



Fast Cars and Energy Drinks: Oracle Red Bull Racing (RBR) as a Competitive Driver

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the strategic function of F1 as a global high-performance branding platform. Red Bull's acquisition of a full F1 team, in contrast to conventional sponsorship forms, is an innovative strategy that establishes professional sport as a direct constituent of its global marketing and business operations. The study analyzes how this ownership-driven strategy realizes competitive advantage in the energy drink market, supports consumer perception, and builds brand equity.

The research places F1 within more extended frameworks of corporate strategy and consumer engagement, and it draws its underlying premises from the RBV, DCT, and BET. The research discusses Red Bull's converged activation across media, retail, and live events in relation to the structural elements of the Formula One business model.

Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, the study combines primary data from expert interviews and an online consumer survey with secondary sources such as industry reports, brand information, and media reports. This triangulated approach enables a multi-dimensional evaluation of RBR's effectiveness as a strategic resource.

Red Bull's F1 connection is more than superficial brand awareness, as suggested by the results. It reinforces Red Bull's performance, youth-positioned brand stance, fosters customer loyalty, and facilitates global market extension. Ownership is a better control, story alignment, and long-term value generation approach than traditional sponsorship tactics.

The study formulates the theoretical framework of corporate diversification and sport-based brand equity and offers marketers and motorsport stakeholders valuable insights into using ownership to change branding outcomes in top sport.

Keywords: Formula 1, Brand Equity, Sports Marketing, Red Bull Racing, Competitive Advantage, Team Ownership, Consumer Engagement

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Resumo

Utilizando a Red Bull Racing (RBR) como estudo de caso, esta dissertação analisa a função estratégica da Fórmula 1 (F1) como uma plataforma global de branding de alto desempenho. A aquisição integral de uma equipe de F1 pela Red Bull, diferentemente do patrocínio convencional, representa uma estratégia inovadora que integra o esporte profissional às suas operações globais de marketing e negócios. O estudo investiga como essa abordagem baseada na propriedade fortalece a equidade da marca, influencia a percepção do consumidor e gera vantagem competitiva no mercado de bebidas energéticas.

Fundamentada na Visão Baseada em Recursos (RBV), na Teoria das Capacidades Dinâmicas (DCT) e na Teoria do Valor da Marca (BET), a pesquisa insere a F1 em estruturas amplas de estratégia corporativa e engajamento do consumidor. Analisa também a ativação da Red Bull em mídia, varejo e experiências ao vivo, em relação ao modelo de negócios da F1.

A metodologia adota um estudo de caso qualitativo, com triangulação de dados primários (entrevistas com especialistas e pesquisa com consumidores) e secundários (relatórios setoriais e cobertura da mídia). Os resultados revelam que a propriedade da equipe oferece mais do que visibilidade: ela aprofunda a lealdade, amplia o alcance global e posiciona a marca como inovadora e voltada à performance.

A dissertação contribui para a teoria da diversificação corporativa e da equidade de marca esportiva, oferecendo insights práticos sobre como a propriedade pode moldar estratégias de branding em esportes de elite.

Palavras-chave: Fórmula 1, Equidade de Marca, Marketing Esportivo, Red Bull Racing, Vantagem Competitiva, Propriedade de Equipe, Engajamento do Consumidor

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List of Abbreviations

RBR Oracle Red Bull Racing

RBV Resource-Based View

DCT Dynamic Capabilities Theory

BET Brand Equity Theory

F1 Formula One

RQ Research Question

UK United Kingdom

USA United States of America

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

F1 has evolved from a technology demonstration sport to a worldwide strategic brand-building platform. Combining speed, technology, and scarcity, it delivers high-quality media coverage and access to affluent individuals (Chadwick, 2005). Red Bull, with direct ownership of a F1 team, has subverted conventional brand-sport relations and is an interesting case.

Founded in 1987 as an energy drink manufacturer, Red Bull is now a lifestyle and media corporation founded on extreme sports, content marketing, and experience branding. Its takeover and renaming Jaguar Racing to Red Bull Racing (now Oracle Red Bull Racing) in 2004 was a switch from sponsoring to owning, absorbing F1 into its brand system as an integrated marketing organism (Buhler & Nufer, 2010).

In contrast to traditional sponsorships for visibility and co-branding, Red Bull's ownership model revolves around long-term brand building by experiential narrative, identification with performance, and lifestyle congruence. The result is a globally attractive image of youthfulness, initiative, and high performance (Richelieu & Pons, 2006).

Whereas sponsorship research focuses on benefits such as consumer liking and brand recall (Cornwell, 2019; Meenaghan, 2001), full team ownership is yet to be researched. Its competitive advantage lies in management of communications, aligning performance with brand identity, and access to additional sources of income like media rights, merchandise, and events (Tapp & Clowes, 2002).

Red Bull's F1 strategy illustrates the power of non-automotive brands to use motorsport not just for promotion purposes, but as an inherent source of brand value, fan interest, and global growth.

1.2 Research Objectives and Scope

F1, the world's most expensive and most watchable sport, has traditionally been dominated by automobile giants Ferrari, Mercedes, and Renault. Red Bull's entry in 2004 was a strategic shift, with an unconventional automotive lifestyle brand having

an entire team and employing F1 as not sponsorship, but as a core branding and business platform.

Underpinned by multiple Constructors' and Drivers' Championships, RBR 's achievement has brought F1 from an activity to a single brand asset. This challenges traditional understanding of sponsorship as, primarily, awareness and short-term recall (Meenaghan, 2001; Cornwell, 2008). The ownership of the team, however, provides brand immersion, symbolic association, and narrative control (Bühler & Nufer, 2010).

Even as sports become a more frequent source of inspiration for lifestyle brands, scholarship has rarely looked into ownership as a strategy for long-term brand equity and differentiation (Richelieu & Pons, 2006), but rather focused on fan engagement and view numbers.

This thesis fills that gap by examining how Red Bull's team ownership fuels long-term business success. The general research question is:

RQ: What are the most influential F1 factors driving Red Bull's competitive success?

The study investigates RBR as a strategic brand asset that builds loyalty, designs equity, and drives international market expansion. It considers mediators like emotional branding and fan identification, and moderators like media coverage and regional dynamics. Along the way, the thesis deepens the understanding of team ownership as a branding and commercial growth strategy.

1.3 Relevance

As companies seek out new avenues of differentiation in competitive markets, the intersection of sport, branding, and strategy is coming increasingly to the foreground in study (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003). F1 forms a high-visibility branding vehicle through global presence, high-end demographics, and technological gloss (Smith, 2008). Sponsorship within motorsport has come under the microscope, but research into the strategic advantage of complete team ownership—especially by automotive non-asset consumer brands like Red Bull—is almost nonexistent.

By designating ownership as a distinct form of brand investment, this thesis contributes to sports marketing and brand equity research. Referencing RBV (Barney, 1991) and DCT (Teece et al., 1997; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000), RBR is theorized as an embedded, valuable, and rare brand resource. Through conceptualizations by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), the study demonstrates how F1 engagement drives brand awareness, loyalty, and perceived quality—drivers of consumer-based brand equity.

From a managerial perspective, the study presents insights to companies that would like to incorporate sports ownership within their strategic marketing. Where story and identity are more critical than product characteristics, ownership delivers greater brand control, increased involvement, and extra revenue beyond advertising (Cornwell, 2019).

Overall, the research is well-timed. With F1 getting ever more global in fame and appealing to non-endemic brands, Red Bull's ownership structure is still a pioneering branding practice with theoretical and business ramifications of value.

1.4 Dissertation Outline

The research starts with a consideration of the strategic value of F1 for lifestyle and non-automotive brands in terms of brand positioning and differentiation. It goes on to specify the theoretical framework in terms of some of the most relevant management concepts, including Brand Equity and the RBV.

Lastly, F1 is assessed as a commercial setting, with sponsorship versus ownership models and the brand positioning of brands such as Red Bull taken into consideration. The analysis also examines the impact of sport on brand equity based on consumer behavior, media exposure, and emotional branding.

Research design and methodology chapter discuss the utilization of expert interviews and a consumer survey. Primary and secondary findings are then analyzed and discussed. The final chapter is where the key findings are provided, as well as theoretical and practical contributions, limitations, and future research directions.

Under this nested approach, the study offers an in-depth explanation of the manner in which F1 shapes Red Bull's competitive advantage, linking theory and evidence to scholarly and business interest.

These elements are synthesized in the conceptual model, in which Red Bull's involvement in F1 translates strategic inputs into market outcomes, mapping the correlation between independent variables, mediators, and the dependent variable.

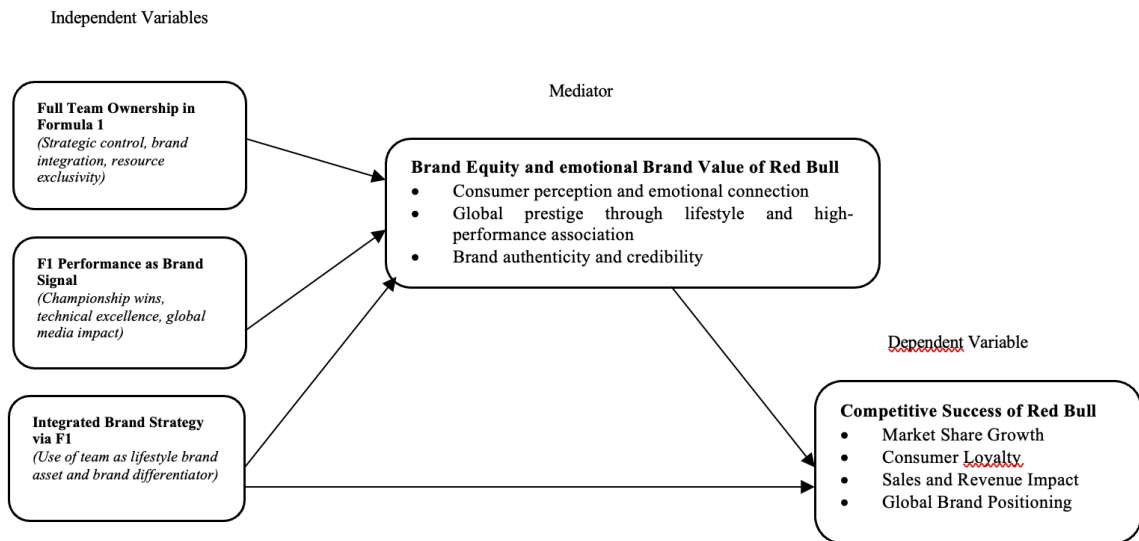


Figure 1: Conceptual model.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Strategic Role of F1 in Brand Positioning and Differentiation

F1 is a powerful brand platform, with the capacity to position companies as premium, creative, and performance driven. Engagement, either as an owner or a sponsor, provides visibility to a global audience and an aura of exclusivity. Ma (2023) states that F1 drew an estimated 1.92 billion viewers in 2019, reflecting its immense reach. Brands leverage this visibility to enhance awareness and differentiate themselves in crowded markets. Halo effects and image transfer enable F1's core attributes—speed, technology, and world-class competition—enrich related brand images (Cornwell, 2019). Car manufacturers and watchmakers are representative luxury brands that have a propensity to borrow F1's cachet to enhance their own images. Events like the Monaco Grand Prix amplify this phenomenon by elevating glamour, aspiration, and high-performance attributes.

F1 also has emotional depth. The thrill and tension of racing engender powerful consumer emotions, which can be transferred to associated brands (Keller, 2003). The

high-stakes environment offers partners attributes of adrenaline rush, accuracy, and innovation that are hard to get elsewhere.

Ultimately, F1 allows brands to move beyond traditional advertising. By uniting identity, performance, and emotion as a story, F1 involvement is a calculated investment in brand worth. High-end associations not only build awareness but also create long-term consumer affection through performance-driven storytelling (Cornwell, 2019; Recre8media, 2023).

2.2 Key Theoretical Frameworks

This section introduces the core theories that underlie the RBV analysis: the RBV, DCT, and BET. Together, they explain how Red Bull employs Formula 1 team ownership as a rare, dynamic, and emotive asset to generate competitive advantage and brand equity.

2.2.1 RBV and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The RBV is that businesses obtain competitive advantage by obtaining and directing valuable, rare, inimitable, and organizationally embedded resources — the VRIO framework (Barney, 1991; Barney, Wright, & Ketchen, 2001). A completely owned F1 team, as in the case of Red Bull, is the kind of strategic asset that fits the description. It is rare, perhaps precious, and difficult to copy, especially in the context of the highly capital-intensive sport and technical specifications of the activity. In full integration with Red Bull's business model and brand strategy, the team enables long-term strategic leverage.

RBV more and more emphasizes intangibles like culture, reputation, and knowledge assets that are harder to imitate by competitors (Barney et al., 2001). Red Bull's integration of F1 adds to its uniqueness through integrating engineering, international content creation, and storytelling competencies — all VRIO-compatible capabilities. Such integration is perhaps more robust and unique than conventional advertising.

Besides this, RBR enables complementary strengths: talent development, partnership with IT and auto firms, and advanced R&D processes — each indirectly complementing Red Bull's core business. These complementarities validate RBV's focus on internal resource interconnectness by showing that one resource (the F1

team) can unveil others. Finally, Red Bull's F1 ownership is more than just a marketing device; it is a central strategic asset that contributes to long-term competitive advantage.

2.2.2 Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Adaptation in High-Performance Branding

RBV has been criticized for its static frame of reference and limited value in dynamic environments, despite its focus on rare and imitable resources (Priem & Butler, 2001). DCT fills this gap by emphasizing flexibility over resource control, especially in the dynamic sectors of motorsport and sports entertainment.

Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997) create dynamic capabilities as a firm's ability to "integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies" to cope with change (p. 516). Barreto (2010) continues this process, emphasizing the firm's ability to sense opportunity, reconfigure assets, and respond to challenges. Competitive advantage, in this view, emerges not from the possession of assets but from strategic responsiveness and adaptability.

RBR is an ideal case of DCT through its fusion of F1 operations with brand, content, and marketing. Red Bull doesn't treat the team as an asset but leverages it to discern cultural trends, grab new formats (e.g., esports, docuseries), and redefine stories. Such brand adaptability reflects Red Bull's ability to remap strategy due to consumer culture and competition.

Red Bull's F1 participation also demonstrates cross-functional innovation, converting racing performance into emotionally compelling content. As Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) note, these "high-velocity routines" are essential in volatile industries. Above all, ownership provides Red Bull full flexibility to reform assets, align messaging with cultural moments, and embed performance into narrative—essential elements of brand salience.

Thus, DCT provides an insightful view in understanding how Red Bull achieves competitive superiority through incessant reconfiguration of strategies and not just resource control.

2.2.3 Brand Equity as a Strategic Asset in Competitive Sports

Brand equity is worth a brand places on a product or service beyond its useful value, based on perceived quality, loyalty, associations, and awareness (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001). A strong brand is the foundation for premium pricing, retention of customers, and market power. In sport, symbolic and affective dimensions of fan identity are primary drivers of brand equity. Involvement at a higher level raises emotionality and symbolic value (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020).

Red Bull's ownership of an F1 team creates brand associations by linking its image to attributes like precision, performance, and innovation. Global visibility through racing further increases brand awareness. Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, and Exler (2005) stress that this equity is linked to consumer loyalty as well as financial performance.

Brand equity is both a commercial outcome and a strategic tool. Red Bull does not simply utilize its F1 team for exposure but also to build lasting emotional connections. This reflects Keller's (2001) customer-based brand equity, by which consumer reaction is dictated by brand knowledge. By drivers' charm, race victories, and stories, Red Bull inspires loyalty towards the team as well as the brand.

At the heart of this is brand equity transfer: RBR's success and brand reinforce Red Bull's parent brand. When product and team merge, loyalty of fans can be converted into product loyalty. This coalesces into a self-reinforcing ecosystem, and Red Bull becomes a more competitive entity.

2.3 F1 as a Commercial and Strategic Environment

We need to know the larger commercial environment of F1 to be able to completely understand Red Bull's strategy there. In addition to being a sporting contest, F1 is a high-end commercial system involving teams, sponsors, officials, media, and global markets. More specifically, cost structures, revenue sharing, and commercialisation are addressed in this section alongside the changing role of non-automotive companies, e.g., energy drink companies, in the business model of F1.

2.3.1 F1's Business Model: Cost Structures, Revenue Sharing, and Commercialisation

Business model of F1 is associated with high operational costs and universal sources of revenue common to the parties. Competing generally requires hundreds of millions annually in spending. To ensure financial equilibrium and parity, there has been a cost cap since 2021 at \$145 million (Ma, 2023; Autosport, 2021). However, the front-running teams continue to preserve their superiority through staff, facilities, and R&D, and therefore structural disparities persist.

F1 makes revenues from sponsorships, race host fees, broadcast rights, and merchandising. Broadcasting contributes around 40% of total revenue through global media agreements (PwC, 2020). Race hosts pay \$20–60 million, which is justified in terms of tourism and global visibility — Azerbaijan reportedly generated nearly \$60 million from its Grand Prix (Ma, 2023).

Sponsorships also collect much revenue at team and league levels. As a case in point, Aramco's multi-million dollar sponsorship with F1 unleashes this value (Liberty Media, 2022). Distribution of team revenues is regulated by the Concorde Agreement, considering performance, heritage, and commercial attractiveness (ESPN F1, 2019). Powerful teams, however, like Red Bull, are likely to invest back into performance, fueling competitive hierarchies (Ma, 2023).

Spurts of commercialisation have followed Liberty Media's 2017 takeover. Initiatives such as F1 TV, Netflix's Drive to Survive, and social media development have attracted younger, overseas fans and distributed revenue across a wider base (Liberty Media, 2022). F1 teams are now content-driven entertainment brands within a wider commercial system.

In this context, Red Bull's team ownership provides it with immediate revenue access and greater control over branding — benefits that sponsors cannot replicate. Ownership enables Red Bull to shape and benefit from the evolving commercial model of F1.

2.3.2 The Role of Energy Drink Businesses and Non-Automotive Companies in F1

F1, once dominated by automakers, has evolved into a broader commercial platform. Over the past two decades, non-automotive brands—particularly in consumer goods and tech—have increasingly entered the sport, signaling a shift in how F1 is used (Jensen, Cobbs, & Turner, 2016). Energy drink brands like Red Bull and Monster exemplify this trend, albeit through contrasting approaches.

Red Bull's action was bold and unconventional. Rather than sponsoring an existing team, it acquired Jaguar Racing in 2005 and rebranded it RBR. It later added a second team (Toro Rosso, now Visa Cash App RB), a commitment to F1 as a long-term brand-building and content platform (Gorse, Chadwick, & Burton, 2010). This model has also been termed "branded content ownership," in which Red Bull is both creator of content and subject.

This strategy appeals to Red Bull's youth, thrill-seeking fan base. F1's high-performance, elite lifestyle brand image delivers instant brand cred. Full ownership of the team gives total control over storytelling, promotion, and brand appearance and feel—and thereby the team becomes a 24/7 brand voice (Modha, 2024). Monster Energy set a different sponsorship path with Mercedes and McLaren. While still a good thing, this strategy lacks narrative control and integration that ownership offers (F1 Official Magazine, 2021).

F1's brand has been revolutionized by non-car sponsors. Oracle (Red Bull), Cognizant (Aston Martin), and AMD (Ferrari) demonstrate how technology corporations now use F1 to drive innovation. Red Bull pushed it further, positioning its team as a platform that combines racing, media, and technology storytelling.

This approach creates some returns. RBR's income is estimated to be in excess of \$500 million, and team worth is around \$1.5 billion (Modha, 2024). It is a central part of Red Bull's €15 billion brand strategy—marketing F1 from a visibility tool to a vertically integrated commercial platform.

2.3.3 Dual Competition: Motorsport Success vs. Market Share

Red Bull has a unique dual niche in F1, competing both on the race circuit—against established teams like Ferrari and Mercedes—and in global energy drinks against

firms like Monster and Rockstar. Both markets contribute to Red Bull's strategy of world brand leadership but through different metrics of success.

Red Bull distributed over 12.6 billion cans around the world in 2024 and continued to dominate the market (Red Bull GmbH, 2024). Monster was in second place, with Celsius increasing fast, especially in North America, on an 11% market share (Celsius Holdings Inc., 2024). Despite its dominance, Red Bull has tough competition in a highly dynamic market with new players introducing ongoing threats. F1 is a key differentiator—keeping Red Bull aligned with performance, innovation, and currentness.

Unlike manufacturers like Mercedes or Ferrari, Red Bull F1 engagement is brand-centric and not product-specific, with the team's performance affecting overall perception of the brand and helping to uphold its sporty image.

Success here is translating from individual KPIs: F1 race wins and F1 podium finishes, to sales, awareness, and loyalty in consumer space. Red Bull fills the gap through carrying on-track success onto emotionally compelling brand narratives, particularly with youth segments (Smith & Stewart, 2015).

Red Bull ownership strategy also grants narrative control and revenue autonomy. It merchandises differentiated partnerships (e.g., Oracle, Mobil 1, Tag Heuer) and is a global brand platform, not a racing team (Deloitte, 2023).

Ultimately, Red Bull's F1 approach is to win on and off the track—enhancing business performance and brand worth for long-term advantage in high-end sport and market saturation.

2.4 Sponsorship vs. Ownership: Strategic Models in Motorsport

Two business models are utilized by firms mostly in motorsport: ownership, where a firm runs a team's operations directly, and sponsorship, where brands outside the teams provide teams with funds for the exposure and goodwill. Variations, advantages, and disadvantages of the two models are below elaborated in the case of F1 and brand strategy. Red Bull's simultaneous role as owner and sponsor is a rich case to analyze for an analysis of how different levels of involvement affect competitive positioning and brand value.

2.4.1 Sponsorship and Commercial Partnerships

Sponsorship has been a long-time economic cornerstone of F1, allowing teams to survive and utilize brands to gain world visibility and prestige alignment (Cornwell, 2014). Sponsorships range from small logo deals to title sponsorships of over \$100 million per year, such as Petronas–Mercedes-AMG or Oracle–RBR.

Strategically, sponsorship is an affordable tool for visibility. It can significantly affect brand image and awareness, as stated by Cornwell and Kwon (2020). Moreover, Speed and Thompson (2000) emphasize sponsor-sport congruence, while greater congruence increases image transfer and customer loyalty.

Sponsorship also produces psychological effects. Supporters are likely to transfer their team loyalty to its sponsors, creating affective brand relationships that inform buying behavior (Keller, 2003; Chien, Cornwell, & Pappu, 2011). Its success increasingly depends on the degree to which the sponsor is able to activate the relationship through multimedia and experience-driven campaigns (Cornwell, 2019).

Although, sponsorship offers limited strategic control. Sponsors generally have no control over team activity or communication except contractual rights, reducing narrative coherence and credibility. Sponsorships are also fleeting in essence and may not create strong consumer relationships except where extended over time (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020).

Despite these constraints, sponsorship remains a powerful branding vehicle in F1, especially when integrated with digital and experience activation. However, as the subsequent section discusses, team ownership can deliver even greater strategic returns—albeit at increased cost and complexity.

2.4.2 Financial and Strategic Impact of Team Ownership

In contrast to sponsorship, team ownership represents a different, more fundamental level of involvement. Brands are given the opportunity to establish and own their own sporting property, instead of riding on someone else's team. Red Bull's purchase and building of RBR is a prime example of such a strategy (Chadwick & Wollen, 2012).

Ownership guarantees complete alignment between team and brand identity. Through livery, messaging, content, and driver selection, the team mirrors Red Bull's high-

performance, youth-oriented, bold image (Bühler & Nufer, 2010). As a strategic asset under the RBV, team ownership generates financial return as well as intangible brand value through international exposure and branded storytelling (Barney, 1991). With media production in-house, Red Bull transforms RBR into a twelve-months-a-year content machine more powerful than conventional advertising.

Though ownership is costly, RBR's progress from modest buyout in 2005 to multi-billion-dollar asset justifies long-term potential (Modha, 2024). Upmarket alliances such as Oracle equalize costs while confirming Red Bull's twin image as sporting and commercial colossus (Forbes, 2023). There are risks still—failure on the circuit or scandal can hit the brand directly. Ownership requires long-term vision and sector expertise. Yet, as Red Bull shows, prize can outweigh sponsorship-based models.

Currently, RBR makes nearly \$500 million in yearly revenue and is valued over \$1.5 billion (Modha, 2024; Forbes, 2023). Compared to other advertising, ownership delivers values in the form of appreciating brand assets and world event possibilities (Red Bull GmbH, 2022). It also encourages greater consumer loyalty, brand recall, and emotional attachment (Keller, 2013), while enabling inner capacities such as analytics, learning, and content strategy.

Overall, Red Bull's F1 ownership indicates how combined planning and specialist resources can turn a team into a commercial asset and a long-term source of brand equity—achievement classic sponsorships can barely match.

2.5 Consumer Behaviour, Engagement, and Loyalty in Motorsport

Lastly, the success of sport-based branding is qualified with regard to its impact on consumer behavior. This chapter analyzes how people engage with motorsport brands and how these engagements affect brand loyalty and emotional attachment. In F1 and Red Bull, success relies on whether and how such activities cause behavior change, reinforce emotional bonds, and reinforce brand images. From theories of involvement, loyalty, emotional branding, social identity, and digital engagement, the following sections disassemble the dynamics that cause these outcomes.

2.5.1 Consumer Attachment and Loyalty Mechanisms

Consumer attachment in sport refers to the emotional bond that fans possess for teams, players, or events. Fan identification measures this bond, and highly identified fans are likely to remain loyal even when their team performs poorly (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

The Psychological Continuum Model identifies how a fan will transition from awareness to loyalty through the process of attraction and attachment (Funk & James, 2001). Aligned brands of teams can capitalize on such a loyalty trajectory.

Marketing loyalty resides on attitudinal (positive attitudes) and behavioral (repeat purchasing) dimensions. Oliver's (1999) four stages of loyalty—cognitive, affective, conative, and action—illustrate the role emotional attachment accelerates the process from trial to advocacy. Emotional attachments with Red Bull's F1 team can drive purchase intention and guard against competitor impact.

Emotional branding amplifies those effects. Rather than appealing to utility, it builds lasting emotional associations (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Red Bull F1 visibility offers emotionally charged experiences—rivalries, victories, team identification—which generate passion and loyalty (Thomson et al., 2005). Involvement theory generalizes that personal relevance heightens memory, attention, and brand identification. RBR fans who follow it closely may borrow its story and generate rituals, such as consuming Red Bull when viewing races.

In short, converting spectators into faithful buyers depends on connection, emotional affinity, and brand affiliation. With its ownership of an F1 team, Red Bull directly controls these drivers of loyalty—providing benefits beyond those possible through conventional sponsorships.

2.5.2 Community, Media, and Digital Engagement

While rooted in psychology, brand loyalty is socially rooted. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) says that individuals derive identity from membership in a group. Fans not only identify with teams like RBR but also like-minded supporters, which forms loyalty through shared identity.

Sponsors and teams anchor brand communities in motorsport. Group norms and brand identification are reaffirmed through internal communication among RBR fans, both offline (e.g., Grand Prix events) and online (e.g., social websites, forums). Heere and James (2007) put it on record that external membership renders internal team identification more influential.

Media framing also constructs perceptions. Red Bull's image in Netflix's *Drive to Survive* made the team more human and increased emotional investment. As Entman (1993) describes, framing emphasizes some features of reality, shaping public perception. Red Bull is usually framed through youthfulness, innovation, and risk-taking.

Social media is now at the heart of fan-brand engagement. According to Filo, Lock, and Karg (2015), online platforms facilitate interaction and content co-creation. Red Bull's sites are not merely promotional—ones that create memes, discussion, and participatory narratives.

Experiential marketing reinforces loyalty further. Pine and Gilmore (1999) posit that multisensory, immersive experiences are what create emotional connections. Red Bull leads the way in this regard, providing access to the pit lane, meet-and-greets with drivers, and city-based show car events—making brand interactions shareable life experiences.

Finally, international fans come together in virtual brand communities. Vale and Fernandes (2018) suggest these groups become brand loyal and increase perceived brand value. These international tribes keep Red Bull close to culture and social involved long after the track.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Through brand equity, customer engagement, and commercial results, this study design sought to examine how Red Bull's ownership of a F1 team enhances its competitive advantage. Figure 3 below provides a summary of the procedure.

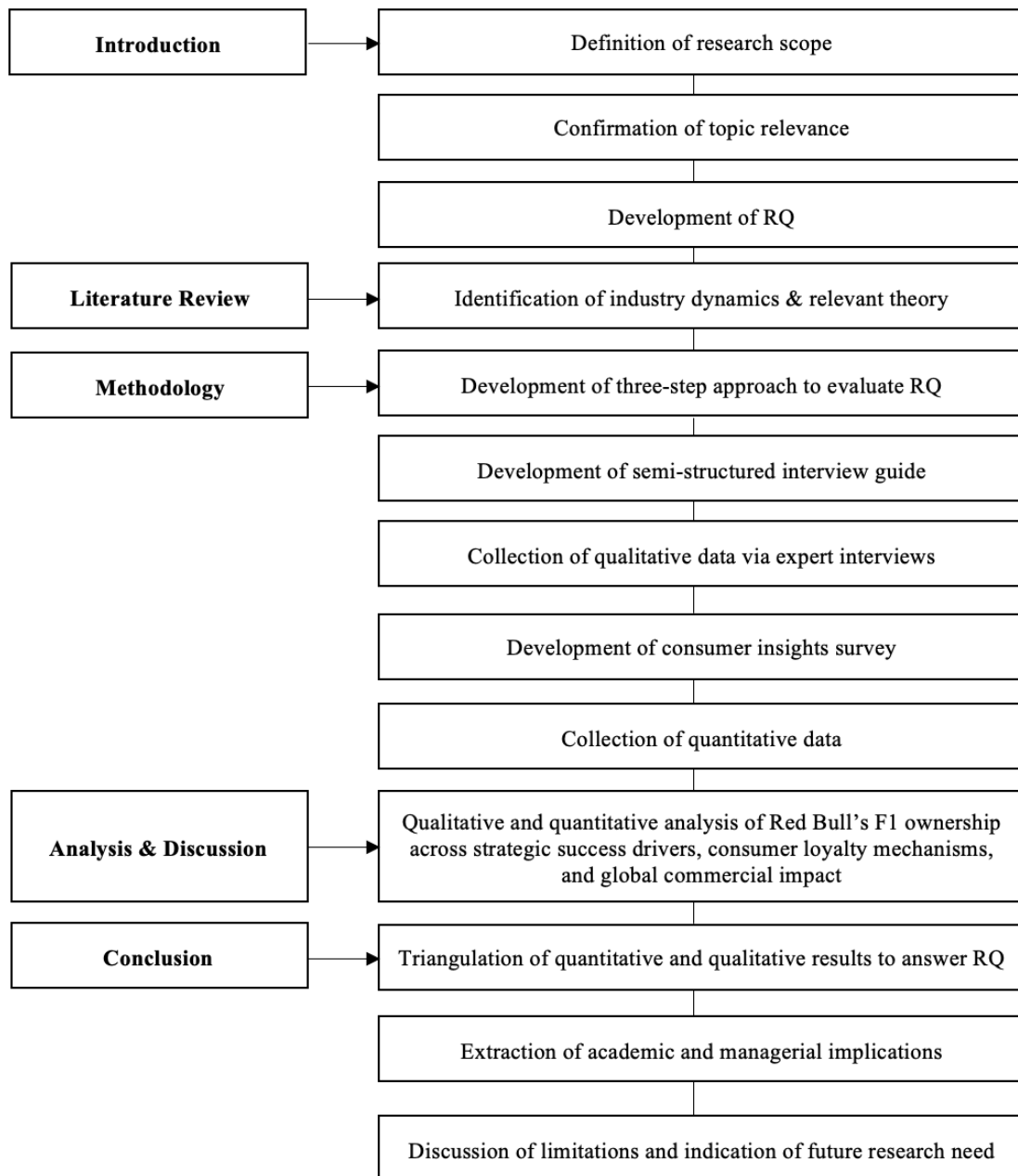


Figure 2. Research design

Triangulation, an applied mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative data with inductive and deductive reasoning, was used (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

First, corporate sponsorship specialists, sports marketing, F1 operations, and brand development specialists participated in semi-structured expert interviews. From Chapter 3.2.1, it was appropriate to use expert interviews to reveal strategic and nuanced views that cannot be obtained from secondary sources (Qu & Dumay, 1995; Weiss, 1995). Second, quantitative information was obtained by means of a consumer survey to measure public opinion about Red Bull's F1 involvement, e.g., emotional engagement, brand authenticity, and purchasing intention (see Chapter 3.2.2).

Lastly, a deep composite picture of how F1 is an integral asset in Red Bull's corporate world was attained through triangulating the survey result with the expert interview results and the research literature.

3.2 Data Collection

The paragraphs below discuss the data collection methods used in Chapter 4.

3.2.1 Primary Data Collection – Expert Interviews

Semi-structured expert interviews were the primary qualitative technique to explore how Red Bull's involvement in F1 affects brand equity, market image, and competitive positioning. It is especially effective in achieving multi-dimensional insights in fields like branding strategy and ownership forms (Galletta & Cross, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It is a mix of structure and flexibility with a standardized question framework and provision for individualized follow-ups according to the expertise of interviewees (Adams, 2015; Rowley, 2012).

As outlined in Chapter 2, the interview guide comprised 10 open-ended questions that focused on theoretical frameworks across RBV, DCT, and BET. The questions examined strategic fit of brand-owned sport assets like RBR into larger brand systems.

Follow-up probes were designed to match the perspective of each respondent—team, agency, corporate, or academic—augmenting richness of data (Rowley, 2012).

To complement qualitative findings, some Likert-type rating questions were used. These captured expert opinion on critical variables like team ownership versus sponsorship, brand impact, and the link between performance and brand equity, enabling triangulation with survey responses (Joshi et al., 2015).

There were 10 participants, drawn from F1 teams, Red Bull's global marketing department, sponsorship agencies, and academia. Professors, brand partnership leads, and sponsorship strategists formed the sample. Participants were approached through LinkedIn, referrals, and personal invitation. Interviews took place over Zoom or Teams, were 30–40 minutes long, and were recorded with permission. Anonymity was granted on request.

The sample attains the thematic saturation criteria in business studies, typically obtained with 10–12 in-depth expert interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Table 1 includes an anonymised summary of participants and their roles.

Table 1: Overview of interviewees

Code	Position and Expertise
NS	Group Commercial Director at Red Bull Racing; leads commercial strategy and partner relationships for the F1 team.
DM	Former Head of Marketing at Red Bull Racing; oversaw team branding and fan engagement strategies for 12+ years.
AD	International Motorsports Manager at Red Bull GmbH; directs Red Bull's global motorsport marketing strategy.
MD	Director of Partnerships at McLaren Racing; drives sponsor engagement and strategic partnerships for McLaren's F1 program.
TF	Head of Partnership Activation at Mercedes-AMG F1; implements brand integrations and ROI-focused partner initiatives.
SS	Former Marketing Manager Europe at Rockstar Energy; developed brand and sponsorship strategy for Red Bull competitor.
RF	Founder & CEO of Right Formula; leads an F1-focused sports marketing agency delivering sponsor value and brand impact.
MG	Motorsport consultant and ex-F1 executive; author of "The Business of Winning", links performance and commercial strategy.
SM	Director at Millharbour Marketing; ESA board member with deep expertise in European sports sponsorship strategies.
AB	Director of German Institute for Sports Marketing at ESB Business School; expert in European sponsorship and branding.

3.2.2 Primary Data Collection - Consumer insights survey

Building brand equity entails consumer interaction, emotional attachment, and perceived authenticity—particularly in high-performance sports contexts (see Chapter 2). To examine the impact of Red Bull's F1 involvement on consumer attitude, loyalty, and buying intentions, a quantitative questionnaire was administered.

The survey examined RBR and F1 awareness, brand positioning by team ownership, emotional involvement with Red Bull, and F1 effect on consumer behavior. Online

by the Qualtrics system (Wright, 2005), it enabled broad, low-cost distribution and ensured safe, anonymous responses in simple-to-use form.

Containing 25 questions (Appendix A), the survey used multiple-choice and 5-point Likert scales across eight themes: (1) knowledge of RBR and F1; (2) perception of team and brand; (3) opinion of Red Bull's product; (4) consumption habits; (5) identity and loyalty; (6) drivers of the flagship brand (ownership, sponsorship, performance); (7) media and online usage; and (8) demographics. The survey was conducted in English and disseminated through channels like LinkedIn, academic networks, and sports forums.

In May 2025, 125 complete and valid responses were obtained. Incomplete or invalid responses were not included in the analysis. Data in the Likert scale allowed statistical analysis through mean scores, frequency counts, and testing of correlations (Sullivan & Artino, 2013).

While not being nationally representative, the sample size is adequate for case study results (Marshall et al., 2013). The survey was created to examine targeted impressions of Red Bull's F1 branding—not to make inferences between populations. Limitations are also dealt with in Chapter 5.2.2.

4 Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Strategic Success Drivers for Red Bull's F1 Involvement

In analyzing the prevailing drivers for Red Bull's strategic use of F1, thematic analysis was applied. Triangulation of expert interview responses was performed by thematic category, with cue words supported and key theoretical frameworks like the RBV, DCT, and BET aligned. Wherever possible, conclusions are contrasted and placed into perspective with supporting detail from secondary sources and consumer survey. A synthesised analysis of Red Bull's team ownership, sponsorship arrangement, and F1 performance as the main determinants of competitive advantage is provided in the following sections.

4.1.1 Team Ownership and Brand Equity Creation

Team ownership was the most common strategic driver mentioned in expert interviews. Thematic coding of repeated trigger phrases from such interviews found

five overarching domains of value creation. The five areas describe how Red Bull's complete ownership of its F1 team results in quantifiable and sustainable brand equity. The themes that were drawn out and related linguistic patterns are presented in figure 3.

As the comparative table below shows, both groups of experts identified the strategic importance of the ownership of F1 teams, but they differed in the frequency and tact with which they highlighted individual branding attributes.

Table 2: Thematic categories and trigger keywords on strategic value creation through team ownership.

Theme	Trigger Keywords/Phrases
Narrative Control & Brand Autonomy	“We control the story”, “fully aligned campaigns”, “ownership means full integration”
Authenticity & Brand Credibility	“It’s not just a sponsorship”, “long-term investment”, “committed”, “authentic”
Emotional Engagement & Identity	“Lifestyle brand”, “fans feel part of it”, “emotional connection”, “shared values”
Consistency Across Channels	“Across all touchpoints”, “consistent message”, “unified visuals”, “seamless execution”
Strategic Differentiation & Rarity	“Not replicable”, “no other brand does it”, “unique asset”, “hard to imitate”

As the comparative table below shows, both groups of members identified the strategic importance of the ownership of F1 teams, but they differed in the frequency and tact with which they highlighted individual branding attributes.

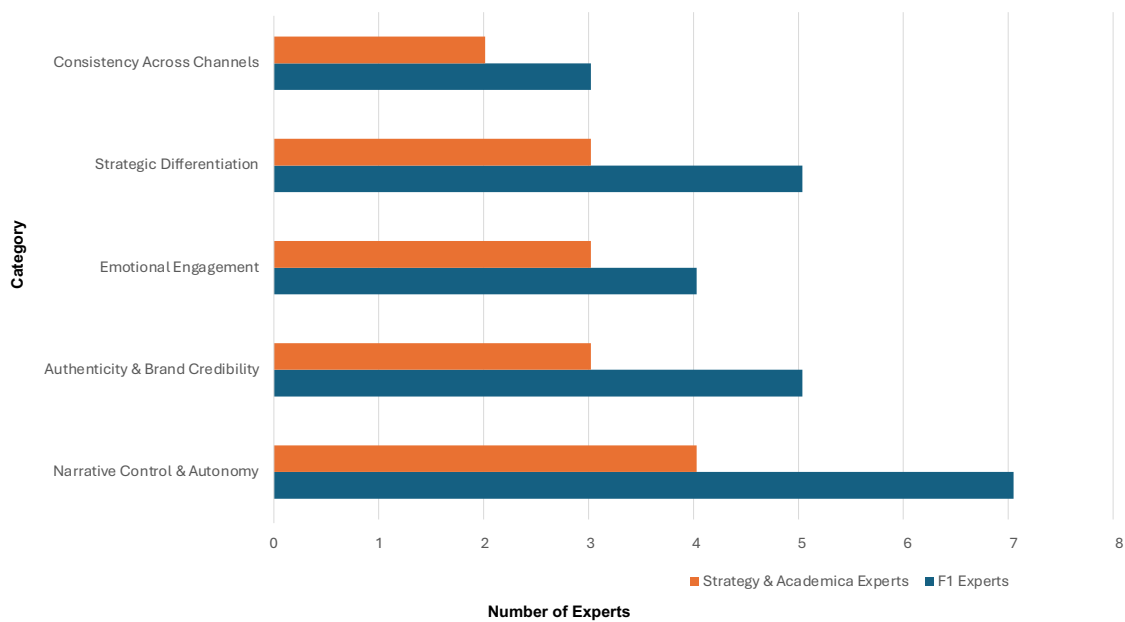


Figure 3: Frequency of strategic ownership themes by expert type.

Narrative control was the most-popular theme. Red Bull's total ownership of its F1 team gives it complete branding control, in the opinion of several interviewees. NS explained that ownership enables Red Bull to coordinate race-day content with global campaigns freely, without needing external approvals or having to navigate third-party constraints. Consequently, Red Bull can integrate racing action, driver personality, and technological innovation into the broader marketing narrative without difficulty, something sponsorship would render problematic.

The evidence from the consumer survey illustrates this strategic autonomy. The most common choices were "content marketing" over "F1 team ownership" when respondents were asked, "Which of the following do you think gives Red Bull a competitive advantage over competitors?"

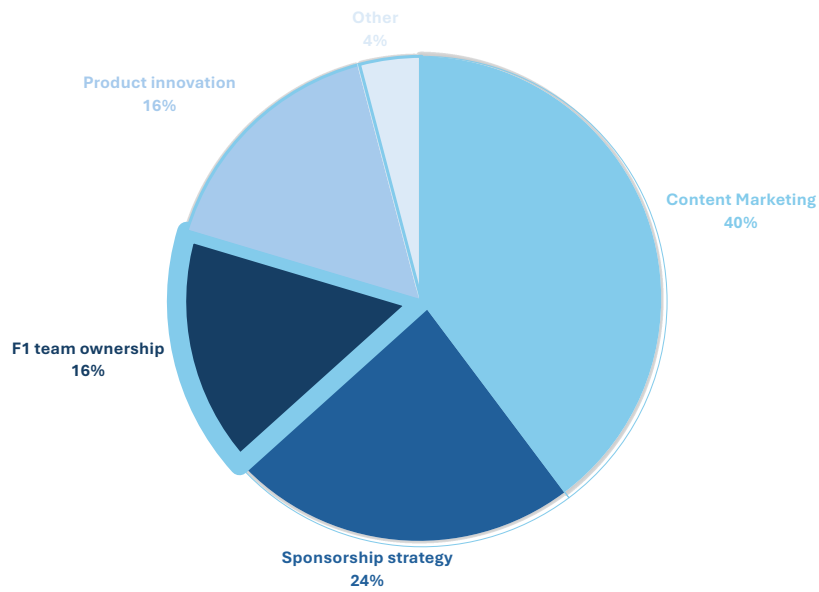


Figure 4: Answer distribution of question 16.

Although a few consumers may be more excited about Red Bull's media image than its ownership model, this fortifies rather than defies the thesis: content marketing and team ownership are complementary. Full ownership of the F1 asset enables Red Bull to deliver high-performance narratives on YouTube, Netflix, and TikTok. Such complementarity is at the center of Red Bull's media dominance and branding campaign.

Industry expert DM emphasized that the F1 team represents more than just a branding instrument—it functions as a dynamic embodiment of the brand itself. This aligns with the RBV (Barney, 1991), whereby RBR is an inimitable, valuable, rare, and embedded asset that is especially in light of the ideal fit between team and brand identity.

Authenticity was also a standard theme. Ownership, as experts confirm, speaks more deeply about brand loyalty than sponsorship. AB made the point that consumers can tell when the brand is truly engaged in the sport and not just paying for visibility. SM added to this, observing that having the brand integrated into each level—from the car to the balance sheet to the engineering floor—communicates an authenticity and commitment that cannot be matched. This aligns with Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003), which associates authenticity with higher loyalty.

Experts further highlighted emotional connection. RBR is not only backing the brand—she is the brand. RF called the crew "brand DNA in motion," referencing the carrying over of values like speed and innovation over to the product in customers' minds. This aligns with Keller's (2001) idea that strong brand associations allow for premium positioning and customer response.

Ownership also offers continuity of narrative across all platforms. As AD quipped, Red Bull can control everything from race graphics to TikTok content. Such versatility is the very definition of DCT (Teece et al., 1997)—RBR is an adaptive, reconfigurable brand asset in a media environment that is constantly changing.

Lastly, Red Bull's distinct strategy was different. Unlike Monster or Rockstar, who rely on common sponsorship, Red Bull has built a strategic ecosystem. SS commented, that while other brands might paste on logos, Red Bull creates an entire brand universe. This distinction points towards Red Bull's long-term brand defensibility and strategic uniqueness.

4.1.2 Sponsorship vs. Ownership: Branding ROI

This is a section about a strategic comparison, though part 4.1.1 described how Red Bull club ownership operates as an intensively integrated brand asset: On branding return on investment (ROI) terms, how does ownership differ from conventional sponsorship? This is a question about relative effects of each branding system, most specifically by the viewpoints of professionals and consumers, not internal processes of brand equity generation.

Consistent with expert interviews, ownership is much preferred to sponsorship in terms of the strategic brand impact. Nine out of ten interview respondents supporting explicitly ownership as a better brand-building approach are clear from Figure 4.3. Only one of the experts, SS, previously at Rockstar working on sponsorship strategy, came to the defense partially of the conventional sponsorship model but even mentioned its shortcomings in terms of long-term storytelling, activation rights, and brand depth.

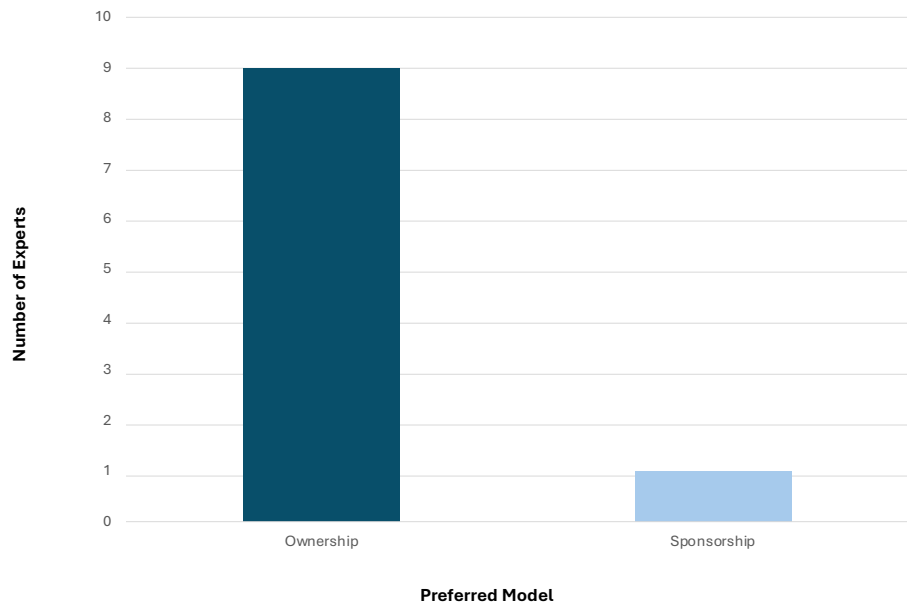


Figure 5: Expert-perceived strategic branding impact – Ownership vs. sponsorship.

This was largely fueled by control and messaging of the brand. NS stressed that ownership allows Red Bull not just to occupy marketing space, but to build and own the actual stage on which its branding is performed. DM echoed this view, adding that team ownership gives Red Bull the control to set the message from the race weekend onwards to social media content and in-store promotions. This is also reflected by the RBV (Barney, 1991), which detects the strength of managing rare, valuable, and unique assets. Here, the team is such a strategic asset that it integrates into the brand's larger ecosystem effortlessly rather than being a media asset.

This response is supported by the results of the consumer survey. For "Do you believe team ownership (vs. sponsorship) has a stronger impact on brand image?"

The division of the data was as follows:

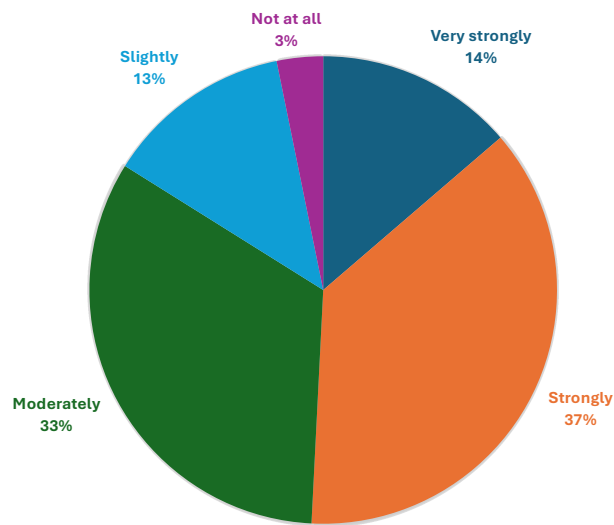


Figure 6: Answer distribution of question 17.

According to the survey, over 84% of the subjects — half of whom answered "strongly" or "very strongly" — believe team ownership has a greater impact on brand image than sponsorship. This is in line with Cornwell & Kwon's (2020) finding that customers feel more comfortable with high-involvement, genuine brand activations rather than passive logo positioning.

RF emphasized the shortcomings of sponsorship, in which brands become one among numerous logos with limited control over how or when they are included in broadcast content. Even top sponsors such as Oracle don't have creative control like Red Bull, who owns its team and story entirely.

This is what limits the power of sponsorship under Keller's (2003) Brand Equity Theory. Sponsorship may raise awareness but fall short of establishing emotional connections or brand loyalty—especially where activation rights are underutilized or in tight supply.

On the contrary, ownership unlocks more strategic value. As noted by AD pointed out that team ownership provides access to a range of assets sponsors cannot—such as direct involvement in content development, technical narrative, driver profiles, and

global merchandising. This underlines Chadwick & Wollen's (2012) argument that owner platforms can generate exponential branding value by owning both platform and message.

From a DCT viewpoint (Teece et al., 1997), ownership allows Red Bull to reorganize its F1 asset constantly across media, campaigns, and formats—converting it into an elastic, reusable branding platform.

Said all of that, sponsorship can still be an option for low-budget brands or niched purposes. SS noted that sponsorship is still in its position, particularly as a solid introduction for brands that lack the ambition or resources to take ownership of a team. However, it depends on team cooperation, legal contracts, and category exclusivity—not in the hands of the sponsor.

Overall, Red Bull's ownership model offers higher strategic ROI, narrative integration, and long-term brand building. Sponsorship remains applicable but ownership offers a transformational model of branding based on identity, not association.

4.1.3 F1 Performance and Consumer Preference

This section turns focus to a strategic concern, supplementing analysis of team ownership and its priority over sponsorship: What effect does track performance by RBR have on customer belief and brand selection? Ownership provides control of the narrative, but brand value can be enriched significantly by competitive win, reflected in success and dependability.

Ninety-nine percent of the experts concurred that performance makes things look more appealing emotionally, builds consumer trust, and makes things legitimate. MG continued that consistent podiums shape public opinion, transforming Red Bull from a merely fast team to a winning brand in everything. This is in keeping with Keller's (2001) BET, that consumer-based brand value is strongly influenced by perceived quality. Success in track implies product quality even when the product is not directly associated. TF supported this position by adding that winning doesn't just gain a following—it builds trust. For him, performance lends credibility to all branded content and reinforces Red Bull's associations of energy, precision, and innovation.

Nonetheless, specialists also emphasized that performance does not suffice. DM stressed that winning is only the beginning—it must be harvested and converted into valuable consumer engagement. The necessity of restructuring resources—race outcomes, media, and content—into engaged consumer activity is demonstrated by this, which demonstrates Teece et al.'s (1997) DCT concept.

These results are supported by consumer survey responses to the question: "Do you think that Red Bull's success in F1 makes the product more appealing to you?"

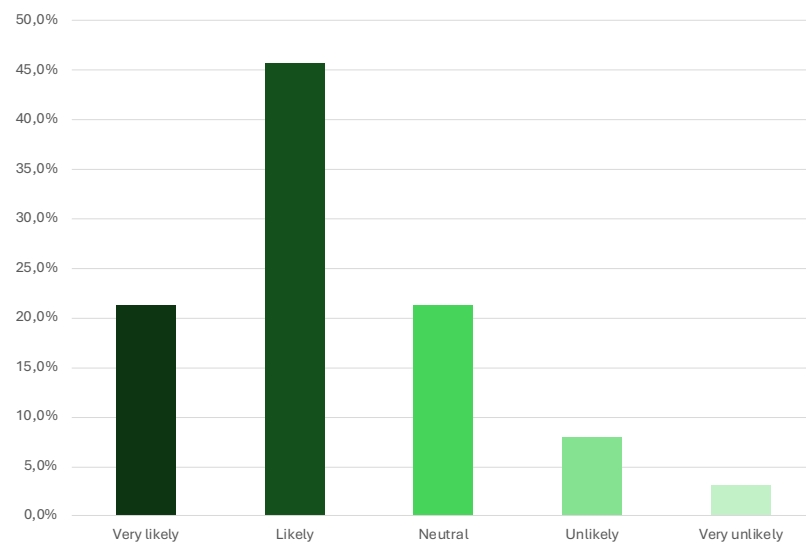


Figure 7: Answer distribution of question 8.

Good F1 performance, according to more than 67% of the respondents, increases Red Bull's product value. This indicates that in-track performance affects customers' perceptions of product value as well as the team. This demonstrates how performance reinforces drivers for brand equity such as customer confidence and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991).

In addition to this, these findings substantiate the contention that performance is a mechanism for psychological transfer between the team and the product insofar as success on the track is said to impact consumer-facing brand value in addition to RBR's sport-facing identity. In order to continue this understanding, the questionnaire also sought to determine whether or not consumers were of the opinion that Red Bull's

sporting success is representative of more brand qualities. This is an essential element in understanding how performance-based brand equity is built in the competitive F1 industry. To measure their opinion toward team-related brand qualities, respondents were required to pick one of the F1 teams provided in a list of recognized F1 teams that they best link with being innovative and having superior performance.

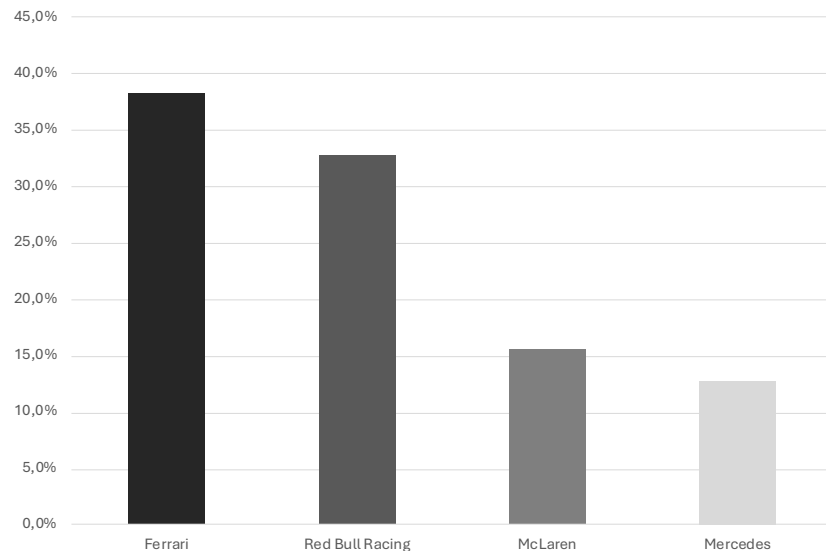


Figure 8: Answer distribution of question 6.

RBR was preferred by one-third of those polled, second only to Ferrari. While Ferrari benefits from wealthy motorsport heritage, Red Bull has established a good performance reputation with recent dominance. This is proof of the success that Red Bull has achieved in transforming its image as a high-tech, top-level player within the consumer mindbase from that of a lifestyle brand.

Consistent victories by RBR have significantly reinforced the market position of the parent company. Eight Drivers' and six Constructors' Championships between 2010–2013 and 2021–2024 (F1, 2024) rank RBR's supremacy as closely akin to the commercial trajectory of Red Bull GmbH. It sold 12.67 billion cans in 2024 (up 4.4%) and reported revenue of €11.227 billion (up 6.4%) (Red Bull, 2025). Its brand value rose by 11% to €8.7 billion early in 2025, at 238 in the Global 500.

This alignment of sporting performance with brand performance indicates that on-track performance has a substantial effect on consumer opinion, the credibility of the brand, and commercial success—even if there can't be definitive evidence of causality.

Furthermore, performance enhances content value, narrative ownership, and emotional branding. Great storytelling results from winning and solidifies Red Bull's brand value as a high-performance experience, not a sporting result. Competitive victory is therefore both brand expression and sustainable advantage driver.

4.2 Consumer Engagement and Loyalty Effects

Aside from exposure, the chapter explains how Red Bull's F1 team uses emotive branding and experiential brand engagement to increase consumer interaction, emotional connection, and buying intention.

With the integration of survey data and expert viewpoint and theoretical frameworks, the section examines the way RBR works as a symbolic touchpoint that enhances commercial outcomes and brand partnerships. The emotional bond between fans and the brand (4.2.1) and the success of Red Bull's experiential and digital advertising in closing brand love to consumer action (4.2.2) are two complementing paths that are investigated.

4.2.1 Emotional Branding and Fan Attachment

The psychological aspect of consumer experience is investigated in this section, discussing how emotional branding and fan attachment allow the development of brand equity and brand loyalty.

The degree to which customers emotionally connect with a brand, using brand experience as an expression of identity and self, is called emotional branding (Thomson et al., 2005; Keller, 2001). Such behavior is best explained in sporting marketing terms using the Psychological Continuum Model (Funk & James, 2001) and fan identification model (Wann & Branscombe, 1993), both of which place consumer interactions with sport enterprises on a stage of progressing from awareness to allegiance. It was asked how emotionally close they felt to Red Bull as a brand in order to investigate the extent and implications of emotional closeness to the brand.

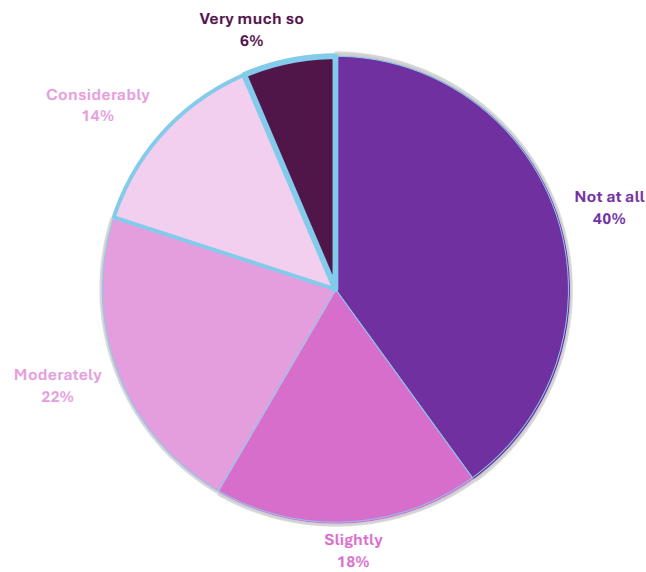


Figure 9: Answer distribution of question 13.

On the basis of these findings, 20% of the participants (quite + very much so) experience high emotional attachment to Red Bull, whereas the rest experience low to medium emotional attachment. According to Keller's (2001) affective brand equity model and Oliver's (1999) loyalty model, this loyal minority is a critical group of consumers that could potentially be more receptive to brand initiatives, more immune to competitor products, and more likely to act as brand champions.

The participants were also questioned if they believed that RBR made the Red Bull Brand more authentic to further examine mechanisms inducing emotional attachment.

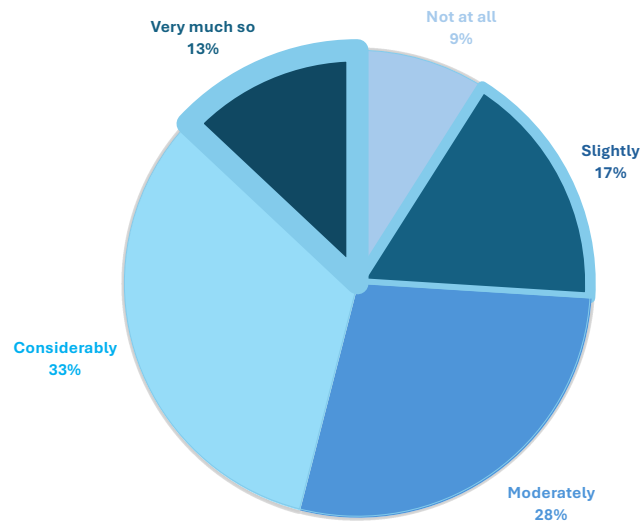


Figure 10: Answer distribution of question 14.

According to 74.2% of the survey respondents, RBR reinforces authenticity in a moderate to strong level. These findings send a strong message that cannot be ignored. This reinforces the argument that team ownership is an emotional anchor strengthening brand identity rather than a strategic control. Since authenticity brings loyalty, trust, and symbolic value, this sense of authenticity is crucial to emotional branding (Napoli et al., 2014).

Respondents suggested the following when asked to state what the strongest drivers of loyalty are:

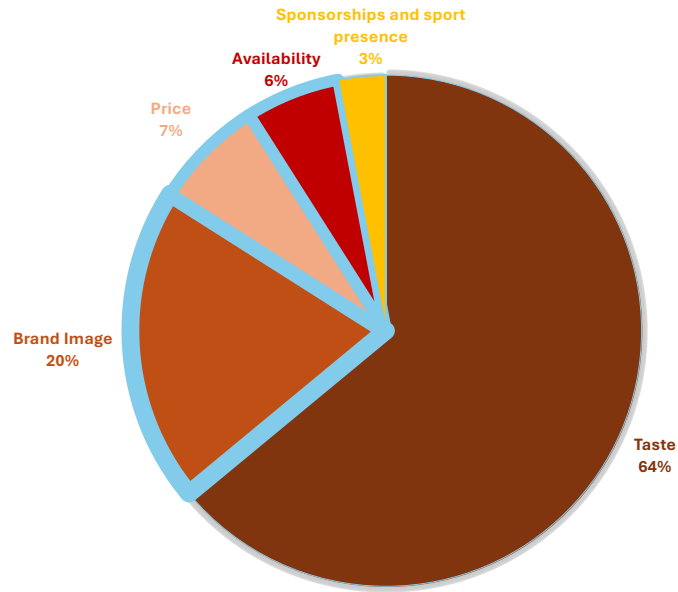


Figure 11: Answer distribution of question 15.

Taste is obviously the most important dimension, but 23.3% of respondents depend on brand-specific dimensions (brand image and sponsorship/sport presence) when deciding about their loyalty. This suggests that symbolic and affective dimensions play a significant role in the development of loyalty, which concurs with Aaker's (1991) theory which assumes brand equity to be a sum of perceived quality, associations, and loyalty.

This study used an independent samples t-test, comparing emotional connection scores (Q13) between two exclusive groups that were defined by their chosen loyalty driver (Q15), to test whether consumers who are loyal to symbolic brand attributes (brand image, sponsorship through sports) show a stronger emotional connection to Red Bull than those who are loyal to functional drivers (taste, price, availability).

A t-test is appropriate here since it tests whether there exists a statistically significant difference in mean emotional attachment between the two loyalty segments. Even though emotional attachment (Q13) is an ordinal variable, Likert scale data are typically treated as interval data for comparative purposes in social science (Norman, 2010). Null hypothesis (H_0) for performing this analysis was:

H_0 : There is no significant difference in emotional connection between

symbolic attribute loyal consumers (brand image, sports sponsorship) and functional attribute loyal consumers (taste, price, availability).

The alternative hypothesis (H1) is:

H1: Symbolic attribute loyal consumers (brand image, sports sponsorship) have a significantly higher level of emotional connection compared to functional attribute loyal consumers (taste, price, availability).

```
Welch Two Sample t-test

data: q13_numeric by loyalty_group
t = -2.1573, df = 42.134, p-value = 0.03673
alternative hypothesis: true difference in means between group Functional and group Symbolic is not equal to 0
95 percent confidence interval:
 -1.17219395 -0.03914625
sample estimates:
mean in group Functional    mean in group Symbolic
          2.14433              2.75000
```

Figure 12: Independent samples t-test results: Emotional connection by loyalty driver type.

The t-test confirms that emotional commitment differs significantly between groups: those who are drawn to symbolic brand attributes—image or F1 involvement—have higher emotional commitment towards Red Bull than those that are motivated by functional causes. Because the p-value is below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and a difference in emotional commitment is indicated.

These results confirm BET (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001) and Thomson et al. (2005), which highlight the role of emotional connections in forging brand loyalty. They also align with professional views placing RBR as a narrative tool instilling brand pride and follower identification. MG depicted the team as a marker of competitive identity, helping consumers to associate self-concept with an excellent champion brand. DM emphasized the point that fans relate to being part of a larger experience, rather than customers. TF clarified that Red Bull's ongoing F1 involvement adds to authenticity. AG emphasized the power of ongoing storytelling, and RF linked team performance to pride-based loyalty, especially with ownership providing control.

This resonates with the Psychological Continuum Model (Funk & James, 2001), explaining how emotional commitment turns casual consumers into long-term brand champions.

In essence, emotional branding is not on the fringe—it is central to Red Bull's F1 strategy. While not all customers are emotionally attached, they do perceive more authenticity and loyalty, attitudinally and behaviorally. Such trends validate emotional branding as a strategic momentum behind brand equity, supported by evidence and expert endorsement.

4.2.2 Digital and Experiential Marketing Power

By means of its grasp of media visibility, content strategy, and experiential engagement about RBR, its influence on consumer perception and behavioral response, the chapter addresses the ways in which Red Bull's experiential and digital marketing played a part in leveraging that asset into consumer-faced brand equity. Instead of reduplicating the value of proprietorship, emphasis here is laid on Red Bull's digital ecosystem's value in execution, a significant means for optimizing the F1 platform for enhanced brand loyalty and financial growth.

The leadership of Red Bull in digital, social, and event content is the source of their competitive advantage.

This enables the company to frame its participation in F1 as a premier sport and entertainment of cultural significance. RF went on that Red Bull doesn't just win by racing, but by creating emotional, socially pertinent stories around each performance. The ability of the brand to quickly translate racing weekends into "multi-platform media events"—from in-depth fan experiences to TikTok and behind-the-scenes videos—was greeted by analysts. Teece et al.'s (1997) DCT, in which a firm's potential to evolve and reallocate resources to capitalize on new opportunities is highlighted, is present here. This is best illustrated through Red Bull's media system that turns live performances into constant customer interaction. Survey participants were asked to grade the effect of Red Bull's online presence on their knowledge of the brand in an attempt to quantify how this is translated to consumer perception. From the results, most participants are convinced that Red Bull's online campaign is successful.

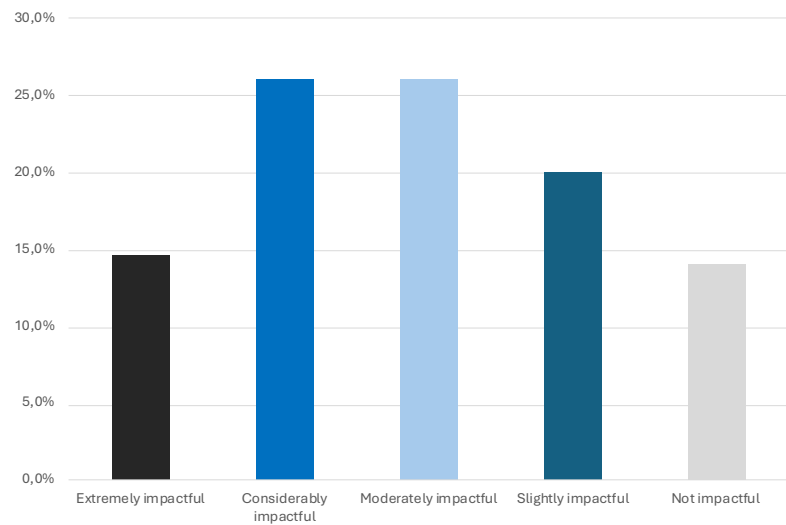


Figure 13: Answer distribution of question 20.

66.7% of the respondents expressed moderate to strong influence, which implies that digital presence is a fundamental source of conveyance of brand meaning rather than a secondary association. These findings complement the theoretical focus on brand equity transfer (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001) in presuming that consumer opinions on the quality, relevance, and affective value of a brand are facilitated by non-product encounters (e.g., such media involvement).

This media effect is not solely perceptual. Only when the F1 engagement is made explicit and emotionally elicited can it ideally be converted into commercial intent. "How likely are you to try or buy Red Bull because of its F1 involvement?" was queried from respondents in question Q9.

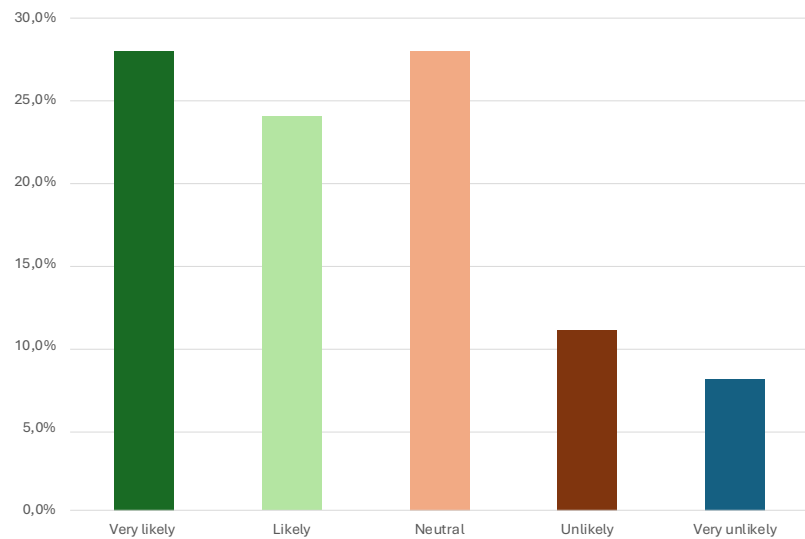


Figure 14: Answer distribution of question 9.

These statistics show over half of the respondents (52.03%) express a definite intent to buy Red Bull due to the fact that it is F1. This positive finding is only indicative of the potential for F1 engagement as an advertising weapon. Whether Red Bull's media and digital communications campaigns are able to actualize this potential is the management challenge.

In order to investigate this claim, linear regression analysis was used to check if there is a correlation between those who believe Red Bull's digital and media presence has a greater influence (Q20) and whether or not F1 coverage (Q9) makes them more likely to try or purchase the product.

To distinguish active involvement from passive reception, the study tried to see whether media-driven brand activation is a valid predictor of purchase intent. The findings are important from both statistical and strategic standpoints:

Table 3: Linear regression output: Media impact (Q20) predicting try/buy likelihood (Q9).

Linear Regression: Media Impact on Purchase Likelihood

Dependent variable:	
Likelihood to Try/Buy Red Bull (Q9)	
Perceived Media Impact (Q20)	0.554*** (0.086)
Constant	1.188*** (0.286)
Observations	123
R2	0.256
Adjusted R2	0.250
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Strong, positive correlation between intent to purchase as a result of F1 activity and perceived media effect is suggested by regression analysis.

One-point rise in perception of media impact on a 5-point Likert scale is equivalent to 0.55-point rise in try/buy intention. R2 of the model of 0.2561, explaining more than 25% variation in consumer behaviour, depicts how Red Bull's approach with the media strongly improves Red Bull's return on finances from Red Bull's investment in F1.

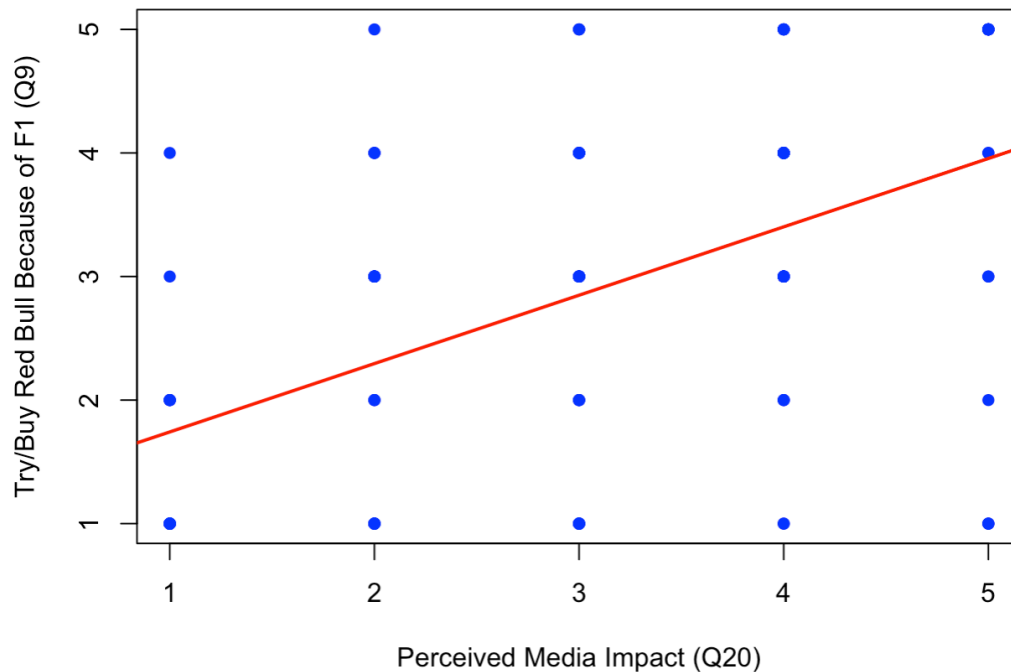


Figure 15: Regression plot showing the relationship between media impact perception and try/buy likelihood.

One direct consequence of this finding is that the presence of F1 per se cannot ensure customer behavior. The ability to use interactive and affective media to tell and spread that presence is what makes the difference. Its content ecosystem serves as the bridge between brand performance and brand property, embodying Keller's (2001) brand salience and Teece et al.'s (1997) Dynamic Capabilities.

This is supported by professional views. DM reinforced this by stating that if the race wins aren't interpreted in an emotionally engaging manner, much of their intrinsic value is never realized. MG corroborated this by clarifying that the real effect is how those moments get translated into long-term brand momentum. These are the only testaments to Red Bull's ability to translate performance to perception, which demonstrate how sports turn into stories and stories turn into sales.

Essentially, ownership is heightened through digital and experiential marketing but not augmented by it. Red Bull converts sporting performance into loyalty through its emotionally engaging and flexible content strategy and, in doing so, amplifies customer engagement. Specialist opinion verifies the contribution of storytelling and

authenticity to enabling the transition from race wins to brand value, yet quantifiable data supports the relationship with media consumption.

4.3 F1's Role in Red Bull's Corporate Strategy

This section explores how Red Bull Racing functions as a corporate asset within the company's broader corporate objectives. It explores two key dimensions: the team's contribution to enhancing world brand reach and salience, and its role in commercialisation and monetisation through consumer and B2B channels.

4.3.1 Global Brand Expansion and Market Impact

Awareness of the geographic scope of participant engagement—divided into three larger markets—is critical to evaluating RBR 's strategic position in financing Red Bull's global brand expansion. Both the United States and Canada, collectively known as North America, and the UK, represent a significant number of participants with 23% and 35%, respectively.

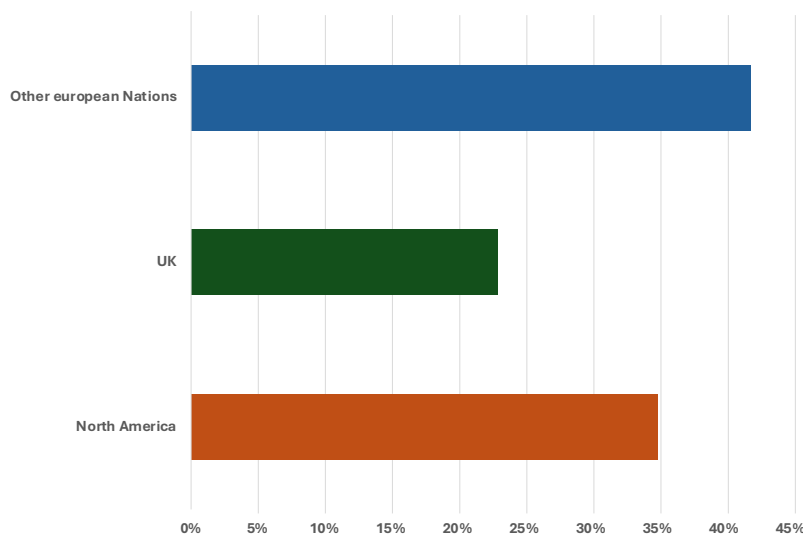


Figure 16: Geographic categorization of participants.

Regional comparison of how Red Bull's sports-oriented brand identity translates outside its home European market is facilitated by this broad sample.

This aspect in specific discusses how Red Bull has managed to develop brand awareness in North America and the UK, whereby brand loyalty had to be forged strategically and not inherited, because of the ownership of an F1 team. These markets were perfect for evaluating RBR's potential as a driver of development because, in contrast to Red Bull's Euro giants, they needed brand extension initiatives to take off. F1, with more than 20 events on five continents and 1.5 billion views in 2023, is a global marketing behemoth (Formula One Group, 2024).

RBR utilizes this infrastructure to create a mobile brand platform that integrates customer activation, narrative, and visibility. Strategically, this is aligned with the RBV (Barney, 1991), which is all about asset advantage being embedded, rare, valuable, and unique. Red Bull boss NS described RBR as a cornerstone branding ecosystem that elevates consistent storytelling across international markets, while MG defined it as a high-performance branding engine. A t-test for one sample was used to compare the empirical impact of the model in non-core market zones. North Americans and British subjects rated how important being present in sport is when deciding on energy drinks (Q18). That sports being present is more than slightly important is confirmed by a mean rating of 2.63 ($t(70) = 3.82, p < .001$), which means Red Bull's F1 model has a considerable impact outside of Europe.

One Sample t-test

```
data: subset_clean
t = 3.8247, df = 70, p-value = 0.0001406
alternative hypothesis: true mean is greater than 2
95 percent confidence interval:
 2.357575      Inf
sample estimates:
mean of x
 2.633803
```

Figure 17: One sample t-test results: Mean rating of importance of sports involvement for energy drink selection (UK + North America).

This supports the argument that Red Bull's joined-up F1 strategy influences customer choice in emerging markets by confirming that respondents in these markets consider participation in sport to be a dominant criterion when choosing an energy drink.

This agrees with AD's evaluation that F1 offers an "sustained global visibility platform," especially in markets such as the United States.

Red Bull is able to leverage such activations as the Miami and Las Vegas Grand Prix through activities that are "authentic because we're truly part of the sport" owing to its outright ownership. Such endeavours have not been in vain, with Red Bull performing better than competitors like Monster in the United States and increasing its market share significantly between 2022 to 2024 (Statista, 2024). In addition, experts emphasized that RBR is a unifying in-house source of strength. For NS and AD, it achieves quick, homogenous activation across markets without outside limits. AB even suggested that RBR holds as much brand equity as the Red Bull product itself. This supports Keller's BET (2001), asserting that enduring loyalty is established through symbolic and emotional brand bonds. RBR, in a sense, has converted Red Bull from a European beverage company to an internationally known lifestyle brand.

4.3.2 Commercialisation and Monetisation Strategies

The brand positioning and international expansion strategic importance of RBR was alluded to in earlier segments, but this chapter is about another aspect: the team as a commercial entity that unlocks revenue creation, category leadership, and consumer monetization. Red Bull's presence in having a F1 team is a monetization engine that takes advantage of media, performance, and cultural capital to achieve direct and indirect monetary gains, apart from being a brand strategy.

F1 structurally important revenue opportunities extend far beyond brand recognition.

Through repeated championship successes, RBR earns substantial revenue and participates in F1's centralized prize fund. Eight Drivers' Championships and six Constructors' championships between 2010 and 2024 earned the team the right to receive high-end commercial payments under the Concorde Agreement. MG also highlighted the internal value of running RBR as a business unit within the company, with specific mention of its strategic integration. Consumer behavior verifies this business activity. A statistically significant difference between Red Bull consumers and non-consumers exists for Q9 (chance to buy Red Bull because of F1), as a two-sample t-test indicates ($t = -9.885$, $p < .001$). Red Bull drinkers have an average of 3.64, while non-consumers have an average of 1.78.

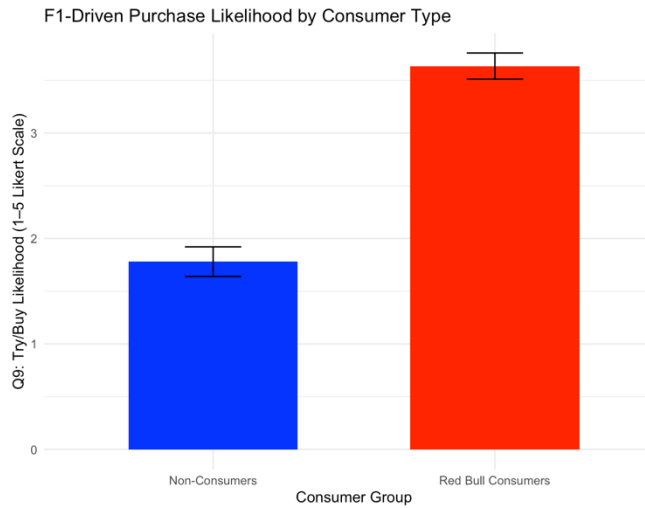


Figure 18: Comparisons of F1-driven purchase intent between Red Bull consumers and non-consumers.

This is to say that F1 is not just a brand asset but a generator of demand, driving the loyalty and preference of existing customers. This was in accordance with NS's point that the team's visibility renders Red Bull the default choice at the shelf and that F1-driven promotions have delivered concrete short-term sales lift.

Red Bull's competitive strength is illustrated by Q11, which shows that it is the respondents' favorite energy drink, thus supporting this conclusion.

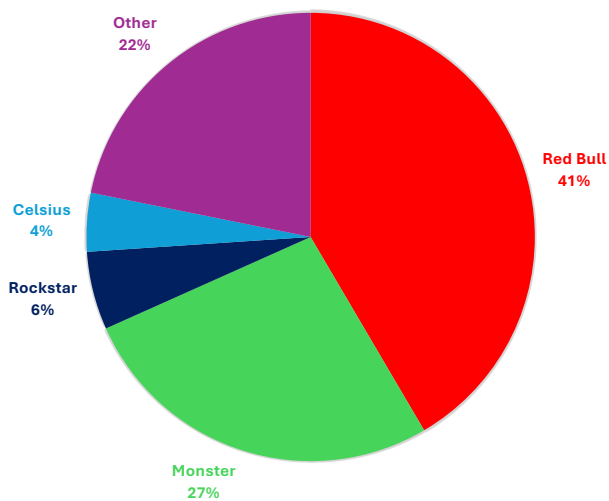


Figure 19: Answer distribution of question 11.

DM emphasized that Red Bull's brand strength is not founded on performance only; the real differentiator is in the extent of translation of that performance. RBR helps convey race success into commercial returns—through driver-authored storytelling, geo-targeted advertising, and custom packages.

Besides involving consumers, RBR is also a B2B and in-house brand commercialization engine. AD described the team as an active partner development, brand equity, and premium client experience lever. Tech, fashion, and logistics strategic partnerships are amplified by having a partner team that has Red Bull DNA. These are not passive sponsorships but co-branded pipelines that generate shared value.

Internally, RBR creates efficiencies through executive hospitality, regionized activations, and replicable campaign templates. It allows for speedy cross-regional coordination too. AD supported this motif by portraying the team as a shared platform that facilitates synchronization of worldwide marketing—allowing for concurrent launches and real-time post-race activations in markets on five continents all through the season.

Finally, the panel talked about the limits of sponsorship. DM said any brand can sponsor a team if the budget is there—but creating an immersive, integrated brand universe is a far more ambitious and successful strategy. SS quoted that although Rockstar utilized visibility, Red Bull's model built lasting brand equity.

Ultimately, RBR is not an ad spend — it's a commercialization tactic. It purchases shelf space, builds preference over consumers, makes execution easy, and leverages attention. In contrast to sponsorship, which rents visibility, ownership provides Red Bull full control of platform and revenue potential.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Key findings – Triangulation

This chapter summarizes the most significant results from the triangulated analysis of the consumer survey, expert interviews, and literature discussed throughout Chapter 4. It demonstrates a synthesized view of how RBR contributes brand equity, consumer engagement, global growth, and commercial worth. Consistent trends through sources

confirm that RBR exists not just as a marketing tool but also as an interconnected brand and business system.

Team ownership was the strongest driver of strategic uniqueness. Experts categorized it not as a marketing technique but as an asset with long-term value. RBR meets all VRIO conditions: it is valuable, rare, inimitable, and embedded in the organization, according to RBV (Barney, 1991). Experts such as NS and DM emphasized how ownership ensures control over storytelling and homogeneity of the brand. Evidence from surveys reinforced this: more than 84% of those surveyed perceived ownership to have a greater influence over brand image compared to sponsorship—positioning it at the center of Red Bull's brand structure.

Industry folks and brand managers would always choose ownership over sponsorship for long-term ROI. Sponsorship may definitely make one aware, but it lacks emotional richness and control. Surveys and experts concurred in proving that with ownership, Red Bull has the ability to build, and not borrow, branding—platforming everything from race-day content to merchandising. Keller's Brand Equity Theory (2001) says that ownership enhances salience, associations, quality, and loyalty.

Performance mattered too. Survey findings reported that 67.5% of the respondents believed that RBR's success made Red Bull's products more attractive, verifying Keller's (2001) perceived quality theory. A third associated RBR with innovation and high performance after Ferrari. Performance was agreed by specialists to fuel trust in brands, but as DM noted, this must be initiated through thoughtful content in order to have an effect.

Ownership also enables symbolic and emotional branding. Stronger higher emotional involvement was established among sport-and-brand-image-motivated consumers, as shown in a t-test. Experts agreed, describing RBR as cultural anchor. Emotional loyalty is not by chance—it's a tactical outcome of brand identity matching. In addition, 74.2% of the respondents felt that RBR enhances Red Bull's authenticity.

Experiential and online marketing were the most important brand equity drivers. Linear regression showed that there was a highly significant positive relationship between purchase intent and perceived media influence. This confirms DCT (Teece et al., 1997): Red Bull is turning F1 success into platform engagement. As experts like DM and RF maintained, content is not secondary—it is behind brand performance.

Regional analysis confirmed global reach. North America and the UK saw a one-sample t-test confirm sports participation significantly impacted energy drink consumption. Experts characterized events such as the Miami and Las Vegas Grand Prix as "door-openers," showing RBR's cultural adaptability and global applicability—confirming Teece's dynamic capabilities and Keller's salience of the brand.

Finally, monetization was the key outcome. A two-sample t-test showed Red Bull consumers were significantly more likely to buy due to F1 (mean = 3.64 vs. 1.78). Experts emphasized the activation function of races—B2C and B2B. From co-branded marketing to executive hospitality, RBR derives revenue and strategic efficacy across the ecosystem.

In total, Red Bull's F1 strategy combines ownership of the brand, emotion, performance, and media leverage into a competitive value. RBR is not just a marketing asset—it is a multifunctional engine for long-run brand equity and business building.

5.1.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study on Red Bull's F1 ownership strategy have far-reaching implications for theory in branding and management.

Above all, they validate the RBV by upholding RBR as a firm-specific strategic asset that meets all VRIO criteria: valuable (enhancing brand preference), scarce (not many consumer brands possess leading teams), imitable (due to extensive media incorporation), and organizationally embedded (Barney, 1991). While consumer survey evidence (e.g., Q9, Q11) establishes concrete impact, expert interviews reveal internal strategic coordination—offering insight into how sport-based experience assets may serve as long-term branding infrastructure.

RBR also formulates Brand Equity Theory (BET). The collective builds equity symbolically and performance-based, indicated by emotional attachment (Q13), perception of genuineness (Q14), and symbolic commitment (Q15). Further, the statistically significant difference in purchase intent between Red Bull consumers and non-consumers (Q9) offers behavior proof of RBR's status as an affective brand multiplier when cultural embeddedness.

The results also validate the DCT (Teece et al., 1997). Scholars emphasized Red Bull's dynamism in monetizing its F1 asset in experience, retail, and digital environments. This is empirically tested with regression between Q20 (perceived media influence) and Q9 (purchase behavior). RBR is a reconfigurable platform—enabling Red Bull to capture trends, seize cultural moments, and redefine brand stories in real time, all typical of dynamic capabilities in high-velocity environments.

An emergent effect is the architectural role of team ownership in brand development. Both AB and AD said RBR is now on the same strategic level of relevance as the product itself. This means brand ecosystems will progressively evolve towards platform-based paradigms, where the message (brand identity) and medium (F1 team) become fully fused. This necessitates further studies on ownership as a constituent structural aspect of strategic branding.

In summary, this thesis not only employs but also embodies basic theories in marketing and strategic literature. RBR is a mixed brand asset—symbolic and commercial, embedded and flexible—that has the capacity to affect consumer behavior and corporate growth via a specifically combined platform.

5.1.2 Practical Implications

All brand strategists, sports marketers, and companies looking to invest in high-level sports can benefit from practical learning from this study.

First, club ownership has clear benefits in consistency, narrative integrity, and brand control over sponsorship. Following Red Bull's approach, in high-dynamic environments, ownership enables quicker alignment between messaging and market activation. Emotional loyalty is also a key driver.

Greater emotional attachment and purchase intention were displayed by the customers who identified with symbolic attributes such as RBR. In addition to utilitarian value, brand managers need to place great emphasis on consistency and sincerity of storytelling.

Third, internal coordination is facilitated by F1 as a brand-owned property. Red Bull fuels efficiency and agility by exposing central content to regional teams in order for them to align campaigns and react more quickly to changes in the market. Finally, performance is not sufficient. The secret is to translate sporting success into content

and experiences. To maximize the commercial value, businesses need to invest in digital storytelling and real-time media. All things considered, Red Bull's F1 strategy demonstrates that ownership is a strategic multiplier that amplifies execution, loyalty, and long-term brand value in addition to being a visibility tool.

5.2 Limitations

5.2.1 Expert Interviews

Though they were under the limitation of scope constraints, the semi-structured expert interviews were extremely informative. Selection bias might have been incurred since participant recruitment was affected by professional access and availability. Although the experts reflected a wide range of marketing professionals, F1 insiders, and brand strategists, there were few voices from non-sports branding environments.

Furthermore, there is a greater risk of confirmation bias as the inductively designed interview guide might have directed responses towards preconceived theoretical themes. Notwithstanding these threats, the expert sample demonstrated high credibility as all members had extensive knowledge of either the Red Bull brand ecosystem or similar sponsorship programs.

It is also necessary to remember that, however great their qualitative depth, expert ideas might not be relevant to broader industry contexts. Their usefulness, like that of any interpretive data, resides not in statistical representativeness but in topic convergence and contextual applicability.

5.2.2 Survey

The survey questionnaire used in this study has limitations that can potentially weaken the validity of the results, as is the case with most self-reporting tools (Bryman, 2016).

While spread globally, the population of participants in the survey was not evenly distributed across geographical regions.

North America and the UK accounted for the bulk of responses, with 35% of respondents identifying as being from the USA and 23% from the UK.

Moderate representation was noted in Germany, Italy, and Portugal. Conclusions regarding "global brand expansion" need to be considered partial rather than universal

in nature because under-represented regions like Asia-Pacific, South America, and Africa are included in the sample. Future research could be enhanced by additional regional sampling and more equitable geographic categorisation to achieve cross-cultural validity. Demographically, the sample was age-biased in favor of the younger population. With more than 60% of the respondents falling in the 25–34 and 18–24 age ranges, this distribution suggests a population of digital natives, and this may have a bearing on attitudes towards sports marketing, media consumption, and brand dynamics. Acquiescence bias in Likert-scale responses is another methodological issue. Positively framed alternatives are typically preferred by respondents (Krosnick, 1999), particularly when questions related to brands are asked. This can result in exaggerated beliefs about the effect of F1 or Red Bull's branding success.

Moreover, because the survey is cross-sectional in nature, it can offer but a snapshot of consumer attitudes; it can't control for change over time or the effect of repeated campaign exposure to RBR.

5.3 Future Research

This research has demonstrated how Red Bull's team ownership in F1 generates consumer engagement, brand equity, and international growth. There are some areas left for future studies, nonetheless. First, while this research used F1 as an example, comparative research on other ownership-based sport investments (e.g., esport, extreme sports, or non-F1 motor sport) would determine if the same strategic advantages apply in other situations.

This thesis also addressed how consumers perceive the products. Future studies must look into the organisational and financial effects of team ownership, including partner management, internal brand management, and brand execution performance, as mentioned by practitioners but empirically under-studied.

Geographically, extending research to less-represented markets such as the Middle East, South America, and the Asia-Pacific region can build knowledge of how ownership-based branding works in various markets.

Longitudinal research can further trace shifts in consumer attitudes and emotional attachment dependent upon RBR 's performance cycles, such as the effect of a losing season on brand loyalty.

Finally, to enable triangulation of findings from a wider strategic platform base, future research needs to engage additional stakeholders, including merchants, media partners, F1 insiders, and rival brands.

More broadly, this research lays the foundation for the understanding of ownership as a sport brand strategy in high-performance sport. The concepts can be evolved and framed differently in industries, regions, and over time in future research.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Outline of Survey Questions

Table 4: Survey Questions Outline

Q No.	Question	Question Type	Answer Options
Awareness & Perception of F1 and Red Bull Racing			
1	How familiar are you with Formula 1 (F1)?	5-point Likert scale	1 = Not familiar at all; 5 = Very familiar
2	How familiar are you with Red Bull Racing's involvement in Formula 1?	5-point Likert scale	Not familiar at all (1) - Extremely familiar (5)
3	How frequently do you follow Formula 1 (e.g., races, news, content)? <i>Question type: Multiple choice</i>	Multiple Choice	Every race; Sometimes; Rarely; Never
F1 Brand Associations			
4	What qualities do you associate with Formula 1?	Multiple Choice	Speed; Innovation; Prestige; Exclusivity; Glamour; Entertainment; Don't know
5	- To what extent do you associate these qualities with Red Bull Racing?	Matrix question	Not concerned at all (1) - Very concerned (5); Not applicable/Don't know
6	Which of the following F1 teams do you most associate with innovation and high performance?	Multiple choice	Red Bull Racing; Mercedes; Ferrari; McLaren; Don't know
Red Bull Product Perception			
7	How would you describe your perception of Red Bull's energy drink?	Multiple choice	High-performance product; Lifestyle product; Just another energy drink; I don't have an opinion
8	Do you believe Red Bull's performance in Formula 1 makes the product more appealing?	5-point Likert scale	1 = Very unlikely; 5 = Very likely

9	How likely are you to try or buy Red Bull because of its F1 engagement?	5-point Likert scale	1; 2; 3; 4; 5
Consumption Behavior			
10	How often do you consume energy drinks?	Multiple choice	Daily, Weekly; Monthly; Rarely; Never
11	Which energy drink brands do you consume? <i>(Select all that apply)</i>	Multiple choice	Red Bull; Monster; Rockstar; Celsius; Other
12	When do you usually consume energy drinks? <i>(Select all that apply)</i>	Multiple choice	During sports/workouts; While watching F1; While working/studying; At social events; Other
Brand Loyalty and Identity			
13	To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to Red Bull as a brand?	5-point Likert scale	1 = Not at all; 5 = Very connected
14	Do you feel that Red Bull Racing enhances the authenticity of the Red Bull brand?	5-point Likert scale	1 = Not at all; 5 = Very much so
15	Which factor most increases your loyalty to an energy drink brand?	Multiple choice	Taste; Price; Brand image; Sponsorships and sports presence; Availability
Strategic Drivers (Testing Theories)			
16	Which of the following do you think gives Red Bull a competitive advantage over competitors?	Multiple choice	F1 team ownership; Sponsorship strategy; Content marketing; Product innovation; Other
17	Do you believe team ownership (vs. sponsorship) has a stronger impact on brand image?	5-point Likert scale	1 = Not at all; 5 = Very strongly
18	How important is sports involvement when choosing between similar energy drinks?	5-point Likert scale	1 = Not important at all; 5 = Very important
Digital Branding & Fan Engagement			
19	How often do you engage with Red Bull's F1 content (social media, YouTube, Drive to Survive)?	Multiple choice	Often; Occasionally; Rarely; Never
20	How impactful is Red Bull's digital and media presence on your perception of the brand?	5-point Likert scale	1 = Not impactful; 5 = Extremely impactful
Consumer Profile			
21	What is your age group?	Multiple choice	Under 18; 18–24; 25–34; 35–44; 45–54; 55+
22	What is your gender?	Multiple choice	Male; Female; Non-binary; Prefer not to say
23	Which country do you currently live in?	Short Answer	Open text field
24	What is your primary occupation?	Multiple choice	Student; Employed full-time; Employed part-time; Self-employed; Unemployed; Other
25	Do you consider yourself a sports fan?	Multiple choice	Yes, No; Somewhat

Appendix B: Expert Interviews

1 Interview Scripts

The following is a script of questions posed to the various experts in interviews. It must be mentioned that, as these were semi-structured interviews, some of the questions were altered based on each expert's area of expertise.

1. What do you think influenced Red Bull's branding strategy in Formula 1?
2. How is Red Bull Racing's brand presence in F1 different from that of classic sponsors or factory teams (e.g., Mercedes, Ferrari)?
3. How do you consider the value of full team ownership in F1 compared to sponsorship-only models?
4. Do you believe Red Bull's F1 performance has a measurable impact on brand equity? If yes, in what manner?
5. What brand attributes are most reinforced by Red Bull's involvement in F1? (e.g., innovation, performance, lifestyle, authenticity)
6. How effectively do you think Red Bull integrates its F1 activities into its overall brand and product marketing?
7. To what extent do you think Red Bull's involvement in F1 creates consumer loyalty or purchasing habits?
8. Does owning a team create branding value that sponsors do not receive?
9. How would you rate Red Bull's position in the international energy drink market versus competitors like Monster or Rockstar, in terms of sports marketing power?
10. Is Red Bull Racing a unique strategic asset to the long-term competitive advantage of Red Bull? Why or why not?

2 Summary of Interview 1: NS

How central is Formula 1 to Red Bull's overall brand strategy?

NS: It's quite central — not just in marketing terms, but as part of how we define and express the Red Bull brand globally. The team gives us a consistent presence in a high-visibility environment, and we're capable of using that platform not just for awareness, but for actual positioning. I think one of the things that's not common is that we don't manage the team like a normal sports sponsorship. It's integrally woven into our branding ecosystem. So when we're talking about performance, precision, or even something like youthfulness or risk-taking, those values are reconfirmed through the F1 team and pushed out to our consumer

touchpoints. It's not a plug-in channel — it's an asset that enables us to communicate the same message worldwide.

How does full ownership stack up against more traditional sponsorship models?

NS: Sponsorship, for the most part, gives you exposure and access — and that can be very valuable. But there's usually a limit to what you can do. You're usually operating under somebody else's brand umbrella, and there are only so many things you can impact or change. With ownership, we control the direction. We dictate how and when we convene the team with campaigns, events, media — and it delivers a level of consistency and creative alignment that sponsorship just doesn't. It's not brand placement, it's brand architecture. We can time a product launch around a race, align a driver's media schedule with our lifestyle messaging, or produce long-form content that's 100% our story. That level of integration is hard to get using traditional methods.

Follow-up:

So you'd say it gives you a level of control you can't otherwise achieve?

NS: Precisely. It's control, but also speed. In F1, everything moves fast — races every weekend, driver controversies, technical developments. Because we own the team, we can respond in a heartbeat. There's no lag from negotiations or approvals from third parties. If something happens on Sunday, we can have branded content live and on air on Monday that ties directly back to it. That kind of agility is very valuable in today's media environment, where attention spans are short and timing is everything.

In terms of brand equity, what does F1 performance enable you to do?

NS: Performance is a credibility builder. It's not so much whom you beat — though that certainly doesn't hurt — but how you race. Are you innovative? Are you consistent? Are you seen as elite? Those are the sorts of things that affect how the brand is viewed. And when Red Bull Racing performs on the track, it reflects positively on the product. Consumers don't say it in that way, but they absorb it. They associate us with speed, precision, and competitiveness — and that translates into how they feel about the brand in general. It underlines quality and emotional connection.

Do you have any evidence that Red Bull Racing influences actual purchasing behavior?

NS: We've quantified it in various ways. There's often a lift in brand metrics — awareness, favorability, purchase intent — after a big race weekend or when one of our drivers is in the spotlight. In some markets, we've even seen short-term sales impact tied to F1-related campaigns. But I'd say the more meaningful effect is long-term. It's about building preference. When consumers are choosing between energy drinks on the shelf, a brand like Red Bull — which they associate with a greater universe of performance and applicability — is more likely to prevail. That's the intrinsic effect F1 has. It's not so much about spikes, it's about becoming the default choice.

Do you think consumers are conscious of the ownership model — and does that affect authenticity?

NS: I think more and more so, and especially with the younger audience. The fans today

are knowledgeable — they follow the sport, they watch the content, and they understand the difference between a sponsor and a team owner. They realize that Red Bull owns the team, runs the team, and is consistently involved in the sport, and that creates a perception of seriousness. It doesn't feel like a marketing add-on — it feels like something that we genuinely care about. And that, I think, makes the brand feel more authentic. It's not manufactured loyalty. It's built over time, through consistency.

Are there downsides to ownership from a branding perspective?

NS: There are definitely challenges. It's expensive, for one. And it requires ongoing performance — you cannot be completely off the pace for a number of seasons, as that undermines the credibility you have built. And F1 is so much in the public eye. If there is scandal, if a driver makes a comment not on message, if performance suffers — it reflects on the brand. So it is not without risk. But for us, the potential upside in terms of brand alignment and storytelling far outweighs those risks. It's a long-term play, and it has worked amazingly well so far.

How do you contrast Red Bull's approach with what Monster or Rockstar are doing?

NS: They've done more of the traditional things — athlete sponsorships, event sponsorships, logo placements. And that can be effective, depending on your goals. But it's less cohesive. The message isn't always connected, and the brand isn't as organically integrated into the platform. With Red Bull Racing, we're not renting relevance — we're building it. That makes for a much more stable base for everything we do, from content to campaigns to partnerships. It's just a more integrated model.

On a 1-to-5 scale, how do you rate the strategic value of Red Bull Racing to the brand?

NS: Five. Without a doubt. It's become one of the most valuable brand assets we have — not just in terms of visibility, but in terms of alignment, agility, and depth of engagement.

And F1 performance — how much does that move the needle?

NS: Four. When we win, it amplifies everything. But even when we don't, the consistency of the brand experience remains. Winning helps, but it isn't the only reason.

3 Summary of Interview 2: DM

In your opinion, how did Red Bull Racing's brand identity evolve during the time you were responsible for the marketing of the team?

DM: In the early years, it was all about disruption. We entered a very stodgy sport and brought in something younger, edgier, more irreverent. That was by design — the whole idea was to shake things up. But as the team aged and we started to win, the branding matured as well. The identity didn't change at its essence — we're still energy, edge, confidence — but it became more refined. We learned how to blend in performance and polish without losing that challenger mindset. And that balance became an enormous asset.

Do you believe F1 changed from a marketing platform to something more ingrained in Red Bull's brand DNA?

DM: Definitely, yes. Initially, it was viewed — at least partly — as a high-risk brand investment. But once we built the infrastructure and saw the kind of engagement and storytelling it could facilitate, it started to function as more than an exercise in marketing. It became a means of how Red Bull speaks to the world. It wasn't just visibility; it was a reflection of who we are. So yes, over the years, F1 has become integrated into Red Bull's brand architecture.

How do you compare the branding value of ownership to that of sponsorship from your experience?

DM: It's night and day. When you're a sponsor, you're always a bit at the mercy of another company's strategy, regulations, and tone. You get exposure, you might get access to some content, maybe co-branding opportunities — but you're always a guest. When you own the team, everything is revolving around your brand. We could dictate the look and feel of the car, the messaging, the content of the driver, the fan activations. That level of control keeps your brand consistent — across seasons, markets, and mediums. It's unfiltered.

Follow-up:

And that control enabled better alignment with product campaigns?

DM: Completely. We could plan everything — product drops, limited editions, seasonal activations — off the F1 calendar. And that wasn't just a matter of timing. It was a matter of tone, energy, and relevance. If Verstappen wins in Austin, and two days later we launch a Red Bull campaign that's tied to U.S. performance culture, that feels natural. That's the value of ownership.

How does on-track performance affect branding outcomes?

DM: Winning always helps. It feeds media coverage and perception. But I wouldn't say performance alone is the solution. It's what you do with the performance that matters. We always had a philosophy of converting results into content — whether behind-the-scenes footage, memes, short films, or campaigns. The race is the event, but the brand impact comes from the story around it.

Do you have any evidence from your time that F1 success benefited Red Bull's consumer choice or loyalty?

DM: There were definitely signs. We did market research studies and saw bumps in brand engagement around key races. We also saw more traffic to Red Bull-owned channels when the team was doing well. That said, I think the more significant impact was on brand stickiness — people remembered us, stuck with us, and talked about us more. That doesn't directly impact sales right away, but it creates long-term preference.

Do you believe Red Bull Racing increases the perceived authenticity of the brand?

DM: I do. Presence and consistency yield authenticity. And when you're present consistently, and you're not just renting space but actually running the show, people take notice. People appreciate that. And also, you're not just showing up once a year

— you're competing on a weekly basis, under high-stakes circumstances. That adds a certain gravity to the brand. It signals you're not dabbling. You're committed.

What do you think are the disadvantages or pitfalls of team ownership from a brand's perspective?

DM: There are a number of them. It's a long-term commitment, and it's expensive — not just in financial terms, but in terms of attention and resources. You've got to be prepared to continually perform, to adapt and innovate. And you're out there. If something goes wrong — on track or off — it can reflect on the brand. And in sport, not everything is in your control. But overall, if you're well organized, the upside is huge.

How do you view competitors, say Monster or Rockstar, in this category?

DM: They've done a great job with sports marketing — action sports and music, especially. Their motorsport strategy has been more. logo buys, event sponsorships, maybe some driver sponsorship. Red Bull did it differently — we built the team, the content machine, the lifestyle positioning. That's a tougher model to follow. You can sponsor anything if you have a budget, but building a world around your brand — that's something else.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how significant is the strategic value of Red Bull Racing to the parent brand?

DM: It's a five. It's integrated, it's global, and it gives Red Bull points of difference in a competitive marketplace.

And how do you score the importance of F1 performance in that mix?

DM: I enjoyed it. I would give it a four. It's worthwhile — regardless of who. But where you get the most out of the platform is where you reap its actual value. Performance gives you the opportunity. What you build around it — that's what separates.

4 Summary of Interview 3: AD

How does Red Bull Racing fit into the overall brand and sports marketing strategy in your view, from your global perspective?

AD: Red Bull Racing is definitely one of the flagship properties in our overall sports portfolio. It's in the same category as something like Red Bull Rampage or the Air Race series — but for a very different purpose. Formula 1 gives us continuous, structured global exposure. It's not one event or promotion. It's 24 races, year in and year out, with consistent media, storyline, and brand exposure. From a strategic perspective, that's incredibly valuable. It gives us a top-tier platform to build Red Bull as a performance brand — not just in sport, but as a mindset.

How do you see that as a distinction from how Red Bull uses other sports properties?

AD: With the majority of our other properties — say cliff diving, BMX, surfing — we're sponsoring the sport and the athletes, but not necessarily defining the sport. F1 is the exception. Because we own the team, we're not just a participant — we're helping define the

space. That enables us to be more consistent in the way the brand is portrayed. So while other properties deliver credibility to the brand in lifestyle and culture, F1 delivers authority in performance and innovation.

Follow-up:

So you would consider Red Bull Racing a strategic asset, more than a sponsorship?

AD: Yes, exactly. It's not a line item in a media plan. It's part of how we globalize the brand. And it's flexible — we use it for content, for digital engagement, for B2B partner development, even for internal brand culture. That flexibility only really comes when you own the asset and can control its direction.

How does Red Bull leverage the F1 team when it comes to international brand expansion?

AD: F1 helps open doors — no doubt. Particularly in newer or tougher-to-crack markets. For instance, in the U.S., F1 was quite niche until recently. But now, with the Netflix effect and races like Miami and Vegas, it's booming. And because we're not just a sponsor but a top-tier team, we're able to attach the Red Bull brand to that cultural moment. We're hosting events, doing retail activations, collaborating with local influencers — and it all comes off as authentic because we're truly part of the sport. That's hard to fake.

Does team ownership impact how consumers perceive the brand?

AD: I think it does. Especially among younger fans. They can tell when a brand is just “renting” visibility and when it's actually embedded in something. And because we've been in F1 since 2005, there's a sense of legitimacy. We've put in the time, invested in the infrastructure, built up talent. It gives the brand weight. It's not just flashy — it has substance.

Are there also internal advantages to having a team, beyond consumer perception?

AD: Yes, there are. It gives the brand team — and even our local market teams — something to work with together. It creates internal energy. People get behind it. And we can build multi-market campaigns off of it without having to coordinate with an external rights holder. So there's efficiency there too, on top of the creative and emotional value.

What do you think are the biggest risks or drawbacks of the ownership model?

AD: You're totally exposed. If the team doesn't do well, the brand is still out there in front of everybody. There's nowhere to hide. And F1 is uncontrollable — technical failures, rule changes, even internal team politics can affect perception. It's a high-risk scenario. But we've accepted that as part of the deal. If you desire total control and authenticity, you also accept the risk.

How does Red Bull's F1 strategy compare to competitors like Monster or Rockstar?

AD: They're doing a good job in terms of activation, especially in motorsports like Supercross or rally. But it's shallower. It's sponsorship, rather than ownership. They're present, but they're not driving the narrative. I believe what Red Bull has done is more difficult — building from

the ground up and bringing it to cultural prominence. It's a longer play, but it builds wealthier equity.

On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the strategic value of Red Bull Racing to Red Bull's overall global brand?

AD: Five. Not because it's the only channel that works, but because it works on everything — brand, media, consumer engagement, even talent recruitment. It's a strategic multiplier.

And how significant is real race performance to that value?

AD: I'd give it a four. Winning is key — especially when you're competing against the likes of Ferrari and Mercedes. But consistency, visibility, and content are just as vital. The platform is strong, win or lose.

5 Summary of Interview 4: MD

What do you think is the strategic role of branding in a Formula 1 team like McLaren?

MD: It's in the middle — I mean, squarely at the heart of how we do business. F1 teams are no longer just racing teams; they are commercial brands with global reach. For us, the McLaren brand stands for innovation, quality of engineering, and heritage — and that brand value is a big part of what we sell to partners. The racing gives us credibility, but the brand is what makes partnerships sustainable.

How are partnerships at McLaren structured from a branding and commercial value standpoint?

MD: We have a tiered system — you have title partners, principal partners, technical partners, and so on. With each level come corresponding rights: visibility, access, content integration, hospitality, etc. But more than that, we attempt to co-create value. We're not simply selling real estate on the car — we're helping brands tell stories that are meaningful to what McLaren represents.

Follow-up:

So storytelling is a large component, even in a sponsorship model?

MD: It's not enough anymore just to be seen — you have to be relevant. That means aligning values, leveraging shared audiences, and activating campaigns that go beyond exposure. That's where a lot of the value is being driven today.

How do you contrast this model with a full ownership play like Red Bull's?

MD: It's quite different. Red Bull have made their team a mirror image of their consumer brand, so they have a very distinct line between product and sport. That's powerful, unquestionably. But it also introduces another kind of risk and responsibility. Our model is more dynamic — we collaborate with a vast array of partners in a multitude of industries, and we have the ability to tailor our brand message to each of them without being tied down to a single commercialized image.

Do you believe there are disadvantages to the sponsorship model compared to what Red Bull is doing?

MD: Of course, there are trade-offs. With a sponsorship deal, you're always balancing a series of interests. Each partner has a slightly different agenda, and that can dilute the message if you're not careful. Red Bull doesn't have that concern — they own the whole platform, so they can keep the messaging tight. But the risk is, they take the whole cost and risk. We can move faster to change direction, and we can diversify our commercial base, which has its own advantages.

How does McLaren measure the branding impact of partnerships?

MD: We look at a mix of quantitative and qualitative metrics. Reach, engagement, recall — the usual media KPIs. But also shifts in brand perception, content performance, and B2B outcomes where relevant. A lot of our partners are keen to understand how the McLaren affiliation assists in elevating their own positioning — whether that's innovation, sustainability, or performance.

Do you think Red Bull's ownership structure gives them a brand equity advantage over sponsor-based teams?

MD: I'd say in certain areas, yes. They have a unified narrative that aligns perfectly with their consumer product. That's very effective, especially with younger fans who value consistency and authenticity. For us, the brand equity comes more from the heritage, the racing legacy, and our ability to adapt to different brand partnerships. It's a different kind of equity.

From your view, what's Red Bull Racing's biggest branding strength?

MD: Probably the coherence of their brand-world. From how they present the team to the media profiles of the drivers — everything points back to the parent Red Bull brand. Such consistency is difficult to obtain in a multi-brand constellation like ours.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how strategically significant do you think team ownership is for brand building?

MD: Four, maybe four and a half. It gives you total control but also limits flexibility. If you can make it work — as Red Bull clearly has — it's a massive advantage. But it's not a model that suits everyone.

And how significant a difference does on-track performance make to brand perception?

MD: It's still important — in F1, performance is part of product. Winning makes everything better. But long-term, how you energize fans, how you activate partnerships, and how you show up in culture — that's what ultimately drives perception.

6 Summary of Interview 5: TF

How do partnerships at Mercedes work from a brand activation perspective?

TF: At Mercedes, we approach partnerships as long-term strategic relationships. It's not just about exposure — it's about generating value on both sides. Our partners expect to be aligned with innovation, precision, sustainability — the values that Mercedes as a brand represents. So from branding on-car to content creation to hospitality, everything is crafted to reflect that. Our job is to make the partner's objectives and our team's values blend together in a seamless way.

How do you decide what assets or platforms to activate with partners?

It simply depends on the partner and whom they're attempting to reach. For a B2B tech brand, for instance, we might do more technical storytelling and behind-the-scenes-esque content. If it's a consumer brand, it could be more lifestyle-driven, with drivers or moments of racing. We have a mix of assets — trackside, digital, experiential — and we look to tailor activation plans so that they're effective and authentic.

How does that compare to a model like Red Bull's, where the brand owns the team outright?

TF: That's a very different setup. Red Bull is fully vertically integrated — the team is an extension of their product brand. Their marketing, storytelling, driver content — it's all highly integrated with Red Bull tone and message. We operate more as a brand platform for multiple partners. There's greater flexibility, but also greater complexity. We have to balance diverse objectives across a wide portfolio.

Are there advantages to the sponsorship model over ownership, then?

TF: Yes, definitely. Flexibility is one. We can accommodate a range of industries and adapt messaging by market or campaign. And because we're not married to a single commercial identity, we can innovate across segments — automotive, tech, finance, consumer packaged goods. That variety gives us resilience.

Follow-up:

But do you get brand storytelling problems when you're working with multiple stories?

TF: Yes, and that's the trade-off. You need good brand governance — editorial control, creative consistency — or it can be fragmented. We've gotten better at that over the years. But yes, it's a challenge, especially when every partner wants something bespoke. That's where Red Bull's model is helpful. They're able to keep it very targeted.

Do you think Red Bull's ownership structure results in stronger brand equity?

TF: I think it does — particularly with emotional resonance and authenticity. The fans understand Red Bull is all in — not just sponsoring a team, but running one. That's a deeper connection. It also allows for faster content creation and shorter storytelling. We can do a lot, but we still have an overall ecosystem of partners and approval levels.

From a fan's perspective, do you think people know the difference between sponsorship and ownership?

TF: I think increasingly, yes. With things like Drive to Survive and social media, fans are

more informed. They know who's actually building the team versus who's just there. And that impacts perception. It's not overt, but it does impact brand authenticity and engagement.

What do you think Mercedes is good at in terms of brand positioning in F1?

TF: Our strength is linking performance and heritage. We have a great engineering story, and we've built our reputation on excellence and professionalism. That resonates globally. It's a more conventional brand image than Red Bull's, but it does the job. And we've worked to update— more digital, more dynamic — without betraying what Mercedes represents.

On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rank the success of Red Bull's ownership model at building a brand?

TF: Four, perhaps four and a half. It gives them speed, integration, and control — all positives. But it also requires a huge commitment and less flexibility. So it all just depends on the brand and on the business. With Red Bull, clearly, it does.

And how important is race performance in brand perception?

TF: It still does — plenty. Winning validates everything. But I would say consistency, values, and off-track narrative weigh just as heavily today. You don't have to win every race to win hearts and minds.

7 Summary of Interview 6: SS

In your experience at Rockstar, how much of a priority was motorsport sponsorship in the brand's overall strategy?

SS: It played a key role, especially in markets like Germany, the UK, and certain Eastern European markets. We were actively involved in rallycross, drift, and motocross — anything loud and adrenalin-fueled essentially. It gave us relevance to a young, male audience. But I'd say it was less strategic than product visibility. We focused on being visible and on being associated with energy-sapping events, rather than building an extended brand universe as Red Bull has.

Do you believe Rockstar's venture into motorsport created emotional engagement with consumers?

SS: To a degree — yes. Some of the fans saw us on a regular basis and felt that affinity. But in most instances, it was fairly superficial. Sponsorship is excellent for reach and awareness, but it's harder to build identity or loyalty from that foundation. We didn't own the narrative — we were part of the backdrop. You're sitting with a bunch of other logos, and if you don't activate well, you're just another sticker on a helmet or a car.

How did that compare to Red Bull's model, in your opinion?

SS: Red Bull were in a different league. I don't just mean budget — though that's obviously a part of it — I mean structurally. They weren't sponsoring a team; they were the team. That

gives them a lot more freedom in terms of content, narrative, brand tone, even how they present drivers. We could never really match that. Our activations would always be tied to events we didn't own. Red Bull built their own platforms.

Follow-up: Do you believe that ownership gave Red Bull a clear advantage in consumer perception?

SS: Yeah. I think fans — especially young fans — can smell that. They know when a brand is actually into something compared to paying to be there. Red Bull team ownership gave it credibility and a feeling of commitment. It made them feel like they were part of the sport, not taking from it.

Did you ever consider moving from sponsorship into an integration model that's even deeper?

SS: There were some internal talks of more profound engagement at the team-level sponsorship or building a proprietary event platform, but outright ownership was not really on the table — not while I was there, anyway. The focus was coverage and volume: get in front of as many fans as possible, as often as possible. But in hindsight, that approach had its limits in terms of depth and long-term equity.

Do you think Rockstar's brand equity suffered from not having control over the platforms it activated on?

SS: It all depends on how you define equity. If it's awareness and association, we did fantastic — people knew Rockstar stood for action, energy, boldness. But if you're talking about emotional loyalty or symbolic meaning, I think we fell behind. We didn't have a story that evolved over the years. Red Bull had drivers, storylines, rivalries — we had placements. So absolutely, I'd say ownership creates more powerful brand equity, if you can manage to do it.

How did you view the return on investment from motorsport sponsorship?

SS: It was positive but plateaued. Once you get to a certain level of exposure, the marginal gains reduce unless you add a more enriched activation strategy. And because we didn't own the properties, we were limited in how we could extend that story. That's where Red Bull gained the advantage. Their F1 content factory maintains the brand's topicality, even in the periods of time between races.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how valuable is Red Bull Racing to Red Bull's brand equity — from a rival's point of view?

SS: Five. No doubt. They incorporated it into the brand, not just an asset.

And how significant is real race performance to that perception?

SS: Four. It counts — fans follow results. But even when they don't win, the brand is still out there and linked. The consistency and the style are equally valuable as the podiums.

8 Summary of Interview 7: RF

In your experience of dealing with brands across F1, how would you describe the essential distinction between sponsorship and ownership in terms of brand strategy?

RF: Sponsorship gives access, exposure, and a level of association. Ownership gives you control. That's the simplest way to put it. When you sponsor, you're operating within someone else's system — which can be accomplished successfully, but you're still adapting to their brand voice, their performance, their media product. When you own the platform, you build the story from the ground up. Red Bull doesn't just sponsor F1 — they've developed one of its most powerful brand engines.

Do you think control translates to more long-term brand value?

RF: For Red Bull, absolutely — no doubt. Their team is not only a media property. It is part of their master brand ecosystem. They can tie a race win to a social campaign, a product promotion, a YouTube documentary — all without needing to navigate third-party approvals. That speed and consistency is hard to replicate in a traditional sponsorship deal.

What are some of the trade-offs between sponsorship control of ownership and flexibility?

RF: Sponsorship gives you flexibility — you can come and go, test and refine, and shift budgets around. Ownership is a long-term, capital-intensive commitment. You can't just opt out after a season. But with ownership, you get depth — the kind of depth that builds genuine equity over time. You're not just visible; you're trusted. That's worth something.

How do sponsors view Red Bull's F1 business compared to other teams?

RF: Red Bull is typically the example that is pointed to for brand integration. They've built a team that feels like an extension of the product — not just visually, but culturally. They're edgy, unconventional, and fast — just like the drink. That congruence makes their branding feel more natural and effective. Other teams — including factory teams — have more complicated partner ecosystems, which dilute the message a bit.

Follow-up:

So you'd say Red Bull has an advantage in storytelling?

RF: Yes, exactly. They don't have to negotiate storytelling — they just do it. That's a huge advantage in the current media environment, where brands need to move fast, own their channels, and be consistent across touchpoints.

Do you think consumers actually notice the difference between ownership and sponsorship?

RF: More than you would think. The average fan might not know about all of the financial deals, but they know who the real players are. They do know that Red Bull owns the team. That says something. It speaks of commitment, and that commitment is passed on to the brand image. You cannot replicate that.

What does Red Bull Racing give Red Bull that traditional media or event sponsorships cannot?

RF: It gives them a living, breathing brand platform. They're not reacting to someone else's event calendar — they are the event. They control the drivers, the message, the media content, even the music in their movies. That kind of end-to-end brand world is so compelling. And they activate it globally, across all consumer touchpoints.

In your estimation, how replicable is Red Bull's model for other brands?

RF: That's where it becomes tricky. The model itself could be replicated theoretically — own the team, control the message, build content around it. But few brands have the alignment, the organizational structure, or the creative continuity to do it. Red Bull has media competencies, cultural relevance, and a brand tone. Most brands just don't have that ecosystem.

On a 1 to 5 scale, how strategically valuable would you assess Red Bull Racing is to the Red Bull brand?

RF: Five. Without a doubt. It's one of the best uses of ownership I've seen in sports branding. It's consistent, scalable, and very embedded in the brand narrative.

And how important is actual race performance in that equation?

RF: I would say four. Winning makes everything bigger. But the storytelling — the way they involve fans in the experience — that is where long-term value is built. They would still be relevant without a podium each week.

9 Summary of Interview 8: MG

How do you see Red Bull Racing's role in Red Bull's overall corporate strategy?

MG: Red Bull Racing is not just a marketing exercise — it is a business unto itself. And that is rare in sport. Red Bull did not enter F1 to buy exposure to the sport. They were making a long-term investment in what I would call a performance-based branding engine. They've turned the team into a global storytelling platform, a content engine, a talent pipeline, and a brand differentiator — all rolled into one. It's an affirmation of everything that Red Bull wants to be thought of as: quick, precise, bold, and unorthodox. In this manner, the team is something beyond sponsorship — it's a strategic capability.

How do you think that comes into models like the VR or other strategy frameworks you've used within the F1 context?

MG: Classic example of the Resource-Based View. If you think about the VRIO model — value, rarity, inimitability, and organization — Red Bull Racing scores on all four. It's valuable in terms of the attention and association it delivers. It's one-off — not many brands own a team outright. It's hard to copy, as you need capital, cultural alignment, creative expertise, and a long-term commitment. And it's well organized — Red Bull has built media, talent, and product teams around the asset. So yes, from a strategic perspective, it's one

of the strongest examples of a branded asset driving long-term competitive advantage that I've seen in sport.

Why, in your view, does the ownership model work so effectively for Red Bull?

MG: I believe it's the consistency. They've been so consistent with their brand tone — rebellious, high-energy, risk-taking — and the team inhabits it. The car design, the attitude of the drivers, the social content, even the humor in some of their media — it all reflects the personality of the drink. That coherence delivers long-term brand equity. While most sponsors are attempting to craft messaging to work within a team or league's parameters, Red Bull sets the parameters. They've built a marketing universe from the inside out, and that's why it's so effective.

How does Red Bull Racing compare with more traditional sponsorship-based models in terms of ROI and brand equity?

MG: Sponsorship can be effective — especially for awareness and reach. But it's limited in terms of brand-building depth. You're borrowing someone else's narrative, and your visibility is often contingent on their performance or PR handling. With ownership, Red Bull creates, controls, and scales the story. The ROI is harder to measure in traditional financial terms, but in terms of brand loyalty, cultural relevance, and global presence, I'd say the return is substantial. And crucially, it compounds over time. The longer they're in the sport, the stronger the brand-story connection is.

Do you believe Red Bull Racing impacts consumer loyalty or buying behavior?

MG: Yes — especially among younger consumers. We've reached an age where consumers don't just decide based on functional benefits. They connect with brands that represent something. Red Bull's involvement in F1 communicates ambition, excitement, and precision. Even if the buyer is not a hardcore motorsport fan, the values carry over. And the content the team creates is shareable, relevant, and identity-based — which is very much a factor in purchasing decisions today. People like to be associated with high-performance brands.

How important is race performance to that brand equity?

MG: It's significant, perhaps less so than people think. Winning does serve to get the word out, and certainly it gets attention. Yet the real equity is in the consistency — being present in the correct manner, each race, each season. The story Red Bull has built up around the group is fascinating regardless of whether they're in first or fifth. Their fans aren't only invested in the scoreboard — they're invested in the atmosphere, the content, the experience. So performance matters, yet it's not the be-all.

Are there dangers or negatives to team ownership from a brand strategy perspective?

MG: Absolutely. F1 is expensive, unpredictable, and very public. When the team does badly, or when there's in-fighting, it reflects on the brand. The visibility works both ways. And then there's the operational burden — it's not a simple thing to be operating an F1 team. You need the right technical expertise, the right partners, the right governance. Red Bull has accomplished that effectively, but it's not something every brand would be capable of doing. And I believe the biggest challenge is one of remaining relevant — keeping the

team revitalized, building the story, and making sure it continues to resonate where the consumer marketplace is heading.

How replicable do you think Red Bull's model is for other consumer brands?

MG: Not necessarily. I mean, theoretically, any well-funded brand could buy a team. But few could follow up with the same cultural fit, creative integration, and patience. Red Bull is as much a content company as a drinks brand. That gives them the competencies to turn an F1 team into a brand multiplier. Other brands might try — and some have — but most don't have the infrastructure and the mindset to make it work.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the strategic value of Red Bull Racing to Red Bull's brand position?

MG: Five. It's at the core. It's not a support channel — it's a primary brand asset that shapes people's perception of Red Bull globally.

And how important is race performance within that strategic value?

MG: Four. It maximizes everything — visibility, credibility, cultural capital. But Red Bull's brand health doesn't live or die with a race result. That's the beauty of the way they've constructed it.

10 Summary of Interview 9: SM

From your experience of working with brands in sport, how do you see the strategic difference between team ownership and classical sponsorship?

SM: It's a basic difference. Sponsorship is about access — to audience, to content, to cultural moments — but it is transactional in nature. You pay for rights and negotiate for exposure or activation windows. Ownership, on the other hand, is transformational. It gives a brand complete control over the asset and, more importantly, how the asset is positioned, activated, and evolved over time. Red Bull is the most blatant example in sports: they don't just involve themselves with Formula 1 — they've become part of its very narrative. That's only possible when the brand owns the team and, effectively, the storytelling.

How does that control equate to brand-building outcomes?

SM: It equates to consistency. Red Bull Racing employs the same brand language as the drink. The drivers, the content, the appearance, even the way they do press moments — it's all part of a whole. That cohesion builds trust, and trust builds equity. With sponsorship, even if you have strong creative rights, you're still operating within another company's infrastructure. You can influence the message, but you don't own it. Red Bull owns it. That gives them the ability to adapt quickly, scale activations globally, and maintain a unified brand voice across regions and formats.

Are there risks or challenges that come with that ownership model?

SM: Of course. Ownership carries cost, complexity, and visibility — and not always the good kind. You're exposed to everything from performance fluctuations to reputational risk. If

something goes wrong on or off the track, it reflects directly back on the brand. That's a double-edged sword. Team ownership also requires deep internal integration — creative, commercial, operational. Without the right systems in place, you can't optimize the asset. But in Red Bull's case, they've built that infrastructure over the years. It's not by accident — it's part of their long-term strategy.

How do you believe customers perceive this model of ownership — do they notice or even care?

SM: They absolutely do — young consumers especially. Audiences are hyper-aware now. They don't just follow a sport; they follow the behind-the-scenes dynamics. They know who owns the teams, they know who's invested, and they crave authenticity. That's where ownership really shines. It shows commitment. It shows that the brand isn't just borrowing from the sport's credibility — it's actively contributing to it. That resonates.

Does that help with long-term emotional loyalty, in your view?

SM: Absolutely. Emotional loyalty isn't built in a single campaign or with a clever placement. It's built over time, through repeated, consistent brand behavior. Red Bull Racing gives the brand that consistency. Fans see the drivers, the races, the digital content, the team apparel — and they connect all of it back to the Red Bull identity. That builds memory structures. And once a brand is part of an individual's lifestyle memory, it's very difficult to dislodge.

In what ways is Red Bull's approach different from other energy drink rivals like Monster or Rockstar?

SM: They're in the same category, but I don't think they're in the same league in the sense of F1. Monster, for example, has a great presence in action sports and does a great job of niche motorsport sponsorships. But they're sponsors, not owners. That's the difference. Rockstar tried to do the same but has not been consistent. Red Bull built a wholeecosystem — team, media, product, and event — and they've duplicated it globally. That's hard to replicate without single brand culture and heavy commitment.

What do you think Red Bull Racing's biggest branding strength is?

SM: Clarity. The team is Red Bull, all the time. It's fast, it's bold, it's a littlerenegade — but incredibly professional. They've accomplished whatmany brands can't: they've made a sports property an extension of their brand voice, not a billboard for their logo. And they've succeededin doing so at every touchpoint — from driver content to media interviews to how the team represents itself in the paddock. And that consistency builds equity.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how strategically valuable do you think Red Bull Racing is to Red Bull's global brand?

SM: Five. No question. It's a cornerstone — not a sponsorship, not a campaign. It's a long-term brand asset that continues to grow in relevance.

And how significant is actual race performance to that value?

SM: I'd say four. It's important — performance validates the brand narrative. But I've seen Red Bull continue to build equity even in seasons where they weren't winning everything. It's the way they activate, the content they push, the consistency in tone — that's what holds attention and builds affinity.

11 Summary of Interview 10: AB

From an academic perspective, how would you place Red Bull Racing's place in Red Bull's overall brand strategy?

AB: Red Bull Racing is what I would refer to as a strategic brand platform. It's not a communications tool, it's not a sponsorship effort. It's a highly integrated asset that's explicitly linked with Red Bull's master brand identity. In brand architecture terms, Red Bull Racing is equal to — if not superior to in certain markets — the product itself. It embodies the values Red Bull wants to be associated with: performance, youth culture, daring, and a touch of anti-establishment spirit. That kind of identification is difficult to achieve with classical sponsorship.

How does that align with models like Brand Equity Theory or the Resource-Based View?

AB: Very nicely. Under Aaker's Brand Equity Model or Keller's CBBE model, Red Bull Racing supports virtually every pillar — from awareness and association through loyalty and perceived quality. When a brand asset can express symbolic meaning — precision, excitement, innovation, for instance — in a consistent way across markets, it builds equity directly. From an RBV perspective, the team is both inimitable and rare. It's not only capital-intensive to be an F1 team owner, but the brand, the asset, and the cultural narrative alignment are nearly impossible to replicate. It's valuable, rare, not easy to copy, and fully embedded in the strategic architecture of the firm — it passes the VRIO test.

Do you believe this ownership model contributes to brand authenticity?

AB: Yes, and increasingly important. In the European market especially, they are very sensitive to authenticity. They don't only read the message — they read the behavior behind the message. Red Bull's long-term involvement in F1 — not merely showing up with logos, but sponsoring a team, building drivers, controlling performance — communicates a commitment level that's out of the ordinary. That makes the brand appear more authentic, more invested, and ultimately more trustworthy. Ownership is synonymous with skin in the game.

Follow-up:

Do you think perception pays off in terms of measurable outcomes like loyalty or preference?

AB: Yes, particularly in product groups with low functional differentiation. The energy drink sector is highly saturated, and product differences are minimal. In such climates, brand equity is the differentiator — and equity is built on emotional connection and

symbolic identification. F1, and Red Bull Racing specifically, provides a chance for both. The drama, the high-performance setting, the global exposure — all this builds a narrative that supports consumer choice and loyalty.

In what ways does Red Bull's model compete with competing brands like Monster or Rockstar from a European branding standpoint?

AB: It's a pretty big gap, to be honest. Monster and Rockstar have presence, especially in action sports and some motorsport subcultures, but it's fragmented. Their brand storytelling is more campaign-based, more sponsorship-based. Red Bull has established a narrative infrastructure. They've built a world where product, platform, and philosophy converge. That's really powerful in brand terms. It's also far more difficult to replicate, because it demands coherence across departments — marketing, media, operations, and strategy.

What are the risks you foresee with this ownership strategy?

AB: The first is reputational risk. As the team owner, you're liable for everything — performance, public perception, internal culture. Any scandal, performance slump, or management issue reflects directly on the brand. And in F1, with its intense media scrutiny, that's not a notional risk — it's all too real. Red Bull has handled it successfully, but it requires sound internal governance and long-term brand strategy. It's not for every company.

On a 1 to 5 scale, how strategically important is Red Bull Racing to Red Bull's worldwide brand equity, in your estimation?

AB: Five. It's one of the clearest examples we have of a sports property being utilized as a long-term brand-building asset. And not even just in terms of visibility — in terms of meaning creation, identity reinforcement, and differentiation.

And how significant is real F1 performance within that blend?

AB: I'd say four. Winning certainly reinforces the narrative and accelerates brand impact. But even in seasons where they're not dominant, the alignment between the team's presence and the brand message remains strong. The platform is robust enough to carry equity even without consistent podiums — that's the mark of a well-integrated asset.