the United organization, managing not just the first team but the entire club. “Steve Jobs was Apple; Sir Alex Ferguson Is Manchester United,” says the club’s former chief executive David Gill.

In 2012 Harvard Business School professor Anita Elberse had a unique opportunity to examine Ferguson’s management approach and developed an HBS case study around it. Now she and Ferguson have collaborated on an analysis of his enormously successful methods.
However, fewer people acknowledge and recognise that the implementation of a wide range of accessibility services and structures for SwD at Old Trafford over the last three decades form an important part of their overall CSR policy

Only in recent years have studies examined the range of services and activities in relation to the promotion of accessibility among their fans with disabilities (Paramio et al, 2011; Downs and Paramio-Salcines, 2013; Paramio-Salcines and Kitchin, 2013).
The formulation of strategy is easy, but the real issues and problems are those of implementation (Kay, 1993, p. 337)

The implementation process of CSR and the factors that contribute to the process is an area currently underresearch (see Anagnostopoulos, 2013)

There is a neither one overarching framework, nor a set of guidelines when organisations try to implement CSR activities. CSR implementation within the business context requires a tailor-made approach
Effective development and implementation of CSR in sport organisations:

1. Sensitivity to the organisational environments
2. Awareness of values
3. Clear Leadership
4. Some sort of club commitment
5. Actions that go beyond the law and exceed its ‘minimum obligations’
6. Activities that are discretionary and cannot be enforced in any court of law (Werre, 2003; Banerjee, 2007, in Downs and Paramio-Salcines, 2013, p. 137)
Implementing Accessibility at Old Trafford

1. The Dark Ages
   Simply ‘not thinking’ rather than just ignorance

2. Enlightenment
   Links to the hierarchy… ‘it’s not what you know…’

3. The Jigsaw
   Facilities, where, accessibility, policy, information

4. Can Do
   Evolution… Not Revolution
3. Improving Accessibility at Old Trafford... In Action!
In the **late 1970** disability and accessibility for SwD to football matches at stadiums was definitely at the bottom of the agenda for most business and, by extension, the same would apply to most football clubs.

Unlike today, promoting access for all people to football matches was neither a social priority nor were there specific laws mandating accessibility to places of public accommodation.

Phil Downs’ first approach to Manchester United in late 1970s and the club responses to his proposals.

The club first approach to accessibility and disability may be perceived as positive, discretionary and responsive, rather than being reactive or defensive, despite the absence of any legal requirements, guidelines or minimum standards in the UK.
During the 1990s the situation changed slightly when the legal environment in most countries was becoming more orientated towards addressing the issues faced by people with disabilities.

1990. American with Disabilities Act (ADA) (USA)
1992. Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (Australia)
1995. Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) UK
2001. Behindertenglischstellungsegesetz (BBG)
Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities Act (Germany)
2003. Equal Treatment, Non-Discrimination and Accessibility for All Law (LIONDAU), Spain
2013. European Accessibility Act (pending to be passed)
VISON

TO BE THE BEST FOOTBALL CLUB IN THE WORLD BOTH ON AND OFF THE PITCH

OUR VALUES ARE BEST REPRESENTED BY THE FOLLOWING ACRONYM

U - United... with our fans in our commitment and passion for the club

N - on-discriminatory... in making Manchester United accessible to all, irrespective of age, race, gender, creed or physical ability

I - innovative... in our ambition to be “first to the ball” at all times

T - team-orientated... in our desire to work together with the same dedication displayed in every game by our first team squad

E - excelling... in our aim to be world-class in everything we do

D - determined... in our pursuit of success while being accountable for our actions
Main Milestones
1989. Foundation of MUDSA
1993. First DLO’s permanent post
2003. Ability Suite
From formulating strategy to gradual implementation

Seats for Wheelchairs fans and their companions at Old Trafford over the years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991 season</td>
<td>37 wheelchair positions with adjacent companion places (during Stretford End redevelopment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996 season</td>
<td>70 wheelchair places with adjacent companion places (North Stand 3 Tier development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 season</td>
<td>104 wheelchair places with adjacent companion places (East and West Stand developments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 season</td>
<td>120 wheelchair positions with adjacent companion places (NE and NW Quad developments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 season</td>
<td>120 wheelchair positions with adjacent companion places in three wheelchair platforms for general access:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. 104 wheelchair seats plus adjacent companion places (South East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. 8 wheelchair seats plus adjacent companion places (North East)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. 8 wheelchair seats plus adjacent companion places (North West)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, there are 89 wheelchair places (1 place per executive box)

Source: compiled by the authors.
Description of the Services and Facilities for different kind of SwD at Old Trafford on match and non-match days at the 2012-2013 season

Table 9.2 Provision of services and facilities for different kind of SwD at Old Trafford Stadium, season 2012-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website contact and Disability Liaison Officer</th>
<th>Stadium, date of building, capacity</th>
<th>Seats for fans with disabilities (General access)</th>
<th>Other accessible services</th>
<th>Capacity/total seats for SwD (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.mudsa.org">www.mudsa.org</a> Old Trafford, Phil Downs 1910, 76,312</td>
<td>120 for wheelchairs (108 home and 12 away) (+ companion seating) (240)</td>
<td>21 for severe mobility difficulties (+ companion seating) (42)</td>
<td>21 for moderate mobility difficulties (+ companion seating) (20) for visually impaired (+ companion seating) (40)</td>
<td>76,312/411=0,53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120 for wheelchairs (108 home and 12 away) (+ companion seating) (240)</td>
<td>21 for severe mobility difficulties (+ companion seating) (42)</td>
<td>Tickets and membership services Commentary headsets for visually impaired fans Services for assistance dogs Induction loop facilities 300 parking areas Adapted transport for away matches Hospitality areas (Ability Suite) and 9 toilets 89 seats in executive boxes New food, beverages and concession stands Museum and Tour Centre, club store and Red Café Radio headsets and away transport coaches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by the authors.
New Accessible Quadrants
2010. 89 Accessible VIP areas
Accessible Stadium Tour
April 2003
Manchester United 4 Liverpool 0
& the Ability Suite is opened!!

Dedicated matchday lounge for disabled supporters.
Provides added benefits to disabled supporters plus freeing up concourse congestion.

Non matchday Learning Centre forming part of M United CSR policy.

Unique to Manchester United
Ability Suite on match days
CSR in action: Non-match Games at Ability Suite, Old Trafford
Non matchday Learning Centre

Manchester United and Manchester Metropolitan University have teamed up to help train disabled Manchester people in Business Information Technology. Working together, they are providing training sessions to the Manchester United Disabled Supporters Association (MUDSA). MMUBS Senior Lecturer, Lewis Endlar presented a seminar at Old Trafford’s Ability Suite highlighting the ways in which MUDSA members could find out more about educational courses and the response was outstanding. This has led to a unique set of courses being held in the Ability Suite at the ground.

The Suite is a unique venue tailor-made to cater for disability/health related conferences and training courses.

The Ability Suite
- 4 computer terminals
- Broadband internet access
- 2 large plasma screens
- Software packages specifically for people with disabilities
- Disabled toilet facilities
- COMING SOON...Environmental Control System plus other aides to daily living

Lewis Endlar, Senior Lecturer, MMUBS
Master in Business Administration (Technology Management), Certificate in Education (Dist), Member of the British Computer Society

Lewis has 20 years experience in research and teaching of Information Systems and has taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

“I am delighted to be involved in providing training with members of the Ability Suite and look forward to delivering courses in 2006.”

Lewis Endlar

“It is good to see a development like this course in which the high quality facilities of a stadium like Old Trafford can be opened up for a variety of uses. We hope that this initiative will help people from all backgrounds and with all abilities to learn, work and play.”

Huw Morris, Dean of MMUBS

“A partnership with a respected educational institution is bound to provoke the interest of our members and we look forward to a long and beneficial relationship with MMUBS.”

Phil Downs, MBE, Secretary of MUDSA

Watch out for dates of introductory seminars in 2006

MMUBS, Aytoun Street, Manchester.
Tel: 0161 247 6472 or email a.mcneice@mmu.ac.uk
3. Implementing Accessibility at Old Trafford in action:

Manchester United vs Swansea
Season 12th May 2013
4. Conclusions and Managerial Implications

All types of sport organisations (including professional football clubs) need to demonstrate that they are responsible to all customers, including those with disabilities (Paramio, Campos and Buraimo, 2011; Paramio and Kitchin, 2013)

Promoting as well as improving access by fans with disabilities to European venues should be one of the main concerns of governing bodies and individual clubs and should be part of their CSR (Downs and Paramio Salcines, 2013)
4. Conclusions and Managerial Implications

As the case of Manchester United proves, over the period 1980-2013, the club has transformed their understanding of accessibility of SwD and disability, who are valued in this process as significant stakeholders of the club, from a charitable and philanthropic activity to their current consideration as a strategic management practice of the club.

After the setting of MUDSA, the partnership between MUDSA and the club has led to building confidence through a variety of formal and informal relationships with stakeholder dialogue between both sides having contributed to the involvement of MUDSA in decision-making processes.
4. Conclusions and Managerial Implications

Over 2,200 SwD which also includes some companions are able to access football matches and enjoy similar experiences to the rest of fans.

Increasing number of children and adults with disabilities engaged in different disability programmes in the club since 2000.

Any positive development around accessibility depends on the values of the football clubs and how they incorporate these values into a CSR strategy as the Manchester United’s case represents (Downs and Paramio-Salcines, 2013).
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