



# Art and Environmental Sponsoring as Corporate Image Tools: Chances, Limits, and the Role of Thematic Fit

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## ABSTRACT

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Participants ( $N = 140$ ) saw a print advertisement of a private bank vs. a detergent producer that referred to the sponsoring activities either in the art vs. in the environmental sector. Afterwards, they were asked to provide image profiles, overall likeability, and uniqueness ratings. Environmental sponsoring led to higher ratings in social and ecological responsibility, solidness, and attractiveness. Art sponsoring, in case of the detergent company, yielded higher ratings in originality and innovation, as well as in dynamics and generosity. Perceived competence and status were not affected by sponsoring domain. The environmental sponsor elicited a more positive overall attitude, but art sponsoring created an image of the extraordinary. Taken together, the results suggest that thematic fit between company and sponsoring domain is not a prerequisite for positive image effects. In contrast, unusual sponsoring activities may contribute to a corporate image of dynamics and innovation, uniqueness, and generosity.

*Key words: corporate image, sponsoring, inconsistency, attention, innovation*

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## 1 Introduction

Nowadays, marketing specialists are facing multiple challenges in using classical communication instruments to attain corporate goals. Specifically, this is because consumers are experiencing daily information overload, which is followed by reactance. Products are increasingly interchangeable as advertising campaigns are. This leads to coverage waste and high attention losses. Customers are searching for additional emotional and social benefits of products and brands as decision criteria and advertisement has to adapt to those needs (Bruhn, 2007).

The potential of sponsoring as a communication instrument, which is able to emotionalize people, is not yet exhausted (Hermanns & Marwitz, 2008). Thus, it seems worthwhile to take a closer look at the effects of sponsoring on corporate image. During a sponsorship a company sponsors a person, group, or institution in its social context for a communicative purpose on the basis of a contract (Hermanns, 1997). The most common sector of sponsoring is sports. Besides that, art sponsoring draws the highest attention (Hermanns & Marwitz, 2008). Art sponsoring refers to active commitment of a company in the sector of art, which involves at least a direct consideration for corporate communications (Bruhn & Dahlhoff, 1989). Instead of addressing a mass audience, art sponsoring specifically intends to reach a smaller, but more attractive target group. This selective targeting is most effective with highly profitable consumers, who can be tied to the brand (Bruhn, 2003). Due to its emotional attributes art additionally serves as a perfect source for

gaining an added value for the product or the brand (Witt, 2000).

Another type of sponsoring with gradually more importance is environmental sponsoring. Central topics, which are covered, are environmental problems as well as environmental protection. The potential of sponsorships in the environmental sector is promising especially because the society members are increasingly sensitized to ecological topics (Hermanns & Bagusat, 2006). Moreover, consumers are willing to invest more in sustainable brands. Sustainability is a contemporary lifestyle of the modern high-earners (Wenzel, Rauch, & Kirig, 2007). Due to the above described characteristics of art sponsoring and environmental sponsoring, especially in terms of innovativeness, these two types were selected for the present investigation on the opportunities and limitations of sponsoring as an image tool.

### 1.1 Sponsoring Goals

Especially psychological goals of sponsoring are relevant in the present study. These goals aim to influence the attitude and knowledge of the target group concerning a product or brand (Hermanns, 1997). Specifically, sponsoring aims to a) increase a company's popularity, b) positively influence the image, c) improve customer loyalty, d) motivate employees through higher identification possibilities with the employer, and e) enhance the reputation as well as the employer attractiveness of the sponsor (Bruhn, 2003; Hermanns & Marwitz, 2008). Hermanns

and Marwitz (2008) support the idea that those motives could be summarized under one image dimension.

Valuable image effects through sponsoring can be attained either through image transfer or through demonstrating social responsibility. Image transfer is reached through emotional conditioning. Thereby, the sponsored object or subject (e.g., art or environmental project) is presented simultaneously with the sponsor (e.g., company or brand name). The emotional reaction, which is originally caused by the sponsored object or subject, will then be transferred to the sponsor (Drees, 1989). In the case of art sponsoring, positive characteristics of art in general like innovation, creativity, individuality, and sensuality are transferred to the sponsor to increase the uniqueness of a company or a brand (Bruhn, 2003). As mentioned above, positive image effects can be also achieved when the target group perceives the company as a sponsor of socially relevant projects per se (Witt, 2000). Specifically the image gains through environmental sponsoring follow this principle. Often, the environmental sponsor is associated with responsibility, dependability, and ecological attachment (Bruhn, 2003).

## 1.2 Thematic Fit

It is frequently assumed as necessary that there is a general thematic connection between the brand and the sponsorship (e.g., Walter, 1996). For instance, Hermanns und Marwitz (2008) assume that there will be only positive image effects of environmental sponsoring, if the sponsor is also acting ecologically responsible. It seems obvious that a lack of consistency in corporate actions will decrease the company's credibility in the target group (Bruhn, 2003). Bruhn (2007) however, goes beyond these basic ideas by recommending that, for example, art should be only sponsored if it is a direct or indirect part of the company's product portfolio. He claims that a thematic fit between sponsor and sponsoree forms a pre-condition for successfully integrating sponsoring in the communication mix. At first sight, this seems a most plausible and evident argument.

From a different angle, however, it seems very promising to go beyond people's expectations and hence use the positive effects of surprises. Basic research in (social) cognition, has repeatedly shown how powerful unexpected features are in drawing attention, as they are per definition rare and thus distinct (Hamilton, 1981; Hastie, 1980; Hastie & Kumar, 1979; Taylor, 1981; Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Learning about a company operating in a particular business domain, such as financial services, is likely to activate general knowledge about financial service institutes. Such a schema (for a comprehensive review, see Smith, 1998) then serves as interpretational background for newly acquired information such as a particular sponsoring activity. Attention, in turn, usually elicits a deeper elaboration of the information provided (Macrae, Milne, & Bodenhausen, 1994; Macrae, Bodenhausen, Schloerscheidt, & Milne, 1999; Sherman & Frost, 2000; Sherman, Lee, Bessenoff, & Frost, 1998) and consequently a robust memory advantage (Hastie & Kumar, 1979; Ehrenberg & Klauer, 1995; see Rojahn & Pettigrew, 1992, and Stangor & McMillan, 1992, for meta-analytic reviews).

These findings open new perspectives on the issue of thematic fit between sponsoring and business domains. We assume that an unusual sponsoring activity will elicit attention and positive interest in the company and in particular contribute to an image of originality and uniqueness.

## 2 Method

The aim of the present study was to assess the effects of art in contrast to environmental sponsoring as presented in a print advertisement. Dependent variables include overall interest, likeability and contact intentions, corporate image as measured via a comprehensive set of attribute ratings, and perceived uniqueness.

### 2.1 Overview and Hypotheses

In order to study the effects of thematic fit between sponsoring domain and business branch, the latter was varied as a second independent factor, that is, the advertisement either promoted financial services or a washing detergent. It was assumed that sponsoring art would be perceived as being consistent with the financial services sector whereas environmental sponsorship should provide a thematic fit with the detergent producer. We expect general content effects of sponsoring domain on corporate image: Environmental protection is likely to create an image of ecological and social responsibility whereas art sponsoring is expected to contribute to an image of creativity and innovation. Whereas current perspectives on sponsoring (e.g., Bruhn, 2003, 2007; Hermanns & Marwitz, 2008) would lead one to expect that thematic fit between sponsoring and business domain is a prerequisite for positive image effects we hypothesize that more unexpected combinations (bank – environmental and, in particular, detergent – art) will elicit particular interest and promote an image of originality and uniqueness.

Thus, a 2 (sponsoring domain: art vs. environment) x 2 (business domain: private bank vs. detergent producer) factorial between-subjects design was realized.

### 2.2 Materials and Dependent Measures

Four full page print advertisements were created according to experimental condition. Both firms and logos were fictitious and introduced as Austrian in order to reduce suspicion about their real existence. The versions promoting the Austrian Private Bank atb show a grey background and classical characters, the ones promoting Purix!, a washing detergent, use a bright blue background and a more dashy lettering.

In the art sponsoring condition, a black and white photograph of a sculpture by the Dutch artist Martine Vanderhoven was depicted along with a statement that claimed the company's commitment to highest quality for customers' benefit, and that this also held for their guidelines as an art sponsor. It was specified that art of the finest quality was the respective company's concern because art stimulated our society and inspired new ideas. For that reason, the respective company organized art exhibitions in cooperation with the most renowned Austri-

an museums, such as the spectacular exhibition of sculptures by Martine Vanderhoven at the Kunsthalle Linz.

In the environmental sponsoring condition the advertisement showed a color photograph of human hands holding a little plant growing in earth. The corresponding statement was entitled Your Future and explained that the respective company supported the environment since the 70ies with projects such as Living Trees, a worldwide program in which 200 trees a year are planted. It further stated that, as a company with highest quality standards, they were serious in taking responsibility, sought to contribute to the maintenance of natural resources, and that the project "living trees" aimed at rendering trees accessible sources of life for men, animals, and environment.

After having formed an impression, participants were asked to indicate on 6-point Likert scales how much they liked the company overall, how ready they felt to become their customer, and to which degree they could imagine becoming their employee. In the next section, they were asked to characterize the company on 44 7-point bipolar attribute scales. The attributes were chosen and combined from Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale, Becker's (2006) Corporate Personality Inventory, a Corporate Reputation Scale (Davies, Chun, Da Silva, & Roper, 2001), and supplemented by items from Mayerhofer, Grusch, and Mertzbach (2008), Szallies (1997), Bruhn and Wieland (1988), as well as Zentgraf (2002). The attributes were selected in order to represent a good balance of art-related, environment-related, social responsibility, as well as basic image and brand identity dimensions, at the same time avoiding redundancy. For each trait, an opposite was supplemented in order to form a bipolar pair. The image attributes were factor analyzed (see Results section) and are listed in Table 1 according to the dimensional structure yielded.

Finally, we asked participants to what extent they felt that sponsoring domain and branch fit (manipulation check), to what extent the sponsoring activity added an aura of the extraordinary to the company, and to what extent the sponsorship aroused their interest in the company and its products. The questionnaire ended with gender and age assessment and thanks for participation.

### 2.3 Participants and Procedure

Participants were  $N = 140$  students of a variety of bachelor and master programs at the Hochschule Fresenius Cologne and the University of Cologne (45 male, 95 female, mean age  $M = 22.63$ ,  $SD = 2.56$ ). In consent with the respective professors, they were recruited course-wise at the beginning or end of course and asked to follow instructions on the questionnaires handed out to them. They were randomly assigned to the four experimental conditions ( $n = 35$  each), and response rate was 100%. The introductory part stated that the study was conducted as a Bachelor thesis and that we were interested in how people perceive companies. Response scales were explained, it was stressed that there were no right or wrong answers, and participants were asked to study the following advertisement thoroughly. According to the experimental condition, one of the four print advertisements

was shown on the next page, followed by dependent measures (see previous section) and demographic questions. Finally, participants were thanked and debriefed. The entire procedure took around ten minutes.

## 3 Results

In the following sections, results are presented by order of dependent variables.

### 3.1 Effects on Overall Impression and Behavior Intentions

First of all, perceived fit of sponsoring and company domain was analyzed as a manipulation check. As intended, art sponsoring was perceived as fitting much better with the private bank ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ) than with the detergent company ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ), and ecological sponsoring was perceived as fitting better with the detergent company ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) than with the private bank ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ). Both main effects are significant (sponsoring domain  $F(1, 136) = 10.80$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .07$ ; company domain  $F(1, 136) = 21.14$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .14$ ), as is the two-way interaction ( $F(1, 136) = 35.05$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .20$ ). The effect pattern is illustrated in Figure 1.

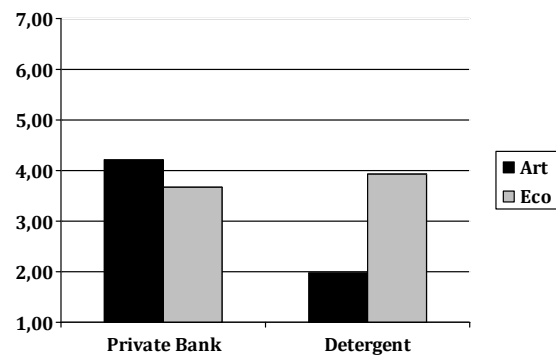


Figure 1: Perceived fit as a function of company and sponsoring domain.

Next, we tested in how far perceived fit or, more precisely a lack of perceived fit, has effects on the company's overall likeability as well as on being somewhat "special".

As can be seen in Figure 2, the combination perceived to fit least, that is, the art sponsoring detergent company is the one that yields the highest ratings in being extraordinary ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ). With the art sponsoring private bank ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ), both art sponsors receive significantly higher ratings than the ecological sponsors ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ , and  $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ , respectively), producing a significant main effect of sponsoring domain ( $F = 4.42$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .04$ ). There is no main effect of company domain ( $F < 1$ ), and the interaction is only marginally statistically significant ( $F(1, 136) = 2.34$ ,  $p = .06$ , *one-tailed*). These data, however, are first evidence that a lack of thematic fit between product and sponsoring domain may have positive image effects in terms of adding to an aura of the extraordinary to the company.

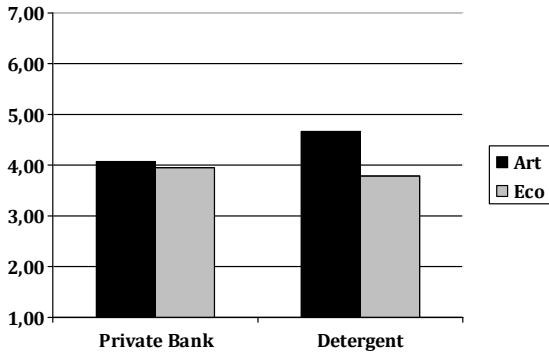


Figure 2: Agreement to "The sponsoring activity adds an aura of the extraordinary to the company" as a function of company and sponsoring domain.

Next, we analyzed effects of sponsorship and product domain on the impression measures and behavioral intention ratings, on overall likeability of the company, the extent to which the sponsoring activity raises interest in the company, and the willingness to become a customer. As these were highly intercorrelated (Cronbach's alpha = .80), we summarized them into an index of overall positive attitude towards the company.

Despite the positive effects of art sponsoring on being somewhat extraordinary art sponsoring did not enhance overall positive attitude toward the sponsor – quite to the contrary.

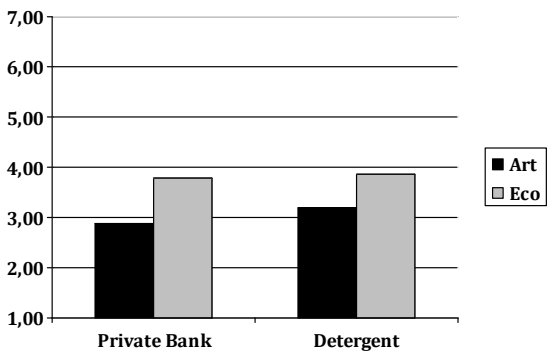


Figure 3: Overall positive attitude as a function of company and sponsoring domain.

As illustrated in Figure 3, there was a strong main effect in favor of the environmental sponsor ( $F(1, 136) = 20.18, p < .01, \eta^2 = .13$ ), who got more positive ratings in both company conditions (private bank:  $M = 4.47, SD = 1.03$ ), and detergent producer  $M = 4.38, SD = 1.16$ ) as compared to the art sponsor (private bank  $M = 3.47, SD = 1.16$ , and detergent producer  $M = 3.69, SD = 0.97$ ). There was no effect of domain and no interaction (both  $F$ 's  $< 1$ ).

3.2 Effects on the Image Factors

The 44 bipolar attribute pairs were factor analyzed in order to explore latent image dimensions underlying participants' ratings. Principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation yielded a well interpretable ten factor solution (Kaiser-Guttman criterion) explaining 67.57% of the total variance. Table 1 in the Appendix shows all

items, factor loadings and percentages of explained variance according to the ten image dimensions (1) Environmental Responsibility, (2) Dynamics, (3) Social Responsibility, (4) Originality and Innovation, (5) Competence and Achievement, (6) Solidness, (7) Attractiveness, (8) Status, (9) Generosity, and (10) Benignity.

For each factor, ratings on items with factor loadings higher than .40 were aggregated to a mean index for the respective image dimension. In a next step, we tested for effects of sponsoring domain, company domain, and fit (interaction) between the two on all image dimensions simultaneously by means of a MANOVA in order to control for accumulating alpha error in multiple univariate tests. Multivariate Tests yield a highly significant main effect of sponsoring type ( $F(10, 127) = 17.68, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .58$ ) and of company domain ( $F(10, 127) = 3.98, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .24$ ) as well as a significant two-way interaction between both factors ( $F(10, 127) = 2.29, p = .02, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .15$ ). Now, what is the nature of these effects for each of the ten image dimensions? Figure 4 shows the rating profiles (means) along all image factors for each of the four experimental conditions and statistical tests for differences across conditions are reported in the following paragraphs.

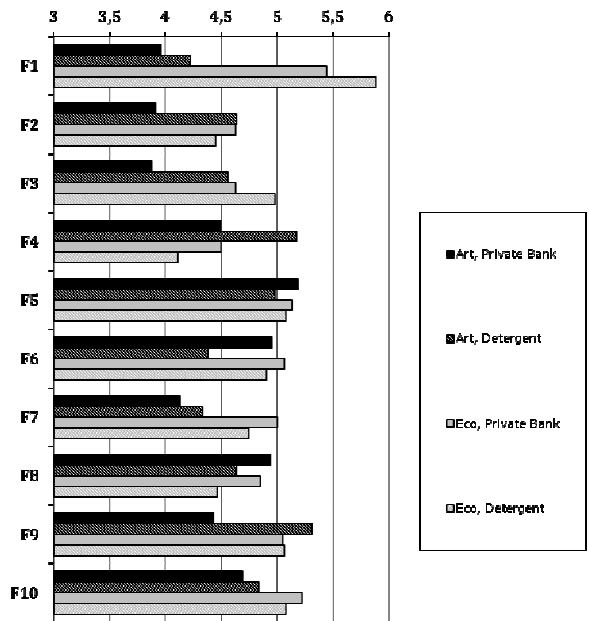


Figure 4: Mean ratings on the image dimensions F1 (Environmental Responsibility), F2 (Dynamics), F3 (Social Responsibility), F4 (Originality and Innovation), F5 (Competence and Achievement), F6 (Solidness), F7 (Attractiveness), F8 (Status), F9 (Generosity), and F10 (Benignity) according to sponsoring domain and company.

As expected, both environmental sponsors ( $M = 5.44, SD = 0.92$  private bank;  $M = 5.88, SD = 1.08$ , detergent) were attributed higher Environmental Responsibility than the art sponsors ( $M = 3.96, SD = 0.73$  private bank,  $M = 4.22, SD = 1.04$  detergent), a highly significant main effect ( $F(1, 136) = 118.03, p < .01, \eta^2 = .47$ ). The main effect of product domain was also significant with the detergent company receiving higher ratings in envi-

ronmental responsibility than the private bank ( $F(1, 136) = 5.99, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$ ). There was no interaction between the two factors ( $F < 1$ ).

The image aspect of Dynamics, as mirrored in our second dimension, was also affected by experimental manipulations. The art sponsoring private bank was rated as considerably less dynamic than the other three conditions, thus yielding two significant main effects ( $F(1, 136) = 3.99, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$  for sponsoring domain;  $F(1, 136) = 4.08, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$  for company domain) that are both driven by the correspondent significant two-way interaction ( $F(1, 136) = 11.44, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$ ).

A similar pattern emerged for the third factor, Social Responsibility. Again it was the art sponsoring private bank who got the lowest ratings ( $M = 3.88, SD = 1.01$ ), while the detergent company acting as environmental sponsor got the highest ratings ( $M = 4.98, SD = 0.90$ ), with the art sponsoring detergent company ( $M = 4.58, SD = 0.99$ ) and the environment sponsoring private bank ( $M = 4.98, SD = 0.90$ ) lying in between. The main effect of sponsorship ( $F(1, 136) = 11.07, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$ ) as well as of company domain ( $F(1, 136) = 8.84, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$ ) were significant, but there is no interaction ( $F < 1$ ).

Thus, on the first three factors, the art sponsoring private bank consistently got the lowest, most negative ratings. The fourth dimension, Originality and Innovation, however, shows a different pattern: Here, it was the art sponsoring detergent company who got the highest scores ( $M = 5.17, SD = 0.83$ ), followed by the two private bank conditions ( $M = 4.50, SD = 0.89$  for art sponsoring and  $M = 4.50, SD = 1.16$  for environmental sponsoring, respectively). The least extraordinary combination (see above), that is, the environmental sponsoring detergent company, got the lowest value ( $M = 4.11, SD = 1.01$ ). The main effect of sponsorship was significant ( $F(1, 136) = 9.92, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$ ), and so was the interaction ( $F(1, 136) = 10.01, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$ ), but there was no main effect of company domain ( $F < 1$ ).

There were no significant effects on perceived Competence and Achievement (all  $F$ 's  $< 1$ ). With regard to Solidness, our sixth factor, however, the private bank got higher ratings ( $M = 4.95, SD = 0.99$  as art sponsor and  $M = 5.06, SD = 0.75$  as environmental sponsor) than the detergent producer ( $M = 4.37, SD = 1.07$  as art sponsor and  $M = 4.90, SD = 0.86$  as environmental sponsor). This main effect of company domain was small but statistically significant ( $F(1, 136) = 5.61, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04$ ), as was the main effect of sponsorship domain ( $F(1, 136) = 4.15, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$ ). Although the interaction between the two factors failed statistical significance ( $F(1, 136) = 1.80, p = .18, \eta^2 = .01$ ), it can be seen in Figure 4 that both effects go back to the effect that the art sponsoring detergent producer acting was perceived as somewhat less solid than the other three.

In line with the findings on overall likeability reported above, the image dimension Attractiveness is considerably affected by sponsoring domain. The environmental sponsors got higher mean attractiveness ratings ( $M = 5.00, SD = 0.80$  for the private bank,  $M = 4.74, SD = .95$  for the

detergent producer) than the art sponsors ( $M = 4.13$  for the private bank, and  $M = 4.33, SD = 1.22$  for the detergent producer), and this main effect is highly significant ( $F(1, 136) = 13.90, p < .01, \eta^2 = .09$ ). There is no main effect of product domain ( $F < 1$ ) and no interaction ( $F(1, 136) = 1.88, p = .17$ ).

In contrast, the eighth factor, Status, was only affected by product domain ( $F(1, 136) = 7.27, p < .01, \eta^2 = .05$ ) but not at all by sponsorship ( $F < 1$  for main effect and interaction). Not surprisingly, the private bank got higher status ratings ( $M = 4.94, SD = 0.89$  as art sponsor;  $M = 4.85, SD = 0.72$  as environmental sponsor) than the detergent producer ( $M = 4.63, SD = 0.77$  as art sponsor,  $M = 4.46, SD = 0.68$  as environmental sponsor). Perceived Generosity, the ninth image dimension, also yielded a main effect of product domain ( $F(1, 136) = 8.11, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$ ), that is, the detergent company was perceived as more generous, in particular, when it acted as an art sponsor ( $M = 5.31, SD = 0.78$ ;  $M = 5.06, SD = 0.98$  as an environmental sponsor). The private bank received lower generosity ratings ( $M = 4.43, SD = 0.91$  as an art sponsor, and  $M = 5.05, SD = 0.99$  as an environmental sponsor). There was no main effect of sponsorship ( $F(1, 136) = 1.40, p = .24$ ), but the two-way interaction reached significance ( $F(1, 136) = 7.89, p < .01, \eta^2 = .06$ ). Whereas the bank's perceived generosity increased in case of environmental sponsoring, the detergent producer's perceived generosity increased with its art sponsorship.

The final image factor was labeled Benignity and captured in how far participants perceived the company as trustworthy and supportive. It was considerably affected by sponsoring domain ( $F(1, 136) = 11.29, p < .01, \eta^2 = .08$ ), but not by company domain ( $F < 1$  for main effect and interaction). That is, when presenting itself as an environmental sponsor, the private bank ( $M = 5.22, SD = 0.84$ ) as well as the detergent company ( $M = 5.37, SD = 1.05$ ) were attributed higher benignity than when promoting as an art sponsor ( $M = 4.69, SD = 0.85$  for the private bank;  $M = 4.83, SD = 1.01$  for the detergent producer).

#### 4 Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine art sponsoring as well as environmental sponsoring as image tools. Overall, both types of sponsorships had positive effects on the image of the sponsor. Analogous to the assumptions about image transfer, the art sponsor was perceived to be more original, innovative, unique, and extraordinary, and the environmental sponsor as more ecologically and socially responsible, solid, and attractive. Our student participants had generally more positive attitudes towards the environmental sponsor. This is hardly surprising, as the target group of art sponsorships is somewhat more settled and wealthy, and students are likely to especially care for ecological topics. This main effect may thus not be generalized, but it shows how important it is to examine the exact goals and target group of a future sponsorship when deciding for either art or environmental sponsoring.

Most interestingly, the present findings demonstrate that thematic fit is by no means a prerequisite for positive

image effects of sponsoring activities. In contrast, a lack of fit seems to attract attention and interest and add an aura of the extraordinary to the company. Also, it led to an increase in perceived generosity. It is possible, that consumers are bored by typical advertisements, and evaluate uncommon sponsoring projects as stimulating and positive. Whether these effects go along with memory advantages (Rojahn & Pettigrew, 1992; Stangor & McMillan, 1992), such as better brand recognition, is a relevant question for future investigations.

The present study was conducted using a purely student sample, and thus of course bears some shortcomings with regard to external validity. In particular, it seems likely that the highly positive attitude towards eco-sponsoring might be enhanced in comparison to an average community sample (or, at least, in comparison to the average high-potential-client of a financial service institute). In addition, our participants might have been more familiar with the issue of sponsoring and corporate image than the average consumer, and this might have biased their response sensitivity. Moreover, there might be an effect of the advertisement design on the participants' evaluation of the corporate image. Thus, the present results should be replicated with a more representative sample before being generalized.

However, unusual combinations of company and sponsorship domains seem to offer promising options for a broad range of product and service sectors. Art sponsoring led to a substantial increase in perceived generosity, innovation, and originality of the sponsor, however at the cost of being rated somewhat lower in solidness. Thus, in case of a brand, which has less potential to emotionalize, like it is the case with fast moving consumer goods, art sponsoring could be a tool to create special and unconventional image characteristics. And environmental sponsoring bears a special potential for traditionally more conservative domains such as financial services. The present image profiles indicate that the private bank suffered from a priori rather low ratings in social and environmental responsibility if acting as an art sponsor. Ratings on both - highly valued - dimensions improved dramatically when the company presented itself as environmental sponsor. Also, environmental sponsoring, though "fitting" far less than art sponsoring, enhanced the bank's perceived benignity - an image dimension of recently increasing public interest that may guide more and more clients when deciding for a financial service institute. Overall, the study shows the need to evaluate sponsoring activities in general, especially because typical sponsoring strategies do not lead to the assumed effects.

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## 6 Appendix

Table 1. Image dimensions and factor loadings based on a principle components analysis with varimax rotation for 44 image attributes rated on 6-point bipolar scales ( $N = 140$ ).

Factor label and % Variance Explained	Image Attribute	Factor Loading
Environmental Responsibility (23.40%)	Environmentally engaged – not environmentally engaged	.89
	Ecologically responsible – not ecologically responsible	.86
	Close to nature – not close to nature	.85
	Natural resources – artificial resources	.78
	Ethical – unethical	.65
	Down-to-earth – detached	.64
	Healthy – unhealthy	.63
	Responsible – irresponsible	.59
	Sustainable – short-termed	.49
Dynamics (12.48%)	Modern – old-fashioned	.83
	Young – old	.77
	Conservative – liberal	-.67
	Spirited – not spirited	.65
	imaginative – unimaginative	.63
	Friendly – unfriendly	.47
Social Responsibility (8.38%)	Honest – dishonest	.71
	Altruistic – egoistic	.67
	Not only profit-oriented – only profit oriented	.64
	Trustworthy – not trustworthy	.61
	Altruistic – egoistic	.59
Originality and Innovation (4.71%)	Original – imitated	.75
	Individual – adapted	.72
	Creative – not creative	.63
	Innovative – traditional	.55
	Unique – interchangeable	.54
	Inventive – simple	.52
	Leading – following	.48
Competence and Achievement (4.27%)	Intelligent – stupid	.81
	Hard-working – lazy	.73
	Successful – without success	.80
Solidness (3.58%)	Reliable – unreliable	.76
	Secure – insecure	.47
Attractiveness (3.06%)	Aesthetic – unaesthetic	.77
	Atmospheric – not atmospheric	.66
	Good-looking – ugly	.44
Status (2.89%)	Robust – fragile	.69
	Prestigious – not prestigious	.54
	Engaged – not engaged	-.46
	Exclusive – artless	.44
Generosity (2.66%)	Generous – stingy	.70
	Active – passive	.45
Benignity (2.46%)	Trustworthy – not trustworthy	.42
	Supportive – not supportive	.41

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