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THE INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INVOLVEMENT ON REPUTATION; A SPORT CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE

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In the wake of the G8 Summit, the establishment of the Make Poverty History campaign, the collapse of Enron and Arthur Anderson, the off field indiscretions of elite athletes such as Australian swimmer Nick Darcy and Carlton footballer Brendan Fevola, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate reputation have been brought to the forefront of marketing managers' minds. With surveys in the US spouting statistics such as 84% of American consumers would be likely to switch brands to one associated with a good cause, price and quality being equal, organisations the world over are redefining strategic marketing plans in looking to attract and retain customers. The question sport marketers should be asking is how does this impact the sport industry? Will sport consumers switch teams or sporting codes based on the level of involvement in CSR activities?

This research thus aims to measure how salient CSR involvement is to the reputation of the Australian Football League (AFL), from the consumer perspective. This study will seek to determine if an increased involvement in CSR activities has a positive influence on reputation; and if a more positive reputation leads to increased consumer loyalty, word of mouth, repeat purchase and media consumption. This study will endeavour to go beyond the more common financial measures for CSR and reputation and look to consumer perceptions and outcomes in determining the strength of the relationship between the sport organisation's level of involvement in CSR activities and the influence on its respective reputation and ultimate outcomes.

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