



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

Master's Degree  
in Economics and  
Management  
Global Development and  
Entrepreneurship.

Final Thesis

# Social-Media as platform for Football Teams to increase commercial revenues and enhance Brand-value

**Supervisor**

Ch. Prof. Marcella Lucchetta

**Graduand**

Riccardo Mattesi

Matriculation number

847330

**Academic Year**

2018 / 2019



# Index

<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 Introduction to the Thesis .....	4
1.2 Social Network: definition and history.....	5
1.3 Advertising Online.....	16
1.4 Social-Media Advertising .....	23
1.5 How to compute Social Media ROI .....	30
1.6 Football and Social Network.....	34
<b>Chapter 2- Deepening</b> .....	<b>40</b>
2.1 Introduction to the Second Chapter .....	40
2.2 Direct model: Liverpool FC example .....	43
2.3 Case-study 2: The purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo by Juventus FC .....	52
2.4 Interview to two Managers of AS Cittadella .....	62
2.5 Friendvertising and Non-Professional Teams.....	67
2.6 Interview to a possible Sponsor for Non-Professional Teams .....	72
<b>Chapter 3 - Conclusions</b> .....	<b>78</b>
3.1 General conclusions .....	78
3.2 The opportunity cost and the Return of Investment.....	80
<b>References</b> .....	<b>84</b>

# **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction to the Thesis**

The aim of this thesis is to put in relation the online advertising techniques, the effects on commercial revenues and the enhancing of brand value with Social Media strategies for the football clubs.

Web 2.0 opens important economic opportunities for professional and non-professional football teams using Social-Media channels where enforce their brand and generate revenues from online advertising and sponsorships. The introduction defines and describes Social Networks and how they were created, analyse online advertising and explains the reasons of the suitability of the Social Networks Instagram, Twitter and Facebook for this purpose. General Online Advertising techniques are described in the second subchapter, in addition to the reasons why these recent methods are generating many revenues for companies. The following subchapter enters in the aim of the thesis introducing "Friendvertising", the advertising techniques usually implemented on Social Media. The formula for the computation of the Return of Investment for Social Networks promotions, subsequently, is presented, considering both the financial and non-financial nature of the subject. The relationship between football and Social Media concludes the first chapter, explaining the economic potential of this combination and the reasons why football can be the best vehicle for online sponsors among other sports.

The Second Chapter takes in consideration two case-studies based on two methods of making a good Social-Media marketing: the "Liverpool FC" case and the "Cristiano Ronaldo to Juventus FC" case. In the first, thanks to an interview to two Social-Media managers of the English Team, it is possible to analyse themes such as: strategies for get closer to fans; strategies for engaging supporters; economic value of a Social-Media strategy; Friendvertising; and the challenges of Social-Media strategies.

The aim of the second case of study is to analyse if the positive commercial and financial effects recorded by Juventus FC, derived from the purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo, are strictly linked with the popularity on Social-Media of the football player. The analysis considered three areas of interest in relation to Juventus FC: Commercial, Financial and Social-Media growth. The possibilities to develop brand and increase revenues for non-professional football is another topic of the chapter. Interviews to a Social-Media Manager and to an owner of a potential sponsor-company complete the analysis.

Conclusions can be found in the Third Chapter, with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Social-Media strategies for professional and non-professional Football Clubs. Opportunity costs and real effectiveness of digital marketing in the world of football are the crucial topics of this final analysis.

## **1.2 Social Network: definition and history**

The XXI Century is a period characterized by the increasing accessibility and availability of Internet in any part of the World. This progress creates a network where anyone can share and learn knowledge, ability, information etc. from every person that have the possibility to access on a website. The use of the Internet, in fact, before April 30<sup>th</sup>,1993, was limited only to scientific researches and government members of a restricted circle of nations, but, when the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) of Ginevra decided to make public the technology at the basis of the World Wide Web, a technological and socio-cultural revolution began. The continuous expansion of this service has led, nowadays, to the situation in which out of 7,676 billion people, 4,338 billion are active Internet users, with on average of 1 million users more per day. [1]

The increasing of the number of users, simultaneously, make the contents and services that Web can provides more and more numerous and various. The need of costumers to identify oneself to this new technology and to exploit it,

creating a digital image of themselves in order to link with other people and to give visibility to own qualities, whatever they are, has headed to the birth of Social Networks.

Four categories of Social Media can be identified, in the following lines there will be mentioned and described. Blog e microblog: an online journal or informational website displaying information in the reverse chronological order, with latest posts appearing first. It is a platform where a writer or even a group of writers share their views on an individual subject [2]. Social Network Site: Danah Boyd and Nicole Ellison, Social Media scholars, give the definition of Social Network as a “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.” [3] Virtual world: is a computer-based online community environment that is designed and shared by individuals so that they can interact in a custom-built, simulated world [4]. Collaborative project: “allow groups of people to work together to create online content” [5]. content community: “allow users to share online multimedia materials” [5].

It is imperative to specify that not all of them allow to create a social network within them. A social media to also be social network must meet the following conditions:

- there must be specific users;
- users must be connected to each other;
- two-way communication between users must be possible. [6]

The minimal conditions just mentioned permit to deduce that Social-Media generate relationships and contents. Social networks within the social network can be pre-existing or born through it. The contents created, shared and exchanged are texts, videos, photos, applications and so on, leaving the user much freedom to express his personality and interact with those who share his interests, passions and activities.

SixDegrees.com, in 1997, was the first Social Network launched in the World Wide Web. The site, at the time, gave already the possibility to create profile and list their Friends and, from 1998, surf the Friend's list. The union of these three features was a great novelty because dating sites, that in 1997 was already existed, could give these services, but not in combination. SixDegrees.com promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While the new Social Network attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. The next wave of Social Network site began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Adrian Scott, founder of Ryze.com, reports that he firstly introduced the site to his friends, principally members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future web sites; in particular, people behind Ryze and other rising social network sites like Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were tightly entwined personally and professionally, they believed that they could support each other without competing. The already cited Friendster was important for the develop of the actual model of Social Network. The Social Media, born in 2002, was designed to compete with Match.com, a profitable online dating site. Most dating sites were focused on introducing people to strangers with similar interests, whereas Friendster was designed to help friends-of-friends meet, based on the assumption that friends-of-friends would make better romantic partners than would strangers. The server and the database of the company, however, couldn't support the rapid growth of inscription derived from an emergent popularity. The Social Network, then, faltered regularly. In order to view additional profiles, moreover, users began to increase connections and to look for strangers to expand their reach. Someone began massively collecting Friends, an activity that was implicitly encouraged through a "most popular" feature. The ultimate collectors were fake profiles symbolizing representative fictional characters: celebrities, concepts, and other such entities, that Friendster attempted to remove. The effective deletion of "Fakesters", and real users who preferred non-realistic photos, was view to some that the Website did not share the interests of the users. The combination of technical difficulties, social collisions, and

a rupture of trust between users and Friendster, make many early adopters left the Website.

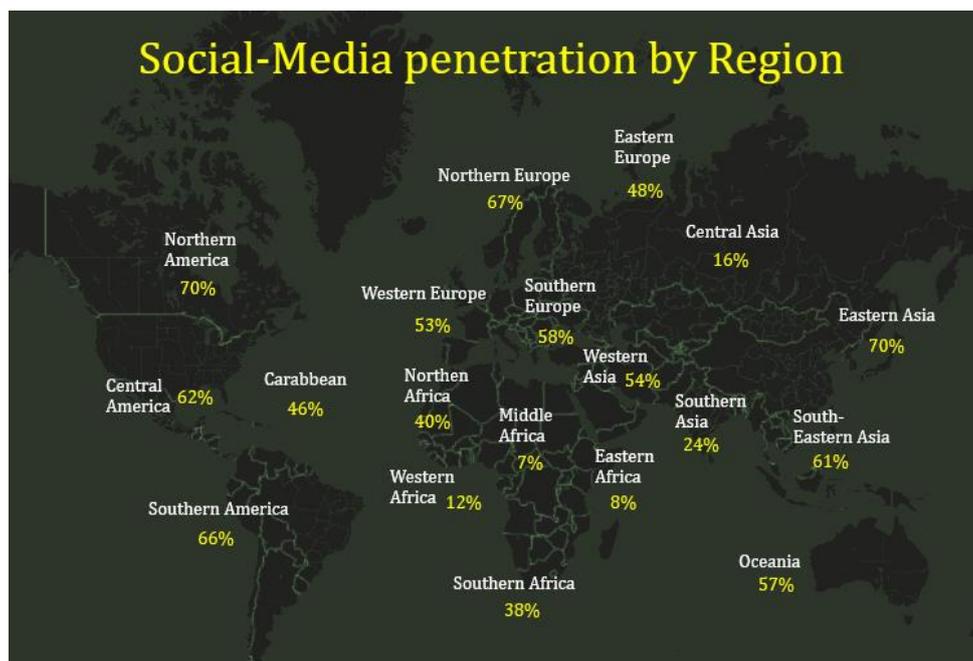
Many new Social-Media sites, from 2003 onward, were created trying to reproduce the initial success of Friendster, in this way an intense competition between old and new firms began. The arrival of MySpace.com which wanted to engage users of Friendster, was one of the main reasons. This new typology of Social-Media distinguished itself by consistently increasing on characteristics. These features were based on user demand and the permission to users to customize their pages. This model arose since MySpace.com did not limit users from adding HTML into the structures that surrounded their profiles; a “copy/paste code” culture developed on the Web to assist users in producing distinctive backgrounds and layouts.

MySpace.com, then, drew most of the media interest in the USA and abroad, meanwhile Social-Media were flourishing and increasing in popularity worldwide. The new firms, for this reason, explored niche markets to propagate and engage new consumers not involved by the major important Social Networks. Facebook, for instance, was born in 2004, and, until 2006, was designed to support specific college networks only. The Social Media in fact, was open only to users with a university e-mail addresses associated with those institutions. This condition made the site quite closed and contributed to perceptions for costumers as a Social Network intimate and private. The ability for outside developers to create "Applications" was an additional feature that distinguishes Facebook from other Social-Media. This characteristic, indeed, permitted users to customize their profiles and execute other tasks, for instance compare movie predilections and record travel histories. Anyone who wanted to build a niche Social-Media, finally, can do so on Ning, a Website and hosting service which inspires costumers to generate their own Social Network site.

According to the Global Digital Report of 2019 [1], currently, worldwide Social Media user numbers have grown to almost 3.5 billion at the start of 2019, with 288 million (+ 9%) new users in the past 12 months, pushing the global penetration figure to 45%.

The possibility to connect to the Internet through mobile phone allows the chance to access on Social-Media easier than by computer. The Report, in fact, records an increasing of 10% of mobile social media users from 2018 (+ 297 billion people). **Graphic 1** represents the penetration rate of Social Networks in worldwide. Social Networks access, however, is still far from uniformly distributed across the World. Penetration rates, moreover, in many areas of Africa are even now in the single digits. Middle, Western and Eastern Africa, in fact, are still at, respectively, 7, 12 and 8 percent on Social Media penetration comparable only with Central Asia (16%). North America and Eastern Asia has the best penetration rate, worth to 70%, being the areas with the most technologically advanced countries. Significant data there are, however, in North Europe and South America with 67% and 66% respectively.

**Graphic 1**



**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel; data: Global Digital Report 2019; <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2019/01/digital-2019-global-internet-use-accelerates>

Few people, nowadays, do not have an account in one of the most popular Social-Media. Almost all the important events of their lives, on Social Networks, and the close events of everyday life are told. Ideas, opinions and emotions, in fact, are liberally expressed,

and users interact each other. It is important to exploit this several quantities of information in the best way, in order to understand multifaceted social phenomena or even forecast them. The literature, on this matter, is growing exponentially among companies providing data analysis obtained from Social Networks. Stephen Rappaport, Knowledge Solutions Director of the Advertising Research Foundation, stated the following thought in a report presented to the global organization “UN Global Pulse” and to UNICEF, in July 2012: "Social networks are more curious than other Big Data sources because they provide information about what people think. Analyzing social media is like bringing the voice of people into organizations and the advantage goes to those who know how to focus on the right signals, extract relevant information, process them quickly and modulate their actions accordingly” [7]. Social media allow to know in real time what is thought on the Internet, collecting pieces of distinct information, which can create a comprehensible mosaic.

On social media it is possible to monitor:

- the volume of mentions, views or posts that a topic, organization or user receives;
- the Social Network and channels used to exchange content;
- the level of involvement based on how many users discuss, share, appreciate or respond to messages concerning a specific topic
- the contents of the discussions categorizing as positive or negative a message published on the net through a sentiment analysis or trying to interpret the opinion of the author.

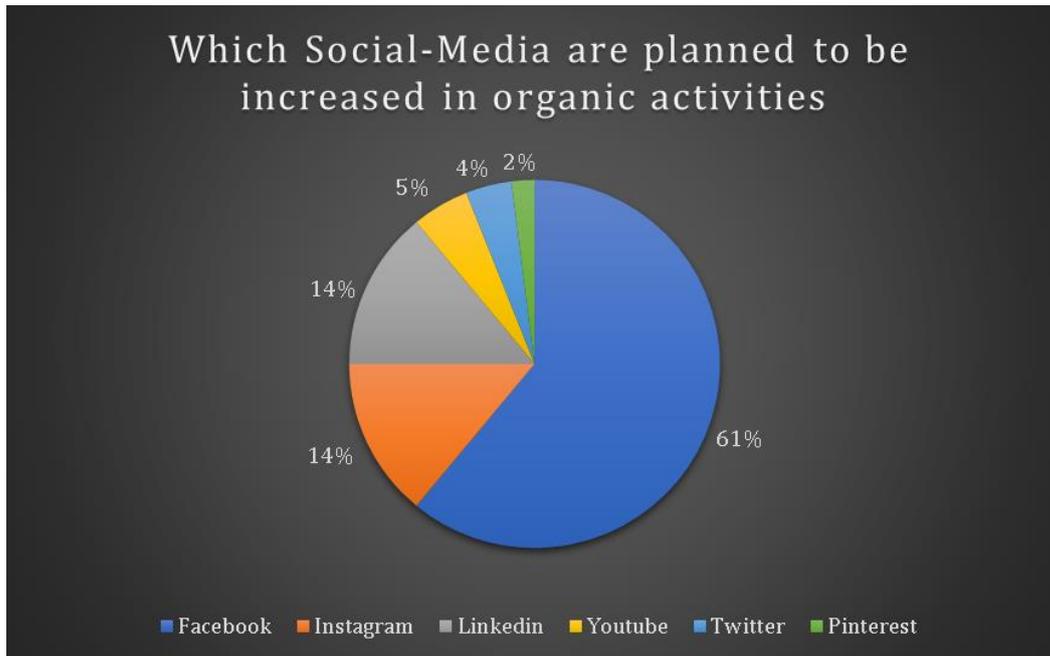
The impact of social networks on consumer choices has been fully verified. Social-Media, nowadays, has become a fundamental tool for evaluating the brand image of a firm. The opinions expressed online, by a satisfied or dissatisfied customer, influence the reputation of a brand. The process of engaging potential consumers and the success of new products, in fact, are affected by reputation also in Social-Media. Customers rely on what they read in discussions on the Web more and more.

A brief description of the most common social platforms is given in the following lines:

- Facebook: users can share photos, videos, texts or audio on their personal profile. To access the profiles of others and interact with other users through private messages or through the expression of appreciation, using the "like" function, one must first become "friends", through mutual acceptance; exceptions are made profiles made public.
- Instagram: an application with which you can apply filters to photos you have just taken and share them in other social networks. It is possible to comment and express the appreciation for others' shared photos and follow other users without consent, unless the Instagram profile has been made private. The textual contents are cataloged by topic by inserting the "hashtag" (words or sentences without spacing preceded by the symbol #), a tool that allow a creation an immediate link to all the other tweets posted that deal with that topic and that have entered the same hashtag; doing so creates. Another important function recently implemented is the possibility of posting "stories": very short photos and videos that can be visible to other users for a maximum of one day.
- Twitter: launched in 2006 by Jack Dorsey allows user to "tweet", or post on timeline of consumer, a message of no more than 140 characters, called "tweet". Updates to a profile appear on the homepage to all users who have registered as "followers" of the user who "tweets". Unlike Facebook, in this case, there is no need for authorization to become a "follower". Users can follow whoever they want without reciprocity and, on the contrary, they can also have access to tweets of users who do not follow each other since Twitter is an open platform. Mention a user in a public message, it is also possible, to even without being a follower, simply by entering the username preceded by the "@" symbol. Another allowed action is the "retweet", that is to send a message written by others to its followers, in this way a "tweet" can be spread through the network of users who follow the author.

- Snapchat: a multimedia application for smartphones. The main feature of Snapchat is to allow users to send messages, photos and videos that can only be viewed for 24 hours. The content once, it disappears.
- LinkedIn: Social Network that aims to develop professional contacts. Through their personal profile, they present their own relevant characteristics in the workplace and create connections with users who consider themselves important in their professional field, in order to then connect with other interesting subjects to find or offer a job.
- Pinterest: born in 2010, the root of the name "pin", derives from the fact that it shares photos, images and videos gathered, on the basis of precise themes comparable to post-it, hanging in a real themed bulletin board. Texts cannot be published, except those that act as captions to the images, by titles for the categories or by comments. Users can also share content published by others through the "pin it" button. In this social network, moreover, it is possible to follow other users to be able to see what they publish on their message boards without having permission.
- YouTube: Web platform, founded February 14, 2005, which allows sharing and viewing of multimedia content on the web, process called "video sharing". Users can also vote, bookmark, report and comment on videos. Most of the videos are free for viewing, but there are exceptions, including premium subscription-based channels, movie rentals, as well as YouTube Premium: a subscription service that offers ad-free access to the website and access to exclusive content made in partnership with existing users.

## Graphic 2



**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel, data: Industry Report 2019

The trend of growth of the Social Network is an important aspect in order to evaluate what is described previously. According to the Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2019 [8], that asked to more than four thousand and eight hundred digital managers how their organic posting activities will change over the next 12 months, interesting results were recorded. For example, Facebook, considered the most important platform for 61% of surveyed for their business (**Graphic 2**), 51% percent of digital managers plan on increasing their Facebook organic activities, a drop of 11% from 2018. About Instagram, social media preferred for 14% of managers, a significant 69% of them plan on increasing their Instagram organic activities over the next 12 months, up from 66% in 2018. 73% percent of business-to-consumers digital managers plan on increasing Instagram organic activities, compared to 65% of business-to-business. More than half of managers (52%) plan on increasing their LinkedIn (14% of preference also for this platform) organic activities over the next 12 months, up 1% from 2018.

YouTube has only the 5% of the predilection, but 62% of interviewees plan on increasing their organic activities over the next 12 months. This is an increase from 2018 when 58% of managers planned on doing more organically with YouTube. About one in three (35%) of them plan on increasing their Twitter organic activities over the next 12 months, down from 44% in 2018. This result is in line with the votes expressed by sellers, worth to 4%. The remaining 7% of preferences belong to Pinterest (4%) and Snapchat (2%) The two platforms have respectively 29% and 9% on the intention for digital managers to increase their organic activities over the next 12 months. Both fell sharp compared to 2018.

The Industry Report 2019 [8] provides additional interesting information on the subject regarding two other topics.

The first is which social media platforms digital managers want to learn more about. Instagram surpassed Facebook for the first time. Interest in learning more about Facebook marketing dropped to 69% from 79% in 2018. The last topics concerns to the next argument of this Thesis: the online advertising. The Report ask to digital managers to identify which platforms they regularly use for social media advertisings. The platform most used by interviewees for publicity is Facebook (72%), followed by Instagram (38%). Instagram advertising use rose from 31% in 2018. Managers, moreover, mostly plan on increasing promotion in Facebook (59%, down from 67% in 2018), Instagram (55%, up from 53% in 2018) and YouTube (40%, up from 35% in 2018). A significant 73% said they have no plans to use Pinterest and Snapchat (84%) for advertising. For these reasons, for the aim of this Thesis, the most considered platforms will be Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

According to Global Digital Report [1], in fact, the last social media will be taken in consideration because continues to show strong results in website rankings, despite its eroding user base, ranking at the 7<sup>th</sup> place in the world's most visited websites, as **Tab 1** shows.

**Tab 1**

#	Website	Category	Time per Visit
1	Google	Search	09 min 12 sec
2	Youtube	Social-Media	21 min 36 sec
3	Facebook	Social-Media	11 min 44 sec
4	Baidu	Search	06 min 53 sec
5	Wikipedia	Reference	03 min 45 sec
6	Yahoo	Portal	06 min 26 sec
7	Twitter	Social-Media	09 min 14 sec
8	Pornhub	Adult	10 min 16 sec
9	Yandex	Search	10 min 43 sec
10	Instagram	Social-Media	06 min 25 sec

**Source:** Own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel, data: Global Digital Report 2019

### 1.3 Advertising Online

Advertising, in the Era of the Web 2.0, has had to sustain radical changes regarding the methods and the landscape in order to be able to remain effective and in step with times.

The actual definition of advertising of American Marketing Associations describes this technique as “the placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms, non-profit organization, government agencies, and individuals who seek to inform and/or persuade members of a particular target market or audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas.” [9]. But due to the advent of Internet some aspects must be reviewed.

**Tab 2**

WORLD INTERNET USAGE AND POPULATION STATISTICS 2019 Mid-Year Estimates					
World Regions	Population ( 2019 Est.)	Internet Users 30 June 2019	Penetration Rate (% Pop.)	Growth 2000-2019	Internet World %
Africa	1,320,038,716	522,809,480	39.6 %	11,48%	11.5 %
Asia	4,241,972,790	2,300,469,859	54.2 %	1,91%	50.7 %
Europe	829,173,007	727,559,682	87.7 %	592%	16.0 %
Latin America	658,345,826	453,702,292	68.9 %	2,41%	10.0 %
Middle East	258,356,867	175,502,589	67.9 %	5,24%	3.9 %
North America	366,496,802	327,568,628	89.4 %	203%	7.2 %
Oceania	41,839,201	28,636,278	68.4 %	276%	0.6 %
<b>WORLD TOTAL</b>	<b>7,716,223,209</b>	<b>4,536,248,808</b>	<b>58.8 %</b>	<b>1,16%</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

**Source:** Own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel, data: Internet World Stat 2019; <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> ; on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019

The penetration of Internet in 2019 in the World, as is possible to observe from **Tab 2**, is, on average, at 58,8%, with peaks above 87% in North America and Europe. The penetration rate, in Africa, is already low respect the other areas. The growth rate of new users, however, between 2000 and 2019 worth 11,48%, the most significant,

and it gives hope for rapid achievement on global standards. The advertising industry has long sought to go where consumers go, so the companies have followed consumers online even developing new form of advertising to relate to consumers in their virtual reality. Advertising philosophy, in fact, has changed in large part, as a result of the opportunities created online. [10]

The concept of “mass media” is the first feature that advertising had to change respect to the definition above. The Internet, indeed, is composed by a large scale of people composing countless niche markets and a relatively few websites with a significantly mass reach, like Google or YouTube. Advertising online involves one-to-one advertising through permission base, or a mass coverage using mass display likes search engine, for example Yahoo. Mass-media focus on print and broadcast media, whereas online advertising uses some tactics, such as direct responding or specific strategies like keyword or behaviourally targeted search engine advertising. The second aspect relates to the methods of reward. The actual definition, in fact, asserts that advertising must be paid communication. The new models do not provide necessary a direct payment, or they can be even unpaid. Think advertising as a one-way-communication is another discordance. The Web 2.0, indeed, brings developments in technology employed online. This newness exalts interactive capabilities in an environment characterized by user control and freedom, creating a new degree of interactivity and consumer involvement to advertising modalities. It is no longer possible, for this reason, to affirm that there is only one way to communicate while the opportunities to perform this action are limitless.

The Web 2.0 involves a situation where consumers are in a media democracy. Industries, then, encourages costumers to create and co-create new content. Digital managers have recognized that it is not enough accept this new situation in a passive way. They, in fact, must invite consumer participation and encourage it to engage with the brand. Advertising in a traditional model, for instance the TV, consists in a series of interruptions that tele-spectators must accept in a passive way.

Consumer must understand that is the price to pay for benefit for this service. In a field where the user is the main creator of the media content, these interruptions are clearly less efficient.

Online advertising got its start in the early 1990s, when companies involved the potential of electronic commerce. Improvement in technology characterized recent year along with a growth in the Internet penetration, fluctuations in consumer media consumption and challenges related with advertising through other media. A rich landscape was the consequence of these factors, as evidenced by the switching in publicity expenditures across media types. Mass media still account for most of the ad spending in the in the early 2000s. Shifting in expenditures across media categories over time, however, it is easily explained when the Internet advertising has grown each year. The costs, indeed, reached € 11,08 billion with a grew by 30% in 2005, and continued to increase in 2006, reaching € 14,98 billion, a pickup of 73% [10]. Allocations to other media categories, simultaneously, have consistently declined. Online advertising, indeed, achieves the highest growth rate of any media and pulls spending from television, magazines, and newspapers into the online category.

The trend, nowadays, is not going to change, despite early warning signs of a Global economic slowdown: advertise spending will continue to rise across the globe, with digital driving most of the growth. Worldwide digital spending on advertising, during 2019, will rise by 17.6% to € 295,34 billion. The Digital, then, for the first time, account for half of the global ad market. [11]

**Tab 3**

Percentage of spending in online advertising compared to the total			
Nation	2018	2019	Increasing of (%)
China	65,3%	69,5%	6,43
UK	63,8%	66,4%	4,08
Norway	61,7%	65,5%	6,16
Ireland	58,8%	62,6%	6,46
Denmark	57,8%	61,1%	5,71
Sweden	56,3%	60,3%	7,10
Australia	55,6%	57,1%	2,70
USA	48,6%	54,2%	11,52
New Zeland	51,8%	54,0%	4,25
Canada	50,2%	53,5%	6,57
Netherlands	47,8%	52,6%	10,04
Russia	45,1%	50,0%	10,86

**Source:** Own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel; data: EMarketer; <https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-digital-ad-spending-2019>

The **Tab 3** shows that digital has already become the dominant advertising medium in some countries, including UK, China, Norway and Canada. USA and Netherlands, this year, will join that group, with digital accounting for 54.2% and 52.6% of total ad spend, respectively. Google is the largest digital publicity seller in the World in 2019, accounting for 31.1% (€ 91,93 billion) of worldwide promotional spending. Facebook is the second one, with € 52,92 billion in net ad revenues, followed by Alibaba.com, at € 25,88 billion.

Online advertising is diverse with numerous possible formats, these include:

- Paid search advertising: publicity delivered on Web sites in response to specific search words or phrases entered by visitors to the search site.
- Display advertising: boxes presented on Web sites, which contain text and graphical images.

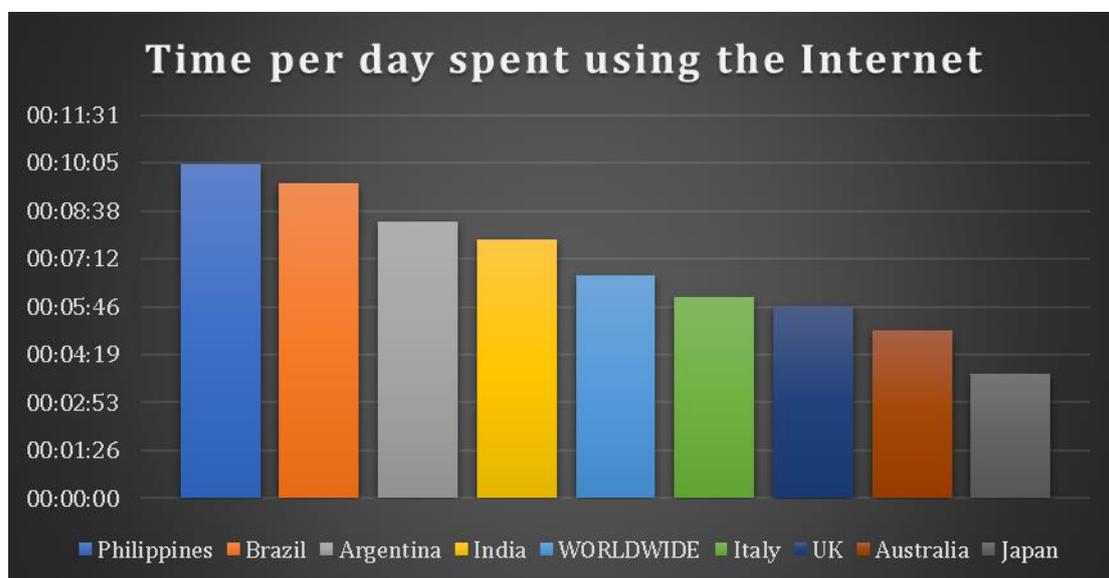
- Classifieds: brief advertising with small type that are typically presented by product category.
- Rich media: online publicity that approximate the qualities of television commercials, including audio, streaming video, and animation. They also enable audience interaction with the ad.
- Referrals (or lead generation): fees that advertisers pay to promotion networks that refer qualified purchasers to the advertiser.
- Promotional e-mail: banner advertisings, links or advertiser sponsorships that appear in e-mail newsletters, e-mail marketing campaigns and other commercial e-mail communications.
- Sponsorships: includes a range of devices, as well as: microsites or spotlights, which are custom Web sites branded with a specific campaign; advergames, a branded video games; content or section sponsorships, for which an advertiser sponsors specific content on a third-party site; and branded contests.
- Social Media marketing: a broad category of advertising spending, including advertising using social networks, virtual worlds, user-generated product reviews, blogger endorsements, podcasts, games, and consumer-generated advertising.

Three reasons why industries shifting their resources to online advertising can be found. The first one is the possibility for the companies to have an accurate measurement and accounting when they invest in digital publicity. In term of measurement, online advertising offers a lot of metrics: tracking consumer behaviour online through page views and clickthrough rates; monitoring the length of time a visitor spends at a site; counting the number of times a streaming video is played; and how frequently a visitor comes to a site are only a few of tools for data collection. The possibility of accounting for advertising effectiveness is a factor driving growth in digital publicity. Advertisers attempt on key words. The propositions ensure that the advertises appear on search results pages when costumers use those key words. The relative placement of the value of one bid, consequently, versus other proposals on

those same key words determines the rank positions of them advertises. Only when someone clicks on the promotion, advertisers pay the offer amount. [10]

The second motivation relates to the higher number of consumers that a company can reach with online advertising respect to another media publicity. The increasingly penetration of the Internet in the World, give the possibility to reach a wide range of costumers that, as reported the Global Digital Report 2019 [1] and visible in **Graphic 3** spent more and more time on web sites.

**Graphic 3**



**Source:** Own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel: data: Global Digital Report 2019; <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2019/01/digital-2019-global-internet-use-accelerates>

The average of the time spent on the Internet of the World per consumer is 6 hours and 42 minutes each day. This statistic was higher the past year, and worth to 6 hours and 49 minutes. The decrease is clearly explained by the large number of new users who are still learning how to use the Internet.

The third reason stands to the technology driven engagement opportunities. Technological advances create chances those affect the way in which advertising is formed, targeted, and delivered as well as the way consumers interrelate with those opportunities. Targeting online is an important economic opportunity. This method, in fact, allows to track consumers online and integrate this valuable behavioural data with unlimited databases on demographics and off-line behaviour. The success of Google has mostly derived from the capability to access numerous niche sites and make in connection those sites with advertising companies. This is possible thanks to AdSense program and AdWords search program. Taking in consideration Social-Media, furthermore, the numerous systems of advertising provide the opportunities for consumers to assimilate aspects of the brand of a company. This allows to evaluate what the trademark represents to them, interact with that brand and distribute it to other customers in the Web.

The negative side of online advertising is the bad perception that consumers have against determined techniques that are already exploited by companies. The most significant aspect that makes online advertises not well transposed are: the appearing of publicity in inappropriate moments; the repetition of the same promotion too often; and the lack of credibility in the advertising. R. Bruner, in order to correct those weak points, identifies a list of advertising functions that benefit consumers:

- Support consumers make acquisition decisions when they are looking for advice
- Provide consistent product and category information when demanded by customers
- Cost of premium content the for clients guaranteed
- Offer publicity that encourages user engagement instead providing something that passively await, being advertising somewhat consumers seek out
- Delight consumers with content that is inspirational, amusing, funny, interesting, stimulating and beguiling. [12]

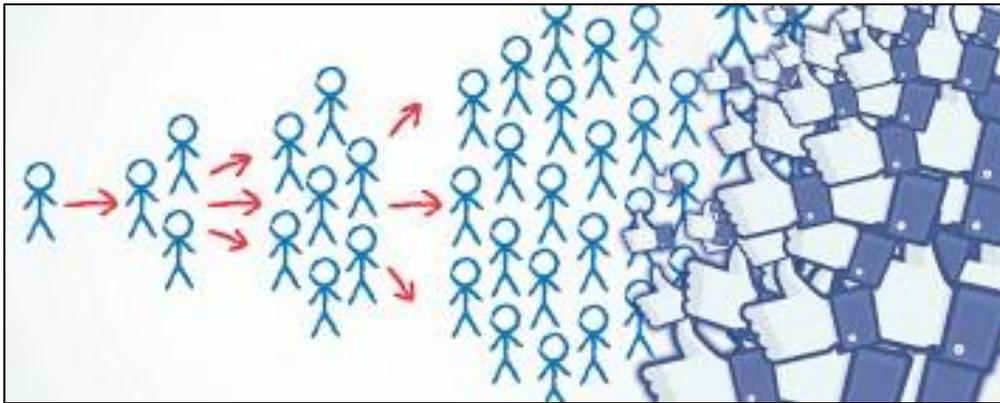
## 1.4 Social-Media Advertising

Social media make communication possible throughout all the systems of social groups online. Social Networks, as explained before, include forums, virtual worlds, social news organizations, social opinion sharing sites, and social networks. Social-Media are constructed around site platforms that allow members to develop identity profiles, interrelate with other members, and contribute in several site activities. Social Networks have grown up in popularity from their ability to provide a platform for data-sharing, communication, and relationship development and maintenance. Those Websites are above all else communication centres. The core product of networking capabilities is offered, and, at the same time, networks do find solutions to differentiate themselves. Instagram and Facebook support the relationship-building and relationship-conservation. YouTube provides a set for sharing and promoting videos and related opinions. Pinterest enables photo sharing and revising. LinkedIn offers a form of self-promotion and profession networking. Niche sites are constantly focused on any number of hobbies and individual interests.

The substantial audience size and the surprising measurement of exposure time users spend in the network given in the previous chapter, attract several numbers of advertisers. These companies, more than any other community environment, have incorporated social networks for marketing purpose. Advances in behavioural targeting make possible for Social Networks not only to target but also micro target audiences. "Friendvertising", the name of Social-network advertising, allows brands to reach both mass markets and niche markets while targeting specific segments. Segmentation tools, in fact, is offered by Websites, based on user behaviours and demographic information. Behavioural targeting, in the context of online advertising, means delivering pertinent display promotion based on the behaviour online of a user. The programs of tracking-network-advertising trace the pattern of visits on Website and Webpage to segment users built on their online behaviour. That information is, then, used to serve vastly relevant promotions to a segment of consumers who are expected to be interested in the product.

Targeted advertising is attractive given the greater effectiveness in generating consumer response. The advertising options of Facebook, however, highlight the core reason brands can benefit from Friendvertising. Influential brand enthusiasts, thanks to the motivation of Social-Media promotion, spread virally the brand information. Accordingly to the “Never Ending Friending” Report [13], 40% of the users of Social Networks discover a unknown brand they truly like. The Report explains that advertising increases value on social networks by building a “momentum effect”. The momentum effect occurs when “brands build on the basic value of their display advertising and brand profile by encouraging friends to share the brand’s message”. Display advertising and profiles exist on the network site, whereas brands, due to Friendvertising, are not restricted to paid advertising impressions in earning consumer exposure to the message of a brand. Friends, within the Social-Media, carry the message virally by debating the brand, embedding branded symbols and widgets on profile pages, and reporting on brand-related events. The media value originating from nonpaid word-of-mouth, the most productive influences in online conversations between consumers, can be enormous, if a brand is well liked, relevant and buzz worthy. This is the core of the momentum effect, and it works because friends are awarded a special form of influence social proof. Social proof works by inspiring customers to make decisions that imitate those of people in their social network. Friends that are favourable toward a brand or making brand purchases, influence others are likely to as well. Social networks, thus, offer chances for word-of-mouth communication to other friends and influential about the brand. Brands can take advantages from the viral communication of brand messages and the associated social power with any social media. The substantial impact of social networking cannot be underestimated: a person who sends an e-mail marketing message to a few friends have, probably, small impact in the marketplace with this “1+1+1” model of distribution. However, if that same user posts a link to a video ad using a social network, the distribution grows exponentially (**Image 1**).

**Image 1**



**Source:** <https://www.melacreo.it/comunicazione-virale-su-facebook/>

Friendvertising depends on encouraging conversations among connected users in a network. A debate concerning if it is relevant which friends start the conversation shows up. There are two schools of thought on how public interest builds.

Malcolm Gladwell [14], suggests that three factors effort to ignite interest in an idea, product, or behaviour: the law of the few; the stickiness; and the power of context.

- The law of the few: the three kinds of individuals who help to spread viral messages. The first is “Maven”, person who is knowledgeable about many things. “Connector”, the second one, who know many people and communicate with them. The third is “Salesmen”, who influence others with their natural persuasive inspiration. Brands enhance the likelihood, targeting mavens, connectors and salesmen, in order to spread their messages throughout a Social Network. Mavens and salespeople are not easily to be identified. Connectors, indeed, are those with the most friends, their networks are large and active.
- Stickiness: ideas, or in this case brand messages, will be more viral if they stimulate action on the part of the receiver. Direct marketers are confident that creative content pulls best when bundled with a call to action. That brands, to the extent, can build the same thing into their social-networking promotions and the campaign could be more effective.

- Power of Context: Messages can hit the reach of an epidemic only if they also have the power of context. Context means that mavens, connectors and salespeople have enough interest in knowledge about. They, moreover, control over the message to create communities around it.

The second theory suggest that messages spread from many rather than a few. Marian Salzman, chief strategy officer at Euro RSCG Worldwide, [15], states that the main activity in order to move brand messages through social networks is cultivate “bees”: hyper devoted customers who live to spread the word about the brand. Companies should build “beehives” by devoting extra attention to brand enthusiasts who are likely to serve as bees, offering product samples to these fans, heartening them to share branded materials with friends, and offering them with persuasive information (stories, brand gossip even) that they will want to share with others.

Brands, obviously, want to make the most of the Social Network itself. Companies cannot look social media as any other Websites, looking, for example, for audience size. Social networks do offer reach and lengthy periods of time for a message of a brand to be managed. The advantage of Social networks over the other sites in that members tend to visit recurrently, staying for a protracted visit each time. Brands take profit from this time component. Social-networking sites provide brands a lot of occasions for engagement. Brand profiles, once created, allow brand to exist as “people” on the sites. Every user can interact with the brands, share information, photos, and videos, and participate in two-way communication, a real dialogue. The company as person increases the ability of a brand to use conversation marketing. A brand-persona strengthens the personality of the firm, differentiates from competitors, and sets the stage for a perceived relationship. A pleasant and credible brand-persona can simplify message internalization: the procedure by which a user assumes a brand belief as his/her own. Friending brands provides lots of incentives to a consumer, as explained in the “Never Ending Friending” Report. Incentive-driven motives, for example, such as get invitations to future events or receive information on sales and special offers. Relationship-oriented reasons, another incentive, such as a desire to support the brand to its proposal of high-quality products, to associate with the company and its image or

to reply to a friend's recommendation about the brand. Companies on social-networking sites, recently, promotes brand consciousness, brand recall and builds on own loyalty and equity. Social-Media offer occasions for publicity and engagement for those which learn to leverage the exclusive characteristics of the network in question. The network strategy can backfire if the brand is not perceived as credible.

Four general approaches, then, to craft an operative Friendvertising strategy are possible: advertising using display promotion on social networks; inserting the brand in the social network with brand profile pages; branded widgets; and promotions building an select branded social network; sponsorships.

- a) Display advertising placed on many pages within the Website, is the simplest level of Friendvertising. Social-Media, as explained above, offer search optimization options which can allow accurate targeting of specific members. Those tools are based on online behaviour of members and demographics. The video, moreover, could be streamed on most sites, in order to enable advertisements or "shorts" (short films) to run. Promotions can be shown prior to the viewing of the video or just afterwards, if video is offered as a site feature, either feature entertainment or informational or user-generated video. Brands, furthermore, can integrate the publicity in the site with, for example, sponsorships, e-newsletter features, branded instant messaging, branded groups (forums and communities). Social Networks offer a lot of possibilities for advertisers who request to use display publicity. IAB is the platform which sell the space for standard online advertising units, including several sizes of boxes, banners and skyscrapers. The rates charged for promotions online, just like the cost of placing advertises in other media, are based on CPM (cost per thousand exposures). The CPM rate is a function of demand for the inventory advertising of the site and the value of its audience. Audience value is problematic to express but contains the following considerations significant to advertisers: sheer volume; segmentation characteristics; visit patterns (frequency of visits, how recent they were, and time spent per visit); and involvement in the site.

- b) The development of brand profiles is among the most valuable activities. Profiles give the brand a persona in the social media landscape. It is a natural extension of the trend for brands to create personalities for themselves, both through the use of creative language (including imagery, tone, creative appeals, style, and music), and brand ambassadors, who accurately offer a human persona for the company. General Electric, for example, is one of the most capable in acting this type of strategy. The firm publishes many researches, as well as educational content, and can translate those to social media at the right level. The film-maker Sam Cossman, indeed, in partnership with General Electric, descended into the Masaya Volcano, or 'Mouth of Hell', in Nicaragua. The complete event was shared on Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram, showing Cossman and the team installing sensors which have the function to tracking a variety of measurements new to science for this volcano. The famous hashtag "#6secondscience" and its beautiful photographs on Instagram make the company one of the brand's most notable successes on social media [16]. Firms can also develop "communities" on some Social-Media. Own spaces can also be set up entirely. Coke, Nike, and Showtime developed independent spaces, but brands with reduced budgets can still develop networking sites consistent with their image. The communities have the possibility to feature photo posts, blogs, discussion forums, video sharing, and all the other functions commonly offered by traditional social media.
- c) Sponsorships are built on offering something of value to the target audience. Sponsorship of social-networking sites works with the equivalent method. Nikon, for example, has created a sponsorship with Social Network "Flickr". The choice has been perfect because Flickr members are passionate about photography, catching memories through photographs and sharing those with other users online. Nikon, a premium camera brand, looking coherently for gain market share in the digital camera market. The company benefits from higher exposure to the brand name, the purpose of the site for members and from the emotional connection between the site and the sponsor.

Mark Drosos of iMedia Connection [17] reminds digital managers that Social-Media can meet several marketing purposes with social networking. These are: value driven provided by the brand that design a persona; motivation to meet, communicate, and share provided to a community member; relevant content offered to provide value to the community.

Social Media Marketing Industry Report of 2019 [8], with the goal of understanding which the paybacks were to promote their businesses on social media, surveyed four thousand and eight hundred of digital managers. An important 93% of all dealers specified that their Social-Media efforts have created more exposure for their businesses, a pickup from the result of 87% in 2018. Increased traffic was the second major benefit, with 87% (78% in 2018) reporting positive results. Generated leads, in 2019, increased to 74% from 64% of the past year. An important result it is recorded about the sales, risen from 53% to 72% in 2019. According to managers surveyed, also the developing of loyal fans grew from 63% to 71%, remembering that a base of faithful fan base seems to be a benefit that improves over time. Provided marketplace insight grow to 58% from 54% of the 2018. Business partnerships, at the end, improved to 56% from 49%.

Digital Managers, usually, verify better sales results with more years of social media practice. More than 70% who have been using Social-Media for more than 12 months, in fact, report it helped them improve sales. The use of Social Networks, in the past, for selling assets was a big challenge for managers, and, now, it appears that most of them have overcome this issue.

## 1.5 How to compute Social Media ROI

Marketing is incoming a new period where the power of influence moves from managers to customers. New marketing tools and methods for measurement of Return of Investment (ROI) in promotional activities are required. ROI is the percentage rapport between profit and the investment that generates that income. The rate is broadly used to study the performance of an investment [18]. The formula of this function, which give a percentage result, is [19]:

$$ROI = (Gain\ from\ Investment - Cost\ of\ Investment) / Cost\ of\ Investment$$

Differences, however, can be observed between calculating the ROI in financial terms, and in terms of marketing, in online marketing, particularly, where levels of complexity are several. A variety of different metrics replacing traditional ones are in marketing ROI equations. There are financial and non-financial measurements of ROI (Perdue 2010), ultimately. The measuring of performance of online advertising, in the past, used simple metrics such as unique visitors, page visitors, page views or cost per clicks [20]. Applications of Web 2.0 brought a further advance of e-metrics which are defined as performance criteria. Those tools measure the success of sites of the Internet, both internal and external, and e-business and e-commerce [20]. Metrics could be divided into: marketing; financial; and technical. The three categories, although, can be interconnected. Performance indicators, in several different typologies, are used for engagement, traffic measurement, customer service, financial return, reputation management and so on [20] [21] [22]. Barefoot and Szabo [23] suggest that the following metrics can deliver ROI measurements: visitors; incoming links; social network activity; conversations and contributions; references in the blogosphere; views on social media sites; subscribers, and social book-marking. Financial and non-financial metrics are identified and categorized. Hard-financial metrics must be completed by non-financial ones, due to the Social-Media marketing complexity. Engagement is the most significant element of the non-financial Return of Investment. Many marketers try to translate the benefits of engagement into hard-financial return.

Engagement is instant, available, and appears where the audience already exists. Engagement can be successfully accomplished through several marketing actions, namely:

- Word-of-mouth (WOM): already cited before, as research explained that 90% of consumers trust more other customers rather than advertisements.
- Reach: the easiest metric to quantify across all platforms
- Traffic: find out where the customer came from, which Social media applications customers used and, finally, what led the purchaser into the actual acquisition of the product or the service;
- Customer service: the key for customer engagement strategy
- Brand advocates: who can deliver financial ROI.

The cost of a Social Network advertising strategy is calculated depending on the plan a company follows. A relevant aspect, for example, appear if a company outsource its online marketing activities or keep them in house. Dividing the two approaches, financial and non-financial is possible to find relevant aspect. The Financial Return can be computed not only with the ROI, but also with a function specific for Marketing Investments [19]:

$$ROMI \text{ (Return of Marketing Investment)} = \text{incremental value} / \text{marketing cost}$$

ROI and ROMI are not exclusive to each other. They can be used both in order to have a more accurate evaluation of the investment in a complex landscape as the online advertising. According to Holmboe [24], if the actual sales of a specific period are higher than the forecasted sales, the difference can be used as the value of the Social-Media return. All promotion platforms can be utilized either as selling points, or as promotional tools.

In terms of no-financial return, findings present the levels of engagement as a result of reach, customer service, and positive sentiment, as well as high levels of brand reputation, that emerged from the interaction of the users with the social media platforms. According to Facebook [25], post engagement is the number of actions related to a post as the outcome of an advertisement. Metrics such as likes, comments,

shares and post clicks, are used in an algorithmic filtering for the calculation of engagement [25]. Total engagement rate can be computed based on formula of Smitha [26]:

$$\text{Engagement rate} = \frac{\text{Total engagement (likes + comments + shares)}}{\text{total fans}}$$

Leander [27], after an extended research of 500,000 Facebook pages, supports that the average engagement rate of a page below 10,000 fans is 0.96 %. Leander, furthermore, trusts that a satisfying engagement rate for a business should be above 1 %. An alternative formula was given by Ghali [28]:

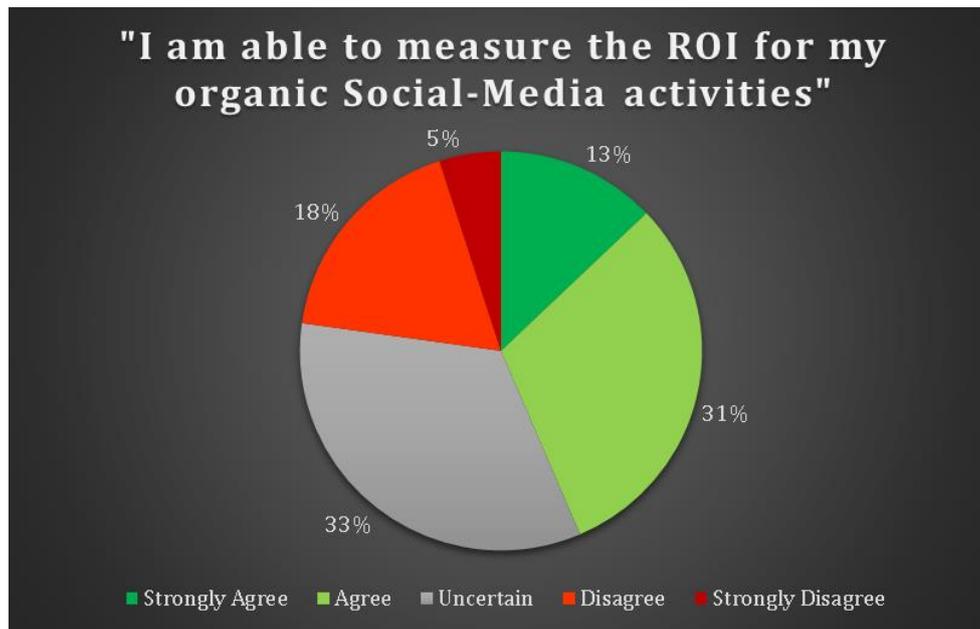
$$\text{Positive sentiment} = \frac{(\text{total likes} + \text{total shares} + \text{positive comments} + \text{positive messages})}{(\text{total number of posts} + \text{total number of comments} + \text{total number of messages})}$$

Those formula are clearly less objective than the financial rates, but, two companies with similar numbers on Social-Media, in terms of followers, likes and comments, can use them to understand whether the implemented social policy is successful or not.

Friendvertising, being a relatively new field, still finds it difficult to compute the Return on Investment. Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2019 [8], to prove this, surveyed digital managers in order to understand their ability to measure the return on their organic Social-Media activities.

The reporter asked managers to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I am able to measure the return on investment (ROI) for my organic Social-Media activities." Only 44% agreed, or strongly agreed, they were able to measure their organic social activities. The data that make most effect is that at least 1 marketer on 4 (23%) is not able to compute the Return of Investment of Social-Media activities, as the **Graphic 4** shown.

**Graphic 4**



**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel; data: Industry Report 2019

The problematic measurement of the ROI for Social-Media organic activities is a topic that is analysed in Chapter 2.

## 1.6 Football and Social Network

The Social Network rising scenario cannot leave indifferent the market of football clubs. The principal reasons to develop an efficient social media strategy are enhancing brand value, increasing commercial revenues and attracting more supporters [29]. The sports marketing literature suggests that customers of sports have inimitable relationships with their preferred teams [30]. Several levels of fandom, team identification and emotive attachment towards sport teams have often been associated with the term 'engage' in the sport marketing literature [31]. Highly engaged supporters are expected to develop non-transactional actions such as: positive word-of-mouth; displays of sport fandom; consumer-to-consumer interactions communities of fans; and information reading about the team [32] [33]. Social media has transformed the way supporters engage with sports club, athletes and other fans [34]. A lot of sport fans are very engaged, and, for many, sport represent a significant role in their everyday lives [35]. Sport teams progressively invest significant resources and time to drive online engagement, due to the popularity of social networks, leveraging the highly involved nature of their supporters.

In the marketing landscape of sports, fans are considered a broadly diverse cluster. Supporters, in fact, are segmented in every socio-economic class and education level. The interpersonal dimensions of the relationship between supporters and the object of fandom, moreover, can be evaluated by the validity of different psychoanalytic approaches to desires, pleasures and self-identity in the World of fans [36]. Supporters can exhibit distinct fandom levels, oscillating from attending games to assuming the successes and losses of their team as their own. The degree of passion, however, and emotional meaning, differentiates a sport fan from a mere spectator [37].

Social Networks provide fans new sceneries of fandom and an extra mean to engage with their preferred teams, while, at the same time, permits sport organizations to reinforce support-relationships [38].

Consumers become co-owners and co-creators of club brands, within social media, playing a strong and empowering role in building brand reputation and image.

The use of Social Networks has allowed football teams to have a two-way relationship with its supporters. Media, not intended only Social Media in this case, is one of the largest sources of revenue for team organizations. An example is the new 3-year € 4,4 billion right deal by Sky Sport and BT Sport with Barclay’s Premier League to broadcast all the matches of the major English championship in these two cable TV.

The **Tab 4** shows, moreover, the revenues (in million €) of the six most important clubs of Barclay’s Premier League in the last ten years, showing that these teams had gain almost € 800 million thank to the rights done with TVs.

**Tab 4**

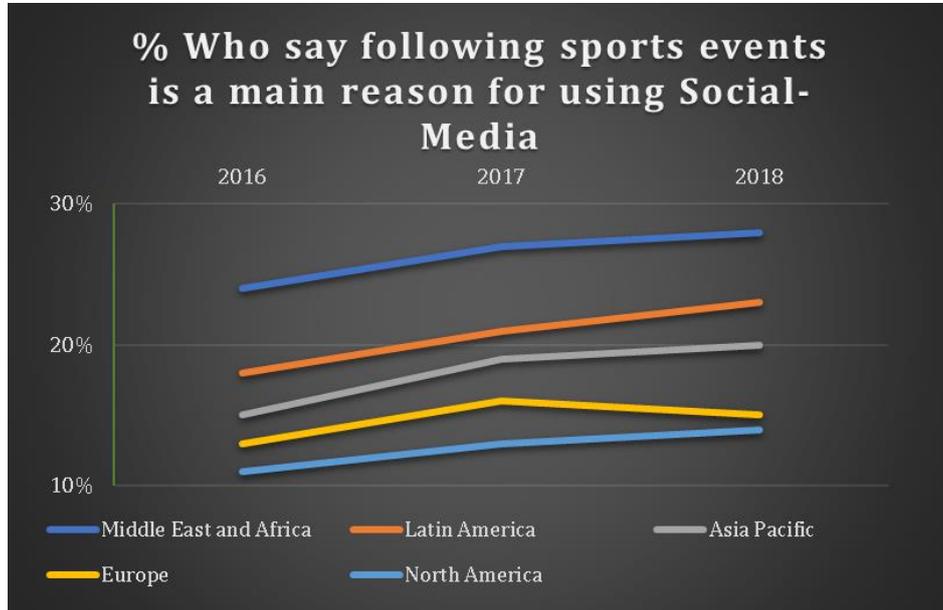
Revenues (in million €) from TV rights of the six most important clubs of Barclay’s Premier League											
Team	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/2018	18/19	Total
Manchester City	45,1	50,5	55,1	52,9	87,9	89,6	88,3	133,7	136,0	137,4	876,5
Manchester United	48,2	55,0	54,9	55,3	81,2	88,1	87,8	128,4	136,3	129,7	864,9
Chelsea	48,0	52,5	49,5	50,1	85,6	90,1	79,4	137,2	128,9	132,9	854,3
Liverpool	43,7	50,2	49,5	49,9	88,7	84,4	82,4	133,0	132,8	138,7	853,2
Arsenal	47,0	51,1	51,1	52,0	84,5	87,8	91,9	127,0	129,2	129,4	851,2
Tottenham	45,0	48,3	52,2	50,9	81,6	80,8	86,6	132,4	131,4	132,1	841,5

**Source:** Own elaborations made with Microsoft Excel ; data converted in Euro (1 Euro= 0,91 GBP) from <https://www.calciofinanza.it/2019/05/24/ricavi-diritti-tv-premier-league-2018-2019-2/>

Television is still the major media for sports, football in particular, but it is getting caught up rapidly by social network. Sports fan, indeed, on average, spends 1-2.5 hours a week following their teams via social media. These statistics would appear to specify that football clubs around the World should implement Social-Media campaigns to interact with their supporters. Social Networks have become a rapidly developing alternative medium in sports, in contrast with traditional media such as newspaper and television. A lot of social media options, although, are present: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are the most common types found on most websites of sports teams. The Global Index Trends [39] asked to a base of 485,436 Internet users, aged between

16 and 64 years, what are the reason of using Social-Media: the result is an increasing of preference in watching sports online (**Graphic 4**).

**Graphic 5**



**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel; data: Global Index Trends 2019

Only in Europe there is a decrease, from one year to the following one, for preference in using Social-Media for following Sports (from 16% in 2017 to 15% in 2018). Middle East and Africa 28% on people use Social-Media mainly to follow sports (+4% from 2017). North America is the area with a worst motivation to follow sports through Social-Media (14%) in 2018, with, nevertheless, an increasing of 3% from 2017).

Positive aspects in reaching supporters and enhancing brand derive also from sponsorships. Companies, in fact, have great advantages to be seen close to teams with great audit and popularity. An example is the English football team Manchester United, that, in the recent years, did not reached always important results in the competition where it had played. Nevertheless, “Red Devils”, as they are called by supporters, in the glorious past years develop a strong fanbase with fan-friendly policies and international Summer tours in Asia and North America, and, now, is the most supported club counting at least 700 million of fan all over the World.

Chevrolet, an automobility company, in order to benefit of the positive image of Manchester United, in 2014 rights a deal to put its logo in the shirts of the football team, giving him 445 million euro in 7 years.

The clubs of all sports became more and more active on Social Networks. Football, however, is the most followed sports on the three main important Social-Media currently: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. **Tab 5** takes in consideration the number of followers (expressed in million people) of the most famous followed team of the most popular sports in the World. For Football was taken in consideration Real Madrid, a Spanish football club, that derives his popularity by winning the most challenging competition, UEFA Champions League, for thirteen times [40], more than any other team. Basket is the second sport in Tab and, accordingly to Focus [41], can count at least 2 billion of interested people all over the World. Los Angeles Lakers, an American team, is the most followed one, also thanks to the twenty-three NBA titles won in its history. The third sport analysed is Baseball, with 500 million people which follows the matches. New York Yankees, accordingly to Forbes [42], is “the most valuable sports team of USA, ranking fourth overall at \$2.3 billion”. The American team turned out to be the one with the most active followers of the Major League Baseball. American Football, the penultimate sport taken in consideration, benefits from 400 million supporters all over the World. This sport, moreover, provides the final match of NFL called “Super Bowl” which is “the most valuable sporting event brand, with a value of 420 million dollars” [43]. Cricket, finally, can reach between 2 and 3 billion of followers, mainly in South-West Asia, and the Indian Cricket Team, is the most famous team of this sport. Tab highlights that Real Madrid, the football club, had at least the double of the sum of the followers of the others four teams.

**Tab 5**

Name	Sport	Number of followers (in million)			Total
		Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	
Real Madrid	Football	110,3	75,5	32,6	<b>218,4</b>
Los Angeles Lakers	Basket	21,6	8,7	7,8	<b>38,1</b>
New York Yankees	Baseball	8,6	2,3	3,4	<b>14,3</b>
New England Patriots	American Football	7	3,9	4,5	<b>15,4</b>
Indian Cricket Team	Cricket	29	9,8	9,2	<b>48</b>

**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel ; data taken from Social-Media official accounts of each team.

The most impressive aspect is that the second one in this rank, Indian Cricket Team, compared with the ranking of the most followed football teams of the UEFA Champions League, it would place 9<sup>th</sup>, in front of the Turkish team Galatasaray (28,3 million followers) and behind English club Manchester City (58,8 million followers). Tennis, another famous sport, in this tab, was not take in consideration because there are not teams, but only single player.

The quantity of followers of the single athlete respect other people, is another witness about the good penetration of football in Social Networks. In the **Tab 6** were analysed the number of followers of the top 10 most famous person on Instagram. Football players are evidenced by bold font. Cristiano Ronaldo, footballer of Portugal and Juventus, is the most followed person on Instagram and, as will be seen in next chapter, the most followed person on all Social Media. At the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> places there are respectively Lionel Messi, athlete of Argentina and Barcelona, with 126 million followers, and the Brazilian Neymar Junior, who plays for Paris Saint German.

It is possible to observe that there are no athletes of any other sports, except for the wrestler Dwayne Johnson who, however, has gained more popularity thank to the acting profession.

**Tab 6**

#	Name	Profession	Followers (in million)
<b>1</b>	<b>Cristiano Ronaldo</b>	<b>Football Player</b>	<b>176</b>
2	Ariana Grande	Musician and Actress	160
3	Selena Gomez	Musician and Actress	153
4	Dwayne Johnson	Actor and Wrestler	150
5	Kim Kardashian	Reality Tv personality	144
6	Kylie Jenner	Reality Tv personality	141
7	Beyoncé	Musician	130
<b>8</b>	<b>Lionel Messi</b>	<b>Football Player</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Neymar Jr</b>	<b>Football Player</b>	<b>123</b>
10	Taylor Swift	Musician	119

**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel; data taken from official accounts of each character.

However, for some football teams, there seems to be a lack of real effort to know their fan base. Many clubs, in fact, still fight with the indecision of wanting to have control over their brand, while at the same time building an engaging presence with their strengthened fan community [38]. Most clubs, indeed, notwithstanding the large investments made, gradually moved into engaging with fans by expressive social media activity. In the sport management literature, as such, research devoted to supporters engagement has deserved inadequate attention, particularly on Social Networks and from the fan perspective [44]. Most studies, in fact, although research investigating matters on engagement of sport consumers distances closely 30 years, have been developed offline and focused on transactional behaviours [31], while the insufficient developed online fail to contemplate a full set of behaviours and motivations related to social network engagement, lacking theoretical deepness [45]. Clubs, however, in order to use Social-Media efficiently, need appropriate direction on how to manage their presence online, specifically by gaining additional insights about their supporters, motivations and behaviours.

# Chapter 2- Deepening

## 2.1 Introduction to the Second Chapter

Subchapter 1.5 highlighted the affinity of football with Social Networks. The second Chapter focuses mainly on the use of Friendvertising in football. To understand how digital advertising is developing in this sport, German championship visible in the USA is taken as example. US soccer supporters watching televised action from Germany's Bundesliga in season 2018/2019 saw something different on screen from their German counterparts. Fans in Australia, China or other parts of the World, watching the same game at the same time, have had also fractionally different viewing experiences. The Bundesliga, the major competition of German football, had become the first 'big five' league of Europe to fully test and approve the newest version of 'virtual' advertising: a technology that virtually replaces the advertising on perimeter boards around the edge of the pitch. The technology, for the first time, is accessible on LED perimeter boards.

Virtual advertising images, digitally inserted on pitch-side advertising boards, will be unique to their region. The technology, instead, makes no difference to what fans see on the pitch. Clubs, for this reason, modifies advertisings that are most pertinent to the respective international TV audience, whether they are watching from all over the World. The potential windfall for clubs employing virtual advertising is consistent. The Report from Nielsen Sports [46] found that the 18 clubs of Bundesliga could potentially increase collective advertising revenue by 7% (€60 million), by retailing targeted promotions to supporters in five international areas.

The improved reality technology, made by the innovative sports media and technology company Supponor, is built into 'Virtual Hybrid' LED systems made by stadium screen specialists: ADI.tv. The technology was used in the German Super-Cup in 2018, with "modified feeds" offering targeted advertising to supporters

watching in South Asia, North Asia, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa.

“The sports advertising/sponsorship market has really matured in many top tier sports. Clubs and rights holders need to find ways of delivering greater value for their partners or to segment their offering more effectively,” states the ADI.tv CEO, Geraint Williams, to an interview to Forbes. “Brands, thanks to this technology, can communicate to their target market in their native language and align their message with regional brand strategy.” The English Football Association has similarly been an early adopter, installing the technology for a friendly match against Costa Rica, in June 2018, during the warm-up. Region-specific digital publicities and messaging were introduced for a feed in the Americas and another in the rest of the World, in addition to the in-stadium domestic feed with the promotions physically at the ground. The Premier League, the major competition of England, is another which could invest more severely in the technology, due to its huge global audience. Williams states: “Each club attracts significant investment from international partners. Watch any Premier League game and you’ll see that the perimeter media space is full of adverts for multinational brands as well as adverts for numerous Asian partners which are, quite frankly, wasted on the vast majority of the viewing audience. All the parts of the puzzle seem to be in place. The viewing audience is there, the demand from partners is there, and the technology is here. Over the past two to three years we’ve seen significant increase in demand from clubs for the technology, with around 25% of clubs now having systems that are either fully functioning Virtual Hybrid systems, or they have the ability to be easily upgraded.”

Virtual advertising in sport could become even more targeted, as fans move towards online content and watching what they want, how they want to. The company Supponor is currently developing technology to insert from the online World virtual advertisings, which are targeted at individual IP addresses. “Ultimately, we see a day when virtual advertising will be able to reach viewers with tailored content, not just on an international level, but by individual,” Williams said.

“That could mean the likes of Amazon being able to integrate clickable perimeter ads which are served by the individual’s purchasing habits – much like we see in online advertising now.” [47]

The examples just mentioned referred to online advertising and football. The following topics concern, instead, the relationship between Social-Media and football. The sub-chapters 2.2 and 2.4 deal with two case-studies concerning two different models of development of a Social Network strategy: direct and indirect. The first concerns Liverpool Football Club and is the case of direct development. The English team is taken as an example of a virtuous model of social network evolution. Strategies are analysed thanks to an Interview to two Digital Managers of the English team made in “Social Media Strategy in Professional Football: The case of Liverpool FC” study [48]. The second case-study concerns the acquisition of Cristiano Ronaldo by the Italian team Juventus FC. The engagement of the Portuguese player has allowed to a several growth on Social Networks for the team of Turin. Both these methods are still bringing benefits to the teams both in terms of brand enhancement and in terms of increasing commercial revenues. Concerning on strategies of Social-Media for professional teams, in subchapter 2.3, techniques and perspectives can be understood through an interview with the Digital Marketer of the Cittadella Calcio, a team currently in Italian Serie B.

Sub-chapters 2.5 and 2.6 focus on the Friendvertising for amateur football teams. Innovative sponsorship techniques are being used little by little today. Through an analysis of the momentary situation regarding this phenomenon and an interview with the owner of a possible sponsor-company, it will be possible to understand the reasons for the late development and the prospects that online advertising has in the amateur soccer world.

## **2.2 Direct model: Liverpool FC example**

The case of study relates on an interview conducted with two Social-Media marketing managers of Liverpool Football Club made in 2014 by Petros Parganas and Christos Anagnostopoulos in the study “Social Media Strategy in Professional Football: The case of Liverpool FC” [48].

The top English Premier League teams (Arsenal FC, Chelsea FC, Liverpool FC, Manchester City, and Manchester United) were considered as ideal candidates, as they benefits of World-wide visibility and brand awareness [49], high brand value [50], and are successfully implementing Social-Media as part of their communication strategies [49]. Liverpool, although, in 2014 had low sporting success, in order to examine how the social media strategy of the club was adapted to deal with such circumstances, the researcher selected the English club for this study.

The researchers asked to Social-Media managers of Liverpool FC to comment on the rationale of club in its use of social media, to describe the social media strategy of club, the relation between social media and club revenues and its integration with the overall marketing strategy, the particular role of Facebook. Through this qualitative research design [51], the researcher could gain an overall picture and understanding of the meanings the interviewees attached to marketing issues and social media. Each interview was visited separately in order to identify emergent themes and concepts related to the research aim. In the study are not published the name of the two managers, so they are called Manager A and Manager B.

Five key topics emerged from the interviews with the social media managers: getting closer to fans, engaging fans, economic value, Friendvertising and dealing with challenges. “These four thematic labels and their associative meanings, however, should be regarded as tentative and in need of substantiation through further research”. [48]

In term of getting closer with supporters, the digital strategy of Liverpool FC is part of its overall marketing approach to put fans on the centre of interest and can be abridged as “thinking global, acting local.” The Club is conscious of its status, a well-known football brand worldwide, and that it must reach a several fan-base across all continents. Liverpool was one of the first football club to adopt Facebook, given the huge World-wide diffusion of Social-Media. The club, for this reason, have the opportunity to penetrate foreign markets and establish the awareness of the brand in this Social Network. The online following of the club, indeed, in several Asian countries, exceeds the total number of United Kingdom-based online followers (34,8 million followers on Facebook). The aim for the club, however, is to intensify and maintain the level of engagement of the supporters. This view was echoed by both interviewees:

(Manager A): “You need to have a relationship with those [worldwide] fans ... social media is about getting closer to fans and letting fans getting closer to you, it is about having a conversation. “

(Manager B): “We use those platforms because this is where our fans are ... so we are trying to make our fans part of our life, of the life of the club, we are now giving them this opportunity, we are trying to make them have their voice, we don’t only talk at them, we talk to them as well.” [48]

The club, due to its massive World-wide fan-base, recognised that language and cultural differences are unavoidable, as is a lack of interaction with supporters of foreign countries, where the English language has been a barrier. Liverpool, therefore, aims to provide personalized posts to supporters across the World by segmenting its fan-base either by language or by country. Numerous different accounts of Facebook have been set up by the team in the local language of those countries where the following is high or where the English language is not prevalent. The strategy of Liverpool is to provide “customer-tailored posts, trying to be as culture- and language-relevant as possible”, while a numerous quantity of the content posted in the principal Facebook account is replicated in those accounts:

(Manager A): “We try to be culture-relevant and to post things which are not insulting the different cultures. So, where language isn’t a barrier, we try to be cultural relevant. Translation is easier but less effective but localised content demonstrates cultural recognition.”

(Manager B): “So for example, we have social media accounts across the world, we try to do something relevant to them, it is not only content in Greek for example, it is relevant content for Greek fans, it is not only translated content ... Not all messages which go out on our main [Facebook] account, go also out to other accounts. Just what is relevant for Greece, for Brazil, for Thailand and so on.” [48]

Facebook posts, at the same period, as part of the overall marketing approach, originate from each section of the team, such as sponsors, retail or public relations. The content of the posts, inevitably, reflect this strategy:

(Manager B): “Social media is a product for the entire club, a service that we offer to all the parts of the business ... it is for engagement, for our fans, but also to leverage all other departments across the club. So, every day we have a fixed agenda of themes coming from different business departments of the club.” [48]

The engagement with fans is the second key topic, achievable through the implementation of a Facebook-based strategy. The method to drive traffic is to engage supporters using their passion for the team, in a link with tribal literature [52]. Engagement for Liverpool is defined as increased interactivity between fans and the post of the club through the features of Facebook, whereas both interviewees emphasised the lack of a mutual definition of the term ‘engagement’ in the sport industry in relation to Social Networks. In other words, the replies to the post, like “comments” or “share”, are those which matter in terms of engagement, while the number of online followers is indicative of the awareness of the brand of the club. Liverpool FC, in order to maintain engagement, undertakes periodic reviews aiming to recognize the preferences of its followers in social networks. The predilections could be in terms of communication features (such as videos, pictures, etc.) and content of

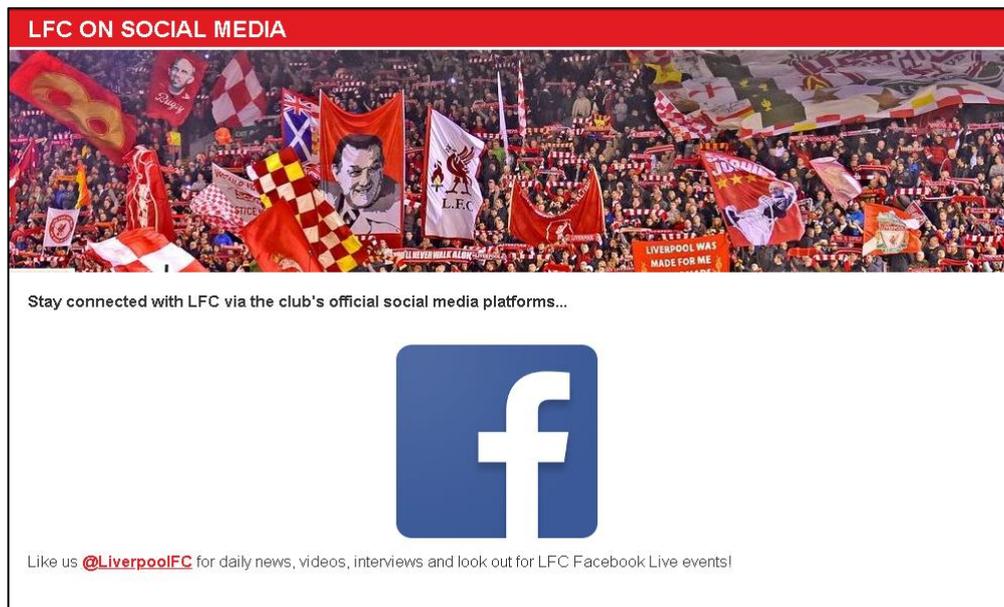
posts (such as players, the team, sponsors, history, etc.). Pictures and videos, have greater capacity for involvement and interaction of supporters than any other communication form [53] [54] and that such contributions enhance the spirits of fun and enthusiasm and shape the image of brand [55]. The visual impression is fundamental for the two Managers, which constantly monitor it analysing the effect of posts on supporters in terms of number of clicks on links, comments or views of videos. Liverpool, moreover, does benchmarking in order to catch other post on Facebook of competitors and how it affects the engagement of fans.

(Manager A): “Facebook is not about having the most fans; the number of followers doesn’t tell the full story; you need to have a relationship with those fans. We do undertake some studies to see what kind of posts generates the most engagement, [To see which] kind of posts are producing the most likes for example, or the most comments, the most interactivity.”

(Manager B): “[We analyse] how many people clicked on a video, how many of them saw the video from start to the end and we constantly look at Barcelona or Real Madrid, or Italian clubs, we try to get ideas from other clubs as well.” [48]

**Image 2**, taken by the official website of Liverpool FC [56] , shows that the club tries to link the messages posted on Facebook with its official television channel and official website. Two reasons are based on this choice: first, the website offers a meaningfully greater space to spread the message, moreover, it offers much more information. The second reason concerns the nature of the website, which is “the place where information about the team, its history, its sponsors, and even commercial activities (e-shop) are taking place” [48].

**Image 2**



**Source:** <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/fans/social-media/lfc-on-social-media>

Liverpool FC, thus, influences, either directly or indirectly, the quantity of purchases of gadgets or football clothing, increasing the number of visitors to its official website. A negative aspect, however, can be found: the current customer management system of the club is inadequate to integrate all information in term of interrelation of online platforms, preferences, and overall online behaviour of consumers. The aspect has an influence on the third topic of this case of study: the economic value.

A well-implemented Social-Media strategy should be placed at the heart of the club, as both interviewers believe, and it could improve value to a club. The managers, however, explain that is difficult to establish an effectiveness connection between the usage of social networks and the increase of revenues. This link cannot be translated into specific tangible benefits even when such a connection is established. The club, for instance, have recorded an increase in its turnover in all nations where a localised Facebook account has been set up, whereas the quantity of revenues that have been traced back to this strategy can only be implied. The reason can be found in the lack of a customer management system, which would integrate online behaviour of

supporters and offer a sophisticated analysis to give support to the marketing process of the team. Such systems were used by clubs for more transactional marketing objectives, as opposed to relationship building or loyalty, and that they lack resources to gain valuable insight from the data [38].

(Manager A): “We see an increase in web traffic, in engagement, we see sales increase in countries such as Thailand and Malaysia, in Australia we had 95,000 people attending our football match.”

(Manager B): “We don’t have the information to say for instance that each fan is worth such amount for us, we can’t say we have a social media channel and this will increase sales that much, there is no such system in place right now, but we can imply from the information we have, that the channel actually helps leverage sales.” [48]

Friendvertising is the fourth topic of the interview. It was debated that the future of Social Networks will be severely connected with sponsors and commercial partners. Liverpool FC, in fact, notices that posting messages from or about its official sponsors can influence its revenues in two ways: the first one, in line with the literature, supporters develop higher levels of loyalty towards those firms that financially support their preferred club [57]; the second way, confirmed by the interviewers, relates to the Worldwide diffusion of Facebook, which attracts the interest of sponsors and commercial partners, which can be then translated into revenues during the predictable future.

(Manager A): “We can have some better sponsorship deals in these countries [of Asia and Australia], local partners campaigns perform better when measuring on a click-through rate.”

(Manager B): “I can say that our sponsors are increasingly more interested in our digital activities. It becomes part of the deal. We offer them some space in our social media channels to advertise their products and it is becoming increasingly important to them to get advertised in our digital channels.” [48]

Sports marketers of Liverpool FC consider Friendvertising important, because sponsors currently are progressively concerned with gaining access to content and supporters. This aspect highlights the importance of a customer management system for teams in order to provide key insights into their interests of fans and purchase behaviour patterns.

The challenges of Social-Media strategies are the last theme of the interview. The design of appropriate social media plan is the first concern of managers of Liverpool FC. A good design strategy on the one hand realizes the commercial objectives of the club, and on the other hand encounters the expectations of its supporters. The risk is to lose the interest of fans, as such Social-Media platforms are used to serve simultaneously supporters and business activities. This is a common problematic for all European professional teams which want to communicate through Social Networks. A conflict between the role of football clubs as profit-maximising institutions and football clubs as utility-maximising social institutions can be found [58]. It has been brought up during the interviews that certain levels of tension between supporters and the club generated in relation to the level and focus of communications about the football brand. There is a sense of moral ‘ownership’, indeed, of the club by its fans. An appropriate balance, for this reason, must be found between promotional or commercial posts and those which keep attention on the club. The first one, in fact, should not limit the process of engaging fans.

(Manager B): “This is a challenge for us because at the one hand, these channels [i.e. Facebook] exist to support commercial activities, but on the other hand we do not want to over-commercialise these channels because they are for fans, for engagement, not to sell things. It is a sensitive topic. So, over the next few months we must find ways to do things maybe on separate pages, or using separate themes, so we will have two

teams, one looking after fan engagement and another one looking after promotion.” [48]

Another issue concerning the control of the conversations held in Social Networks settings raised during the interviews. Rival club fans, besides supporters of Liverpool FC, often follow the club on Facebook. They sometimes join in in online conversations, as much as supporters of Liverpool FC follows rival clubs in online channels. This involvement is common in the sports context [59] and is related to the tribal nature of football support [60]). Negative or even offensive comments about the clubs’ players, coaches, management, or sponsors can be found, and this could potentially damage the brand image and, consequently, the revenues of the team. Bad emotions and frustration are particularly after a non-successful match, where those are made in the heat of the moment. No determinate set of regulations exist regarding how to deal with such issues. Several clubs, therefore, acknowledge the problem and pointed out the need to take collective action to mitigate it [59].

(Manager B): “We do not have a profile of our fan base, but we have a sense because of what the fans post and what they comment. There are other fans on our accounts, it is not only Liverpool fans, we also have rival fans following Liverpool as much as Liverpool fans are following other clubs. And there are fans who do not like everything we are doing, especially when the club is not doing well on the pitch, so we must be careful of when and what we post or what they post as well.” [48]

This case of study, in conclusion, analysed the use of Facebook by a Worldwide professional football brand. The main purpose is to understand the reasons behind using Social Networks, and how such use fits into the overall marketing strategy of the club. Advantages offered by social media was recognised early by Liverpool FC, both in communicating with supporters and developing relationships with them. A customer-focused social media strategy which accounts for differences in terms of language or culture regarding its fan base has been adopted by the club. The ‘cultural recognition’ it is probably the reason for the several growths in number of followers, especially in Asian countries, which is the most desirable market in term of business, according to

the interviewees. Facebook, moreover, gives supporters an active role, and, consequently, encourages the relations between fans and the team. The impact on revenues is twofold, in term of increasing of brand exposure and fan engagement. A direct and an indirect link can be found. The direct way concerns to provide an additional outlet to sponsors and commercial partners in order to publicly their products to millions of followers immediately. The facilitation of two-way communication and the building of long-term relationships with fans, which is the indirect way, can be converted into revenues in the long term by the increasing in merchandise and ticket sales. The necessity to connect the information from all media channels, such as social media, TV and website, was recognised by the club, in order reach more suitable insights into the profile of their consumers. The critical issue of the lack of a sophisticated customer management system raised in the study. The system is a key prerequisite for clubs which want to become more customer-focused and reach a long-term profitability. The importance of long-term profitability, and of specific strategies that support to do so, has become more and more evident. UEFA's financial fair play legislation, indeed, controls the balance and the economic forecasts of all European clubs more strictly than ever. The social media strategy of Liverpool FC, however, is connected to the overall marketing strategy of the team. Communication features by Facebook, thus, permit to Liverpool FC to share content from different business departments. The main challenge all football teams, is to effectively manage the balancing act of fan engagement and commercial activities. Supporters, notwithstanding recognize that the club have the necessity to operate as a profit-oriented business, commonly do not appreciate advertising campaigns or heavy promotions in Social Networks. Fans see social media communities as 'their' space [38], so, such posts must be used with carefulness, as they can discourage or even irritate them. In other words, there are financial benefits from engaging with supporters, but, if engagement becomes only for earn money from them, the consequence is only to weaken loyalty of supporters, inducing an endangering to long-term success of the team. The study made by Petros Parganas and Christos Anagnostopoulos recommend "that those sport clubs that want to survive economically must adopt a customer-centric approach, both internally and externally". [48] Information, then, collected

from dissimilar consumer platforms must be reliably controlled into a customer management system. Tailored contents, with this organization, are provided and used to gain fan engagement and loyalty and, consequently, expands the value of the brand.

### **2.3 Case-study 2: The purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo by Juventus FC**

The second case of study has the aim to analyse if the positive commercial and financial effects recorded by Juventus FC, derived from the purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo, are strictly linked with the popularity of the football player. The status of Cristiano Ronaldo, in fact, is expressed and recognized through Social Networks. Three area of interests are considered: Commercial, Financial and Social-Media. The purchasing of Ronaldo, in fact, influenced particularly these three sectors. The sports results derived from this acquisition are not a core interests of the thesis. The numerical data are, in part, taken by the Report of KPMG “Ronaldo Economics” [61].

Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro represents one of the most important football players of modern era, along with Argentinian winger Lionel Messi. The Portuguese superstar, nevertheless, compared to Messi, distinguishes him as a brand of his own. CR7, as his nicknamed, has been awarded with Ballon d’Or five times (once while at Manchester United FC and four times at Real Madrid CF), and only the Argentinian has collected as many. Ronaldo is the top scorer ever in all UEFA club leagues (123 goals), and he has been the top scorer of the UEFA Champions League in seven occasions. The Portuguese player, during his period at Real Madrid FC, scored 450 goals in 438 matches overall, receiving the “Pichichi” (award which is received only by the top scorer of the Spanish major competition) three times. The UEFA European Cup win in 2016, the first international trophy ever reached by CR7 in senior national team, is another achievement in his career. All these great sporting results, obviously, are remunerated, as the Portuguese is one of the best-rewarded players Worldwide.

His net revenue (net wage, bonuses and endorsements) for the 2018/2019 season, according to Forbes [62], worth to about € 106 million. Ronaldo represents a valuable company by himself, capable to produce more profits than more than a few teams against which he plays. He is sponsored by several high-profile brands like Nike, Electronic Arts and Herbalife. Ronaldo has, moreover, created his own brand (i.e. CR7) across his sporting performing and persona. He is participating in, along with the various lines of business, the major ones are perfumes, clothing and shoes, underclothes, his own museum and hotels. The Portuguese player, with over 334 million followers between Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, is the most followed character in the World and, then, benefits of a vast fanbase worldwide. On 10 July 2018, after 9 years at Spanish club Real Madrid CF, he unexpecting moves to Juventus FC.

The Italian club, besides having purchased the potential of his on-field performing, has available the exclusive chance of leveraging on the huge fan base of Ronaldo, in terms of communication and commercial point of view. Securing the performance of the Portuguese raises the possibilities of have success on the pitch, which, in football, theoretically involves better profits generated through media, bonus for awards and engagement of supporters. The key topic, however, is in what way Juventus FC will finance such an investment and how a positive ROI can be made from this acquisition. The average of the ratio between the fee paid for record transfers, historically, and the operating revenues of the purchasing team has remained constant at 22% in the last 10 years, as the **Tab 7** shows. The last record-breaking move of Neymar Jr to Paris Saint Germain in 2017 might be counted as an exception (42%). The purchase of Ronaldo, indeed, is closer to the average (28%).

**Tab 7**

Player	Fee paid/Operating Revenues	Selling-Buyng Clubs	Transfer fee (in million €)
<b>Cristiano Ronaldo</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>Real Madrid-Juventus</b>	<b>117</b>
Neymar Jr	42%	Barcelona-PSG	222
Paul Pogba	15%	Juventus-Man. United	105
Kevin De Bruyne	16%	Wolsburg-Man. City	74
Luis Suarez	17%	Liverpool-Barcelona	82
Gareth Bale	20%	Tottenham- Real Madrid	101
Thiago Silva	19%	Milan-PSG	42
Fernando Torres	23%	Liverpool-Chelsea	59
David Villa	10%	Valencia-Barcelona	40
Cristiano Ronaldo	23%	Man. United- Real Madrid	94

**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel ; data: KPMG, “The Ronaldo Economics” Report

The official announcement about the purchase of Ronaldo by Juventus FC states that the total fee was € 117 million divided in: €100 million for the transfer fee (payable in two financial years), € 5 million for FIFA solidarity costs and € 12 million for extra payments owed to his manager Jorge Mendes. CR7 signed a 4-year contract, which leads the annual amortization of the transfer fee, delayed for the duration of the deal, worth to € 29.25 million. The Italian team, lastly, committed to pay a net remuneration of € 30 million to Ronaldo. The total gross annual salary cost for the club, then, is just about of € 55-56 million. Looking at the latest financial statement before the purchase of Ronaldo of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017, the salary cost of the Portuguese would be about 21% of total staff costs (EUR 262 million) of Juventus FC. The annual financial impact of the purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo for the Italian team, then, is about € 85 million, or € 340 million across the 4-year deal period.

The commercial space is the area with the real opportunity to increase for Juventus FC. The growth, although, is hard to achieve in the first year. The Italian team need to clearly profit from the purchase of Ronaldo, indeed, especially in merchandising and sponsoring, whereas matchday incomes are delimited by Allianz Stadium capacity (and the price of ticket limit). Media income, moreover, is achieved through

agreements established at league/international levels. Juventus FC, especially in the last season, was behind the main European clubs in commercial sector. Manchester United FC, Barcelona FC, Real Madrid FC and FC Bayern München, in 2016/17, reached respectively € 320 million, € 288 million, € 280 million and € 344 million. Juventus FC gained less than half respect to these teams: € 120 million. The difference is more evident when comparing the uniform value sponsor for the 2017/18 season. Juventus FC, in fact, earned €17 million per season from their main shirt brand (Jeep) and € 23.25 million per year from kit provider Adidas, making for a total of around € 40 million. Manchester United FC, Barcelona FC and Real Madrid, however, reported a total uniform value of, respectively, € 156 million, €140 million and € 95 million. A potential solution for Juventus FC to partially decrease this relevant gap was to expand the international portfolio of sponsorships, focusing on those nations where the brand of the Italian team was currently less popular. The purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo, then, embodies a clear chance to boost merchandising, particularly taking into account the sale of his uniform. The signing of CR7 offers to the team a new, better, bargaining position with their major sponsors. The global popularity of Ronaldo throughout the World provided to Juventus FC the occasion to sign new profitable licensing deals, combined with the recognition of new international sponsors. The first results in commercial area, indeed, was seen just a few months later: Adidas and Juventus FC, on 21<sup>th</sup> December 2018, renewed the sponsorship contract, which would have been expired in 2021, until 2027 [63]. The US sportswear company will also guarantee € 51 million per season to the Italian team, almost twice as much as the € 23.25 million that it would have been guaranteed under the previous contract. In recognition of the excellent performance of the commercial partnership, furthermore, and of increased visibility of the Juventus brand in 2018, Adidas has recognized an additional bonus of € 15 million.

Moreover, Juventus FC and Konami Corporate, a Japanese popular video-games company on 16 July 2019 signed an exclusive partnership. With this innovative agreement, “eFootball PES Series”, produced by Konami Corporate, will be the only football videogame for consoles to have the rights to use Juventus IP (Intellectual

Property), which includes the exclusive use of the team name, logo and official uniforms [64]. The development team of Konami Corporate, in addition, will have access to players of Juventus FC to recreate their profiles as precisely as possible, through full-body 3D scan technology. It is no coincidence that an Asian company, a continent where Cristiano Ronaldo attracts most of his popularity, wanted to sign an exclusive partnership with the current champions of Italy. The economic terms of the agreement have not yet been revealed, but, certainly, the contract will give positive economic returns for Juventus FC.

At the Budget level, it is already possible to see some positive aspects of the acquisition of Ronaldo for Juventus FC. The club has published the financial statements for the first half of 2018/2019, in the income statement it is possible to compare the differences in commercial revenues with the first semester of 2017/2018 [65].

**Tab 8**

Total Revenues 2017/2018	Typologies of Revenue	1st Semester	
		2018/2019	2017/2018
€ 56.410.423,00	Sales of Tickets	€ 38.263.908,00	€ 30.282.897,00
€ 200.169.142,00	Broadcasting rights and Media	€ 124.580.254,00	€ 109.406.975,00
€ 86.896.999,00	Sponsorships and Advertising	€ 61.419.239,00	€ 43.318.193,00
€ 27.796.591,00	Sales of Products and Licenses	€ 26.514.360,00	€ 14.657.176,00
€ 102.401.466,00	Rights of Players Management	€ 58.906.842,00	€ 76.843.656,00
€ 30.955.269,00	Others	€ 20.532.444,00	€ 16.081.698,00
<b>€ 504.629.890,00</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>€ 330.217.047,00</b>	<b>€ 290.590.595,00</b>

**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel; data: Juventus FC financial statement and media reports.

**Tab 8** shows an increasing of total commercial revenues of Juventus FC for the first semester of 2018/2019 of € 39.626.452,00 (+13,64%) from the first semester of 2017/2018. The only data that has a negative trend is the revenues which concerns the rights of player management (-23,34%), derived from the purchases of football-players (including Ronaldo) and the contract renewals. Revenues about Sponsorships and Advertising is the most interesting data. It is possible to see a pick-up of € 18.101.046

(+41,78%), the second most increasing revenue. The data is a consequence of the new deal signed with Adidas and the other new minor sponsorship deals. The purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo influences significantly all these factors, enhancing the brand value and attracting new supporters from all over the countries. The revenues concern the Sales of Products and Licenses are the most increased value (+80,89%). The Ronaldo-effect, also in this case, was determinant because the uniform with his name and number is the most sold. Calcio&Finanza, in an article, has been estimated that almost 450 thousand of uniform was sold until February 2019, whereas in all over the season 2017/2019 the number was at list the half [66]. The new exclusive licence with Konami Group is not tangible because has been signed for the new season (2019/2020) [64].

Benefits was found also in the financial area, with an increasing of the capitalization of the Italian Club. As shown in the **Graphic 6**, emergent rumours concerning the potential move of Cristiano Ronaldo to Juventus FC, on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, significantly influenced in positive the share price of the team. This increasing lead to a sharp growth in market capitalization, which reached, within only a week, about € 900 million from the initial € 650-700 million. The price of Juventus FC stock increased by approximately 32% during the starting period (from 2<sup>nd</sup> July, the beginning of transfer rumours, to 19<sup>th</sup> July), moreover, thanks to Ronaldo-effect, continued to grow up and on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, worth to 1,445 (+116,96% of increasing respect the start of the transfer rumours) [61]. The highest value ever was recorded on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019, with a value of 1,706 per stock. [67]

**Graphic 6**



**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel; data: Italian Stock Exchange

In term of digital area, taking profits from the value in Social-Media is essential for teams in order to continue to be competitive and to increase their profitability. Channels of the clubs offer, moreover, a distinctive setting for affiliates and sponsors to valuing their brands and, ultimately, enhance their sponsorship value or return on investment. Juventus FC had to make a most important effort in this sector to totally leverage the investment of Ronaldo. Management commitment, innovation, creativity and, possibly, new skills was fundamental to exploit revenue growth opportunities. Ronaldo symbolizes a firm in and of himself that, due to vast media reach, is known throughout the World, also thanks to his numbers on the most important Social Network platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (about 334 million followers in total). This huge visibility is recognized by his sponsors, which are willing to recompense him between € 350,000 and € 500,000 per Instagram post. CR7, for this reason, is the most profitable athlete Worldwide in such terms. Cr7 had, before the move to Italian team, about seven times as many followers as Juventus FC (around 48 million) and almost 100 million more than Real Madrid CF, the most followed club in Social Media. Before even playing his first match with the team, the purchase of

Ronaldo resulted in high visibility for Juventus FC, with Social Networks numbers already risen. The total number of followers is not the only important data, but also their geographical distribution. It is relevant, indeed, comprehend in which markets the club have expanded their presence. Social-Media popularity of Ronaldo in Asia, South and Central America and in USA, would have helped the team to build a global brand which, sequentially, would have resulted in higher incomes. Nations like Brazil, India and the USA (representing highly populated, high growth potential countries), specifically, are stimulating markets for Juventus FC to target in order to enhance their brand exposure. The Italian team was in delay respect to Cristiano Ronaldo and Real Madrid CF also in most of the European countries. In Turkey, the most populous among the European countries, for instance, Juventus recorded just about 500,000 Facebook followers, registering a considerable difference against the 2.6 million of Los Blancos and the 4.3 million of Cristiano Ronaldo. Juventus FC still had a great opportunity for enhancement in leveraging on the image of Cristiano Ronaldo also along the Asian countries (Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Pakistan and Vietnam). The total Asian Facebook followers were less than 5 million in those markets, whereas overall in Asia the Portuguese player had more than 25 million followers. When a popular player (or personality) like Ronaldo goes to a new team, he similarly brings his fan base with him. Paris Saint-Germain FC, for instance, increased its online followership by 30% since purchasing Neymar Jr. Official Social-Media accounts of Juventus FC showed instantaneously a “Cristiano Ronaldo effect”. From 5 July to 17 July 2018, precisely, Twitter and Instagram followers of Juventus increased by around 15% and 25%, respectively. Was recorded, in fact, an increase from 10.1 million to 12.5 million followers for official Instagram account, and an increase from about 7 million to more than 8 million of the total followers on Twitter (taking into account the main Italian page and the English page) [61]. The Ronaldo-effect was consistent even in the long term on the Juventus fanbase. On 28 August 2019, in fact, Juventus became the third most popular soccer team in the world on Instagram, reaching 31 million and 100 thousand followers, surpassing Manchester United (30 million). The Italian team, now, is behind the two Spanish clubs Barcelona FC and Real Madrid FC, which, respectively, reach 76.4 million and 77.6 million followers [68]. These two teams are at the top of

this ranking because the Blaugrana have in its team Lionel Messi, who, as mentioned in subchapter 1.5, is one of the most famous players in the world (129 million followers), whereas the Real Madrid was able to benefit of the performances of Ronaldo for 9 years. The economic translation of this growth is easily understandable in a resounding leap in the value of partnerships with the brand of Juventus FC.

Analysing the numbers of the followers before and after the acquisition of Cristiano Ronaldo, it is possible to observe the following trends:

- Facebook: from 32.6 million to 39.3 million followers (+20,55%).
- Instagram: from 9.8 million to 31.1 million followers (+217,35%).
- Twitter: from 5.8 million to 9.7 million followers (+67,24%)
- YouTube: from around 700,000 to 2.2 million subscribers to the channel (+214,28)

### Image 3



**Source:** <https://www.ilsussidiario.net/news/calcio-e-altri-sport/calciomercato/2018/7/10/cristiano-ronaldo-alla-juventus-ufficiale-ha-firmato-ultime-notizie-al-real-madrid-117-milioni-i-dettagli/829796/>

The strategies for monetizing this whole enlargement for Juventus is important to analyse. The digital strategies of Juventus are certainly very interesting. It starts with the most obvious direct sales of merchandising through the checkout function, up to joining a blockchain fan engagement platform, which includes the launch of a token for fans. Juventus FC has based its digital strategy focusing its posts on the Portuguese champion. First, the image in negative colours of the player was posted on the day of the announcement (**Image 3**), with a very simple description: # CR7JUVE. The photo is still the one with the most "likes" on Instagram, just over 3 million, an important data, considering the less than 10 million followers that Juventus had at the time. The presentation video consisted in showing the true Cristiano Ronaldo in front of the shape that depicts him in negative colours of the image posted when was announced as player of Juventus. With more than 8 million views even this is the most watched video on the page of the Juventus FC of Instagram. After the officiality, almost 8 out of 10 Juventus posts contain an image of Cristiano Ronaldo, in a group or with his teammates. It is, therefore, explained why many companies want to be sponsored by Juventus. The name of a firm imprinted in most of the photos where there is the currently most popular person in the World could enhance a brand of every companies.

In conclusion, this case of study wants to analyse the correlation between the purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo by Juventus FC and the enhancing of the brand value of the Italian team. In front of an expenditure of, about, €340 million over a 4-year period, Juventus can already record these results:

- An increasing of the number of the total Followers of 68,30% in all the most important Social Media platforms (from 48,9 to 82,3millions).
- An increasing of the stock price of 116,96%, reaching a capitalization that worth to €1.450 million on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
- An increasing of 13,64% of commercial revenues from the first semester of 2017/2018 to the first semester of 2018/2019.

These numerical data explain only in part the economic advantages of the Ronaldo-effect for Juventus FC. The real benefits, indeed, will be in medium-long period for the club. Commercial revenues, number of followers and stock price could grow up much more with an empowerment of marketing strategies, that Juventus is already acting, and time. The enhancing of brand value, in fact, is a long process based on the perceptions of the consumers (or supporters) and “is the result of a complex of elements that interact dynamically.” [69].

To conclude, in front of a considerable expenditure, the positive effects are already tangible for Juventus FC. The purchase of Ronaldo attracts for Juventus new remunerative sponsorships and millions of followers on Social Networks. The real results, however, in term of empowering of brand value and increasing of revenue will be clearer in the medium-long period.

#### **2.4 Interview to two Managers of AS Cittadella**

Friendvertising and Social-Media marketing strategies differ according to both the national context and the size of the football team in question. After describing and analysing internationally renowned realities such as Juventus FC and Liverpool FC, it is interesting to understand how Italian professional teams manage their Social-Media marketing policies.

Davide De Marchi and Alberto Carraro, respectively the press office manager and the sponsorship manager of AS Cittadella, were interviewed in this regard. The Venetian team currently plays in the Italian Serie B and, the previous season (2017/2018), came very close to the promotion in Serie A. AS Cittadella is a virtuous example of how a well-run football team, both economically and sportily, can achieve excellent results, despite not having the advantage of owning the catchment area that have other teams belonging to more populous cities. The interview has been done personally and the questions of the thesis are in cursive.

*What are your strategies used in Social Media to increase the visibility and followers of AS Cittadella?*

(D. De Marchi): “We do not use real strategies on Social-Media. We mainly use Facebook, while only the most important things are posted on Instagram or Twitter. We start principally from the website and put all the content there, and then we post them on various Social Networks. We mainly use the website because not everyone has Social-Media. Stylistically we always publish everything with attached the photo to make the content more appealing, or we put the link of the videos if for example they are the highlights of the matches. Every Social-Media nowadays proposes to put in evidence the posts, but they cost too much. The management is not interested in spending those figures and does not give us the directives to do so. More international companies generally do this, but we don’t. Our sponsors with our channels such as the magazine and the website are nominated or screened on the stadium LEDs and seen on tv.”

*Do you have an economic return from sponsorship on Social Media or are these used only to communicate?*

(D. De Marchi): “They are used only to communicate. If we have any content related to sponsors or brands, we link the tag or partnership in our Facebook or Instagram page. Now we have a contract with Mizuno who is our technical sponsor, but we have collaborated on Social Networks only at the time of the contractual agreement. Mizuno, later, did not sponsor us directly for posts on Social-Media.”

(A. Carraro): “Generally our sponsorships are based on a package that includes led, newspaper and magazine. Maybe if we have the new sponsor, we communicate it via Social-Media, but specifically we have no income directly from Social Networks. Having sponsors linked to steel materials or transport, they are not sponsors related to mass-consumption, so these companies through Social-Media would not attract new customers. It would not be in our interest either because, with the same content, they attract more the highlights of a game rather than an advertisement about a transport

company. If, moreover, you have a working person who is good at editing videos as in the most famous companies, then putting us the sponsor has an added value. For example, with the cooperation of Serie B, Red Bull, which is famous on Social-Media, has come to sponsor itself with our football team. They posted videos on Social Media and shared them with us, so, of course, sponsorship for us too becomes more effective. But both the sponsor and the team must have the means to do so.”

*For sponsors, then, isn't it convenient to sponsor AS Cittadella on Social-Media?*

(D. De Marchi): “No because the companies that sponsor us are more focused on having a local visibility.”

(A. Carraro): “These companies prefer led in stadiums or advertising always inside the stadium. This type of sponsor, in fact, is more of visibility rather than to attract new customers.”

*Could the purchase of famous players on Social-Media help make even the team more followed? (I. e. Cristiano-Effect)*

(D. De Marchi): “Surely there is an increase in followers on Social-Media when we buy a player with much following, but we don't record it specifically. Around June, when new players arrive, there is usually an increase in followers. But we don't buy players with a stream that brings us a large number of followers.”

(A. Carraro): “If anyone has more followers than us, they can help us rise. Although, generally, the players who are here are young promises and not established players.”

*What tools are used to monitor the growth and trends of your followers?*

(D. De Marchi): “We use insights on both Instagram and Facebook. Thanks to these tools I can see the interactions with the posts, the new likes, responses to events, comments, how many from the post went on the site and other aspects. But nobody asks us a specific result or a specific growth at the level of followers.”

(A. Carraro): “Some sponsors asked us for the display results, but nothing binding.”

*Are you able to calculate a Return on Investments of your sponsorship strategies in Social-Media at brand value and commercial revenues?*

(A. Carraro): “We cannot monitor it too much. To do this would require too many complicated tools. What we notice is that the growth of the brand rises above all with the sporting results. For example, a promotion from Serie C to Serie B involves more followers on Social-Media and better sponsorship contracts. Evaluating the recent history of the team in recent years, initially, just promoted in Serie B, our sponsorships were lower than the other teams in the league. Thanks to the excellent sporting results, then, , our visibility has also increased and so the followers have gone up. Now, in fact, we have sponsorship contracts that are very similar economically to the other teams in the league. The brand is however related to sponsors and Social-Media”

*What, in your opinion, are possible solutions to improve the social-media marketing policies of a football company?*

(D. De Marchi): With a bigger office and better infrastructure, more original content can be created. For fans, if you have a 360-degree stadium environment, you can offer services that bring you sponsorship much more easily. The infrastructure now makes the stadium just a place to get to, watch the game and leave right away. Even for a fan who does not support AS Cittadella, if he lives near the city anyway, with a better stadium he is more tempted to watch the matches even if he is not interested in the team itself. More fans bring more fame and even more followers on Social-Media.”

(A. Carraro): “In my opinion, what restricts us in terms of marketing is infrastructure. At the stadium level, having a more modern stadium suited to the new needs of the fans would make us make the qualitative leap. Better infrastructure could also help us create Social-Media events such as “Walk-About” and other more original content. In addition, many teams also have larger offices to develop and devise more effective and impact sponsorship strategies.” **(Image 4)**

**Image 4**



**Source:** <https://www.ilpescara.it/sport/calcio/cittadella-pescara-diretta-24-settembre-2019.html>

The interview with the two AS Cittadella executives provided various insights into the Social-Media policies of an Italian football team without an international following of support. Social-Media marketing strategies are more focused on communication at the level of sports results, and not aimed at growth in visibility and commercial revenues. The management has no goals regarding a growth of followers and investment plans in this regard are non-existent.

As can be seen from the case study of sub-chapter 2.1, also in this case managers are not able to calculate the ROI on Friendvertising strategies. It is interesting, however, that the brand, unlike clubs with international fame, grows on the basis of sporting results and not those of visibility.

As possible improvements to Social-Media marketing policies for Italian teams, the two interviewed identified the development of sports infrastructure and the implementation of a Social-Media marketing office. These two solutions, in fact, would favour an increase of tools for managers in order to implement more interesting and attractive content for followers, as well as to attract further sponsorships.

## 2.5 Friendvertising and Non-Professional Teams

Social Media can contribute to the increase in revenues and the development of the brand even of the less renowned amateur teams. Using social platforms to obtain positive economic effects is a practice still uncommon used in the non-professional field. To understand the reasons, it is important to highlight the possible modalities of implementing a digital-marketing strategy for these clubs. The channels in which create visibility exist nowadays. Many non-professional football contents are viral on all social platforms starting from YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. The first because can spread videos about certain events of a match or some spectacular technical gesture of a soccer player. The other two share events of some realities that would be unknown to most, not having visibility in the television networks.

The amateur football attracts a lot on Social Media. A phenomenon called Social Media Football Clubs, in fact, has been created and it is spreading in Europe. These teams are composed by players who are all linked by their status as social media and YouTube Influencers. The Social-Media clubs, like Hashtag United and United London, are changing the amateur football in terms of how they engage with their supporters. The influencer football teams are an attractive product for brands and sponsors. A partnership with one of these clubs permits, for brands, to access an audience with which communicate directly. A new way to communicate and interact with new audiences is a good occasion for sponsor companies. Communication barriers broken and a community built is the best reason to partnering with influencers. Social-Media teams offer to millennials, thank to sponsorships, a low-priced and effective alternative to watch football. The teams, moreover, provide the opportunity to interact with players and buy sponsored products in a method that no other traditional football club does. Each of the players, in fact, has their own social network account with a recognised personality and a ready-made fanbase [70].

Amateur league football teams are attracted to the power of this new media and are still providing their content to these new platforms.

No-professional clubs, nevertheless, have a much fewer integrated fanbase respect to the Social-Media teams, because their supporters are not engaged effectively. A less affected digital reach is the result. A negative effect on brand awareness and fan engagement for possible sponsors. Social-Media teams, for this reason, a more interesting product than traditionally amateur football teams.

Teams like Hashtag United and United London have recognised another novelty in Social Media marketing for football in recent years: E-Gaming. Internet Football, in fact, has become a profitable business over a short period of time, gaining a lot of traction and credit. Social-Media teams work in an arrangement which is comparable to a computer game. "Players who contest in online games work as part of a team over the course of a season to win their league in a set number of matches to gain point, and also build a fanbase" [70]. These special leagues, turned into real life events, has permitted online followers to interrelate and engage through Twitter and Facebook and to watch them on live at football events and obtaining sponsored team products. These Social-Media teams have established engaged supporters benefiting of brand awareness and growth in revenues. A lot of young people want to play for these clubs and many business teams want to contest against them, due to their social following.

The techniques used by amateur companies, in Italy, have not yet had great success in terms of visibility. The posts provided by "Calciatori Brutti" on Facebook and Instagram are the best channel, nowadays, to have great popularity on a digital level. The page, which has a total of 3 million and 400 thousand followers between the two Social Networks, shares content sent by users, mostly for entertainment purposes, of events that take place on the pitch regarding both professional and amateur football. It can happen, therefore, that some team unknown at national level, can acquire popularity for some situation occurred during a game. The Icelandic team Ungmennafélagið Stjarnan is the most relevant case. The club, originally unknown to most of the World, it began to be popular all the way to Italy thanks to videos published by "Calciatori Brutti" of funny celebrations that made players after scoring a goal. The team has gone from having no follow-up on social networks, to having 14,000 followers

between Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Garðabær, the city where it is based, has 10,000 inhabitants), as well as many unofficial fan-pages dedicated in various Social Networks. The positive effects in advertising through a third page stems from the fact that the popularity gained lasts very little. The example of the Ungmennafélagið Stjarnan, indeed, is an isolated case generated by the constancy of the videos published on the Web. Italian teams that have achieved this success for the moment, in fact, have none, but in any case, this proves to be a strategy with potential that can be exploited.

In terms of sponsorships, the amateur series depend on mainly on displaying the logo of the sponsored company on the uniforms and on the posters displayed at the stadium. This strategy would not seem to completely exploit the possible audience that Social Media could reach. To highlight this situation, the Venetian teams of Serie D, the most important category in amateur football, are taken in consideration. The number of followers on Social Media Facebook and Instagram, the most suitable for any advertising techniques, was calculated for the teams that structure the competition in question. A big difference in visibility is possible to notice by comparing these numbers to the average number of spectators in a game of these teams in the 2018/2019 season as **Tab 9** shows [71].

Some data for determinate teams is not available, but enough were collected to calculate that, on average, the Serie D Veneta teams have 147 spectators per game, 552 followers on Instagram and 2889 followers on Facebook. Mestre is the team with the highest average number of fans present at the stadium (1122), with a total of 9085 followers. Luparense, on the other hand, is the most followed team on Social Media (14013 total followers), also due to the success of the team in “football at 5”.

**Tab 9**

Team	Facebook	Instagram	Attenders	Team	Facebook	Instagram	Attenders
Adriese	1479	326	185	Montebelluna	3272	676	24
Ambrosiana	1359	N/A	62	San Luigi	2248	772	N/A
Belluno 1905	3511	117	115	Este	2414	579	24
Campodarsego	3092	109	115	Union Feltre	3939	602	59
Cartigliano	1292	N/A	221	Mestre	8927	158	1122
Chions	1497	181	100	Terme Caldiero	538	127	N/A
Cjarlins Muzane	2105	584	56	Vigasio	1023	681	N/A
Legnago Salus	1237	355	144	Villafranca	2836	1124	79
Luparense	12360	1653	79	Porto Tolle	2711	794	106
UCCS	2321	N/A	74	Tamai	2515	N/A	82

**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excell; data: official Social-Media account of each team; [www.tranfermarkt.com](http://www.tranfermarkt.com)

Several differences are noted between the data regarding the average attendance at the stadium compared to the number of followers in social networks. **Table 10** highlights the difference even more showing the percentage ratio between the average number of spectators per game, with the sum of the followers of the respective team on Instagram and Facebook.

Mestre (12.35%), Adriese (10.25%) and Legnago Salus (9.05%) are the teams with the lowest deficit in the relationship. Luparense (0.56%) and Montebelluna (0.61%), on the other hand, are the clubs with the largest deficit in terms of fans at the stadium and followed on Social Networks. On average, therefore, the general ratio for all teams is 3.91%.

The data, analysed from a different perspective, shows that, on average, these teams have a 96.09% visibility on social networks rather than during games. It could be complained that a user can follow the same team both on Instagram and on Facebook, but also taking into account only one Social Network, Facebook, the data decreases by a few percentage points: 94.6% (5.40% of attenders / followers report).

**Tab 10**

Team	Att/Follow	Team	Att/Follow
Adriese	10,25%	Montebelluna	0,61%
Ambrosiana	N/A	San Luigi	N/A
Belluno 1905	3,17%	Este	0,80%
Campodarsego	3,59%	Union Feltre	1,30%
Cartigliano	N/A	Mestre	12,35%
Chions	5,96%	Terme Caldiero	N/A
Cjarlins Muzane	2,08%	Vigasio	N/A
Legnago Salus	9,05%	Villafranca	1,99%
Luparense	0,56%	Porto Tolle	3,02%
UCCS	N/A	Tamai	N/A

**Source:** own elaboration made with Microsoft Excel.

Social-Media, therefore, used as a vehicle for sponsorships could be a good solution to increase the revenues of amateur football teams. Sponsor a local company with posts on Instagram, Facebook and even Twitter, via hashtags, photos or “Insta-stories” could be a good strategy. The last tactic could be the best, as it provides precisely how many people, and how many times, have looked at the content. A bonus sponsorship contract, based on the display quantity, could be a good solution for both the football club and the sponsoring company. The first, in fact, would be encouraged to constantly improve in finding new sponsorship techniques. The second one could pay the sponsoring company by spending a fair price on the quality of the sponsorship it pays for.

The sponsorship method just mentioned is not yet common among amateur football teams. The reason why this visualization potential is not yet used could be the opportunity cost for sponsoring companies, which should invest too much resources for the revenues provided by the sponsorship. The absence of information related to sponsorships through Social-Media could be another reason, to safeguard them, both the football club and the sponsoring company decide not to undertake this collaboration relationship. The reasons for this choice and the possibilities of sponsorship through Social-Media in amateur football were asked to Arsenio Sala, owner of DoctorSport. The company, which core business is medical-sports visits,

could be the perfect profile as a company-sponsor of an amateur football team. The interview is shown in the next sub-chapter.

## **2.6 Interview to a possible Sponsor for Non-Professional Teams**

The phenomenon of sponsorship of companies towards amateur sports clubs has always occurred. These strategies for obtaining additional revenues are crucial for non-professional teams, as it is their main, and for many cases the unique, channel for obtaining economic revenues. The TV rights, in fact, unlike professional football, do not exist, except for some local broadcasters that does not provide a significant amount of money. In addition, stadium revenues are minimal, due to both the ticket price (€ 5 on average) and the number of spectators at matches.

Professional football teams, therefore, are required to seek sponsorship almost every year to achieve economic stability. Sponsors of amateur football teams are generally medium-small local companies/shops or companies with links to the sponsored company. In the first case, the advantage for the sponsoring company in financing the football club is based on getting visibility within the area in which it carries out its activity. Greater visibility, when sponsorship is effective, has the potential to gain more customers. In the latter case, the sponsoring company is interested in funding the team for emotional or emotional reasons, derived from personal or family ties with the company, or economic, as the company itself may own or control the football team.

In order to understand the reasons for the little use of sponsorships through Social-Media companies towards amateur football teams, was interviewed Arsenio Sala, owner of the company DoctorSport. The firm of medical-sports visits has been selected as it corresponds to the profile of a possible company sponsor for non-professional teams. DoctorSport, in fact, would have the advantage of gaining visibility directly

towards its potential customers: athletes. The company is also in a strategic position, as it is very close to the local headquarters of two amateur sports teams: San Paolo Calcio and Real Padova Calcio. The interview has been done personally, the questions of the thesis will be characterized by cursive.

*What are the sponsorship strategies that implement your company DoctorSport?*

(A. Sala): "The company has a website and we have appointed an external company to keep visitors updated on all the news. We use targeted systems to segment potential consumers and deliver advertising to the desired customer. This year we have not sponsored companies, but we have given our logo shirts to some athletes of any sport (usually customers of the company). Although our reference sport is tennis, as I practice this sport for which I know well the environment of the club in which I play."

*Does your company have a page in Social-Media, such as Instagram, Facebook or Twitter?*

(A. Sala): "Yes, we have a corporate account in all reference Social-Media."

*Do you find Social-Media useful to gain visibility and attract customers?*

(A. Sala): "Sure, as there are returns. For example, about 6 or 7 years ago, we sponsored the "Corri per Padova" event that was visited by over 3,000 people a day in Social-Media, to appear first in Google searches. This sporting event has been very successful in the province of Padua. Having put the link of our website in their page, we ended up in the lead in Google searches as a medical sport visiting company. And we are still either first or among the first place."

*Do you sponsor also football teams in Social-Media?*

(A. Sala): "No, we have no existing contracts and have never been proposed to me. Of course, the teams would gain from being sponsored by my company, but they probably already know that I would refuse. I have affiliated many football teams in my company and, ethically speaking, if I were to sponsor one then I would have to accept

the proposals of all the others. Our policy is therefore based on generic sponsorship such as individual athletes' shirts, but it would not be useful for us to sponsor a team; on the contrary, it would be counterproductive for us. Certainly, if I did not have many football teams as clients, with a satisfactory economic agreement, I would be willing to sponsor. The only chance with my current situation would be to sponsor a football team not locally, but more importantly, like Calcio Padova, but it would not make sense. Whether for the economic factor, or for returns. The investment for a small company in sponsoring a glorified company would be too high."

*What, in your opinion, are the best strategies to sponsor an amateur football team?*

(A. Sala): "Depends on the target. If the goal is to gain visibility on the Internet and on the research on the latter, I would look at the importance of the football club in question and how famous it is in the Social-Media. Then I would put the company's link and it would go up in research. For the return of image, in my opinion, women's football would also be an excellent possibility. Considering how many people watched it last year (2018) and how many watches it now after the World Cup. But still, even for that, you should be a national company and not a local one by now. At this level it is effective specially to sponsor a local event, in my case sporting event of course. Those who generally sponsor football teams at the local level also do so in order to be seen personally, not only as a company in itself. Football teams should therefore look primarily at owners seeking personal visibility, stimulating them and concluding contracts."

*What would be the advantages, according to you, in the sponsorship of non-professional teams through Social-Media?*

(A. Sala): "Definitely visibility is the most significant advantage, the economic return in this case is secondary. It is important in these cases above all the affective value towards the football team of the area or the area itself. In the end, to date, all sponsorships at this level are managed through non-economic knowledge or interests. Maybe the sponsors are owners of companies that have the son playing in that society,

or they are attached to the parish of the football team in question. Obviously, this is quite different from professional football teams.”

Doctor Sala is also presented with the data in subchapter 2.5, concerning the difference in visibility that an amateur football team achieves on Social-Media compared to the average of the presence of fans at the stadium.

*According to you, with a more efficient contract formula, based on a cost for sponsorships directly proportional to the views obtained of the advertisement (tools now available on Social-Media), would it be cheaper to sponsor an amateur football team for a company?*

(A. Sala): “In this case we only evaluate who came to look at the ad, not who is really interested. It would be more interesting, for me, to see who displays the advertise in the account of football team and then goes to visit the sponsoring company’s website. In this way find out who is really interested. It depends on the size of the companies in question, moreover, and the target of the customers. As we are a local company, we target people in neighbouring areas and local football enthusiasts, so in the end, potential customers are those who go to the stadium to watch these kinds of matches. Also, because it is always necessary to divide the two categories of users of the potential announcement: the elderly and the young. The former do not generally use the Internet. I must go to both groups, so I would lose half the visibility potential. For this reason, now, I get more visibility using the logos printed on the athletes' T-shirts rather than posting ads on the Social-Media of football teams. Certainly, however, in terms of effectiveness, online sponsorships are better than conventional ones, as they remain more impressed in the mind of the consumer.”

*What, in your opinion, are the reasons why Social-Media sponsorship for amateur sports teams is not developing in the desired way?*

(A. Sala): “Nowadays companies that could sponsor teams are in economic difficulty. The State does not help football teams and sponsoring companies to make new collaborations. Taxes on this type of contract have become too high over time.

This situation, in my view, has been the ruin of amateur football, as it no longer has the main source of revenue. The return nowadays in sponsorship is not economic, the main reason to sponsor is only at the level of visibility, or affective. Obviously, those who achieve a profit that they can afford to sponsor, then implement the appropriate strategies. With the economic crisis in which the Italian State finds itself, small companies have few profits. Only companies that export products have consistent profits, however, by exporting, have targets to sponsor and gain visibility only abroad and not locally.”

*What do you think the prospects of sponsorship on Social-Media are?*

(A. Sala): “As all technologies will have a vertical development. The power of these tools will be greater. Many top corporate people do not even know these opportunities. Many CEOs do not yet use the Internet and rely on collaborators to explain it with facts and tables. They are less and less, obviously, but still existing. They may even have the economic power to sponsor, so it is a shame they do not know these opportunities well. However, it makes sense to invest now if the aim is to attract young people and to be ready when, in a few years' time, everyone will be able to use these technologies.”

The interview provides an excellent picture of the current situation regarding football sponsorship in Italy. Dr Sala has also provided important insights regarding the reasons for the lack of development of sponsorships implemented by companies towards amateur football clubs on Social-Media. The opportunity cost of this investment is still too high for three reasons: high taxes; little knowledge of existing instruments; ineffective strategy.

The first reason is relative to the situation of crisis of the small-medium enterprises Italian, limited from the high taxations and the little revenues. The specific taxation on sponsorship contracts, moreover, as Arsenio Sala explains, instead of lowering it has become more severe over the years. This situation therefore makes sponsorships too expensive for the possibility of profit, both in terms of visibility and economics. Lack of knowledge about the use of Social Media is the second reason. This problem, as the

interviewee explains, is both at the executive level, with managers who are not yet able to use Social Networks, and at the level of customers. If, in fact, the target for advertisements concerns both young people and older people, it is very likely that the latter will never be reached by online sponsorship. The ineffectiveness of the sponsorship strategy is the third and perhaps fundamental cause. Amateur societies do not need a global expansion of brands such as professional teams. Their desire for increased visibility is mainly limited at local level. The companies, therefore, also considering the high costs that would not even guarantee them economic revenues, prefer to sponsor and gain visibility mainly through advertising in the stadiums. The additional visibility provided by Social-Media is considered a luxury that companies cannot afford.

The possible solutions would be, in the short term rather utopian: the economic growth of Italian small-medium-sized enterprises, and of the Italian State itself; and the expectation that all generations will come to know and use Social-Media. Considering that both these solutions will occur in the medium/long term, Social-Media sponsorship for amateur football teams in Italy is still difficult to implement.

Considering the necessary conditions mentioned above to develop effective policies of sponsorship of football teams through Social-Media, in a European state with certain characteristics, the model could work. Certain nations, in fact, with good economic stability, a more flexible system of taxation on sponsorship contracts and an average age of the lower population, would be more suited to the implementation of non-professional team sponsorship through Social-Media.

# Chapter 3 - Conclusions

## 3.1 General conclusions

The thesis aims to analyse the relationship between the growth of commercial revenues and the value of the brand with the strategies of Social-Media marketing of a football team.

The first chapter has the function of carrying out an introductory analysis of the elements underlying the objective, providing the tools needed to deal with the subject in a deeper and more effective way. Paragraph 1.2 gives a general definition of Social-Media, explaining the features of Social Networks currently most used (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and Pinterest). The Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2019 [8] highlighted the Social-Media that, potentially, are preferred by marketers for marketing policies: Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. The techniques of Online Advertising are described in paragraph 1.3, the thesis highlights six strategies: paid search advertising; display advertising; classifieds; rich media; referrals (or lead generation); promotional e-mail; sponsorships; Social-Media marketing in Italy. The last-mentioned technique, known as Friendvertising, is the main subject of paragraph 1.4. Friendvertising allows brands to reach both mass markets and niche markets while targeting certain segments. Four general strategies are described for Friendvertising: advertising using display promotion on Social Networks; inserting the brand in the Social-Media with brand profile pages; branded widgets and promotions; building an select branded social network; sponsorships. Paragraph 1.5 defines the various techniques for calculating the Return of Investment of a Social-Media marketing policy. Friendvertising, however, being a comparatively new field, still finds it problematic to compute the ROI. Both financial formulas such as ROI and ROMI, as well as those best suited to the world of reputation-based Social-Media such as Smitha [26] and Ghali [28], do not completely solve the problem of ascertaining the real economic value of a Social-Media marketing policy.

The adaptability of a Friendvertising strategies with the football-world is analysed in section 1.6. The sub-chapter, in fact, compares the various sports at a follow-up level on Social Networks demonstrating how football is the preferred one. The numbers on Social-Media in football do not stop just in comparison to other sports. In the ranking of the 10 most popular people on Social Networks, in fact, 30% are football players. Football teams are increasingly providing themselves to have effective Social-Media marketing strategy, as, as at brand level for companies, the Social Networks help to retain the fan with the football team.

The second chapter explores the objective of the thesis. The goal of this chapter is looking for analytical data and testimonials of professionals and try to clarify if there is a positive relationship between Friendvertising and the increase in the value of commercial and brand revenues. Two strategies of Social-Media marketing have been identified for professional teams of international level: the direct and indirect method. The first strategy includes the implementation of a Social-Media strategy aimed at anticipating competition on fan engagement, developing creative ideas which directly connect the fan with the football club. The second strategy consists in the engagement of a very famous football player on Social-Networks that can accelerate the process of expansion of the brand and commercial revenues. The implementation of a good Friendvertising strategy, of course, is a decisive element also in this last method. The case study in section 2.2, example of direct strategy, concerns how Social-Media marketing policies have allowed Liverpool FC to have a loyal fan-base around the world. In an interview with two Social-Media managers of the English team, taken from the report: "Social Media Strategy in Professional Football: The case of Liverpool FC" [48], the following topics are discussed: how to get closer to fans and to engage them through Social Networks; how to compute the economic value of a Social-Media marketing strategy; the effectiveness of Friendvertising ; and how to deal with challenges of Social-Media marketing. The implementation of an indirect strategy of Social-Media marketing is analysed in the second case study in section 2.3.

"The purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo by Juventus FC" is the case of study that want to analyse if the acquisition of the famous football player has involved to an increase in

the commercial revenues and brand-value for the Italian team. In this regard, the data before and after the purchase of Ronaldo are analysed and compared in terms of: sponsorships; revenue from the stadium; revenue from sales of match uniform and gadgets; and developments on Social-Media. The study shows a significant growth in these terms. An interview with two managers of AS Cittadella, instead, describes how Italian professional teams, but with a non-international fan base, implement the policies of Friendvertising. The interview analyses the current limitations that there are still in Italy both in terms of economic revenues derived from the current Friendvertising, both in terms of infrastructure that limit the same policies of Social-Media marketing. The last two paragraphs of the second chapter address the issue from the perspective of non-professional teams. Sub-chapter 2.5 highlights how Social Networks give more visibility for the sponsor of amateur teams than to the classic sponsorships visible only during the football matches of the team. This figure, therefore, could encourage non-professional teams to be sponsored by local companies. Teams could earn more revenue by making sponsorship, and also company that invests on them could have a more efficient sponsorship. The interview given to the entrepreneur Arsenio Sala (paragraph 2.6), owner of the DoctorSport medical-sports visit company, analyses the reasons for the current little development of Friendvertising for Italian amateur teams. The main reasons, therefore, can be traced back to: high taxation for sponsorship contracts; little knowledge on the tools and opportunities of Friendvertising; current Friendvertising strategies still poorly suited for non-professional teams.

### **3.2 The opportunity cost and the Return of Investment**

The relationship between the increase in commercial revenues and brand value with a good Social-Media marketing strategy can only be demonstrated in part and only under certain conditions. Two particular reference groups have been analysed in this thesis: professional football teams and non-professional football teams. The deepening

however has involved to divide the first group into: professional teams with international fan-base and professional teams with local fan-base.

As far as professional teams with international fan-base are concerned, the reference cases are Liverpool FC and Juventus FC. The opportunity cost in investing in Friendvertising, for the two teams, is low. Liverpool FC and Juventus FC are not, in fact, just two football teams, but are real international companies. The need, therefore, to develop the brand increasing the visibility leads them to invest in Social-Media marketing strategies. International companies, at the same time, are persuaded to sponsor the two football teams to increase their brand. The result, therefore, is an increase in the commercial revenues of football teams thanks to Social-Media marketing policies. In terms of Return of Investment, however, there are still difficulties to establish what precise economic revenue is obtained from Social-Media marketing strategies. In the case of the purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo by Juventus, for example, the figures explain that the Italian team spent €340 million over a 4-year period [61]. In terms of revenues the club obtained: A) an increase of total commercial revenues for the first semester of 2018/2019 of € 39,626,452.00 (+13.64%) from the first semester of 2017/2018 [65] B) an increase in stock price from about 0,650 to 1,445 [67] C) an increase of 33,4 million followers on Social-Networks. The economic and brand growth is evident, but it cannot be attributed all with certainty to the purchase of Cristiano Ronaldo. Although the relationship between the purchase and the development of visibility and economic is evident, then, the precise quantification of the Return of Investment is not certainly reliable. The two Social-Media managers of Liverpool FC, moreover, from the interview [48] confirm the difficulty in actually calculating the value. The two managers explain, in fact, that even when such a connection is established, for instance, when they have recorded an increase in its turnover in all nations where a localised Facebook account has been set up, the link cannot be translated into certain benefits. The lack of a customer management system is probably the reason and the solution. The system would integrate online behaviour of fans and provides analysis to support to the marketing process of the team.

Professional teams with local fan-base, on the other hand, seem to be in a situation very similar to non-professional teams. These teams, having no interest in expanding their brand in the short term, rely on more classic sponsorships such as stadium LEDs or sponsors on game uniforms. The monetization through the better visibility brought by Social-Media in fact, is not of interest for this category analysed for three reasons. The first is the too high opportunity cost for football teams. Prices to get more visibility in posts and to implement Social-Media marketing strategies are too high for teams that have low revenues. The second reason concerns the too high opportunity cost for sponsor companies. The fees on sponsorship contracts, in fact, as explained in the interview with Dr Sala (sub-chapter 2.6) are too high. For companies, therefore, it is more convenient to sponsor individual sporting events, or even not to sponsor themselves. The third reason concerns the ineffectiveness of Friendvertising for local sponsoring companies. The visibility through Social-Media is higher, but local sponsors are not interested in sponsoring themselves towards customers who will never reach their company. The number of consumers reached, moreover, is limited only to young people that are able to use Social-Media. The calculation of the ROI, since Friendvertising policies do not focus on economic revenue, is impossible to implement. In a nation with different economic conditions, different fee-policies and a different penetration-rate of Social-Media, the situation could be different and, maybe, better.



## References

- [1] WeAreSocial, "Global Digital Report," July 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://wearesocial.com/global-digital-report-2019>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [2] A. Skrba, "What is a Blog?," 8 April 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://firstsiteguide.com/what-is-blog/>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [3] D. Boyd and N. Ellison, "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship," 2008. [Online]. Available: <https://www.danah.org/papers/JCMCIIntro.pdf>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [4] Techopedia, 2010. [Online]. Available: <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/25604/virtual-world>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [5] Teach-the-Hearth, "Undergraduate Research as Teaching Practice," 2013. [Online]. Available: Undergraduate Research as Teaching Practice. [Accessed July 2019].
- [6] A. Ceron, L. Curini and S. Iacus, *Social media e Sentiment analysis*, Milano: Springer per l'Innovazione, 2014.
- [7] N. Savage, "Twitter as Medium and Message," *Communication of the ACM*, pp. 18-19, 2011.
- [8] M. A. Stelzner, "Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2019," 2019.
- [9] "Dictionary of Marketing Terms," July 2019. [Online]. Available: <http://www.marketingpower.com/mg-dictionary.php?SearchDefinitionsAlso=>.
- [10] T. L. Tuten, *Advertising 2.0*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc, 2008.
- [11] J. Enberg, "Digital Ad Spending 2019," 28 March 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.emarketer.com/content/global-digital-ad-spending-2019>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [12] R. Bruner, "The Decade in Online Advertising, 1994-2004," Double Click, 2005.
- [13] F. I. Media, "Never Ending Friending," 2007.

- [14] M. Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, New York: Back Bay Books, 2002.
- [15] M. Salzman, I. Matathia and A. O'Reilly, *Buzz: Harness the Power of Influence and Create Demand*, New Jersey: John Wiley, 2003.
- [16] B. Devis, "30 brands with excellent social media strategies," 20 November 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://econsultancy.com/30-brands-with-excellent-social-media-strategies/>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [17] M. Drosos, "Branded social strategy: easy as 3+3," 17 January 2008. [Online]. Available: <http://www.imediaconnection.com/articles/ported-articles/red-dot-articles/2008/jan/branded-social-strategy-easy-as-3plus3/>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [18] J. Franklin and J. Plewa, *Understanding return on investment*, Canada: Wiley, 1996, pp. 1-213.
- [19] D. Buhalis and E. Mamalakis, "Social Media Return on Investment and Performance Evaluation in the Hotel," 2015.
- [20] T. Fisher, "ROI in social media: A look at the arguments," *Journal of Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management*, no. 16, pp. 189-195, 2009.
- [21] J. Powell, S. Groves e J. Dimos, *ROI of social media: How to improve the return on your social marketing investment*, Singapore: Wiley, 2011.
- [22] E. M. Orsburn, *The social media business equation: Using online connections to grow your bottom line*, Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2012.
- [23] D. Barefoot and J. Szabo, *Friends with benefits: A social media marketing handbook*, San Francisco, CA: No Starch Press, 2010.
- [24] D. Holmboe, "How to estimate your social media return on investment," 2011. [Online]. Available: . <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-estimate-your-social-media-return-on-investment/>. [Accessed July 2019].

- [25] Facebook, "Advertise on Facebook," [Online]. Available: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/advertising/>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [26] N. Smitha, "Facebook metrics defined: Engagement rate," 2013. [Online]. Available: <http://simplymeasured.com/blog/2013/08/14/facebook-metrics-defined-engagement-rate/>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [27] M. Leander, "What is a good engagement rate on a Facebook page? Here is a benchmark for you," 2013. [Online]. Available: : <http://www.michaelleander.me/blog/facebook-engagement-rate-benchmark/#sthash.p3eZbRjQ.dpuf>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [28] P. Ghali, "Calculating your social media marketing return on investment," *A How-To Guide for New Social Media Marketers*, pp. 2-13, 2011.
- [29] L. Vale and T. Fernandes, "Social media and sports: driving fan engagement," *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 1, no. 26, pp. 37-55, 2018.
- [30] I. Abosag, S. Roper e D. Hind, « Examining the relationship between brand emotion and brand extension among supporters of professional football clubs,» *European Journal of Marketing*, n. 46, pp. 1233-1241, 2012.
- [31] M. Yoshida, B. Gordon, M. Nakazawa e R. Biscaia, «Conceptualization and measurement of fan engagement: Empirical evidence from a professional sport context,» *Journal of Sport Management*, n. 28, pp. 399-417, 2014.
- [32] M. Ahearne, C. Bhattacharya e T. Gruen, «Antecedents and consequences of customer-company,» *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, n. 90, pp. 574-585, 2005.
- [33] K. deRuyter e M. Wetzels, «With a little help from my fans: Extending models of prosocial behaviour to explain supporters' intentions to buy soccer club shares,» *Journal of Economic Psychology*, n. 21, pp. 387-409, 2000.
- [34] M. Ioakimidis, « Online marketing of professional sport clubs: Engaging fans on a new playing field,» *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, n. 12, pp. 271-282, 2010.

- [35] B. Popp, B. Wilson, C. Horbel e H. Woratschek, « Relationship building through Facebook brand pages: The multifaceted roles of identification, satisfaction, and perceived relationship investment,» *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, n. 24, pp. 278-294, 2016.
- [36] C. Sandvoss, *Fans: The mirror of consumption*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005.
- [37] P. Dionisio, C. Leal e L. Moutinho, «Fandom affiliation and tribal behaviour: A sports marketing application,» *Qualitative Market Research*, n. 11, pp. 17-39, 2008.
- [38] J. McCarthy, J. Rowley, C. Ashworth e E. Pioch, «Managing brand presence through social media: The case of UK football clubs,» *Internet Research*, n. 24, pp. 181-204, 2014.
- [39] C. Buckle, "The Year in Review: One of the Biggest Consumer Trends to Hit 2018," 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.globalwebindex.com/hubfs/Downloads/Trends-19-report.pdf>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [40] Real Madrid, "Palmarés de Fútbol," [Online]. Available: <https://www.realmadrid.com/sobre-el-real-madrid/palmares/futbol>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [41] E. Spagnuolo, "I 10 + 1 sport più popolari al mondo," 15 December 2015. [Online]. Available: <https://www.focus.it/cultura/curiosita/i-10-1-sport-piu-popolari-al-mondo>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [42] K. Badenhausen, "Real Madrid Tops The World's Most Valuable Sports Teams," 15 July 2013. [Online]. Available: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2013/07/15/real-madrid-tops-the-worlds-most-valuable-sports-teams/#2f83dba75f40>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [43] P. J. Schwartz, "The World's Top Sports Events," 5 March 2010. [Online]. Available: <https://www.forbes.com/global/2010/0315/companies-olympics-superbowl-daytona-worlds-top-sports-events.html#2d37fcb06c70>. [Accessed July 2019].
- [44] C. Stavros, M. Meng, K. Westberg and F. Farrelly, "Understanding fan motivation for interacting on social media," *Sport Management Review*, no. 17, pp. 455-469, 2014.
- [45] K. Filo and D. L. A. Karg, "Sport and social media research: A review," *Sport Management Review*, no. 18, pp. 166-181, 2015.

- [46] Nielsen Sports, "World Football Report 2018," 2018.
- [47] R. Kidd, "How 'Virtual' Advertising Is Helping Brands Reach International Soccer Fans," 24 August 2018. [Online]. Available:  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/robertkidd/2018/08/24/how-virtual-advertising-is-helping-brands-reach-international-soccer-fans/#91c86466b7f6>. [Accessed August 2019].
- [48] P. Parganas and C. Anagnostopoulos, "Social Media Strategy in Professional Football: The case of Liverpool FC," 2015.
- [49] Premier League, "Season review 2014-2015," 2015. [Online]. Available:  
<http://www.premierleague.com/>. [Accessed August 2019].
- [50] Deloitte, "Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance," 2015. [Online]. Available:  
<http://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/sports-business-group/articles/annual-review-of-footballfinance.html>. [Accessed August 2019].
- [51] A. Bryman and E. Bell, *Business Research Methods*, III ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- [52] B. Cova and V. Cova, "Tribal marketing. The tribalization of society and its impact on the conduct of marketing," *European Journal of Marketing*, Vols. IV-V, no. 36, pp. 595-620, 2002.
- [53] G. Clavio and T. Kian, "Uses and gratifications of a retired female athlete's Twitter followers," *International Journal of Sport Communication*, vol. IV, no. 3, pp. 485-500, 2010.
- [54] D. McLaren, "How Everton FC perform on Facebook," 2013. [Online]. Available:  
<http://www.theuksportsnetwork.com/how-everton-fc-perform-on-facebookinfograph>. [Accessed August 2019].
- [55] J. Williams and S. J. Chinn, "Meeting relationship-marketing goals through social media: a conceptual model for sport marketers," *International Journal of Sport Communication*, vol. IV, no. 3, pp. 422-437, 2010.

- [56] Liverpool FC, "LFC on Social Media," [Online]. Available: <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/fans/social-media/lfc-on-social-media>. [Accessed August 2019].
- [57] A. K. Kerr, "Team Identification and Satellite Supporters: The Potential Value of Brand Equity Frameworks," in *Paper presented at the 6th annual conference for the Sport Marketing Association*, Gold Coast, Australia, 2008.
- [58] S. Morrow, *The People's Game? Football, Finance and Society*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- [59] J. Price, L. Farrington and L. Hall, "Changing the game? The impact of Twitter on relationships between football clubs, supporters and the sports media," *Soccer & Society*, vol. III, no. 14, pp. 446-461, 2013.
- [60] A. Tapp and J. Clowes, "From "carefree casuals" to "professional wanderers" - segmentation possibilities for football supporters," *European Journal of Marketing*, Vols. XI-XII, no. 36, pp. 1248-1269, 2002.
- [61] A. Sartori, "Ronaldo Economics," 2018.
- [62] Forbes.com, "Cristiano Ronaldo," [Online]. Available: <https://www.forbes.com/profile/cristiano-ronaldo/#7beca7e565dc>. [Accessed August 2019].
- [63] Juventus FC, "Accordo Juventus-Adidas," 21 December 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://www.juventus.com/it/news/news/2018/adidas-e-juventus--2027.php>. [Accessed August 2019].
- [64] Juventus FC, "Accordo Juventus-Konami," 16 July 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.juventus.com/it/news/news/2019/juventus-e-konami--firmata-una-partnership-esclusiva.php>. [Accessed August 2019].

- [65] Juventus, "Bilanci e Relazioni 2018-2019," [Online]. Available: <https://www.juventus.com/it/club/investor-relations/pubblicazioni/bilanci-e-relazioni/2018-19.php>. [Accessed September 2019].
- [66] Calcio&Finanza, "Juventus, l'effetto CR7 sulle maglie: vendite raddoppiate," 5 February 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.calcioefinanza.it/2019/02/05/numero-maglie-vendute-juventus-cr7/>. [Accessed September 2019].
- [67] Borsa Italiana, "Juventus Football Club," [Online]. Available: <https://www.borsaitaliana.it/borsa/azioni/scheda/IT0000336518.html?lang=it>. [Accessed 10 September 2019].
- [68] Calcio&Finanza, "La Juve supera lo United: è al terzo posto su Instagram," 28 August 2019. [Online]. Available: <https://www.calcioefinanza.it/2019/08/28/la-juve-supera-lo-united-e-al-terzo-posto-su-instagram/>. [Accessed September 2019].
- [69] A. Niculescu, D. Dumitriu, C. Purdescu and M. A. Popescu, "Enhancing Brand Value of Modern Organizations through Digital Marketing Tools and Techniques: A Study on Top Ten Romanian Companies," *TEM Journal*, vol. VIII, no. 1, pp. 171-181, 2019.
- [70] J. Cormack, "A new phenomenon is on the rise: social media football clubs," 16 May 2017. [Online]. Available: <https://www.snack-media.com/2017/05/a-new-phenomenon-is-on-the-rise-social-media-football-clubs/>. [Accessed September 2019].
- [71] Transfermarkt, [Online]. Available: <http://www.transfermarkt.com>. [Accessed September 2019].
- [72] Juventus, "Accordo Juventus-Konami," [Online]. [Accessed August 2019].