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CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES: DETERMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITY SPONSORSHIP EFFORTS AT PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

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CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES:
DETERMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITY
SPONSORSHIP EFFORTS AT PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of ^[11]_[SEP]
Master of Arts

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May, 2018

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP AND UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES:
DETERMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITY
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An Abstract of the Thesis by
Michaela Joines

A multi-phase study was completed to determine the effectiveness of corporate sponsorship efforts at Pittsburg State University. Pittsburg State engages in corporate sponsorship to partner with local and national companies, seeking to benefit both the university and its partners. The study sought to find factors that improve the effectiveness of such sponsorship efforts as determined by stakeholders' ability to recall sponsors, differences in attitudes toward national and local sponsors, and how brand attachment to the university or sponsoring brands effects perception of the sponsorship alliances. Phase One included interviews with stakeholder groups (students, faculty/staff, alumni, and community members) and functioned as the formative phase of research that informed a later quantitative study. Phase Two involved distribution of a survey to stakeholders to measure attachment, attitudes, and behavior. Results show that stakeholders demonstrate a select knowledge of sponsors, including national sponsors and apparel companies in addition to high-visibility local sponsors. Differences were found in the perception of benefits and community involvement associated with local and national sponsors. A relationship was found between perception of sponsor activity on campus and positive attitudes toward the company. Factors of fit between a sponsor and the university were also examined.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In what case is two better than one? Association in place of isolation? In the field of marketing, this question has become more prominent as practitioners explore the benefit of developing more ubiquitous, creative marketing strategies. Modern practitioners often counteract the isolating effects of advertising against the competition by intentionally associating with non-competing entities through co-branded products, sponsorship, celebrity endorsements, and similar pairings. The goal? To exponentially grow awareness, leverage creative marketing opportunities, and control the empirically-proven transfer of one brand's image to another through intentional brand associations. This marketing strategy has been defined as a brand alliance. By definition, a brand alliance is a short- or long-term association of two or more brands, products, or other distinctive proprietary (Rao & Ruekert, 1994). Previous research has studied the effects of brand alliances presented as co-branded products, celebrity endorsements, or sponsorships (Rao & Ruekert, 1994; Xiao & Wan, 2011; Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2011). Brand alliances can be created by associating two *products* together; however, a potentially more beneficial situation occurs when one (or both) brand(s) enjoys a complex relationship with the consumer as a member of an *institution* or *team*. The

following study attempts to further understand the associative benefit of brand alliances with one of the most plentiful brandable institutions in the United States: Universities.

Also functioning as brands in their own right, universities offer companies unique alliance opportunities. The holistic nature of the university rivals sports teams in terms of member identification; not only do universities provide an opportunity to engage in sports fandom, they are often directly tied to an individual's career and education, a distinct life stage (college student), and even residency and employment. Identification as a student, faculty, alumnus, or fan engenders a sense of belonging with a university beyond that of a branded product or service. Therefore, companies may benefit from brand alliances with universities in ways that cannot be achieved through brand alliances with other products or services.

Of importance to this study is the dual role of a university as both a brand and a sponsored object. Differentiating the university's unique purpose, prestige, traditions, and core values is accomplished by developing and promoting the university as a brand. The University of California illustrates this concept in their explanation of "The UC Brand:"

UC is not just a university, contributing educated graduates to California, but a place in perpetual motion, igniting the potential of California and its citizens through its research, excellence and scale. How can UC's brand embody all these attributes? It's the tone, attitude and actions of the institution, both internally and externally. The brand is made visible through every word, image and gesture... together, creating a recognizable "UC vocabulary" (University of California, 2017).

Universities are also the recipients of sponsorship through sponsored events, contracts, scholarships, and donations. On-campus sponsorship strategies - branded apparel, signage, establishing internship programs, and scholarships made in a sponsor's name - showcase the breadth of available commercial potential for both universities as the object of sponsorship and for companies providing sponsorship.

Highlighting specific opportunities for sponsorship, university sports teams have been considered one of the most lucrative sponsorship opportunities in terms of exposure and potential revenue since the 1970s (Gross, 2015; Soderman & Dolles, 2015). Sports apparel company Adidas holds exclusive footwear, apparel and/or accessory contracts with 94 NCAA athletic programs as of 2017 (Adidas, 2017). The University of Kansas holds one of the largest contracts with Adidas, a 14-year, \$191 million contract that runs through 2031 (Adidas, 2017; Tait, 2017). Also at the University of Kansas, the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation awards a \$500-1,000 Coca-Cola Scholarship, associating the company with funding educational opportunities. Pittsburg State University gives exclusive "pouring rights" to Coca-Cola in all fountain dispensers in retail settings, campus vending machines and distribution at all athletic events as part of a 10-year, \$1 million contract with the company (Pittsburg State University, 2017).

How brands choose to leverage sponsorship in alliances with universities is motivated by the commercial benefit these institutions can provide. Of interest to understanding the uniqueness of brand alliances involving universities is the distinct relationship consumers have with the university. These target consumer groups include, most immediately, current students, faculty, and staff of the university; additionally, individuals not directly affiliated with the university as on-campus students, faculty, or

staff, but who perceive some connection to the university and are aware of current events, issues, and points of discussion as they are relevant to their interests (Wear, Heere, & Clopton, 2016). The first target group - those on-campus individuals - are immersed in the campus climate on a daily basis and cultivate a sense of identity through belonging to an identifiable culture/group (as discussed below). Also, they are more frequently exposed to sponsorships displayed at events, scholarship funding, and university merchandise. The second target group includes individuals who feel connected to the university despite not attending classes or gaining employment from it. Alumni, donors, sports fans, parents of students, and surrounding community members make up this category of individuals who may be influenced by a university's association to brands through media exposure to "official outfitters" and sponsors (Wear, Heere, & Clopton, 2016).

Both target groups identify themselves as members of an in-group. Members of a group can define their self-concept from a sense of belonging to a university. Research has shown that students report a high sense of community associated with the university, engaging in community building activities - watching sports, joining organizations and clubs, and living on campus - in order to develop a psychological sense of belonging (Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1996; Clopton, 2009). Esteem for the university - the prestige associated with the quality of education and success of the sports and educational teams - also influences whether students, faculty, and staff choose to identify with it: "people want to strengthen and announce their associations with institutions that they value and they know that others esteem" (Toma, 2003).

Brands looking to influence consumers through brand alliances should consider the benefit of partnering with universities given the role they play in fostering a sense of identity within a group. Universities in the United States strongly promote an overall culture and sense of belonging to unify student bodies, retain connections to alumni, and extend their presence into surrounding communities and distant locations where alumni reside. This cultivation of a sense of belonging can lead to a level of influence over in-groupers' consumer behavior. The efforts made by universities to engender a sense of belonging can be leveraged by sponsors, who can tap into the commercial potential of building and maintaining ties with in-groupers.

This study will address how companies and universities can effectively leverage brand alliances to access and harness the commercial potential of sponsorship. The aim is to understand: (1) how a university can offer the best experience for partnered brands, and (2) what factors universities should consider when choosing to enter an alliance with a company. Several specific factors that influence the effectiveness university events and campaign sponsorship will be studied, including (a) the benefits of local brands versus national brands, (b) activation strategies that leverage a sponsorship into a multi-faceted on-campus presence, and (c) the effect of attachment on attitude and purchase intent associated with university sponsors.

The following literature review will first discuss theoretical perspectives pertaining to the psychological image transfer between two associated objects: the associative network memory model and congruity theory. Brand alliance will then be defined, including the concepts of brand attitude and brand image, attitude change that occurs when multiple brands are associated with each other, brand attachment, and a

consumer's simultaneous identification in multiple brand communities. Finally, the specific brand alliance strategy of sponsorship will be discussed. This section will include a review of current sponsorship practices and spending in North American markets and universities, differentiating sponsorship from advertising, a discussion of image transfer as seen in sponsorship settings, the role of congruence in improving the effectiveness of sponsorship engagement, and activation as a way to activate sponsorship throughout available commercial opportunities.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives on Brand Alliances

Associative Network Memory Model

The associative network memory model is used in marketing research to explain consumer memory structure (Till & Nowak, 2000). The model organizes human memory into a network of various nodes (pieces of information) connected by associated links (Anderson, 1976; Till & Shimp, 1998). Nodes include pieces of information pertaining to people, objects, or events that have been organized from external sources or internally held attitudes. Nodes function as potential sources of association (Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2009) and can be semantic (straightforward) or affective (emotional) in meaning. For example, a university and a company function as independent semantic nodes, initially unconnected, that can become associated through sponsorship or endorsement. An affective node could include “happiness,” and would include all objects and memories associated with the emotion of “happy.” This could include the feeling of attending a university football game or drinking a bottle of Coca-Cola.

The association process begins through sponsorship, endorsement, or other forms of brand alliances and leads to the development and organization of links in a person’s memory; “Thus, when a consumer thinks of a celebrity endorser, they may automatically

consider the endorsed brand and vice versa” (Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2009, p. 884). Networks can vary in density, which affects the strength of the associative links. Narrow, dense networks exhibit strong links unique to the association, and which are also closely related to other nodes. Social networking sites are an example of a narrow, dense network, where nodes of information (friends and liked events or pages) are densely associated. Broad, loose networks are associated with weaker associations that are interchangeable or not clearly defined (Lawyer, 2015). Centrality of nodes refers to the organization and evaluation process of ranking the most influential nodes in a set of associations. High centrality is associated with high salience and retrievability of the associated link (Johnson, 2014).

Associative sets are all preexisting links that have been meaningfully associated with an object, and which has been expanded over time into a web of direct and indirect associations. Consider the University of Florida; a person’s association set for this university may include sports-related links, such as “football,” “Tim Tebow,” “SEC,” “Gatorade,” “Nike,” and “ESPN.” Depending on the individual, other associations may be more or less salient, such as “education,” “Gainesville,” or “business.” Associations form with repeated exposure (Till and Shimp, 1998); therefore, what may be most easily associated with the University of Florida is athletics (which has been repeatedly enforced through televised sports events). However, a student of the university may find the association to education more salient, because they are exposed to this association on a daily basis.

Once the association process has occurred in an individual’s memory structure, the person begins to consider the congruity of attitudes towards two entities as they relate

to each other in order to build a meaningful structure of associations and their related attitudes. Consequently, the associative network memory model explains the process preceding attitude change that may result from brand associations. As brands become associated in a consumer's mind, meaning, images, and attitudes relating to one brand can be transferred to the other, affecting credibility, brand equity, and perceived brand quality (Spry, Pappu, Cornwell, 2009; Rao & Ruekert 1994). Congruity theory can predict attitude change that occurs from the transfer of meaning.

Congruity Theory

Congruity theory is considered by brand alliance researchers to be the most instructive theory of cognitive consistency for understanding image transfer caused by changing attitudes (Gross, 2015). As a theory of cognitive consistency, Osgood and Tannenbaum's (1955) congruity theory embraces the concept of cognitive balance: "In this simplest of states in which human thinking operates, sources we like should always sponsor ideas we like and denounce ideas we are against, and vice versa" (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955, p. 44). The desire for balance also suggests a feeling of discomfort when two conflicting but associated attitudes, values, or opinions are held at the same time (e.g. cognitive dissonance theory). Therefore, individuals will seek to reduce discomfort by altering attitudes and actions, disassociating two opinions, or avoiding the dissonance.

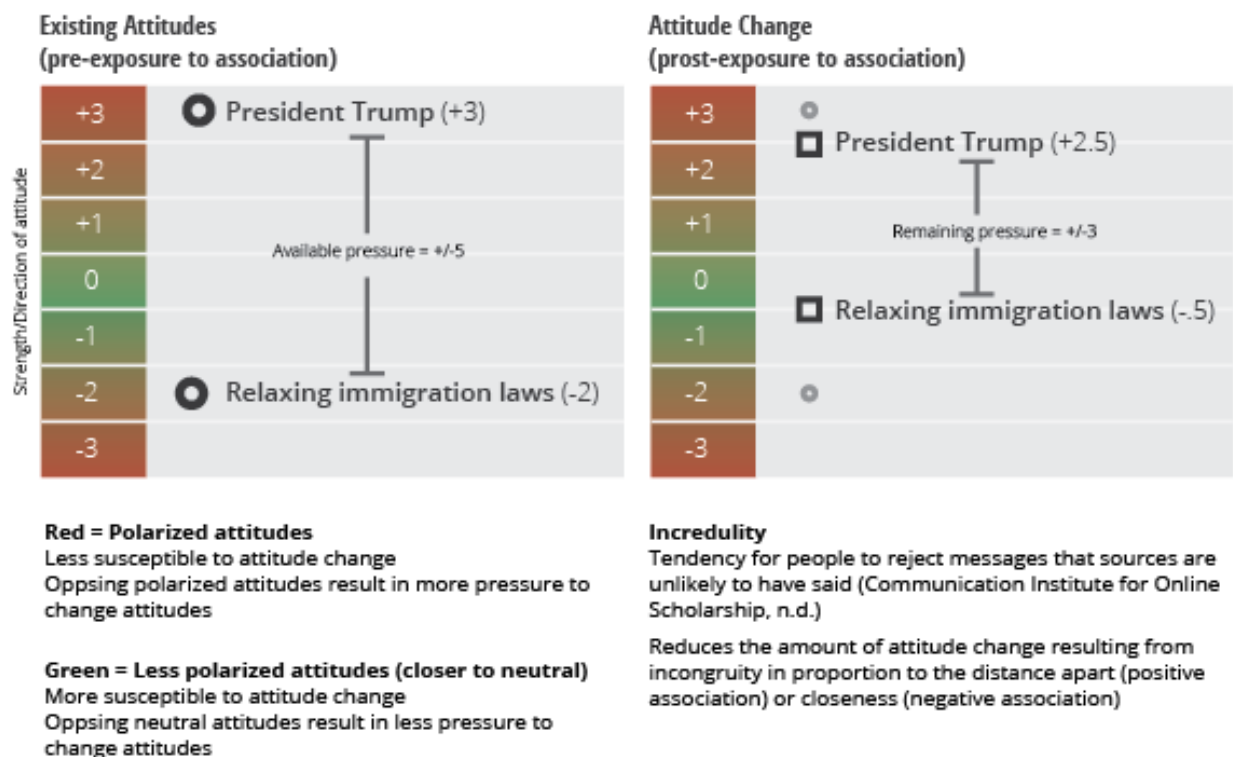
Unique among cognitive consistency theories, congruity theory quantifies the direction and degree of existing attitudes toward a message source (S) and a concept (C) and the available pressure of attitude change based on how polarized or neutral the attitudes are. Attitudes are measured on a 7-point scale from strongly favorable (+3) to

strongly unfavorable (-3), with zero being “neutral.” Assertions (which are made by a message source) follow a similar scale from positive and associative (+3) to negative and dissociative (-3) (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). Incongruity in attitudes held toward the message source and the concept creates pressure to change attitudes towards a point of “maximum congruence,” where the strength and direction for each attitude is identical. Available pressure is limited to the difference, in attitude scale units, between the existing attitudes. The highest available pressure is +/- 6, when comparing two attitudes at maximum positive and negative strengths (one +3, one -3 attitude). More pressure results from the attitudes being more polar. More neutral attitudes result in lower pressure to change attitudes because less incongruity is felt.

As an example, if President Trump (who you hold in high favor, +3) made a positive assertion about relaxing immigration laws (which you hold in medium-low favor, -2), the total pressure toward congruity would be -5 for President Trump and +5 for immigration law. This pressure is higher than if President Trump (+3) made a positive assertion about tax cuts (which you hold a low, but positive attitude toward, +1), which would involve pressure of only -2 (Trump) or +2 (tax cuts). Attitude change will always occur in the direction of increased congruity within the existing frame of reference (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). Congruity theory posits that both attitudes in question can change simultaneously (Gross, 2015). However, attitudes do not change equally. Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) hypothesize that more extreme attitudes are less susceptible to change, while “relatively *less* polarized objects of judgment, when associated with relatively more polarized objects of judgment, absorb proportionately *greater* amounts of the pressure toward congruity, and consequently change more”

(Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955, p. 46). In the example of Trump and relaxed immigration laws, congruity theory would predict that, after correcting for incredulity, the +3 attitude toward Trump would be reduced by -0.5, resulting in an obtained attitude of +2.5. Immigration law (-2) would be increased by +1.5, resulting in an obtained attitude of -0.5 (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). In this example, attitude change did not result in perfect cognitive congruity (two identical attitudes); but, the pressure of towards congruity has been reduced. Figure 1 illustrates this attitude change and shows existing attitudes compared to the strength and direction of the post-exposure attitudes. As Gross (2015) clarifies, if Trump continued to positively associate himself with relaxed immigration laws, the gradual attitude change process is hypothesized to continue until a congruent state is reached.

Figure I - Congruity Theory



Applying congruity theory to brand alliances found through sponsorship, an “assertion” occurs when partnered objects (and event and a sponsor, co-sponsoring brands, a university and official sponsors) become associated in the individual’s mind. The assertion made between partnered entities is always positive (entities would not pair together in a negative, dissociative partnership) and implicit (compared to an explicit assertion by a person) based on their intentional association (Gross, 2015). Simultaneous attitude change, or image transfer, has been found in brand alliances, sponsorship environments, and between co-sponsors of the same object (Simonin & Ruth, 1998; Carrillat, Harris, & Lafferty, 2010; Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2009; Rao & Ruekert 1994).

Brand Alliances

A brand alliance is a short- or long-term association of two or more brands, products, or other distinctive proprietary (Rao & Ruekert, 1994). Brand alliances have been additionally defined in a broad sense as all instances in which “two or more brand names are presented jointly to the consumer” (Rao & Ruekert, 1999, p. 259). Given this broad definition, brand alliances include, but are not limited to:

Component products (e.g. Apple computers with Intel hardware) (Xiao & Wan, 2011)

Celebrity endorsements (e.g. football player Troy Polamalu and Head and Shoulders shampoo) (Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2009)

Joint sales promotions (e.g. earn American Airlines flight tickets when you use MasterCard) (Rao & Ruekert, 1999)

Sponsorship (e.g. Gatorade as an official sponsor of the National Football League) (Cornwell, 2005).

Alliances have been found to impact attitudes held toward each brand in the alliance (Simonin & Ruth, 1998), and are influenced by perceptions of brand and product fit (Norman, 2017; Simonin & Ruth, 1998). Pertinent to a discussion of brand alliances is the concept of brand attachment and an individual's simultaneous membership in multiple brand communities, which engenders a level of belongingness to a brand as a community of consumers.

Brand Attitude and Brand Image

Brand attitude is defined as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). The concept is closely related to brand image, the overall, subjective picture of a brand including symbolic and utilitarian associations linked to the brand. While researchers have debated whether brand image and attitude are distinguishable from one another, this research adopts the idea of two distinct constructs, with image being the multidimensional structure underlying attitude, and attitude being a rough aggregation of disposition toward an object represented by a one-dimensional scale (Gross, 2015). An attitude is built upon judgments formed as consumers receive, interpret, and evaluate information about an object. (Simonin & Ruth, 1998). Therefore, when consumers receive information about a brand through direct experience, advertising, and word of mouth, they begin to interpret and evaluate the brand's value and symbolic meaning. This forms judgments of a brand along a positive-negative spectrum, which are objective in nature (Park et al., 2010), but contribute to the subjective overall picture of brand image.

Effect of Brand Alliance Evaluation on Attitudes - Spillover Effects, Perceptions of Brand and Product Fit

Brand alliances have been found to influence attitudes toward individual brands of the alliance. Simonin and Ruth (1998) termed this phenomenon “spillover effect,” and found that (1) attitudes towards the alliance influenced attitudes towards each brand individually, and (2) pre-existing attitudes toward the component brands influenced attitudes toward the alliance. Additionally, spillover effects are mediated by the consumer’s familiarity with the brand; i.e., less familiar brands contributed less to the formation of an attitude towards the alliance. Therefore, more familiar brands exerted a stronger effect on brand attitudes *towards* the alliance. However, less familiar brands experienced stronger spillover effects *from* the alliance. Lesser brands had more to gain from an alliance in terms of attitude formation among consumers (Simonin & Ruth, 1998).

“Brand fit” and “product fit” have been concurrently studied as a component of consumer attitudes toward brand alliances. Both considerations of “fit” have been found to significantly affect attitudes toward the alliance (Simonin & Ruth, 1998). Product fit is the result of the consumer process of finding the most concrete category shared by brands in an alliance (Pittsburg State University (public university) + Adidas (sports apparel company) = “collegiate sports team”). Comparatively, brand fit relies on abstract images rather than attributes: “Associations are likely to be meaning-oriented and symbolic rather than strictly functional as are features” (Norman, 2017, p. 8). The resulting category can be built around a concept:

As a means of illustrating, consider the brands Mercedes Benz and Rolex. On a product feature basis, these brands seem to share little in common, even when a higher-order category is sought. However, both of these brands are associated with a very exclusive high-status concept... the concepts are consistent resulting in a high level of brand fit (Norman, 2017, p. 8).

Marketing Implications

Considering these findings in light of marketing strategies, companies can mindfully consider how brand alliances can be effectively used to foster strong, positive attitudes among consumers. Following Simonin and Ruth's (1998) results, two familiar brands can engage in joint marketing that will lead to relatively equal contribution to the alliance. If pre-existing brand attitudes are positive, and consumers perceive a high level of brand and product fit, the association of the two brands can contribute additional positive attitudes toward each brand as a component and as a unified alliance. Consider Apple and Nike, two recognizable brands in the U.S. market. As an alliance, these brands enjoy a high level of brand fit (youthful, mobile, perceived to be at the forefront of technological advancement). Positive attitudes held toward one brand in this alliance will contribute to additional positive attitudes towards the other.

An unfamiliar brand can benefit from spillover of attitudes from partnering with a well-known brand, especially when the two brands show a high level of product and brand fit. As an example, a brand alliance between Coca-Cola and NutraSweet can influence attitudes toward both brands despite unequal familiarity among consumers. Since brand alliances have also been found to reinforce perceived quality and convey information about enhanced product features (Rao & Ruekert 1994), NutraSweet, lacking

in familiarity, may receive positive attitude spillover from being perceived as having enough quality to partner with an iconic brand. Coca-Cola can benefit from marketing the co-branded product as an enhanced product, drawing on NutraSweet's specialization as a sweetener.

What is lacking in research of brand attitude spillover is the influence of a brand's level of regional attachment or national reach. Brands bound to a specific geographic location (such as a university, city, or sports team) may develop a stronger brand attitude (attachment) within the area of origin than a national brand.

Brand Attachment

Moving further into consumer-brand relationships, the concept brand attachment can explain connections between consumers and brands that extends beyond the objective measure of brand attitude. Brand attachment is defined as "the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self" (Park et al., 2010, p. 2). Recent research has expanded the concept into three dimensions: (1) brand-self connection: the cognitive and emotional connection between the brand and the self, (2) brand prominence: the extent to which the attachment is foremost in the consumer's mind, and (3) emotion: positive affect toward a brand (Park et al., 2010; Japutra, Ekinci, & Simkin, 2014).

Japutra, Ekinci, and Simkin (2014) found 6 determinants of brand attachment: (1) self-congruity, (2) experience, (3) responsiveness, (4) perceived quality, (5) reputation, and (6) trust. These drivers include concepts that relate to a person's familiarity with a brand and the brand's responsiveness (e.g. the ability to satisfy psychological needs of autonomy, closeness with others, herein referred to as relatedness), and competence (Thomson, 2006).

The determinants of a consumer's brand attachment result in a level of brand attachment which influences consumer behavior. Brand attachment has been found to influence behavior such as brand loyalty, intention to recommend, purchase, and revisit a brand, resilience to negative information, and acts of defending the brand (Japutra, Ekinci, & Simkin, 2014). Important to the prior discussion of brand attitude, Park et al. (2010) found that brand attitude strength did not predict actual consumer purchase behavior, while brand attachment was found to predict actual consumer purchase behavior. Additionally, brand attachment leads to consumer investment of their own resources in order to maintain the relationship. These include social (defending the brand to others), financial (willingness to pay a higher price), and time (involvement in brand communities and brand promotion) resources. Summarily,

The more strongly consumers are attached to a brand, the more willing they are... to express an intent to engage in difficult behaviors - those that require investments of time, money, energy, and reputation - to maintain (or deepen) a brand relationship (Park et al., 2010, p. 14).

Park et al. (2010) studied an university as an example of a brand that would garner brand attachment, and thereby correlate to expected behaviors. The case of an individual's attachment to a university includes investment of social, financial, and time resources. Individuals may wear clothing showing the university's name, becoming an implied spokesperson (social). Individuals may also defend the university's prestige, success, and decisions in conversation with others. Financially, the individual may choose to donate to a university, purchase tickets to events, or pay a higher tuition. Time investments may include attending social events (sports games, alumni reunions), charity

events, and reading press releases, emails, and other media to remain connected with campus activities and decisions. The type of resources invested may be dependent on nature of the stakeholder's relationship to the university (student, faculty, alumnus, donor, parent, etc).

Simultaneous Brand Community Identification

To this point, brand alliances have been discussed in terms of consumer attitudes toward each component brand and the concept of evaluating a brand alliance based on brand and product fit. Brand attachment has also been considered only in terms of a consumer's attachment to one brand. Additional research has found this isolated consideration of brands and brand alliances to be incomplete, and has proposed the concept of consumer identification within interplaying brand communities. This field of research is relevant to brand alliances because studies have suggested that brand communities do not exist within a vacuum, but that a consumer's identification with one brand community has an effect on concurrent brand communities that consumer identifies with (Heere et al., 2011). Individuals identifying with a university's brand community may also exist within the community of their city or state, favorite sports team(s), and product brands (technology, apparel, food and beverage). The extent to which separate brand communities interact will vary; however, it is possible that two brand communities could interact closely through sponsorship (sports apparel company as the official sponsor of a sports team; university contracts with beverage companies), the existence of one community within another (university within the geographic confines of a city and state), and the individual's use of one brand in proximity to another (using a brand of computer while attending a university).

Sponsorship Alliances

Sponsorship is defined as:

A business-oriented relationship between multiple sponsors and a sponsorship property (referred to collectively as “the sponsorship alliance”) that implies cash settlements, in-kind fees and/or services provided by the sponsors to their co-sponsors and/or to the property in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with the sponsorship alliance (Gross, 2015, p. 227).

Gross (2015, p. 36) identifies 5 accepted fields of sponsorship: (1) sports sponsorship, (2) culture sponsorship (visual arts, performing arts, music, literature, media, and culture care), (3) sponsorship for the social causes, (4) science sponsorship, (5) sponsorship for the environment/ecology sponsorship.

According to Gross (2015), the transfer of attitudes and associations through sponsorship properties (e.g. universities) to sponsors remains a central field of investigation with interest to practitioners and market researchers. Sponsorship is conceptually similar to a brand alliance as both involve the categorization of associating two or more unrelated brands together (Carrillat, Harris, & Lafferty, 2010). Most sponsorships have trading objectives and communication objectives (Meenaghan, 1991, cited in Jalleh et al., 2002). Trading objectives mainly refer to merchandising rights at the sponsored locations (e.g. university events). Communication objectives include improving brand awareness and brand attitude (Jalleh et al., 2002). Sponsorship can occur between a sponsored object and one sponsor (sole sponsorship) or a sponsored object and multiple simultaneous sponsors (co-sponsorship). Additionally, sponsorship

can be tiered in a hierarchy from top-level to low-level sponsors, related to the amount paid to the sponsored entity and amount of promotion opportunities offered in return.

The following discussion of sponsorship as a brand alliance strategy will analyze the practice as a growing practice in large sports and entertainment markets, as well as current practices in university sponsorship; how sponsorship differs from advertising; image transfer that occurs between co-sponsors; the role of activation in increasing the effectiveness of sponsorship; and suggested best practices for companies and universities looking to enter into a sponsorship alliance.

Sponsorship Spending in Current North American Markets and Universities

Global sponsorship consulting agency ESP Properties (formerly International Events Group) provides evidence of the prevalent use of sponsorship in accessible markets through current revenue totals in sports, culture, and cause markets. Overall, North American sponsorship spending reached \$22.3 billion in 2016 at a growth of 4.2% over 2015 spending. Growth rates have sat consistently at 4.1 to 4.2% for North American sponsorship spending since 2013 (ESP, 2017). Sports markets continue to dominate the market since its exponential growth in the 1980s (Gross, 2015, p. 24), sitting at nearly 70% of total spending across all fields of sponsorship nationwide in 2016 (ESP, 2017). Sitting at around 10% of overall spending in 2016, entertainment sponsorship (such as sponsorship of music tours, festivals, and venues) brought in \$2.22 billion (ESP, 2017).

Pertaining to universities, overall spending on event, sport, and education sponsorship is difficult to attain given the vast number and lack of uniformity in possible sponsorship opportunities. However, specific examples follow many of the same patterns

of spending in the overall North American market and can highlight the commercial potential of university sponsorship. Universities often categorize sponsorship opportunities into academic and entertainment events, academic programs, experiential learning such as competition teams, scholarships, sports, and community service (Bryant University, 2017). Highlighting the most lucrative of these categories, sports teams are often a primary opportunity for sponsorship through college apparel contracts. Outlined in these contracts is the exclusive use of one brand's footwear, uniforms, apparel and accessories usually throughout all men's and women's official athletic teams in addition to promotional opportunities at events. Some of the most valuable sports apparel alliances include UCLA and Under Armor, a \$280 million, 15-year contract including marketing fees, rights to exclusive use for all athletic teams, supply of clothing, shoes, and equipment, and upgrades to sports facilities (Wharton, 2016), and Ohio State University and Nike, a \$252 million, 15-year contract including \$112 million in product and at least \$103 million in cash, including royalty income (Cohen & Germano, 2016). Other high-value sponsorship opportunities can include scholarships (i.e. Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation awards a \$500-1,000 Coca-Cola Scholarship yearly at the University of Kansas) and beverage contracts (i.e. Pittsburg State University's \$1 million, 10-year contract with Coca-Cola giving the company exclusive rights to product in all fountain dispensers in retail settings, campus vending machines and distribution at athletic events) (Pittsburg State University, 2017).

Differentiating Sponsorship from Advertising

From a managerial perspective, Gross (2015) identifies 5 factors differentiating sponsorship from advertising including (1) the sponsorship message is strongly tied to the

medium, and is to some degree dependent on the sponsored object's ability to convey messages intended by the sponsor, (2) the sponsor does not have full control over message content, timing or method of delivery; it is a less controllable or direct method of promotion, (3) sponsorship's impact occurs in the medium- to long-term, compared to a more short-term effect with advertising, (4) the sponsored object (event, university, etc.) is the beneficiary of fees paid for access to sponsorship opportunities instead of a media outlet, (5) additional expenditures are necessary to activate the sponsorship (see Activation subsection): "If the brand cannot afford to spend to communicate its sponsorship, then the brand cannot afford sponsorship at all" (Crimmins & Horn, 1996, p. 16). Additionally, sponsorship is perceived by consumers to be more subtle, less coercive, secondary to the primary sponsored object, and involving less obvious commercial intent than advertisements (Meenaghan, 2001).

Event/Sponsor Congruence

An expansion of brand and product fit found in brand alliances, sponsorship alliances are evaluated by individuals on a perceived level of congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored object. The level of congruence has been found to affect thoughts and attitudes towards the sponsor (Becker-Olsen & Simmons, 2002, Pracejus & Olsen, 2004), behavioral responses (Becker-Olsen & Simmons, 2002), recall (Cornwell et al., 2003), and attribution of altruistic motives and sponsor credibility (Rifon et al., 2004). Overall, the more congruent the sponsor with the sponsored object in terms of fit, relatedness, and similarity, the more positively the alliance is judged and the more easily it is recalled (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005). The Professional Bull Riders association is one such example of congruity in sponsors; PBR holds Ford, Wrangler, Jack Daniels,

Ariat, Bass Pro Shops, Monster Energy, and Matador Jerky as national sponsors, showing congruence through similarity of personality (tough, hard-working, exciting) and ability to relate to the PBR as an entity (trucks, jeans, boots, and drinks fit into the socially constructed concept of “Western”) (Professional Bull Riders, 2017).

Co-Sponsor Image Transfer

An additional association of brands has been found to occur through image transfer between brands co-sponsoring the same event. Carrillat, Harris, and Lafferty (2010) term this phenomenon “concurrent sponsorship side effect.” Concurrent sponsorship is conceptually similar to a brand alliance because both cases involve (1) categorization based on object similarity and (2) the association of symbols and meanings of two or more unrelated brands together (Carrillat, Harris, & Lafferty, 2010).

Independent of an event’s image transfer to its sponsors, image transfer occurs between co-sponsoring brands of the same event. Co-sponsorship increases image congruity between similar brands and increases image incongruity in dissimilar brands (Carrillat, Harris, & Lafferty, 2010). Familiarity with the brand moderates this process; when brands were familiar to the viewer, congruity increased or decreased, respectively. When brands were unfamiliar, brand personalities were not salient enough for viewers to categorize them as contrasting (incongruent) against each other.

Gross (2015) found a direct transfer of large components of co-sponsoring brands’ personalities, and posited co-sponsoring brands should “collectively and pre-emptively define as to which particular associations each brand is destined to benefit from the paired brand” (p. 225). To manage the image transfer process, Gross (2015) suggests co-sponsoring brands intentionally control and utilize their association when

jointly presented in the event's promotional material and official memorabilia, and even initiate their own campaign independent of the event.

Activation

Activation refers to putting the sponsorship into action (Soderman & Dolles, 2015) through leveraging creative avenues of advertising associated with an event. Activation can include on-site signage, local media advertising, sweepstakes and merchandise giveaways, on-site promotions, and sponsored "locations" at events, in addition to university-specific activation such as internship and scholarship programs. (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005; Soderman & Dolles, 2015). Jalleh et al. (2002) found that increased activation improved sponsor awareness and attitude. Similar findings were presented by Quester and Thompson (2001), who studied three companies sponsoring the same event but utilizing different levels of activation. Leveraging sponsorship into a wider marketing program through advertising, public relations, and sales promotions improved attitude change, awareness at sponsorship-heavy events, and the likelihood for future consumer interaction with the sponsor. Quester and Thompson (2001) posit that audiences see high-activation sponsors as "facilitators" of events, rather than self-serving and intrusive advertisers.

ESP Properties (2017) outlines current activation strategies in sports sponsorship to build an understanding of popular modes of leveraging sponsorship dollars. Sponsors engaged in the 2017-2018 National Basketball Association Season and their planned activation strategies include:

Jack Daniel's: Online digital sweepstakes for all-expenses paid trip to NBA All-Star 2018, "promoted digitally and through NBA-themed print materials (e.g., coasters,

menu inserts, recipe cards, posters, window clings) in key Jack Daniel's on-premise (e.g., bars, restaurants) and off-premise (e.g., liquor stores, grocery stores) accounts throughout the country”.

Kia: The “official automotive partner across the NBA, WNBA, and NBA G League; maintaining ownership with key on-court platforms, including Kia NBA Performance Awards and Kia NBA All-Star MVP... title partner of Kia NBA Tip-Off - with inclusion in broadcast, digital and social [platforms]... Season-long #KiaWhoYaGot sweepstakes will resume asking fans to predict which team will win key match-ups on NBA social channels during Kia NBA Tip-Off”.

State Farm Insurance: State Farm Assist Tracker on NBA.com: “Every assist on the court will trigger an assist off the court through a corresponding donation from State Farm and NBA, driving local assists in communities around the country” (ESP, 2017).

Activation of university sponsorship could include activation strategies. Sponsors may choose to promote the alliance through merchandise and materials, such as giveaway t-shirts, frisbees, coasters and koozies, and print and digital signage. They may sponsor half-time promotions and games at sporting events, or specific locations at entertainment events (an exclusive “fan-zone” or VIP section). Sponsors could also engage in sponsorship by donating funds to local charities based on a team's performance.

Best Practices in Sponsorship

Practitioners developing sponsorship strategies have suggested best practices to best harness the commercial potential of university sponsorships. Such practices have also been suggested by market researchers. Kim, Ko, and James (2011), found that consumers who perceive a higher level of relationship quality with a sport property are

more likely to believe the sponsors of the entity are sincere, and will subsequently develop a more positive attitude and greater purchase intention. Therefore,

Firms should partner with sport teams that maintain good relationships with their fans, relationships that are characterized by trust, commitment, self-connection, and reciprocity. In order to maximize sponsorship effectiveness... a sponsor strive to be seen as genuinely concerned about the sport, team, and fans (Kim, Ko, & James, 2011, p. 574).

Universities seeking sponsorship have also outlined guidelines for engaging in the marketing strategy. The University of Bristol (UK) includes the following principles for soliciting sponsorship:

- “Companies’ support should add significant benefit to an existing University message or campaign.”
- “Sponsorship should be of activities or events, not of individual students or staff, lest those individuals appear to be placed under an obligation to the sponsor.”
- “Sponsorship should not dilute the department or society’s campaign or message.”
- “The department or society should determine whether the sponsor could bring adverse publicity to the sponsored activity or the University more generally.”
- “The department or society or University must not, and must not appear to, unduly endorse the sponsoring company or its products.”
- “Applicants must put procedures in place to ensure that sponsors do not receive returns that are greater than is proper and proportionate and that any sponsorship agreement is able to withstand public scrutiny. The department or society should

set out what benefit is reasonable for the sponsors to expect” (University of Bristol, n.d.).

Overall, university guidelines outline limits on potentially negative alliances and focuses on sponsorship benefit to existing university messages or campaigns. Similar guidelines are seen throughout U.S. universities when initiating sponsorship alliances for financial and brand equity benefits.

Research Questions

After examining the marketing strategy of brand alliances through university sponsorship, the following research questions can be proposed:

RQ1: What sponsors of PSU can stakeholders (students, faculty and staff, alumni, and community members) most readily recall?

Preliminary research is needed to gauge stakeholder knowledge of sponsorship efforts at universities. What percentage of the all sponsors are stakeholders able to recall? Where are most of these sponsors recognized?

RQ2: Does a sponsor's perceived local presence or national reach affect stakeholders' perception of the benefits of the sponsorship?

Exploratory research on the effect of a brand's local attachment versus national reach as a factor influencing attitudes. When considering the city or region in which a university is found, local brands unique to the region may cultivate a stronger and more positive brand attachment among stakeholders of a university than a national brand. What is the effect of a university partnering with a local brand? Additionally, a national brand?

RQ3: How does sponsorship affect future purchasing decisions?

One goal of sponsorship as a marketing strategy is to improve sales by increasing a brand's recognition among a loyal fan base. Exploratory research is needed to understand how sponsorship influences purchasing decisions. To what extent can sponsorship lead to changes in purchasing behavior, and what are other factors that simultaneously affect consumer behavior?

RQ4: What are factors of university/sponsor congruence as perceived by university stakeholders?

Sponsorship alliances are evaluated by individuals on a perceived level of congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored object. Overall, the more congruent the sponsor with the sponsored object in terms of fit, relatedness, and similarity, the more positively the alliance is judged and the more easily it is recalled. Research is needed on what factors build a sense of congruity between a university and its sponsors.

H1: University stakeholders will report a stronger attachment to national brands than to local brands.

National brands are ubiquitous in nature; they penetrate local communities, are equally present when an individual travels outside their community of residence, and have a strong media presence. Comparatively, local brands are limited in their geographic reach and media presence. Therefore, it is likely that individuals will report a stronger attachment to national brands they have adopted over time as they have developed buying habits based on preference and widespread availability.

H2: University stakeholders will rate the community involvement of local sponsors higher than national sponsors.

While the previously mentioned geographic confinement of local companies may limit the amount attachment individuals report, this factor may work to the benefit of local sponsors in terms of stakeholder-reported corporate community involvement. Local sponsors will be seen as allies concerned with the social and economic health of the surrounding community, fostering a sense of two-way support between entities in the same community. Stakeholders may perceive national sponsors as large, faceless corporations that provide financial support to the university, but fail to benefit the surrounding community.

H3: As a stakeholder's reported attachment with the university increases, positive attitudes toward a sponsor will increase.

Students, faculty and staff, and alumni of a university will demonstrate a level of attachment to the university. This sense of attachment may influence their attitudes toward sponsors who demonstrate a committed partnership to the university.

Stakeholders may positively evaluate sponsorship as support of a university that they feel personally connected to.

H4: Increased recognition of on-campus activity will result in increased positive attitudes toward university sponsors.

Activation strategies have been shown to improved sponsor awareness and attitude. This phenomenon will be tested in the case of sponsor activity on campus, such as signage, promotions at sports events, internship programs, scholarships, and facility naming rights.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Pittsburg State University

This study will use Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas to examine benefits to companies and universities engaged in sponsorship. Although research findings will be specific to Pittsburg State University's culture, fan base, and surrounding community, the findings and interpretation resulting from this study will be useful for expanding the existing body of literature on factors of sponsorship effectiveness. Specifically, the following study adds to the understanding of effectively sponsoring an institution or team, a complex brand community in which members develop a sense of belonging.

University Demographics

Pittsburg State University is a public university in Kansas with a total enrollment of 7,102 in August 2016 (Pittsburg State University, 2016). The city of Pittsburg is the largest city in Crawford County, Kansas at 20,366 in 2017 (United States Census Bureau, 2017). The university attracts high student populations from Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, including the Kansas City metropolitan area and nearby rural counties.

University Branding Efforts

According to the official Pittsburg State Identity Standards and Style Guide, the university actively engages in branding efforts to maintain their reputation, distinguish from competitors, unify their message, and represent the type of experience individuals can expect from the university (University Marketing and Communication, 2016).

Branding of Pittsburg State University includes identifying marks such as the Gorilla mascot and accompanying “Split-Face Gorilla” logo, crimson and gold official colors, stylized “Pittsburg State University” wordmark, university seal, and protected university names (e.g. “Pitt State,” “Gorilla Nation,” “PSU”). In addition to branding efforts identifying the university, Pittsburg State also heavily engages in branding that creates a sense of community among stakeholders. The phrase “Once a Gorilla, Always a Gorilla” appears in promotional videos, on social media, and on signage found around campus. Recent television advertisements also repeatedly use the phrase “You belong” when marketing to potential students. Overall, a unified style and message has been created in branding Pittsburg State University as a whole. Research was conducted to gather information about current sponsorship practices in three areas: campus-wide contracts, athletics, and scholarships.

Campus-Wide Contracts

Pittsburg State University holds a \$1 million, 10-year contract (running through 2027) with Coca-Cola that gives the beverage distributor exclusive “pouring rights” including fountain dispensers in retail settings, campus vending machines and distribution at all athletic events (Pittsburg State University, 2017). Pittsburg State University receives \$100,000 in income per year from Coca-Cola. This contract replaces

a past partnership with Pepsi, who retains a community presence through the PepsiCo Bottling Group in Pittsburgh. Of note, PepsiCo Bottling Group has existed as a locally owned facility in Pittsburgh since 1919. Prior research on brand attachment and brand communities indicates that Pittsburgh State University's change in partnership away from the locally-tied Pepsi may negatively impact the attitudes of certain stakeholder groups, particularly community residents.

The university also holds a food service contract with Sodexo Campus Services as the exclusive vender of beverages and food items served in on-campus buildings.

Athletics

Pittsburg State University competes as a NCAA Division II athletics program. Football enjoys the highest live attendance among athletic events, averaging 9,612 fans in five home games at the 7,950-seat Carnie Smith Stadium in 2016. This average home attendance ranks first among the 14-member Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association conference and fourth among all NCAA Division II schools (Pittsburg State University Athletics, 2017). Venues that provide sponsorship opportunities include Carnie Smith Stadium (football), John Lance Arena (basketball and volleyball), and the Gene Bicknell Sports Complex (baseball). Additional sponsorship is available on the PSU Athletics website. Sponsorship opportunities at the three venues and website include:

- Athletics Website: Drop-down Menu Sponsor; "News Powered By" Sponsor; Top Page Sponsor; Weather Sponsor; Live Web Stream Sponsor

- Carnie Smith Stadium (Football): Jungletron Advertisement; Gorilla Gameday Program; Gorilla Gameday Sponsorship; Tailgater of the Game; Educator of the Game
- John Lance Arena (Volleyball, Basketball): Scorer's Table Signage; Gameday Program Sponsor; In-Game Promotion Sponsor; Scorecard Sponsor
- Gene Bicknell Sports Complex (Baseball): Field Signage; Scoreboard Signage (Pittsburg State University Athletics, n.d.)

Representatives of Pittsburg State University Athletics report 79 total sponsors during the 2017-2018 academic year and associated athletic seasons (N. McArthur, personal communication, February 9, 2018). Sponsors include the following spotlight award sponsors, which include on-field recognition during football games: Spotlight Athlete: The Edge at Rouse; Educator of the Game: Pitsco Education; Tailgater of the Game: Ron's Supermarket. As displayed on the Pittsburg State University Athletics official website, sponsors displayed at the top of the webpage include Hampton Inn and Suites, Chili's, Holiday Inn Express, Comfort Inn and Suites, Parrot Head Liquor, Lamplighter Inn and Suites, and Equity Bank (Pittsburg State University Athletics, 2018). The webpage's weather report is sponsored by Four States Home Page.

Scholarships

A content analysis of Pittsburg State University's scholarship webpage reveals the university currently awards 51 scholarships in company's names in 13 major programs, plus three general scholarships available for students regardless of major (Pittsburg State University, n.d.). The College of Technology, including the Automotive Technology, School of Construction, and Engineering Technology, Graphics and Imaging

Technologies, Technology and Workforce Learning, and Technology Studies, awards the most scholarships associated with a commercial company. Within this college, the Automotive Technology degree program currently awards 12 scholarships in sponsors' names, the most of any single degree program. Sponsors in all departments include local and regional companies such as Crossland Construction, Pitsco Education, Via Christi Auxiliary members, Commerce Bank, Menghini Brothers Distributors, Inc., Chatters Restaurant and Bar, Community National Bank, and the Crimson Villas at Rouse. Additionally, national corporations such as Ford, Caterpillar, General Motors, AT&T, Farmers Insurance, and Toyota also award scholarships in the company's name.

CHAPTER IV

PHASE ONE – STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The remaining two-part study will address how companies and universities can most effectively leverage sponsorship to benefit from the commercial potential of the brand alliance. The mixed-method study included a first phase of qualitative interviews with students, faculty and staff, alumni, and community members associated with Pittsburg State University. The second phase included a quantitative survey informed by interview responses and distributed to the same stakeholder groups. All research methods were supported by resources of the Pittsburg State University Communication Research Lab. All methods were approved by the Pittsburg State University Internal Review Board prior to conducting research. The following methods, results, and discussion will outline Phase One, the interview phase of research. While an important use of the interviews was to guide development of the survey, the interviews also served to answer the four research questions previously proposed.

Methods

A purposeful convenience sample of eight participants was recruited for the first phase of data collection. Participants were selected based on their association to Pittsburg State University in order to ensure that responses were gathered from the four desired

stakeholder groups - students, faculty and staff, alumni, and community members. Participants were contacted face-to-face and online through email and Facebook Messenger to recruit their participation. Participants were informed that the interview would take approximately 20 minutes and would consist of questions related to sponsorship at Pittsburg State University. A definition of sponsorship was not provided to participants; however, during the interview the researcher fielded questions from participants about whether particular activities involving external companies could be classified as sponsorship. The activities in question included university-wide contracts with vendors, donations of money and equipment to departments, and aligning with the university in the form of student discounts on products, PSU-branded merchandise, and signage. The researcher confirmed that the beverage vendor contract with Coca-Cola was a form of sponsorship, in addition to donations of money and equipment and off-campus forms of sponsorship such as student discounts and signage supporting PSU. In addition to the verbal interview, each participant completed a brief written section of data collection which involved a primacy cue of brands most clearly associated with PSU. Prior to any questions or other prompt, the participants were asked to write down brands that they associated with the university for one minute. Transcriptions of each interview are included in the Appendix for review.

Of the eight participants, three identified as students, three as faculty/staff, and two as community members. As a note, these classifications did not exist exclusively from each other; for example, all community members and faculty were also alumni of the university and therefore simultaneously represented this stakeholder group. The interviews ranged in length from 15 minutes to 38 minutes, and all were completed face-

to-face in environments familiar to the participants (workplace offices, homes, and the university student center). Interviews were recorded and transcribed for later analysis. Demographic information for each participant and the setting in which their interview took place are as follows:

Interviewee 1 is a female Administrative Specialist in the College of Technology. She has worked at Pittsburg State University for the past 6.5 years. Interviewee 1 is not an alumnus of PSU. As an Administrative Specialist, she acts as a liaison to companies seeking to sponsor her department's golf tournaments, career fair, and scholarships.

Interviewee 2 is a male Associate Professor in the College of Technology who also identifies as the Director of a statewide Center for Advancement in his field. His association to PSU spans 42 years, and he is an alumnus of the university.

Interviewee 3 is a female community member, alumnus, and recruiter of PSU students as the Chief Executive Officer of a local marketing agency. She has been associated with PSU for the past 19 years.

Interviewee 4 is a male instructor in the College of Technology and alumnus of the university. His association to PSU spans 10 years. Interviewee 4 is the only participant who does not reside in Pittsburg or the immediate area, but instead commutes 40 minutes from out-of-state.

Interviewee 5 is a male student majoring in Communication. He has attended PSU for the past 3 years, and reports that his immediate family has strong ties to the university. Interviewee 5 is employed by the student-run university newspaper and the university-affiliated public radio station.

Interviewee 6 is a female student majoring in Plastics Engineering who is also employed as a student secretary in the College of Technology. She has attended PSU for 3.5 years and resides in Pittsburg, 7 hours from her hometown.

Interviewee 7 is a female community member, alumnus, and employer of PSU students. She owns a local small business that participates in sponsorship and community engagement activities with the university, and has been associated with the university for 17 years.

Interviewee 8 is a male student majoring in Communication. He participates heavily in student-run productions of PSU athletic events, and has been associated with the university for 6 years.

Report of Findings

To answer RQ1, which sought to determine the sponsors of PSU most easily recalled by stakeholders, data was collected from the primacy brainstorming activity and two interview questions to determine local and national brands stakeholders associated as sponsors. Tables I and II show a list of the number of unique instances all brands were named during the primacy brainstorming activity (Table I) and verbal responses (Table II). Findings show that all eight participants were able to identify Coca-Cola as a sponsor of PSU in either written or verbal responses. Interestingly, Pepsi's association with PSU remained at the forefront of stakeholders' minds, despite being replaced as the official beverage sponsor the prior summer by Coca-Cola. As shown in Tables I and II, respondents identified Pittsburg State's previous association to Pepsi as often as the university's current association with Coca-Cola. The beverage partners were often mentioned concurrently as brands associated with PSU, as illustrated by

Table I: Sponsors named during written primacy brainstorming activity

Coca-Cola/Coke	4	Mitchelson & Assoc.	1	Apple	1
Pepsi	4	Pallucca's	1	City of Pittsburgh	1
Nike	3	Cox	1	Pitsco	1
Adidas	3	Millers Imaging	1	Watco	1
Names and Numbers	2	Jock's Nitch	1	"Real estate"	1
Sodexo	2	Jake's Fireworks	1	"Weight lifting equipment"	1
Crossland Construction	2	Kiewit	1		
Barnes and Noble	1	Gorilla Country	1		
Labette Bank	1	"Ron's IGA"	1		
Freeman Health	1	Russell Athletic	1		
Via Christi	1	Pizza Hut	1		

Interviewee 6 ("It used to be "Pepsi State," but no more. Apparently we're Coke...") and Interviewee 5 ("Coca-Cola for sure. Before that Pepsi-Cola" (laughs)). The perception of this vendor change, also referred to as a "hoopla" and a "debacle," will assist in analyzing local versus national ties when discussing Research Question 2 later on.

In addition to the beverage sponsor, two primary athletic apparel brands were heavily associated with PSU: Nike and Adidas. Interviewee 6 correctly identified the current provider of PSU athletic equipment, Adidas; "[Because of] my friend who's in basketball, I see Adidas stuff all the time." However, other participants associated apparel brands more haphazardly, such as Interviewee 1:

I-1: "I'm inclined to say like Nike. But I don't know if that's because I've necessarily seen that or because I just think, when I think sports..."

R: "You think of Nike?"

I-1: "Nike, Under Armour, things like that."

Table II: Sponsors named verbally during interview

Coca Cola	7	Mitchelson & Assoc.	1	Voya	1
Pepsi	7	Commerce Bank	1	Papa John's	1
Nike	5	Cox	1	Ridell	1
Adidas	4	Barnes and Noble	1	Freddy's	1
Pitsco	4	Jock's Nitch	1	City of Pittsburg/Chamber of Commerce	1
Millers Imaging/Mpix	3	PRG	1	KKOW	1
Crossland Construction	3	Kiewit	1	Watco	1
Labette Bank	3	Gorilla Country	1	"Real estate"/ "Realtors"	1
Via Christi/"The hospital"	2	Sodexo	1	KOAM	1
Freeman Health	1	Pinamonti Orthodontics	1	Promaxima	1
Einstein Bagels	2	Pinamonti Physical Therapy	1	Toyota	1
Pitt Plastics	1	JE Dunn	1	Spigarelli Law	1
Black and Veatch	2	Turner Construction	1	Timepieces	1
Pizza Hut/National Pizza Corp.	2	Spirit AeroSystems	1	University Realty	1
Ron's IGA	2	Cessna	1	Equity Bank	1
Under Armour	2	H&R Block	1	Shelter Insurance	1
Pallucca's	2	Midwest Minerals	1	Pittcraft Printing	1
Depco	1	Jones Realty	1	Rib Crib	1
ESPN	1	El Charro	1	Names and Numbers	1
Caterpillar	1	Cafe Del Rio	1		
Ford	1	Carpino Ford	1		
General Motors	1	Menghini Law	1		

The inability to identify a singular athletic brand in partnership with PSU is likely influenced by the variety of PSU-branded apparel available for purchase at the campus bookstore and local apparel stores. For example, the on-campus Barnes and Noble

bookstore offers PSU-branded apparel from 9 brands, including Nike, Under Armour, and Russell.

Local companies frequently identified with Pittsburg State include Columbus, Kansas-based Crossland Construction, Pitsco Education, and Labette Bank. Crossland Construction was associated with their scholarship and internship programs at PSU, especially by students and faculty of the College of Technology. Interviewee 2, a faculty member in the College of Technology, mentioned that the company “gives out a lot of scholarships each year and they provide students with a lot of job opportunities.”

Interviewee 3, a local business owner, stated that the company:

Just [feels] very affiliated with the university in a lot of ways...I think it's probably from hearing a lot about their intern program and that they hire a lot from Pitt State and the fact that they advertise.

Pitsco Education was associated with their sponsorship of the “Educator of the Game” awarded at home football games. Interviewee 2 shared that she recalled Pitsco’s on-field promotion easier than other football advertisements:

There may be brands that advertise [at football games] with banners... but none of those come to mind. But I feel like I remember the on-field promotions and the Jungletron ads.... What Pitsco does, Educator of the Game, has kind of become a tradition of the Pitt State games, so I think that those things lend to the overall atmosphere and it benefits Pitt State.... I think it makes the football games fun.

Labette Bank was clearly associated by Interviewee 5 with community service activities:

I associate them with the BIG Event, especially the more community service-style things....I can picture Labette Bank being on the back of even other club's [t-shirts], you know, just people who go out and do things for the university.

Interestingly, stakeholders sometimes displayed an inability to distinguish local sponsors in the categories of car dealerships, real estate, and law firms. Interviewee 5 grouped such sponsors together: "Local car dealerships, like Carpino. Even... I know that there's a lot, I can't name them all... like Menghini Law, Spigarelli Law, Mitchelson Associates, like a lot of law firms that will hook up." Interviewee 2 failed to identify the sponsor associated with an interactive Jungletron promotion at football games, despite remembering the game well:

I know one of the realtors does the thing on the Jungletron. I always kind of pay attention, because I try to outguess them, you know they describe the house and say, "Is it \$400,000? Above or below?" They'll give you a number, and you're supposed to guess which one you think it is... I remember the game, and I care less about [who it was] because I'm not in the market to buy a house so I don't really care.

This tendency to group service market sponsors is a potential threat to the effectiveness of these companies' sponsorship. If sponsors cannot distinguish themselves from concurrently sponsoring competitors, stakeholders may incorrectly attribute the sponsorship of one company to a non-sponsoring competitor, or fail to recognize the sponsor as a partner of PSU due to an overload of sponsors in certain service markets.

In order to answer RQ2 - Does a sponsor's perceived local presence or national reach affect stakeholders' perception of the benefits of the sponsorship - interviewees

were asked to discuss their perception of the benefits of local and national sponsors. Interviewees were asked to state which type of company - local or national - they considered to be (1) “better” for Pittsburg State University to associate with, and (2) more beneficial for PSU as a sponsor. Findings from the interviews suggest that participants identify (a) local sponsors as beneficial to strengthening local relationships and community networks and (b) national sponsors as financially beneficial and able to provide a sense of national relevance. Both categories of sponsors were stated to be “critical” to the university’s marketing efforts.

Looking first at local sponsors, interviewees considered Pittsburg State University to be inseparable from the surrounding community; Interviewee 6 described PSU and the community of Pittsburg as “a packaged deal” in that “the community supports the school [and] it wouldn't be the same without the community there.” Therefore, activities that benefited community businesses and residents were also seen to be beneficial to PSU. Strengthening local relationships was considered a dual benefit to the university and community members. Interviewee 2 described local sponsorships as “energy-building.” Interviewee 3, a local business owner, explained how this energy develops:

Locally, those are the people who are going to come to the sporting events and... a lot of students will come from here locally... Also, those affiliations help them, I would think, get local business owners, leaders, and employees to come in and do career, interview days and speak in classes, and different things that I know I've been invited to do a few times.

Local sponsors were described as “trustworthy,” “credible,” “more understandable of the community,” and unique to the area. Interviewee 5 associated local sponsors with more depth of credibility compared to “national fluff:”

National fluff you might get at a D-1 school, when you hear the same sponsorships over and over again like Taco Bell, and stuff like that. [With local sponsorships] it’s actually like, you might actually get some local food, you might actually get to talk to people and make connections at this university that you don’t normally get when you hear a bunch of national advertisers at an athletic event or at a community service day.

Ties with local companies were portrayed as stronger than the lifetime of a temporary sponsorship, as Interviewee 7 explained:

If you get your local business owners involved in any way, and you get stuck in their core, then you have them for life. If you’ve got them sponsoring you and you’ve got them buying into the idea that is Pitt State, then I mean, that will never go away and... it’s [a] tradition when they have family [that] they’re going to pass that down.

A sense of responsibility to partner locally when local and national brands compete to sponsor was also suggested. Although both Coca-Cola and Pepsi are national in scope, interviewees saw Pepsi as a “local” beverage option that better supported the community due to the locally-owned Pepsi storage and distribution facility in Pittsburg. Interviewee 1 demonstrated this feeling in her reaction to the beverage vendor change from Pepsi to Coca-Cola. Although she understood the determining factor in the decision (Coke “gave us a better price” and the university will “make a little bit more from Coke than what we

were with Pepsi”), and professing to prefer Coke products to Pepsi, she saw the vendor change in a negative light:

In our specific instance here in Pittsburg, I don't feel like it looks good because, but maybe not everybody knows, that the Pepsi distributorship is locally-owned here....you have a Pepsi right here, and now you're partnering with Coke. I feel like it's kind of a slap in the face... in my heart, I feel like the local connection is more important.

Turning to national sponsors, interviewees named financial benefits and national relevance as two benefits PSU enjoyed when partnering with such companies. Several interviewees mentioned financial struggles at Pittsburg State University; perception of a poor financial state was often correlated with recognition of national sponsors as valuable from a financial standpoint. Interviewee 1 stated this benefit given her perception of PSU's current situation, saying,

From a business standpoint, especially when you're in a financial crisis, I can see, maybe the university making some of the decisions that they have like the Coca-Cola thing, because they're looking at the bottom dollar.

Interviewee 4 extended this monetary benefit to donations of resources and products:

As far as the benefits on the national scale, it's usually probably resources they have to bear on a given problem, right? I mean you're talking much larger companies there, so if you were seeking funds, it's a lot easier for them to write off a significant donation.

An additional benefit of national sponsors was their ability to impart a sense of national relevance to the university. Interviewee 5 related this sense of relevance to its impact on prospective students:

National brands advertising... puts us on a more national radar... I think about the students that are coming here and what they see when they walk on campus, when they get a tour... and they see more national sponsorships...they realize like, "Wow, this isn't some school in the middle of nowhere, Kansas." We actually have recognition from major companies that people know about and are aware of. To see Einstein Brothers and Pizza Hut in our Student Center means that we're not just... you know we don't have grandma cooking out of a stove in the back of the Student Center kitchen.

Interviewee 3 extends this national relevance to Pittsburg State's overall reputation, stating that "the university can't exist alone on local students and local support:"

We know that there's a lot of donors from big companies and from alumni who've moved away and are living other places that wouldn't maybe get the exposure from just a local association but would get the association from a national association. And I think Pitt State wants to be, is, and wants to maintain a reputation of being a sought after [and] highly thought of university, and so I think those national associations help with that.

Overall, local and national sponsors were perceived as offering different benefits to the university, with both being critical to financial and reputational success and community involvement.

RQ3, which sought to discover how sponsorship affects future purchasing decisions, required participants to express their likelihood of buying a product of a sponsor to Pittsburg State University. The findings show that sponsorship of PSU increased a sponsor's worthiness to be purchased and has the power to increase likelihood of purchase, but does not have the ability, on its own, to directly change a stakeholder's established buying habits.

Sponsorship increased a company's worthiness to be purchased, or whether the company was recognized as a known option on the market regardless of whether the individual intended to make a purchase. Worthiness to be purchased increased (1) when local sponsors were perceived to be "giving back to the community," (2) when a stakeholder's loyalty to the university extended to loyalty to its sponsors, and (3) when name awareness increased from sponsorship. Interviewee 7, a business owner in Pittsburg, places increased consideration on local sponsors who appear invested in the local economy:

If I'm going to purchase, I do like to look at the companies and say, if it's a larger purchase, I'd like to know that they are giving back and the money's somewhat staying in the community versus someone I've never heard of. Yeah, it does make a difference.

Interviewee 1, who considers herself "pretty loyal" in a general sense, extended her loyalty to Pittsburg State onto the sponsors associated (or not associated) with the university:

I think people look at it like, 'Oh, well they're a proud sponsor of Pitt State. So maybe I'm going to buy something from them.' That's how I would feel about

it...you have pride in your local university. I mean, I would, if they didn't sponsor or support this university but maybe were a supporter of [local university] Missouri Southern, the way I am, I would be like, "Psh. I'm not buying nothing from them."

Interviewee 2 considered improved name awareness the primary benefit from sponsorship, which may translate into purchase consideration on the basis of knowing the company exists:

You may not buy from them, but at least you know they're available as another option. So you may contact them about some additional information, you may not always buy something from them, but at least you've given them consideration.

Additionally, sponsorship has the potential to increase the likelihood of buying a product when a stakeholder's attachment to the university acts as a factor in the purchase decision. Interviewee 5 explained this process in terms of his future decisions as an alumnus:

I would like to think that after I graduate and move somewhere else maybe even completely out of this region, if I see a sponsor that was sponsoring at Pittsburg State while I was at college here, I may be more likely to buy that product as an alumni out in a different region just because... I have an association with that product for that brand from college where I felt like I was at home. So I may be more likely to buy that product after I leave this place.

Increased worthiness to purchase or likelihood of purchasing did not directly influence a stakeholder's established buying habits. Sponsorship appeared to be an insufficient pull

to change existing preferences as an sole factor in the purchase decision, as Interviewee 6 explained:

I wouldn't think it would affect me wanting to buy from them more. It might make me respect those a little more, and consider it, but ultimately it's what I like the most or... I don't think it would affect me wanting a different product just because they sponsor over another company that doesn't sponsor PSU.

Interviewee 8 described his loyalty to his preferred brands in a hypothetical situation in which PSU changed from co-branding with New Era hats to Nike hats, saying:

If it's not a brand that I would buy as it is, I probably wouldn't buy it going forward...if they switch from New Era hats...to Nike hats, I probably wouldn't be inclined to buy the Nike hats any more than I am now simply because I don't care for Nike hats, I like the New Era ones.

Although sponsorship did not appear to influence existing buying habits, its ability to improve a stakeholder's consideration of its worth as a purchasing option and likelihood to buy a product is important. Consideration of a product as a potential purchase must occur before the buying behavior is undertaken. Individuals will not buy a product they do not first think of as worthy of consideration.

RQ4 sought to discover factors of university/sponsor congruence. To determine what characteristics and symbols individuals associate with Pittsburg State University, and subsequently what corporate sponsors fit into PSU's image, interviewees were presented with a case study to illustrate the idea of sponsor/sponsored object "fit". The example provided to all interviewees was Professional Bull Riders, Inc., and their sponsors Ford, Wrangler, and "beer companies." Stakeholders were then asked to discuss

the images that come to mind when they think of PSU and consider brands that would fit with this image. Findings show that stakeholders strongly associate Pittsburg State University with (1) the Gorilla mascot and (2) concrete (as opposed to abstract) concepts including athletics, education and the daily needs of a college resident (food, healthcare, banking needs). Therefore, brands associated with gorillas (either in name or in actuality), and brands and businesses that meet the daily athletics, education and residency needs of a college student are perceived by stakeholders to have a high level of congruence, or fit, as a sponsor of Pittsburg State.

Pittsburg State University is strongly associated with the Gorilla mascot. Throughout 8 interviews, the Gorilla mascot was most frequently mentioned as a symbol of Pittsburg State, often without additional explanation of what this symbol stands for. However, additional words associated with “Gorilla” were “strong,” and “athletics.” Brands that fit within the symbol of the Gorilla include Flex Trash Bags (due to the “strong” characteristic), Gorilla Glue, and interestingly, Gus the Gorilla at the Fort Worth Zoo in Texas. In 2016, Pittsburg State University became a year-long official sponsor of the baby gorilla after endorsing an online campaign to name the gorilla. Interviewee 7 believed the association to the gorilla was a congruent fit: “The gorilla, baby gorilla, you know, that's kind of one thing that stands out because it's fun and cute....that's a no-brainer... It's so cool.”

Athletics was also strongly associated with Pittsburg State University. Interviewee 5 stated, “When [alumni are] done with school here, they come back and they're more worried about the athletics.” He mentioned fitness equipment supplier ProMAXima - donor of equipment housed in the ProMAXima Strength and Conditioning Center - as a

brand that fits well with the concept of athletics. Other brands mentioned as a congruent fit with the concept of athletics at PSU include Nike and Under Armour.

Pittsburg State University was strongly associated with concrete concepts including education and the daily needs of a college resident (food, healthcare, banking needs). Brands and businesses that meet the daily needs of a college student and resident are perceived by stakeholders to have a high level of congruence as a sponsor of Pittsburg State. When asked to define PSU's image, stakeholders easily related the concept of education with the university. While the connection is obvious, this defining concept influences the type of brands which would fit well as sponsors of PSU. Interviewee 3 identified congruent brands she believed were "driving in the education space," such as Apple, KhanAcademy, and Pitsco Education. In addition to education, stakeholders associated the university with daily needs of a college resident. Interviewee 5 explained the congruence he felt between the university as a "home" for college students and certain market sectors:

You have health systems that care about the health of athletes. You get banks because college students need to open checking accounts when they're down here... stuff that obviously has an appeal to college students is the first thing that comes to my mind. I don't honestly think of law firms and I don't think of real estate agencies when I think of sponsorships first off, because that's not something that I am already caring about as a college student.... Food, health, banks, stuff that I'm going to use on my daily, that's what comes to mind first.

Interviewee 5 also stated how congruity with the needs and wants of a college student influenced his attitudes toward sponsors at events. As an example, car dealerships

sponsoring at football games were seen as incongruent (“I’m in college, I’m going to drive my clunker. To see a nice, fancy, \$32,000 truck in the end zone at a sporting event, that’s not what I care about.”). However, sponsorships with local restaurants appeared to be more congruent with the concept of Pittsburg State as a home for college students (“I care more about Papa John’s giving me a discount on pizza the next day or Cafe Del Rio, that’s what I care about as a college student.”). These factors affecting congruity - fitting well within PSU branding and associating on a practical level with athletics, education, or the needs of a college student - can guide Pittsburg State University as they partner with sponsors exhibiting a high level of fit. Overall, the more congruent the sponsor with the sponsored object in terms of fit, relatedness, and similarity, the more positively the alliance will be judged and the more easily it will be recalled (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005).

Discussion

The preceding phase of research sought to understand through qualitative methods how companies and universities can effectively leverage a brand alliance through sponsorship to harness its commercial potential. Through interviews with students, faculty and staff, and alumni, stakeholder knowledge of and perceptions toward sponsorships were studied. This phase of research effectively answered questions which sought to investigate (1) sponsors of PSU most readily recalled by stakeholders, (2) perceived benefits of local versus national sponsorship, (3) the power of sponsorship to affect future purchasing decisions, and (4) factors that lead to a sense of high university/sponsor congruence. The findings associated with this phase of research can guide universities as they determine how to best position themselves financially,

reputationally, and within their surrounding community. As the university considers the value of sponsorships in terms of benefits provided by the sponsor, it is critical to understand how such partnerships are perceived by stakeholders, who themselves invest time, money, and reputational resources of value and necessity to the university's financial and reputational success. Findings can also guide potential and current sponsors who seek to effectively market their brand through leveraging the commercial benefit of a university, especially the distinct relationships of residency, fandom, education, and employment stakeholders may hold with the university.

To summarize and further interpret findings, it was discovered that stakeholders exhibit a relatively select awareness of sponsors, which consists of national beverage and athletic brands in addition to 5-7 local brands recalled based on their high visibility at sporting and community events. In total, stakeholders recalled 67 sponsors (national and local) in written or verbal responses. However, only 16 of the 67 total were recalled by multiple interviewees. Considering that PSU athletics reported 79 total sponsors in the 2017-2018 year (N. McArthur, personal communication, February 9, 2018), the small number of widely recalled sponsors warrants consideration. Overall, 6 of the 15 sponsors were national companies with beverage or food vendor rights on campus, or athletic apparel brands worn by players or sold in the campus bookstore. Specifically, stakeholders easily associated two competing beverage brands - current vendor Coca-Cola and prior vendor Pepsi - and referenced the highly publicized, recent announcement of the vendor change as a trigger of this association. The ability to recall national sponsors may attribute to their ubiquity within media, popular culture, and availability outside of their partnership with the university. Stakeholders of Pittsburg State University

are exposed to brands such as Coca-Cola or Nike outside of the sponsorship and therefore recall the brands partly because of their primacy in the minds of the stakeholders as consumers.

The remaining 10 sponsors recalled by multiple interviewees were local and regional companies. The defining characteristic of these widely recalled local brands is their level of activity on campus and recognition within the surrounding community. Companies who sponsored on-field/court promotions at university sporting events, such as “Educator of the Game” were widely recalled, in addition to companies with established internship and scholarship programs. Companies based in the surrounding community but with a wider reach, such as construction companies, a restaurant franchisee, and a print production company were also easily recalled. Of these factors, the level of on-campus activity can be increased with relative ease. Companies can sponsor on-field promotions, provide scholarships, obtain naming rights to facilities, and activate their sponsorship in additional ways beyond a simple advertisement displayed on signage. This level of activity and subsequent recognition as a partner of PSU appears to separate and elevate the sponsor over the general mass of sponsors associated at some low level with the university. If sponsors cannot distinguish themselves from concurrently sponsoring competitors in certain markets, stakeholders may incorrectly attribute the sponsorship of one company with another, or fail to recognize the sponsor as a partner with PSU due to an overload of sponsors in categories such as law firms, car dealerships, and real estate.

Overall, local and national sponsors were perceived as offering different benefits to the university, with both being critical to its financial, reputational, and relational

success. While universities will make sponsorship decisions based on predefined goals, it is imperative to understand the perception of sponsorship from the perspective of stakeholders. Stakeholders also contribute to the reputation and success of the university, and can be motivated or dissuaded to attend events, support programs and campaigns, donate money, and attend the university based on their perception of the university's values based on the partnerships they cultivate.

In summary of these findings, stakeholders perceived national sponsors as benefiting Pittsburg State University financially and contributing to the university's national relevance. Local sponsors were perceived to be beneficial to strengthening local relationships and community networks. Stakeholders stated that both sets of goals - national relevance through lucrative national partnerships and strong ties with the surrounding community through local partnerships - were critical to the success of Pittsburg State University. If stakeholders perceive universities to be neglecting local partnerships, they may believe the university values money or national recognition over connections with the local community. In this situation, local business owners or leaders within the community may decrease their participation in university events and campaigns in response to the university's direction. On the other hand, isolating university partnerships to companies in the immediate community may dissuade prospective students, donors, and business leaders from outside the immediate area from attending or partnering with a nationally unimportant university. Recognizing the perception of national versus local sponsorships can guide universities who wish to (1) increase their perception of national relevance or dedication to the local community, (2) draw students from national or local communities based on their sense of prominence in

either market, and (3) improve relations and maintain relevance with alumni locally or on a national scale.

Sponsorship of Pittsburg State University increased a sponsor's worthiness to be purchased and has the power to increase likelihood of purchase, but does not have the ability, on its own, to change a stakeholder's established buying habits. From the perspective of the sponsor, one goal of partnering with a university is to increase sales through improved brand recognition and positively influencing potential consumers' attitudes toward the brand. However, purchasing behavior is a complex matter that encompasses past habits, consumer need, pricing, availability, and a number of other factors. While sponsorship alone is unable to correlate directly to a stakeholder's buying behavior, findings suggest that sponsorship can improve a sponsor's worthiness to be purchased.

In addition, sponsorship can, in some instances, increase the likelihood that stakeholders would buy a product or use a service they had been introduced to as a university sponsor. Sponsors who partner with universities are able to capitalize on stakeholder loyalty to their alma mater, athletic team, or place of residence or employment. If brands can increase their association with an athletic team or educational program, they can become benefactors of stakeholder loyalty to the university itself. For example, if Crossland Construction can become associated as a close partner of the PSU School of Construction through sponsorships and internships, student loyalty to the Construction program may transfer to loyalty to Crossland Construction when they seek employment after graduation. In addition, stakeholders demonstrated a desire to use services they became familiar with during their college years, such as banks and real

estate agencies. The familiarity of the companies and their use throughout a student's college years may increase the likelihood that an alumnus becomes a returning customer following college.

Factors affecting congruity - fitting well within university branding and associating on a practical level with athletics, education, or the needs of a college student - can guide universities as they partner with sponsors showing a high level of fit.

Research has shown that the more congruent the sponsor with the sponsored object in terms of fit, relatedness, and similarity, the more positively the alliance is judged and the more easily it is recalled. Universities and companies can improve the effectiveness of sponsorship by engaging in partnerships with a high level of fit. Findings show that stakeholders associated Pittsburg State University with their unique branding efforts, namely the Gorilla mascot, in addition to athletics, education, and products that support a college student's lifestyle and needs as a resident. Therefore, brands that showed a high level of congruity with these concepts - athletic apparel companies, education services, health care systems, banks, affordable restaurants - were easily associated with the university and generally enjoyed positive attitudes and high recall rates among stakeholders.

CHAPTER V

PHASE TWO – STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Methods

The second phase of research involved distribution of a survey directed by Phase One's interview responses. Phase Two sought to quantitatively measure (1) brand attachment to national and local sponsors and Pittsburg State University, (2) attitudes toward sponsors, and (3) stakeholder perception of sponsor involvement in the surrounding community. Data collected from the survey was used to test Hypotheses 1-4. Before the survey was developed, the concepts of brand attachment, attitude, and company community involvement were operationalized in order to ensure the study's validity and reliability.

Brand attachment: Brand attachment was developed into a multivariate score based on measures of brand loyalty, brand commitment, brand-self connection, and prominence of the brand in the mind of the individual. Seven scale variables were combined from two prior studies of brand attachment: four items were adapted from Park (2010) and three from Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman (2001). Scales were measured on an eleven-point Likert-scale with anchor points at “not at all” (0) and “completely” (10). The original scale designed by Park (2010) used an identical eleven-point scale; the items taken from Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman (2001) were

adapted from their original five-point Likert-scale. Both scales had been previously tested for their reliability based on alpha coefficients and found to be reliable measures of brand commitment and brand attachment. The multivariate score presented in this study provided a possible brand attachment score range of 0 to 70. The score existed as interval data. Scores were additionally categorized for further analysis using the following categories: 0-23: low brand attachment, 24-47: moderate brand attachment, 48-70: high brand attachment. To determine the reliability of the attachment scale, the alpha coefficient for the overall seven-item attachment score was figured. The alpha coefficient was $\alpha = .95$, which demonstrates a high reliability in the multivariate attachment scale.

Brand attitude: Brand attitude was developed into a multivariate score of three items which measured feelings toward a brand along a spectrum from positive to negative. The scale used in this study was originally developed and tested for reliability by Low and Lamb (2000). Items measured on a seven-point Likert-scale, and included a lead-in statement (“Please rate your attitude toward Sponsor (1/2/3): I think Sponsor (1/2/3) is”) and anchor points at good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, and valuable/worthless. The alpha coefficient for the three-item brand attitude score was found to be $\alpha = .96$, demonstrating high reliability in this scale.

Company community involvement: Company community involvement sought to measure stakeholder perception of a sponsor’s engagement within the local community. This measure coincides with the study’s previous research into national versus local sponsors, and assists in testing Hypothesis 2. Perceived community engagement is hypothesized to differ between national and local sponsors. As discussed in the Literature Review, stakeholders exist simultaneously in multiple brand communities, including their

association to PSU and to the surrounding community as a resident. Research during Phase One found local sponsors to be more beneficial to universities when cultivating strong ties within the surrounding community. Therefore, a measure of company community involvement for both local and national companies can provide additional understanding into the perception of sponsor benefit to the surrounding community. A company community involvement scale was adapted from Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, Murphy, and Gruber's (2014) social responsibility scale. Factor One of this scale focused on the "Community" domain of social responsibility, and included five items. These items were adapted into a seven-point Likert-scale with anchor points at "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). The items specifically mentioned company involvement in the Pittsburg community, such as "This (local/national) sponsor contributes to the economic development of the Pittsburg area." Alpha coefficients were determined to test the reliability of the five-item company community involvement scale for local and national sponsors, and were found to be $\alpha_{\text{localsponsor}}=.92$ and $\alpha_{\text{nationalsponsor}}=.93$. Therefore, the community involvement scale was a reliable measure of perceived company involvement in the community.

Brand attachment, attitude toward sponsors, and company community involvement were measured using a 20-question survey. The structure of the survey was designed to specifically measure brand attachment and company community involvement among a predetermined set of familiar local and national sponsors of Pittsburg State University. A list of ten local and national sponsors was provided to respondents, who were asked to choose the one brand they considered "the most accurate representation of a local sponsor of PSU," then later the most accurate representation of a national sponsor.

The ten sponsors listed were taken from Phase One's written component of brands most clearly and easily recalled associated with Pittsburg State University. After choosing one brand as the exemplary local sponsor, respondents were immediately presented with the seven-item brand attachment scale and five-item company community involvement scale. Respondents were directed to answer the questions as they pertained to the chosen local sponsor. After completing the brand attachment and company community involvement scales for the local sponsor, the same list of ten sponsors was presented to respondents a second time, who were directed to choose an exemplary national sponsor. Respondents repeated the brand attachment and company community involvement scales for their chosen national sponsor. Following this section, respondents were asked to use the same brand attachment scale to measure their attachment to Pittsburg State University. This section also acted as a filler between two sections discussing sponsors, thereby reducing the impact of the provided list of sponsors on the final section, where participants were asked to measure their attitudes toward sponsors they recalled organically. For this final section, participants were prompted to name up to three "corporate sponsors of PSU that most easily come to mind." Respondents then rated their attitudes toward Sponsors 1-3 using the three scale items mentioned previously.

Additionally, the survey asked stakeholders to report the type and frequency of home sporting events they attend, since many sponsors choose to advertise at such events. Respondents selected all sports they attended held at venues where sponsorships could be seen (football, basketball, volleyball, baseball/softball, track and field), and were prompted to report the number of home events attended for each sport over the past year. Respondents were also asked to identify if they were a business owner in the Pittsburg

area. If yes, they were asked two questions regarding their involvement with PSU as a business owner: “Does your business regularly hire current or recently graduated students from PSU?” and “Does your business sponsor PSU departments and/or events?” In order to explore the effect of residency in Pittsburg versus residency outside the community on company familiarity and attachment to the university, respondents were asked if they lived within 15 miles of Pittsburg.

The survey was distributed via an online link over a three week period (a copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A). Survey development was supported by the Pittsburg State University Communication Research Lab and was accomplished with the use of Qualtrics software. The survey was approved by the Pittsburg State University Internal Review Board prior to distribution. The link was made available through (1) a bulk email to all alumni on record with Pittsburg State University Alumni and Constituent Relations, (2) distribution by professors in the Department of Communication through class notification boards, and (3) distribution on Facebook by the Department of Communication and the researcher’s personal account.

Sample Demographics

A total of 156 complete responses were collected ($n = 156$). Percentages for each stakeholder group represented in the final data set are: Alumni: 56.4% ($n=88$); Students: 32.1% ($n=50$); Faculty/Staff: 11.5% ($n=18$). These percentages accurately reflect the sample size of each stakeholder population. Additionally, 57.1% of respondents were female, 42.9% male. 58.3% of respondents report living outside 15 miles of Pittsburg; 41.7% report living within 15 miles of Pittsburg. Based on this demographic, the data reflects knowledge and perception of sponsorship efforts by resident stakeholders of the

Pittsburg community and stakeholders (particularly alumni) located outside the surrounding community. Measures of central tendency were found to summarize responses for the age variable. The following are the results of this analysis: $M=36.12$, $SD=17.07$. The mean age and high standard deviation reflects a diverse sample of college-age students, alumni, and faculty and staff. Further analysis of the data reveals the median age to be 29, with a minimum reported age of 18 and maximum reported age of 79. 3 respondents identified themselves as business owners in the Pittsburg area.

The following results summarize the data pertaining to home sporting events stakeholders report attending. Findings show that 56.4% of respondents report attending a home sporting event of any kind in the past year, with 43.6% reporting that they have not attended a home sporting event in the past year. The most commonly attended home sporting event was football, with 50% of all respondents attending at least one home football game in the past year. Of respondents who report attending at least one home football game in the past year, the mean number of home games attended was 2.94, with a minimum reported attendance of 1 and maximum of 6. Therefore, of stakeholders who actively attend home football games, the average home game attendance per football season is approximately 3 games. Additionally, of the total sample ($n = 156$), 23.7% report attending a home basketball game, 14.1% a home track and field meet, 13.5% a home baseball game, 12.8% a home volleyball game, and 8.3% a home softball game. Mean home game/meet attendance per season at these events, among respondents who report attending at least one home game/meet of that sport in the past year, are as follows: basketball: 5.46 games; volleyball: 3.35 games; baseball: 4.76 games; softball: 2.61 games; track and field: 2.91 meets.

Report of Findings

In order to answer H1, which posited that stakeholders would report a stronger attachment to national brands than to local brands, a paired samples t-test was conducted to compare reported stakeholder attachment to local sponsors and attachment to national sponsors. Stakeholders were found to report no statistically significant difference in their attachment to national sponsors compared to local sponsors ($t(155)=-.08, p=.94$). This finding suggests that individuals associated with PSU feel indistinguishable levels of moderate attachment with both national ($M=31.37, SD=17.86$) and local ($M=31.25, SD=20.69$) sponsors, perceiving similar levels of connection, loyalty, and commitment to both categories of sponsors.

In order to answer H2, which hypothesized that stakeholders would rate the community involvement of local sponsors higher than national sponsors, a paired samples t-test was conducted to compare scores of company community involvement for national sponsors versus local sponsors. There was a significant difference ($t(155)=-10.56, p=.00$) in the community involvement score for local sponsors ($M=27.94, SD=5.58$) compared to national sponsors ($M=22.11, SD=6.35$). Local sponsors are perceived as more involved in the surrounding community. This finding further supports the interpretation made in RQ2 that local sponsors are more beneficial to universities for strengthening community ties, contributing to the health of the local community economically, and building positive energy among businesses and residents. In terms of promoting a sense of involvement and commitment to the community, partnerships with local companies provide an opportunity for Pittsburg State University to improve stakeholder perception of a strong tie between the local community and the university.

To answer H3, which proposed a correlation between increased attachment with the university and positive attitudes toward a sponsor, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was conducted to determine whether a relationship existed between attachment to PSU and attitudes toward sponsors. No statistically significant relationships were found between stakeholder attachment to PSU and reported attitudes toward sponsors ($r=.09$, $n=128$, $p=.33$). This finding suggests that stakeholders form attitudes towards companies independently of their attachment to the university. Attitudes are likely more dependent on an individual's experience with and knowledge of the company, which may develop independently, but simultaneously as the individual's attachment to PSU develops.

To answer H4, which hypothesized that recognition of on-campus activity will correlate with positive attitudes toward university sponsors, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was individually conducted for three sponsors to determine whether a relationship existed between the perceived level of on-campus sponsor activity and attitudes toward sponsors. A statistically significant correlation was found in all three cases between perceived level of sponsor activity on campus and positive attitudes toward the sponsor ($r_{Sponsor1}=.38$, $n=125$, $p<.00$; $r_{Sponsor2}=.53$, $n=121$, $p<.00$; $r_{Sponsor3}=.41$, $n=112$, $p<.00$). Overall, there was a moderate, substantial positive correlation between level of perceived activity on campus by sponsors and attitudes toward sponsors. As stakeholders perceive sponsors as more active on campus - likely through the methods mentioned in Phase One such as high-visibility promotions at sporting events, internship programs, and scholarship programs - positive attitudes toward these active sponsors increase.

Discussion

Phase Two of this research study sought to understand through quantitative measures how companies and universities can effectively access and harness the commercial potential of sponsorship, based on stakeholder-reported attachment, attitudes, and perceptions. Through a survey distributed among students, faculty and staff, and alumni, data was gathered on stakeholder behavior and demographics, knowledge of sponsorship efforts at Pittsburg State University, levels of attachment to sponsors and the university, attitudes toward sponsors, and perceptions of sponsor community involvement and activity on campus. This phase of research effectively answered hypotheses which sought to investigate (1) differences in stakeholder attachment to national and local sponsors, (2) differences in perceived community involvement of national and local sponsors, (3) the relationship between attachment to the university and positive attitudes toward sponsors, and (4) the relationship between perception of on campus sponsor activity and attitudes toward the sponsor. From this research, universities can better understand how to offer the best experience for partnering companies, motivate companies to engage in higher levels of activity based on empirically-shown benefits, and manage stakeholder perception of university values and commitments based on partnerships with local and national companies.

Individuals associated with PSU feel similar levels of moderate attachment with both national and local sponsors, reporting indistinguishable levels of connection, loyalty, and commitment to both categories of sponsors. Knowing that increased brand attachment correlates with increased brand loyalty, intention to recommend and purchase a brand, and investment of stakeholder resources in order to maintain the relationship, the

hypothesized higher levels of brand attachment for national sponsors over local sponsors may have supported an argument for higher effectiveness of sponsorship for a national sponsor compared to a local sponsor. However, the similarity of attachment to national and local sponsors suggests equal opportunity for national and local sponsors in terms of improving brand awareness from sponsorship (depending on the level of activity on campus), making use of existing purchase intentions by offering discounts through coupons or selling products on campus, or improving positive attitudes through associating with Pittsburg State University, who itself was found to hold a high average brand attachment score among survey takers of 58 out of a possible score of 70.

Local sponsors are perceived as more involved in the surrounding community compared to national sponsors. This finding further builds on the suggestion that local sponsors are more beneficial to universities for demonstrating a commitment to the health of the local community economically and building positive energy among businesses and residents. Partnering with companies who are perceived as active, committed entities within the local community affects the image of the university; the perception of high community involvement by local sponsors will likely transfer to the university who chooses to partner with such companies. Therefore, partnerships with local companies provide an opportunity for Pittsburg State University to maintain or improve their sense of commitment and involvement in the Pittsburg community.

A statistically significant correlation was found between how active a sponsor was perceived to be and positive attitudes toward that sponsor. The more active a sponsor on campus, the more positively stakeholders rated their attitudes toward the sponsor. This finding corresponds with interview respondents' ability to more easily recall sponsors

with an active on campus presence. An active sponsorship benefits companies looking to maximize the return on their investment of sponsorship dollars. Awareness of a company and positive attitudes can be more reliably and strongly achieved by actively demonstrating a partnership with PSU through internships, scholarships, and high-visibility promotions. For Pittsburg State, research demonstrating increased positive attitudes and name recognition can be used as incentive when negotiating higher level sponsorships with companies.

As a holistic, two-part study of university sponsorship efforts present at Pittsburg State University, this study serves to expand the body of empirically-based research on sponsorship as a marketing strategy. Improved understanding of the factors that impact the effectiveness and perception of university sponsorship - local connection or national reach of the sponsor, levels of activity on campus, perceived level of fit between sponsor and university, and level of sponsor community involvement perceived by stakeholders - can guide both parties as they seek to ensure the positive benefits of sponsorship: increased name awareness, improved attitudes and brand attachment, and potential influence on purchasing decision.

Limitations

This study was developed with a commitment to reliable measures of qualitative and quantitative data and high applicability to universities and companies wishing to engage in sponsorship alliances. However, some limitations are present. First, the qualitative data gathered from Phase One is not fully representative of the stakeholder population of Pittsburg State University. Participants from this phase of study are limited in their knowledge of sponsorships based on their experience and relationship with

Pittsburg State University. Also, the small number of interviewees (8) cannot fully represent the entirety of the sample population. Next, the survey instrument was not pre-tested to ensure the highest level of readability and comprehension among respondents. No “test respondent” feedback was gathered to improve comprehension before the survey was distributed. Finally, the study was conducted solely at Pittsburg State University. Therefore, the unique demographics, attitudes and attachments toward the university and the Pittsburg community, and stakeholder behaviors are unique to PSU. While the results can be reliably generalized to form an understanding of factors impacting the success of sponsorship activities at universities, the specific community and university environment and number of national versus local sponsors cannot be exactly replicated at a different university. Finally, given the approximate size of the population (approximately 50,000 including alumni, students, faculty, and community members), the sample size of 156 is smaller than would be preferred.

Areas of Future Research

Future research into sponsorship as a marketing strategy can include other types of institution-company sponsorship alliances, such as sponsorships of nonprofit organizations, health and medical facilities, and municipalities. As this research sought to understand *stakeholder perception* of sponsor community involvement and activity on campus, future research should involve an analysis of actual community involvement and on campus activity by sponsors. Are sponsors perceived to be actively involved in the community truly active, or is the perception inaccurate? Additionally, an in-depth study of sponsorship efforts at universities could provide a basis for understanding how universities most often display sponsors, how often sponsors are verbally or visually

mentioned, and the corresponding effectiveness of these specific sponsorship promotions based on name recall, attitude change, and purchase behavior change.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A - Survey

Corporate Sponsorships & University Campuses

Before you begin, let me assure you that all of the information you give me is confidential, and none of it will be released in any way that would permit the identification of you or your family. The results will aid in the understanding of sponsorship by outside companies at Pittsburg State University. Of course, your participation is voluntary and should only take 10-15 minutes of your time. You can stop the survey at any time, but your responses will not be recorded.

If participating for extra credit for a course, the study must be fully completed. Remember to print or screenshot the last screen of the survey as evidence of your participation. If you are viewing this survey on a mobile device, please turn the screen horizontally in order to fully view all response options.

If you are not 18 years of age or older, please do not fill out this survey.

Q1 How do you most closely relate to Pittsburg State University? (Please pick the option that describes your strongest affiliation)

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Faculty/staff
- ☐ Alumni
- ☐ Community member in the Pittsburg area
- ☐ None of these describe me

Skip To: End of Survey If How do you most closely relate to Pittsburg State University? (Please pick the option that describes your strongest affiliation = None of these describe me

First, please answer the following demographic questions as they apply to you.

Q2 What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
 - ☐ Other
-

Q3 What is your age?

Skip To: End of Survey If What is your age? < 18

Q4 Is your current residence within 15 miles of Pittsburg, KS?

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
-

Q5 Are you a business owner in the Pittsburg area?

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
-

Display This Question:

If Are you a business owner in the Pittsburg area? = Yes

Q5.1 Does your business regularly hire current or recently graduated students from PSU?

- ☐ Yes (1)
 - ☐ No (2)
 - ☐ Not sure (3)
-

Display This Question:

If Are you a business owner in the Pittsburg area? = Yes

Q5.2 Does your business sponsor PSU departments and/or events?

- ☐ Yes (1)
 - ☐ No (2)
 - ☐ Not sure (3)
-

Q6 What type of home sporting events **held at PSU** have you attended in the past year? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Football
- ☐ Basketball (Men's or Women's)
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☐ Baseball
- ☐ Softball
- ☐ Track and Field
- ☐ Other (Please specify):

☐ I have not attended a PSU sporting event held at PSU in the past year.

Display This Question:

If What type of home sporting events held at PSU have you attended in the past year? (Select all tha... = Football

Q6.1 How many HOME FOOTBALL GAMES have you attended at PSU in the past year?

Note: PSU played 6 home football games this season.

Display This Question:

If What type of home sporting events held at PSU have you attended in the past year? (Select all tha... = Basketball (Men's or Women's)

Q6.2 How many HOME BASKETBALL GAMES have you attended at PSU in the past year?

Note: Men's basketball played 15 home games this season. PSU women played 11 home games this season. If you attended both a Men's and Women's game on the same night, please count these games independently, i.e. 2 games on one night)

Display This Question:

If What type of home sporting events held at PSU have you attended in the past year? (Select all tha... = Volleyball

Q6.3 How many HOME VOLLEYBALL GAMES have you attended at PSU in the past year?

Note: PSU played 9 home volleyball games this season.

Display This Question:

If What type of home sporting events held at PSU have you attended in the past year? (Select all tha... = Baseball

Q6.4 How many HOME BASEBALL GAMES have you attended at PSU in the past year?

Note: PSU plays 19 home baseball games each season.

Display This Question:

If What type of home sporting events held at PSU have you attended in the past year? (Select all tha... = Softball

Q6.5 How many **HOME SOFTBALL GAMES** have you attended at PSU in the past year?

Note: PSU plays 10 home softball games each season.

Display This Question:

If What type of home sporting events held at PSU have you attended in the past year? (Select all tha... = Track and Field

Q6.6 How many **HOME TRACK AND FIELD MEETS** have you attended at PSU in the past year?

Note: PSU hosts 10 home track meets each season.








The following questions will gauge your level of attachment to local and national sponsors of PSU and your perception of their involvement in the community of Pittsburg.

Q7 From the provided list of current PSU sponsors, please choose one brand that you consider the most accurate representation of a **LOCAL SPONSOR** of PSU.

- ☐ Adidas
 - ☐ Coca-Cola
 - ☐ Labette Bank
 - ☐ Nike
 - ☐ Pitsco Education
 - ☐ Names and Numbers
 - ☐ National Pizza Company/Pizza Hut
 - ☐ Pepsi
 - ☐ Crossland Construction
 - ☐ Ron's Supermarket
-

Q8 For each of the statements, circle the response that most accurately describes your attachment toward the LOCAL SPONSOR you selected above from “Not At All” (0) to “Completely” (10).

Note: To choose "0", please click on the slider to register a response. Not clicking a slider will result in an unrecorded response.

	Not At All	Completely									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be loyal to this brand. (1)											
To me, this brand is clearly the best on the market. (2)											
To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward this brand automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own? (3)											
To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward this brand come to your mind naturally and instantly? (4)											
To what extent is this brand part of you and who you are? (5)											
I recommend buying this brand. (6)											
To what extent do you feel personally connected to this brand? (7)											

Q9 Next, please rate your perception of this **LOCAL SPONSOR'S** involvement in the Pittsburgh community on a scale from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7).








	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This local sponsor contributes to the economic development of the Pittsburgh area (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This local sponsor is invested in improving the social and economic health of the Pittsburgh community. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This local sponsor creates jobs for people in the Pittsburgh area (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This local sponsor respects the values, customs, and culture found in the Pittsburgh area (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This local sponsor communicates openly and honestly with the local community (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 From the provided list of current PSU sponsors, please choose one brand that you consider the most accurate representation of a NATIONAL SPONSOR of PSU.

- ☐ Adidas
 - ☐ Coca-Cola
 - ☐ Labette Bank
 - ☐ Nike
 - ☐ Pitsco Education
 - ☐ Names and Numbers
 - ☐ National Pizza Company/Pizza Hut
 - ☐ Pepsi
 - ☐ Crossland Construction
 - ☐ Ron's Supermarket
-

Q11 For each of the statements, circle the response that most accurately describes your attachment toward the NATIONAL SPONSOR you selected above from “Not At All” (0) to “Completely” (10).

Note: To choose "0", please click on the slider to register a response. Not clicking a slider will result in an unrecorded response.

	Not At All	Completely									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be loyal to this brand. (1)											
To me, this brand is clearly the best on the market. (2)											
To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward this brand automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own? (3)											
To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward this brand come to your mind naturally and instantly? (4)											
To what extent is this brand part of you and who you are? (5)											
I recommend buying this brand. (6)											
To what extent do you feel personally connected to this brand? (7)											

Q12 Next, please rate your perception of this **NATIONAL SPONSOR'S** involvement in the Pittsburgh community on a scale from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7).

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This national sponsor contributes to the economic development of the Pittsburgh area (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This national sponsor is invested in improving the social and economic health of the Pittsburgh community. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This national sponsor creates jobs for people in the Pittsburgh area (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This national sponsor respects the values, customs, and culture found in the Pittsburgh area (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This national sponsor communicates openly and honestly with the local community (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The next section will ask you to rate your attachment to Pittsburg State University.

Q13 Please rate your attachment to Pittsburg State University.

Note: To choose "0", please click on the slider to register a response. Not clicking a slider will result in an unrecorded response.

	Not At All	Completely									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be loyal to Pittsburg State. (1)											
To me, Pittsburg State is clearly the best university in the area. (2)											
To what extent are your thoughts and feelings toward Pittsburg State automatic, coming to mind seemingly on their own? (3)											
To what extent do your thoughts and feelings toward Pittsburg State come to your mind naturally and instantly? (4)											
To what extent is Pittsburg State part of you and who you are? (5)											
I recommend attending Pittsburg State. (6)											
To what extent do you feel personally connected to Pittsburg State? (7)											

The final section will rate your attitudes toward sponsors and your perception of how active they are on-campus. When considering how active sponsors are, think about how often you see on-campus signage, event sponsorship, and other forms of advertising at sports and community service events.

Q14 Please name three corporate sponsors of PSU that most easily come to mind (Can be local or national companies, but NOT individual people i.e. Gene Bicknell)

☐ Sponsor 1 (1) _____

☐ Sponsor 2 (2) _____

☐ Sponsor 3 (3) _____

Q15 Please rate your attitude toward the **1st SPONSOR** you named above. I think SPONSOR 1 is...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Bad (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
Unpleasant (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Pleasant
Worthless (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Valuable

Q16 Please rate your perception of how active **SPONSOR 1** is through signage, event sponsorship, and advertising on campus. I think Sponsor 1 is...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not active (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very active

Q17 Please rate your attitude toward the **2nd SPONSOR** you named above. I think SPONSOR 2 is...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Bad (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
Unpleasant (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Pleasant
Worthless (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Valuable

Q18 Please rate your perception of how active **SPONSOR 2** is through signage, event sponsorship, and advertising on campus. I think Sponsor 2 is...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not active (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very active

Q19 Please rate your attitude toward the **3rd SPONSOR** you named above. I think SPONSOR 3 is...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Bad (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
Unpleasant (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Pleasant
Worthless (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Valuable

Q20 Please rate your perception of how active **SPONSOR 3** is through signage, event sponsorship, and advertising on campus. I think Sponsor 3 is...

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Not active (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very active

Appendix B - Interview Guide

1. What are your associations to PSU? Alumni, community member, student, faculty/staff, parent?
2. How attached to PSU do you feel? Where does this stem from?
3. How long have you been a student/faculty member at PSU?
4. How often do you attend sporting events? And what kind do you attend?
5. What national brands or companies do you associate/identify/relate with PSU?
6. What local brands or companies do you associate/identify/relate with PSU?
7. Where do these associations come from? Where do you see this brand association on campus, in your department, or in the community?
8. What is the benefit of partnering with local brands for sponsorship? What about for national brands?
9. What are some places where you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised?
10. What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?
11. Does sponsorship benefit a university?
12. What is the likelihood that you will consider buying a product from a brand/company after seeing them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?
13. Specific products that you have mentioned as sponsors?
14. How do your attitudes change toward a brand/company when you see them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?
15. Which type of brand – national or local – do you think is better for PSU to associate with?
16. Which type of brand – national or local – is more beneficial as a sponsor of PSU?

17. Think of a brand that you feel like fits well with PSU, either an affiliated or unaffiliated brand. What makes PSU and this brand a good fit?

Appendix C - Interview Transcriptions

Interview 1

R: What's your association to PSU?

I-1: Um, staff member. Administrative specialist.

R: Did you attend PSU when you when to school?

I-1: No.

R: Ok. And do you have any children that went to PSU?

I-1: Yeah. [My husband] has a Bachelor's in accounting from PSU. And then, [both my kids] started out here, but didn't finish here.

R: Ok. So you had two students - two children - that started at PSU.

I-1: Yes.

R: Ok. How attached to PSU do you feel? This is kind of a broad, abstract question.

I-1: Yeah, I mean, I feel fairly attached just, you know, because [my husband] has a degree from here, and just from working here obviously, and the community.

R: Umuhm. And yeah, where do it stem from? Does it stem from anywhere else or are those the main points?

I-1: Those are the main points.

R: Ok. How long have you been a staff member at PSU?

I-1: Um, about 6, almost 6 and a half years.

R: Cool. These are easy questions at first.

I-1: (laughs). Yeah I know.

R: Alright. This one is related specifically to sporting events. So how often do you attend sporting events, and what kind do you attend?

I-1: Um, well, football. And I don't know, maybe 2, 3 times a year during the football season. That's about it though.

R: Ok. Starting into the brands and companies, so what are some of the national brands that you relate with PSU?

I-1: National brands... Um, well, Coke. Pepsi. (laughs). Um, and I don't know. Like, I'm inclined to say like Nike. But I don't know if that's because I've necessarily seen that or because I just think, when I think sports...

R: You think of Nike?

I-1: Nike, Under Armour, things like that.

R: Ok, yeah that makes sense.

I-1: Um, as far as national.

R: Going back to the Coke and Pepsi one. Um, what... obviously that stems from our contract from Coke or Pepsi.

I-1: Yep.

R: So what are kind of your thoughts on that and our relationship with one of those two?

I-1: Well, that's kind of a loaded question. (laughs).

R: That's good! Unload, please.

I-1: (laughs). Um, well, I was brought up to, um, believe to support local businesses, to buy locally, because of my dad's business. And Pepsi is a local-owned... the distributorship is locally owned. And so I get that. But on the other side of the coin, with the change in contract with Coke, they actually gave us a better price as I understand it. And we're actually making a little bit more, because we make a little bit of revenue on the product itself and we make a little bit more from Coke than what we were from Pepsi.

R: Yeah. So that made a difference? Did you think that, so the return on our investment in terms of Coke and what they provide to us is more important than the local connection? Or not?

I-1: I really... honestly, in my heart, I feel like the local connection is more important. I do. But, I am a Coke person. I like the Coke product better. So, I mean obviously, if you're thinking in terms of a business, I mean, the same thing. You know? I know that Pepsi, they donated a lot to the university. So, I feel like there's some loyalty issues there. But, that's tough. It's really tough. In my heart I feel like the business relationship is probably more important.

R: Ok. that's good. Are there any other national brands that you want to mention?

I-1: Um, I really don't know.

R: That's fine. It's just whatever you identify, relate with PSU.

I-1: As far as national things, I really... I mean, yeah, there's like some big construction companies that I think of in terms of this department because they've provided money for scholarships and supported different events and things, but as the university overall, I don't know.

R: We'll get to the specific ones for this department later on.

I-1: Ok.

R: So local brands. What local brands do you relate with PSU?

I-1: Well, I immediately think of Jock's Nitch. Crossland Construction. Pittcraft Printing. The local banks. Ron's grocery store. That's about... I mean, specifically, a lot of the businesses in the community, you know, I think support the university. Like I think of Paint the Town Red day, all of the banks and my hairdresser, and everybody, you know, that's involved in that. But, mainly I think, Jock's Nitch just because they support events and they sponsor things and I just see their name on lots of things.

R: Yeah, you see them all over the place.

I-1: Yeah.

R: So, then, where do those associations come from? Are they because they sell PSU's product, do they advertise, is it because they're sponsors?

I-1: They sell PSU, they're sponsors, their name's on banners, their name's on the Jumbotron during the football games. Um, signage. Just, yeah.

R: Cool, that's awesome. Ok, what is the benefit of partnering with local brands? And then what's the benefit for national brands?

I-1: Well I think with local brands, I think you have to do that because that helps with community involvement, community support. Both, monetary and just being involved in the university. And national? I mean, I feel like that's monetary.

R: Do you feel like there's any, and you can be completely honest about this, do you feel like there's any sort of... so, we partnered with Coca-Cola and because Coca-Cola is this big, important company, since PSU's associated with it, does it look good on PSU to partner with certain national brands. Or not? You could think nothing of that.

I-1: I mean, in our specific instance here in Pittsburg, I don't feel like it looks good because, but maybe not everybody knows, that the Pepsi distributorship is locally-owned

here. You know? I personally don't think it looks good. You know, because you have a Pepsi right here, and now you're partnering with Coke. I feel like it's kind of a slap in the face. I mean, otherwise, I don't really have an opinion about it I guess.

R: Yeah. Alright. What are some places you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised?

I-1: Well, we have a lot of events in our department. Golf tournaments, our Construction Expo. Obviously football games, I'm sure basketball games as well. Any sporting event. The parade, the homecoming parade. Local businesses. On TV, they have different commercials and stuff.

R: Yeah, we'll keep going before we get to the specific ones of the School of Construction. What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?

I-1: Probably, signage at different events. On the uniforms that the athletes wear, even though I don't remember off the top of my head what brand they are (laughs). I'm sure they have a logo on them from whatever national brand they are. Yeah, banners, signage.

R: Are there certain events that you feel like you notice it more than others? Football games compared to maybe a golf tournament?

I-1: Well the golf tournament I'm going to notice it more because I'm so involved in it. I talk to the companies and, you know, I see the signs out there on the golf course. Same with the Expo. But, you know, there has to be those kind of things during sporting events because they have to help sponsor it. But that's all I can think of.

R: Ok. Does sponsorship benefit a university. So, first of in general, sponsorship of the university. And then from there, talk about the School of Construction specifically.

I-1: Well, I think it's necessary. I think you have to have sponsorship, and, as the university as a whole. And obviously in our department, sponsorship is necessary to put on the different events that we do so we can make money and in turn give scholarships back to students. And the Expo that we put on, we always have a lot of sponsors for that. And our Company Day. Sponsors, you know, especially when you're in a financial crisis like our university is right now, it's necessary to have sponsors to help sponsor things like those events and even outreach things.

R: Do you feel like it benefits the sponsors? Like how do you feel like it benefits them in addition?

I-1: Well I think people look at it like, "Oh, well they're a proud sponsor of Pitt State. So maybe I'm going to buy something from them." That's how I would feel about it.

R: That goes right into my next question. So, what's the likelihood that you would consider buying some product from a brand or company? Not necessarily that you have bought one, but the likelihood that you would consider it.

I-1: From someone, a company that was a sponsor at the university?

R: Yes.

I-1: Yeah, very likely.

R: So what goes into that mentality?

I-1: Well, I mean, you have pride in your local university. I mean, I would, if they didn't sponsor or support this university but maybe were a supporter of [local university] MSSU, the way I am, I would be like, "Psh. I'm not buying nothing from them." That's just, you know.

R: So it's pride?

I-1: Oh yeah.

R: Of the university, and then they're proud of the university as well.

I-1: Well yeah. Yeah. And loyalty. I'm pretty loyal. (laughs).

R: Ok. How do your attitudes change toward a brand or company when you see them as a sponsor of Pitt State? So if they weren't a sponsor, or you didn't know they were a sponsor, and then you see them as a sponsor... Is there any change in your attitude?

I-1: Yeah, absolutely.

R: What is that change?

I-1: I appreciate the support. And I think it shows, it helps create more pride and loyalty within the community for the university when you have companies supporting them. It just makes everybody feel good.

R: There you go. Alright, what type of brand - local or national - do you feel like is better for PSU to associate with?

I-1: I feel like local. Like I said before, I mean, those relationships are vital. From a business standpoint, especially when you're in a financial crisis, I can see, maybe the university making some of the decisions that they have like the Coca-Cola thing, because they're looking at the bottom dollar. But I think that the local support and sponsorship is necessary. It's vital.

R: Why is that? Is that to help support the local community as well?

I-1: Absolutely. And to help, you know, with recruiting. You know? You want to support your local university and if there's a good working relationship they're more likely to send their kids there, or the kids are more likely to want to go there than maybe somewhere else if their family owns a local business and they're partnered up with PSU. It's all about the relationship.

R: That makes sense. This question is similar, but not exactly the same. What type of brand - local or national - is more beneficial as a sponsor to PSU?

I-1: What kind? Oh, either local or national.

R: Yep, local or national.

I-1: Well, I'm still gonna say local.

R: The relationships are the important part.

I-1: Yeah, the relationships. Cause it's a two-way street. The national... yeah there might be more monetary benefits there, but there's not the intimate relationship that a local business might have with the university. Like I said, sending their kid there as opposed to, you know, some national... they're just getting their name out there. They're promoting themselves. A local business is more, you know, yes they are promoting themselves, but they're also promoting their local university, too.

R: Last one. Think of a brand that you feel fits well with PSU. Either an affiliated brand or just a brand that you feel like would fit well with PSU. What makes them a good fit? So maybe like Jock's Nitch or one that you've talked about.

I-1: Yeah.

R: Why do they fit well together?

I-1: Hmm. Well, I think both Pittcraft and Jock's Nitch, cause you see their names a lot here, even on campus. And they're locally owned. So, it just kind of goes back to the same thing that I said. Just builds that relationship between university and your local businesses, which extends out into the community.

R: This question. I'm kind of thinking, so, think of the PBR. The Professional Bull Riding association.

I-1: Yeah.

R: And then, some of their sponsors are Ford, Wrangler, beer companies.

I-1: Cause the cowboys always drive Ford trucks, and they wear Wrangler jeans.

R: Yeah. Is there anything with that, that sort of association that you feel like, do any brands have that with PSU where it's just like, "This is a natural fit." The identities just kind of match up.

I-1: Huh. I don't really know. I mean, if you're talking like sports, you know, they obviously like I said before the names that stick out in my mind are Nike or Under Armour. But beyond that, I don't know.

R: Ok, that's fine. That's just a question saying if people have those affiliations. But no, that's good. Is there anything else you want to say about the department specifically?

I-1: Well, just in talking about the relationship between the university and the companies. That's why our golf tournaments are so successful. Because they are relationships that we've been nurturing for year after year after year. And that's what makes us successful. So many of them are Pitt State alums and there's the pride thing; they're proud of their school and their community. I just think that's important.

Interview 2

R: What is your association to PSU? There are some examples there: alumni, faculty, staff, parent.

I-2: I am a faculty, I am an alumni, I am an administrator because I am a director, I am a past member and vice chair of the foundation trustees and a past president of the Alumni Association.

R: Ok. So you have lots of different associations.

I-2: I have lots of different... and yeah lots of different associations over the last 40 years.

R: Cool. So that's another question of mine: How long have you been associated with PSU?

I-2: Since 1976. Since August of 1976 when I stepped on campus as a student.

R: Ok. How attached to PSU do you feel, and where does this come from?

I-2: It comes from being here for 42 years.

R: So how attached do you feel?

I-2: Very attached. Yeah, very attached. Just because we've been involved in so many things over, you know, not only as a student, but we've come back for all kinds of events, being a trustee on the foundation, being involved in the alumni association, traveling the country representing the alumni association at different gorilla gatherings and everything else, and we travel to a lot of athletic events. We used to, when we were out of Wichita, we traveled here, and there, and other places.

R: Yeah. How often do you attend sporting events, and what kind do you attend?

I-2: We attend all the home football games and travel to some of the closer games. We attend all the home basketball games and attend some of the closer venues - Washburn, Emporia, and places like that. Softball and baseball. Volleyball. So that's five major sports for us.

R: Ok. With that in mind, what national brands or national companies do you relate with PSU?

I-2: Um, Coke and Pepsi. Pepsi being the past and Coke being the present. National Pizza Corporation - NPC - because that's Gene Bicknell.

R: Ok.

I-2: And this building, a third of this building was financed by Gene Bicknell.

R: Ok.

I-2: The Bicknell Center Family for the Center of the Arts obviously heavily donated by them.

R: Do you feel like most people know about that or do most people not know about that?

I-2: I would think most of them don't. They probably recognize the family name and that Gene's involved. Obviously that building's got his name on it. This building doesn't but if you walk in the building you can see a plaque somewhere in here with his name on it. So pretty soon you can start figuring that out. But he also owned KKOW radio station which until this year was the main sports outlet radio for the University. Now it's ESPN Radio. So there's another national brand; you take it away from the local brand, KKOW, and now you've gone to a national brand, ESPN.

R: Any other National brands that you think of?

I-2: Well from our standpoint in the College of Technology because of the automotive, we have associations with Caterpillar, Ford, Toyota, General Motors. In the School of Construction you've got both local construction companies, but from a national standpoint, the JE Dunn's, Turner, Kiewit, those are a few, if you go anywhere in the country, and talk to anybody in construction, they're gonna recognize Turner and Kiewit because they've worked all over the world. Black and Veatch out in Kansas City is a large engineering firm. So if you're in the industry, you recognize those companies as being national companies. While they're located regionally, they work all over the world so they're nationally recognized firms and they recruit here, which is a good thing. If you go into engineering technology with manufacturing and everything, now you bring in Spirit AeroSystems what used to be Boeing in Wichita. You bring in Cessna. We have students that graduate and go to work for Nike out of Plastics Manufacturing. So there's a lot of national brands that recruit students out of the College of Technology. So we're really aware of those. And I suppose if you go to the College of Business, they have likewise large accounting firms that probably recruit some of their students that would have more of a national... H&R Block, some of those type names, would pop up over there as recruiters.

R: So you see them as more recruiters as compared to sponsors of PSU or do you think they're synonymous?

I-2: I think they're both because we got money this year for our AGC Student Chapter, our Associated General Contractors Student Chapter, we got money from Black and Veatch as a sponsor. \$500. Not a large amount of money, but \$500 helps with a trip to here, a field trip or whatever. So they not only recruit, they also provide support and scholarships and just general funding of whatever. So they not only recruit they are also sponsors so that's a big deal.

R: Gotcha. Alright so local brands that you relate to PSU.

I-2: Um, well Pepsi is a national brand obviously, but right on Broadway there's the Pepsi bottler right there. So that's a local brand or brand that's locally owned. The Pizza Hut, while it's national, NPC - National Pizza Corporation - is a local corporation. Midwest Minerals is spread out all over the eastern half of the state here but they're a local brand, and Midwest Minerals is a big supporter of the University. So you can drive up and down Main Street, the insurance companies, the banks, one of the banks gave out awards at the basketball game last Saturday for two outstanding athletes. So they help recognize the student athletes that have high GPAs. And so again, their support of student athletes... and it doesn't hurt to get their name mentioned as they're giving out those presentations. So you can drive up and down Main Street here and whether they support the university by putting "Paint the Town Red" stuff in their windows or they sponsor awards, or they're involved in the trustees of the Foundation, you know, that makes a difference.

R: You kind of already hit on this but I want to expand on that more: where do these associations come from? Do you see specific brands on campus, in the department, in the community? Where do the associations come from?

I-2: I think most of it's because they're alumni. Most of the people that come back to participate in those things as probably the decision makers in their companies, for the most part are PSU alums. Ok? When we go try to recruit companies for the School of Construction it always helps if one of the decision-makers has a tie to the university and usually that's in the form of an alumni. So being here, being part of the program. So that helps if you're trying to go to a company that, they're pretty purple (Kansas State University) in their belief, you have a tougher time of getting money out of them. Although, we have some companies in Wichita that, while they bleed purple, they believe in what we do and they actually provide scholarships and everything here too. If there's a way that it benefits them, which is why they do the scholarships, yes it benefits the students but they do it with another motive in that they hope that student when they graduate will actually come to work for them also. A lot of those scholarships are tied to an internship. You do a good job as an intern, we're going to give you some money to go back to school. If that all works out maybe, you'll come back the next summer as an intern. Or if you are graduating the next year, you'll give us a higher consideration to come to work full time. So there's a motive both ways. Yes, we want to help you but at the same time we're trying to help ourselves by encouraging you to give us higher consideration for employment than you might give somebody else.

R: Do you think it works? Just based on the students you've been around? Do you think they consider the companies that maybe they've got a scholarship from in the past?

I-2: Yeah I think so, because you build some loyalty in there. Crossland, obviously gives out a lot of scholarships each year and they provide students with a lot of job opportunities. And I think the majority of them end up going to work with Crossland. Not everybody does because at some point you just decide, "Neh, that's not exactly what I want to do." I don't want to necessarily be, well, being stuck is not the right word, but if

my opportunities are Southeast Kansas, I want to expand beyond that. Not that Crossland doesn't work in Denver and have offices all over the place... you can go a lot of places with Crossland, but some other companies might be very close and, if you want to go out and see the world, then you have to go to work for a more regional or nationally-recognized company. Go be located somewhere else. So, there's some... I think by the time they're seniors, you know, like this year, here we are, second week in February, and there's 35 graduates in May; at least 25 of them have already accepted offers. We've still got March and April to go, we've barely even started the interviews for the spring semester, and based on the interviews last fall, or summer internships, two thirds of the class have already made a decision. They're not even going to any more interviews, they've already accepted offers. And I bet, out of the remaining 10, probably half of them already have offers, they just have decided which one to take yet or they're waiting to see what "Brand X" is going to do, and then compare that with the ones they already have.

R: What is the benefit of partnering with local brands for sponsorship? And then, with that in mind what's the benefit of partnering with national brands?

I-2: The brands, they build the energy. They create the energy for you in the community. So Paint the Town Red, there's hardly a business in town that doesn't have some kind of logo in their window. That's intimidating for the other schools when they come to town and the whole community's out there supporting the university. That makes a statement. And so, you get a lot of positive energy out of that. National companies, probably not as highly recognized from that standpoint because they probably don't have an office here, or they don't have people located here. But they're financial help, in some cases, may be more because they have bigger resources to work with. So it might be a balance between financial and otherwise, although their may be an exception to the rule. The local create more of the energy, there's all the things that you can physically see.

R: What are some places that you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised?

I-2: Well let's see... in the football stadium, you've got the Jungletron. There's, between the real estate, the banks, the Crosslands, whatever, there's multitudes of sponsors that are... the vomitories, which is how you get in to the stadium, I think there were some in those including Cox. So whenever you go out, you see Cox all the time. In the Weede (basketball arena)... I guess if you go into the new Plaster Center (indoor track), now you see all kinds of new stuff. Now you see the Harvey Dean track, sponsored by Harvey Dean. There's other sponsors, I think you have to go up into the weight room probably to recognize the weights up there were donated by an alum that has a company. You haven't seen, now that we're Coke products, I haven't seen that much other than obviously all the machines have been switched out and now you have a Coke machine instead of a Pepsi. But it's not blatantly in your face like, on the scoreboard in the arena doesn't flash Coke at you during the whole game. I don't think Coke's even mentioned on it.

R: Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Or is it different from Pepsi?

I-2: Well if you go to KU or K-State, either one of those two games it's gonna be plastered probably everywhere. Just haven't seen it here as much. So, while everybody recognizes, understands the decisions probably, I think everybody knows this is a Coke campus.

R: So the lack of, you know, signs that say Coke, does that influence your thought of this as a Coke campus or does it not matter?

I-2: I don't think it matters that much. Coke, I don't really drink either one, Coke or Pepsi. I'm a Dr. Pepper, and Dr. Pepper's a Coke product. Doc is a Pepsi product, or vice versa. As far as I'm concerned the two are about as close to each other I'll drink either one. Which ever one's available at the counter, that's the one I want. So those two, Pepsi and Coke, a lot of difference there. And I just prefer Pepsi, if I have a choice between the two I'd probably drink Pepsi. When it comes to Dr. Pepper and Doc, it's about the same to me.

R: Does it make any difference that we are now a Coke campus being a Pepsi campus?

I-2: Probably only from a financial standpoint. I mean, you have people who are die-hard Coke or die-hard Pepsi and it's probably politics. You know, the right went to the left and every else in the middle... but from a financial standpoint, they put it out there and Coke won the bid, you know the university is going to make more money. Given the current situation with the state funding and everything else, every dollar helps.

R: What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university. Or even specific brand names. Because we know that there are certain insurance companies that sponsor PSU, but what are their names? So what makes it easier to remember those sponsors?

I-2: Um, probably seeing their logos or things like that. Now, I know one of the realtors does the thing on the Jungletron, I always kind of pay attention, because I try to outguess them, you know they describe the house and say, "Is it \$400,000? Above or below?" They'll give you a number, and you're supposed to guess which one you think it is. I can remember doing it all the time, I can't remember who it was. Might be because I'm 60 years old and just can't remember it.

R: (laughs). Or it could be because you remember the game?

I-2: I remember the game, and I care less about the other because I'm not in the market to buy a house so I don't really care.

R: But if you think you were in the market to buy a house, do you think you might remember it more?

I-2: You might pay more attention if that was of interest. I sat at the basketball game all the time with Brian Jones, who's in the same... Jones Realty. He sits there right there with me. I know they do other stuff for the university too. You know, there's a lot of them.

You see it in some of the advertising on the campus, but at the same point in time, I know there's a lot of them out there just because a lot of those people associated with those brands are also trustees of the foundation. You get on the foundation because you're a major donor, either privately and/or associated with your business. So if you look at the members that are on the trustees, they're the bankers, the insurance people, legal, other things. Now, besides just being there because they're companies raise money and stuff in some cases they're there because they can provide oversight as a trustee because of their insurance background for their financial background they can help guide in the committees where we should put the foundation assets how to get the biggest growth out of them. So they populate those committees with industry people that know their business that's related to that committee. So, you know, I know a lot of people that are on the trustees come from those different community banks, different things, but somewhere from out of state too. So, you draw in from a lot of different places to try and take advantage of their strengths.

R: Does sponsorship benefit PSU?

I-2: Yeah.

R: In what way?

I-2: Keeping the costs down for the students.

R: So it's very much financial?

I-2: Oh I think so. I mean, there's name recognition and there's... it's a way for the alumni to give back to the university. Somebody, when they were students, gave money to this university that benefited them as students. Now that they're in decision-making roles with their companies, they have the opportunity to give money back that gives this generation of students. And when you graduate and become successful and start running a business one day, you'll want to come back and participate and maybe establish a scholarship or sponsor some kind of event or whatever the case may be, because somebody help you get to where you are, you're probably going to want to do the same thing and help somebody else. And that cycle just continues all the time. A new generation graduates and become successful and now they come back to help the next generation and it just keeps growing on itself.

R: Ok. What is the likelihood that you would consider buying a product from a brand or company after you see them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-2: I don't know that their sponsorship necessarily influences my buying decisions. Do I appreciate their sponsorship? Yes, cause it helps out. But do I go buy a Pepsi because Pepsi sponsors? Do I buy Coke because Coke now sponsors? No. I already have my personal preference, so I'm not going to change because of their sponsorship. Do I appreciate their sponsorship? Yeah. Now, they have a captured market when they do that, Coke and Pepsi. When they become the only drink you can buy on campus, a Coke

product, now they've positioned themselves to benefit from that. At the same time they are giving some of that profit back to the university to have that exclusive right. But if I'm buying something off campus, I'm not going to buy Coke just because they have a sponsorship here.

R: So it doesn't change your buying habit. Does it change your attitudes toward the company at all? The companies that are sponsoring PSU?

I-2: Yeah. I think so, because now I have an appreciation for the fact that they are willing to do something to benefit the students of the university, while at the same time most of them... Coke, Pepsi obviously get a benefit. I'm sure that whatever donation they're making to the university, they're not giving back 100 percent of their profits. Ok? They're still making money. And that's fine. They should. But they also wanted the bid to be able to sell their product. Ok? Now, the real estate company that does the ads at the football game; has their business greatly increased because of that? I'd be hard pressed to prove it. They might claim it does, I'd be hard pressed to say that it actually did that. It's like with any advertising. The advertising just gives you an awareness. You know, I used to buy ads all the time in Wichita Business Journal for our business, and sponsor this, or sponsor that. Now, a lot of our jobs are in a hard-bid arena, so 50 percent of the work is a customer that is just going to pick on low price. You can run all the ads and everything else. Now the ad may have got you invited to the dance with the other 5 contractors they are talking to, but ultimately it's going to be the low price that gets the job.

R: Yeah.

I-2: So it doesn't necessarily effect their final decision. So, most of the companies do the sponsorship more for brand awareness. It's the same thing when we go to the state fair each year. The School of Construction and the College of Technology take the lead at the state fair each year to run the university information booth. If it wasn't for us doing it, nobody else would do it. Marketing doesn't want anything to do with it. Recruiting, or admissions, they don't want anything to do with it. So it's left to us. If we're going to have a booth at the state fair, it's because the School of Construction and with the support of the College of Technology want to do it. Now we get a few students or faculty from some of the other departments on the main campus that will help during the week, but from a financial standpoint, it's the College of Technology and the School of Construction that are paying for that event to happen. Yeah, it is not a recruiting event. Yes, we are getting some information from some people, but whether we talk to 10 people or 300 people, it's not about recruiting, it's about branding. It's getting our name out there. Now when we go there, it's not so much any more, but when we used to go there years ago, we'd have Kansas people walking up to our booth and saying, "Now, why would a university from Pennsylvania come to the Kansas State Fair?" Ok. That's a lack of brand awareness. When you're an in-state college and people don't even know you exist, that's an issue. So, we've taken it upon ourselves to make sure that doesn't happen. To be there so they can see our face, see our name, pass out literature to them, let them know there's another option in the state besides a KU, a K-State, an Emporia or whatever else.

R: So it's similar in what the brands are trying to accomplish.

I-2: Right. Name awareness. So that... you may not buy from them, but at least you know they're available as another option. So you may contact them about some additional information, you may not always buy something from them, but at least you've given them consideration. And I think that's what everybody wants to do in sponsorships or advertising or whatever, is to be able to get your name out just so the people know you exist. That's all we're trying to do, this is not a recruiting effort when we go to the state fair, it's a branding, it's marketing. "Hey, here we are down in Southeast Kansas. We're an option you should consider. Come visit us."

R: What type of brand, local versus national, do you think is better for PSU to associate with?

I-2: Both. I think you have to have both. You need the local awareness and the energy that it provides, but then you also need the national brands because of the monetary. Plus, you can take the brand maybe to a bigger market or whatever. There's been times when I travel, I always travel with something, if I'm on business I always travel with a logo of some type. And I'll be going through an airport, I mean I was checking in and getting a rental car at Indianapolis some time during the final four. And the guy at the counter recognized our logo. So, that national branding, we don't necessarily recruit students from national, but it doesn't hurt that we get some from the national market. Anytime, you know some of those national brands can help carry that message a little further than maybe local brands can.

R: What type of brand, national or local, is more beneficial as a sponsor to PSU?

I-2: I was gonna say I think they all... I don't know if you can pin one down. I mean, if you were going to say from a financial standpoint, which one's more significant. Ok, we'll now I'm going to go to Gene Bicknell and NPC. If NPC hadn't had made all the money they made through Pizza Hut, then we wouldn't have a Bicknell Center, we wouldn't have a College of Technology, Tech Center. We wouldn't have a lot of things on the campus that Gene's family paid for. But he made that money through a national organization that just happened to be locally-owned. So it's kind of a double-edged sword; nationally-recognized, but it was home-grown. So, I think both of them prosper to the benefit of the university.

R: Last question. Think of the PBR and Professional Bull Riders. They have brands such as Ford, Wrangler, beer companies. Does PSU have any brands that you feel like fit well with PSU because of their identity and because of the way that they kind of look? What makes them a good fit? Or what makes any brand a good fit for PSU?

I-2: Well the... some of the universities... you know like the technology... the College of Technology is not named after any one person or company. It could be the Brand X College of Technology. It could be Brand Z School of Construction. So if you go to the Arizona State University, it's the Dale Webb School of Construction. If you go to Florida,

it's the Franker School of Construction or whatever. And so they're named after people and/or companies that were very successful and donated money to help them grow or establish a building or whatever the case. And so while we have some campus buildings that are the Plaster, obviously, Bicknell, the College of Technology does not have a name associated with it. Nor do any of the programs have names. I mean, I think when we start... we've stayed neutral, cause who do you pick? Should it be the Crossland School of Construction? Obviously they've donated a lot of money over the years and hired a lot of students. But as soon as you start naming names, then does that alienate a JE Dunn, whose even bigger than Crossland? Or a Kiewit. I'm sure if you go to Nebraska, Lincoln in particular, and Omaha, it's probably the Kiewit School of Engineering, just because that's their hometown and they're going to put their money there. Could we have a Kiewit School of Construction? Yeah, but how many other people would that alienate? Would it cost you money in the long run? So we really haven't had that branding attached. Now, we have the Caterpillar Think Big program, but that's... they're providing the students for that. You know, they take them to a two-year college somewhere else in the country and then send them to the finishing school here. So there's a brand associated with that that fits technology and everything else that we do. Some day we want to add onto this building. Will it get to the point that the building... there will be some naming rights, I'm sure. All these rooms around in this building have names associated with them. If we try to grow the building, there will be some naming rights, there will be the whatever building. It could be the whatever lab room, or whatever classroom. I'm sure there will be some of that. And some of those will be individuals, but I suspect more of them will be companies. If you go to K-State, they did Seaton Hall, a big renovation, that's where their construction... So if you go in there now, it's the Eby Construction classroom, it's the Conco room, it's the AGC of Kansas room, so they put naming rights on all these rooms because those are the companies that donated money towards that effort. So I suspect that will happen, I'm sure the College of Business over there, as they do their funding some of those rooms or lecture halls or whatever are going to get naming rights to them. And some will be individuals, some will be corporate names that you'll recognize as you walk through the buildings.

Interview 3

R: What are your different associations with the college, you know, student, community member, alumni, anything else.

I-3: Sure. So, I was a student. A graduate, an alumni. I'm a board member of the Kelce School of Business. I'm a fan of sporting events, and have donated to them, so I'm a donor. I hire from them, so I have an affiliation in that sense, because I'm a recruiter. I attend their career fairs.

R: Ok, cool. How long have you had these associations? I guess it would start when you were a student, so how long has that full association been?

I-3: Yeah. So, since I was a student, so I started going there in '99. So what is that?

R: So it's 19? 19 years?

I-3: Yeah.

R: How attached to PSU do you feel? What is your level of attachment with them, and where does it come from?

I-3: You know, I feel like, moderately attached. I definitely feel an attachment, maybe not as much as some, like, big, huge fanatics. But, through going to school there, feeling an attachment, and then honestly I feel like my attachment has increased since I've been a business owner, because I've become more affiliated in the community in which I live just in working with different businesses and going to the career fair. You know, this year I went to the hospital gala for the first time and that was on campus, and so while maybe not a direct affiliation it feels, you know, it kind of has that affiliation feel. I've done some work with Pitt State, our agency has, so my affiliation feels like it's increased in the last couple of years.

R: Ok cool. How many sporting, or how often do you attend sporting events specifically, and what kind of sporting events do you attend?

I-3: Yeah, so I primarily attend the football games and I go to probably most of them. I don't know how many they play a year...

R: 10?

I-3: We probably go to 90 percent of home games. We only don't go if I have something going on. And then I usually attend a couple of basketball games, like two basketball games a season. And then, that's all. I haven't been to any other sporting events.

R: Ok. Here's your chance to do some more brands that you relate with PSU. So first off, national, what you would consider national brands or companies that you identify with PSU.

I-3: Ok. So I just thought of two: I guess Crossland's kind of a national brand, so I'd say Crossland. The other one I just thought of was, is it, uh, Einstein Bagel? Einstein because I think they have one, Einstein Bakery or whatever. And then, I know that they have some affiliation with either Under Armour or Nike, or Adidas, but I honestly can't pinpoint what it is, so I would think one of those, but I don't have it narrowed down. Um, national brands... gosh, what else? They don't have a Starbucks on campus.

R: They don't have a Root on campus either, they should have Root on campus.

I-3: Yeah, that's true. I don't know, that's all I can think of.

R: And if that's all you can think of that's fine.

I-3: That's really all the ones that I think of.

R: Ok. What about local brands?

I-3: Another one I thought of was PRG, that comes to mind, Tyler Herrell's business in town. Millers, the hospital, the Chamber of Commerce... I guess those are the ones that stand out to me, I mean, and then like just the conglomerate of small businesses that support the university.

R: And where do those associations come from? Do you associate those companies with Pitt State because you've seen them as sponsors or just because they all exist in Pittsburg?

I-3: I feel like my, I mean, I quickly associated Pitsco and I can't tell if it's because it's an education-based company and, just knowing that they'd be drawn to the university, or they also do the Educator of the Game, which, didn't come to mind immediately, but it could be back in my mind that made that association. Crossland I know does advertising and really, with Crossland, I know they have a big internship program and they just feel very affiliated with the university in a lot of ways. So I think it's probably from hearing a lot about their intern program and that they hire a lot from Pitt State and the fact that they advertise. I think that the others that I mentioned are probably just simply because they're substantially-sized businesses here in Pittsburg so, you know, the hospital and I don't know that I could pinpoint a specific correlation. Oh, another one that comes to mind is Ron's IGA, because they do the tailgater of the game. As I think more about it, there's an association there. But yeah, I think the others are just simply because they're here in Pittsburg and then when I say, like, just the community of small businesses, I think that's from Paint the Town Red. There's a lot of businesses that rally around that.

R: Yes. So, it's kind of a sense of community spirit where they all kind of support each other.

I-3: Yeah. And then specific to the City of Pittsburg, which is the very first one that came to mind, and then also the Chamber, which came to mind later, but those two... I've been involved in a lot of committees that, I mean, I think there's such a strong partnership right now between the city and the university and then the Chamber that that one came really quick to mind just because I think there's a lot of good PR and publicity going around, or at least in my circle, where I immediately associate them together.

R: Good. Ok, looking at the two different categories of companies - local versus national - what's the benefit of partnering with local brands, local companies, and then what's the benefit of partnering with national companies for PSU?

I-3: I think that from a local perspective, I mean, obviously they, you know, increasing your local fan base and support is important. Locally, those are the people who are going to come to the sporting events and, you know, the students, a lot of students will come from here locally. And it's a good way just to give back to your local community. Also, those affiliations help them, I would think, get local business owners, leaders, and employees to come in and do career, interview days and speak in classes, and different things that I know I've been invited to do a few times. As far as national brands, I mean, I think that it works both ways in the sense of a national brand affiliated with Pitt State kind of brings up their credibility from their part. And then, also being associated or affiliated with national brands helps kind of get them out in a broader network outside of Pittsburg. And I think, I know that there's a lot of donors and supporters that aren't here local, and so I'm sure the affiliations help in that way.

R: Yeah. What are some places that you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised?

I-3: Where is PSU advertised? Um, definitely all over town, just in a variety of businesses, you know, like I have pictures on my wall, which aren't necessarily advertisements but, just a lot of businesses have it. But as far as like Pitt State would be paying to advertise...

R: Or, where on Pitt State's campus you see other sponsors. Sponsors of Pitt State advertised?

I-3: Oh, ok. Where do I see those? Primarily the football games, that's probably my biggest one because I'm not on campus a lot, so I don't... nothing stands out to me on campus although I'm sure there's stuff there. At the football games... yeah that's primary way.

R: And at those football games, where do you see them there?

I-3: Mostly on the Jungletron. And then, maybe on the cups, I'm not really sure. I assume on the cups. Ron's does the Tailgater of the Game, which is not on the Jungletron. I mean,

they do get Jungletron space but they've got their own space. Educator of the Game comes out on the field.

R: What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?

I-3: I do think being on the Jungletron helps, I mean, just because it's big. Two more brands come to mind as I think about that: Pinamonti Orthodontics and Pinamonti Physical Therapy, they've done a lot of Jungletron advertising. Yeah, so what makes them stand out... I think being on the Jungletron.

R: And so you mentioned Ron's and Pitsco because they have these kind of extra... like on-field promotions essentially is what they are.

I-3: Yeah.

R: So those two, that kind of helps you remember those as well?

I-3: Yeah. Cause like, honestly, I'm kind of guessing at maybe people have sponsored the cups, I don't know if that's true. I couldn't tell you a single brand that did, I was just thinking that could have happened. And there may be brands that advertise there with banners, that kind of thing, but none of those come to mind. But I feel like I remember the on-field promotions and the Jungletron ads.

R: Ok, cool. That's exactly what I need to know. Is where you feel like you actually remember them and recall them. Ok. Big question: Does sponsorship benefit the university, and if so, how?

I-3: For companies sponsoring them?

R: Yes. And then also what's the benefit for the sponsors themselves.

I-3: Sure. I think it benefits the university in a few senses. For one, it's advertising revenue for the university. Two, it helps integrate them into the community and give back. I think it makes the football games fun. I think what Ron's does is something that's fun and part of Pitt State football games. What Pitsco does, Educator of the Game, has kind of become a tradition of the Pitt State games, so I think that those things lend to the overall atmosphere and it benefits Pitt State. And then I think for the companies, it just gets them a lot of brand exposure in front of a captured audience. It gets their name in front of the people who are at the games. So, building brand awareness for those companies but also staying top of mind for people who may already have brand awareness but seeing that repeated... and I think also there are some people who appreciate that companies do support the university and so they may take their business... you know, they may appreciate that Ron's sponsors Pitt State and therefore choose to buy groceries at Ron's instead of going to Walmart.

R: That's actually my next question: for you personally, and then you can also talk about what you think other people do... does the likelihood change, would you consider buying a product from a brand or a company you see, after you see them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-3: Yeah, I think definitely, like, for me personally, it has the opportunity to create some brand awareness, because I am paying attention to, especially the ones that I noted, the on-field and the Jungletrons, I think there's an opportunity where a brand could gain awareness that I didn't know before. I know there's insurance agents, and car dealerships who advertise there even, who may, kind of subtly plant that in my mind. I don't, if I'm being honest, I don't think it's so strong that I would be like, "That person advertised at Pitt. I'm definitely going there." But, it's certainly, if it moves the needle, it moves it in a positive direction for sure.

R: Ok, good. So it's more of a benefit in terms of the brand awareness: you know that's an option and then...

I-3: I think so. You know, there is a piece of me that, when asked, I feel like I do appreciate local businesses who support our university, so, you know, it's always hard for us to articulate how much that influences our purchasing decisions because we don't really know ourselves. But, I do know that that has some meaning to me, and so I would assume that in the midst of everything else that influences my decision, that's in there some where.

R: The next one I want to go into is attitude change. So, as opposed to behavior change, this is more just attitude change. How does your attitude change, if it does at all, towards a brand or company when you see them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-3: I think what it definitely does is increase my respect or my opinion of the brand. So, you know, honestly I'm not going to go purchase anything from Pitsco, I'm not a teacher or educator, I'm not in that space, but I admire and appreciate and respect that they give back to their local community and support their university. And so when I think about companies like Crossland, Pitsco, and those that do sponsor, I think that I have heightened favorability. And if, you know, somebody asked me about that company, it helps give a positive feel for the company versus comparing that to another company locally who, they don't do those things, they don't give back, they don't support. I think they miss out on that increased or elevated feeling about their brand.

R: Are there any instances where you feel like it would negatively effect either your opinion of PSU or the brand if PSU was in some sort of sponsorship with some brand.

I-3: I mean, yeah, I would not... I think it would be really bad on Pitt State's part if they had like a strip club or something of that nature advertised. Or, I think that it could hurt them if they chose a very strong direction on a very controversial issue. So, I don't know, if they had an ad that really heavily supported abortion or was totally against abortion, in a very controversial situation like that, I am sure people would... there could be some

negativity. But that's the only ones I can think of, if they associate themselves with a brand that's doing something that's already really in question or very, very controversial. Or a brand that's been in the media for scandalous activity or embezzlement or something, I would think that that would not be a good association. But other than that, nothing comes to mind that would be a negative association.

R: Ok. Alright, looking again at the categories of national versus local, what type of brand do you think is better for PSU to associate with?

I-3: I think they're both important. I don't know that I, I mean, I guess if I had to pick one, I would pick one. But I really think that they're both really important.

R: What ways do each of them kind of better PSU?

I-3: Well, I think the associations locally help draw local support from your community. I mean, Pitt State wants, and our community is, just rallies around Pitt State, so, I think their affiliations locally help magnify that, keep that strong, keep local students wanting to come to Pitt State. That's in their favor. But I think the national recognition helps them get outside of Pittsburgh because the university can't exist alone on local students and local support. We know that there's a lot of donors from big companies and from alumni who've moved away and are living other places that wouldn't maybe get the exposure from just a local association but would get the association from a national association. And I think Pitt State wants to be a, is and wants to maintain a reputation of being a sought after, highly thought of university, and so I think those national associations help with that.

R: Which type of brand, local or national, is more beneficial to PSU as a sponsor?

I-3: I don't know. I think that they're probably both important. I'm not sure I know. I mean I think you can look at it from different ways, like from a revenue perspective, and I don't what the ad revenue is for each of those but one could assume it would be bigger from national but I'm sure the volume's more from local. I don't know I think that they're both important.

R: That's a fair answer. Some people really think that those local connections are much more beneficial to PSU then the national ones. Other people are like, "Pitt State's in a horrible financial state. They need national companies to bring in the revenue. Some people have a very strong opinion, some people think that they are both important.

I-3: You know another brand that just comes to mind is, they just had that big Coke/Pepsi debacle. They are with Coke now.

R: That's actually the first one that people have been saying.

I-3: I didn't think about that one at first.

R: Interestingly enough, they still identify both with PSU. They know that we are a Coke campus now but they are struggling to root out the idea of being a Pepsi campus because it was for so long and the connection with Pepsi.

I-3: Yeah. And it was just so knew that... and controversial when it happens that I think both brand names were in the local media and the conversation of, "We're leaving Pepsi!"

R: The last question I have... I'll try to explain it better than I have been. If you think of the PBR - Professional Bull Riding Association - some of their sponsors are Ford, Wrangler, certain beer companies because if you look at those two and the identities that they have, kind of the brand identities that they have, they fit well together. PSU, when you think of their brand image, first off, what do you think PSU's brand image is? And then, are there any companies that you feel like fit that image really well, and what are some ways that they fit well?

I-3: Yeah. I think Pitt State's brand image is they have high value on education. They have a lot of value around community support. I think they have, you know, they value technology. So some of the companies that I would associate being... Apple from an education perspective, companies like KhanAcademy... trying to think of what other companies are really driving in the education space... I think they also have a strong athletic side, good at athletics and awesome outstanding facilities athletic-wise, so I think some associations there with Nike or Under Armour, those types of affiliations. I mean from a technology perspective it would be a big thing but, companies like Google, companies like that could be cool associations. I'm also trying to think of brands that are really rallied around Millennials... I don't know if it would make sense for Pitt State to have an association with Snapchat...

R: Even through filters, like a Snapchat filter for PSU.

I-3: Yeah. I think, you know, other companies that are just regional, large employers like Cerner, Garmin, this type of companies also come to mind as being... Coke Industries... those type of Industries having a strong affiliation seems like that would make sense as well. Or even Polymers with our polymer program that would make sense as well.

Interview 4

R: So the first ones kind of say who you are: What is your association to PSU?

I-4: I am an alumni. I am also currently a faculty member of the Engineering Technology department. Continuing full-time temporary instructor.

R: How long have you been associated with PSU?

I-4: Oh goodness. I started in the fall of 2007, so since then. So that'd be 10 years. Oh goodness, 10 years.

R: Ok. How attached to PSU do you feel?

I-4: Not at all.

R: Ok. So expand on that just a little bit.

I-4: I work there, for the time being. After May I probably won't go back, very much.

R: Ok. How attached do you feel to the community of Pittsburg?

I-4: Not a whole lot since I commute every day. I haven't spent much time in Pittsburg, so I go there, do my job, and leave.

R: How often do you attend sporting events?

I-4: Well let me tell you, I've been around for 10 years and I've been to about 2 sporting events there.

R: What kind of sporting events were they?

I-4: I went to a volleyball game during my freshman experience class and I went to one football game, but it wasn't at PSU, it was actually PSU playing at Missouri Southern. Oh no, I went to a baseball game once. So that's three

R: Good. How involved are you with your department, the Engineering Technology department?

I-4: I teach there. As far as more than that?

R: Yeah, like do you do any of the...

I-4: Recruitment stuff? No, not a whole lot. I give department tours every once in a while if I have to.

R: Ok. What national brands, national as opposed to local, what national brands or companies do you identify or relate to PSU?

I-4: Well, what I put down on my paper was... with sports, I assume they are affiliated with Nike or Adidas or whoever does their jerseys. And I assume there's some sort of Pepsi or something like that for the food court. Again, I only go to the tech center, and the west branch of the tech center, so I don't go to the commons area so I don't really see what's around.

R: Are there any brands or companies that you know specifically do things with the Engineering Technology program?

I-4: Um, not on a continuing basis I would say. The biggest things that come to mind with Career Day which we have sponsors there, but that's kind of a limited event. The other thing I can think of is like in the plastics area, like right now they're getting a new injection molding machine, so like Engel donated a machine to them there. But I don't know if that's a continuing thing as far as...

R: Well, it's still something that's associated with PSU.

I-4: Sure, yeah. So it'd be companies that donated to... also construction, they've got a lot of donations through their companies there. Then we have our advisory board, so I mean, I guess you would say Black and Veatch is associated with us a little bit as with the bigger companies around Kansas City, other members of the advisory board. But those are not really... I think Black and Veatch is obviously an international one, but then there's other ones that are more regional companies.

R: What about local, so things you consider local brands or companies.

I-4: Oh, local brand or company that I identify with PSU... I would say the company, I mean again it kind of goes back to what I deal with, I think it's called Depco maybe. It's the company that does the 3-D printers and stuff. I would say I associate them with PSU just because they come work on our machines. Trying to think if there's any others. That's about it.

R: Ok. So you primarily... any companies that you see that you associate with PSU... it sound like they primarily come from where you see them in the technology center. Is that right?

I-4: That is correct.

R: Cool. In your mind, what is the benefit - looking at the two different types which may be a little bit different for you - but looking at local brands versus national ones, what's the benefit in your mind of partnering with local brands? And then what's the benefit of partnering with national ones?

I-4: Ok. The local brands, probably the benefit I see is a) they're easy to get ahold of. I mean, you call them and they're right across town type of thing, so you don't have to worry about going through a call center in India or anything like that. Also a lot of our local ones also are tied themselves to PSU, like they're all alumni and so forth there, so they're really eager to help. So I'd say that's the major benefits there. As far as the benefits on the national scale, it's usually probably resources they have to bear on a given problem, right? I mean you're talking much larger companies there, so if you were seeking funds, it's a lot easier for them to write off a significant donation, which is a little harder for a smaller company around here.

R: What are some places specifically - events or whatnot - where you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised?

I-4: Sponsors of PSU as a whole advertised?

R: Or departments. Wherever you see people - outside brands sponsoring some sort of thing at or associated with PSU.

I-4: Does it have to be away from the campus of PSU? Or does it matter? Because the thing that immediately jumps to mind is our career day, because we've got banners saying, "Hey, these people are sponsors," and different tables say we're sponsors and names events and so forth. I'm trying to think outside of that if I have any thoughts there. I can't really think of any others.

R: Ok. So that Career Day and any time equipment comes in.

I-4: Yeah. Then they're almost more of a vendor is how I'm associating with them there because that's basically what they are to us.

R: The ones that you do remember, what makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?

I-4: What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university? I would say probably the frequency with which I see them, as far as at the university. The frequency with which I have to deal with them. I guess the other thing would be the quality. Typically it can be a good thing, but you also remember the bad ones.

R: This is a broad question: Does sponsorship benefit PSU? And if so, how?

I-4: Does sponsorship benefit PSU... I would say it has the potential to, as far as if you're able to be sponsored by a company that's reputable and that other people like, then that kind of benefits as far as people like them so they like PSU a little bit better as far as framing of there. But I don't know if that's a real strong thing that pulls a lot of people there. I don't know if there's enough die-hard people, especially with the companies I deal with that they really love Depco as far as the 3-D printing thing. It's probably not going to sway them too much to go to PSU. But I could see how that could possibly be done with

other companies that are a little bit more consumer goods as opposed to just technical equipment.

R: Do you think that PSU... do you think they do a good job of getting outside companies to come in and have a presence on campus? Or do you not know? What's your opinion on that?

I-4: PSU as a whole, I don't really know as far as what they, how they try to get companies to come and sponsor things and so on and so forth there. As far as our specific department, I would say we could probably do better. I mean, the only time we really have company involvement is Company Day, that one day. And then we have the Advisory Boards twice a semester. I suppose if we were really interested in pushing that kind of sponsorship and that connection we could reach out and have more events happening that could get students involved and so on and so forth there that we just haven't done.

R: What is the likelihood that you would consider buying a product from a company after seeing them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-4: Oh, probably depends on how well I was happy with the sponsorship as far as how their sponsorship went at PSU I guess. I mean, again, I feel like it's kind of an awkward question on mine, as far as, I think of all the people I've dealt with there and if I was at a company that was there and I just thought they were ignorant or whatever, didn't have a good impression, then obviously I'm not going to go back and see them. But I would say if I've got a company that I was exposed to at PSU and was associated there and I thought the company was worthwhile and I liked their goods, I would definitely see I could be persuaded to go see them just because I've already kind of felt like I've known the company.

R: So it's based on just the knowledge that you recognize them as an option for you to go to.

I-4: Yeah. That might be the easiest thing as far as sponsorship for PSU. They got connected with PSU and got more eyes on their product by being associated with it there.

R: What about, so that's more behavior in terms of buying a product. What about your attitude? How does your attitude change toward their company when you see them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State, if it does change?

I-4: Oh I don't know if it changes a whole lot. I guess it kind of depends on how I feel about my job on a given day.

R: Ok, so go into that a little bit in terms of if you don't feel attached to PSU, how does that influence it?

I-4: Well if I do feel attached to PSU, I guess feel better about as far as hey, they're working with PSU and helping things out. If I don't feel attached to PSU, I think, "Man, they're just throwing their money away."

R: Ok. So currently, in your current situation and the way that you currently see Pittsburg State, do you not care as much about...

I-4: That'd be right.

R: Which type of brand - national or local, those are your two categories - do you think is better for PSU to associate with?

I-4: National or local... I would say it depends on what their end game is. As far as local, I'd say if their end game is to be associated with a given brand and get more to come to PSU as far as to offset falling tuition, I would say they should steer toward the local side of things. We just don't get many students from... Kentucky coming to PSU. But I would say if it's more on the dollar amount, as far as, "I need to raise funds," I would say look more toward the national, bigger brands.

R: What type of brand then - local or national - is more beneficial as a sponsor to PSU?

I-4: I guess usually I think of the term sponsor in terms of dollar amounts, so I would say national.

R: Think of the PBR - Professional Bull Riders association - their sponsors are Ford, Wrangler, beer companies. So, if you look at those two, that makes sense in terms of, those are just things that fit well with PBR. They have this kind of cowboy, western culture.

I-4: Agreed.

R: When you think of PSU, what is PSU's brand image, what do you associate with them? And then with that, what sort of companies do you envision them fitting well with.

I-4: Ok, so first part is figuring out the brand image of PSU, right?

R: What do you think of when you think of PSU?

I-4: Gorillas.

R: Ok. Athletics?

I-4: Athletics are in there, yeah. And as far as companies that tie into that are like, Nike just because they hire our students. There's a weight lifting company we bought some weights from when they did the new... whatever... I can't remember the name, it was

"Max" something. So that makes me think of that. Other things with PSU, what else do I think about... I would say education, but...

R: Education is good.

I-4: Yeah, but it's hard to think of companies that would go underneath that. I mean, I think of Canvas, and they're made by, like, Instructure or something. I guess that would be one. Who else as far as when I think of education and PSU... I think of Barnes and Noble in the bookstore. Yeah, I got that one. What else... they've got Under Armour... I think of apparel now. I'm thinking Under Armour now. And I'm thinking now of the graduation... the cap and gown people. Jostens or whoever does that. I think of basketball... is there anything on the big scoreboard up there... there is something, in the big cube thing in the Weede. There's a name up there, I know there's advertising up there, there's probably somebody there. That kind of goes back to athletics though. I think of beer, too.

R: That's interesting. Why?

I-4: Cause I know my students.

R: Ok. So it makes sense in terms of a college lifestyle.

I-4: Especially at PSU.

R: So with these, you're doing... the way you're associating them, just to see if this is right, is it practically makes sense because you know these things are useful - we need an apparel sponsor. We have education, so we have a Barnes and Noble bookstore. Yours is very much practical.

Interview 5

R: What is your association to PSU? Are you a student, community member, alumni, and then also your family, what was your family's association to PSU?

I-5: Ok, so yeah, I'm a student, I'm a senior, graduating soon. My parents both graduated from here, so they're both alumni, as well as three out of the four of my grandparents. So yeah, I have a lot of family that's been here, a lot of my aunts and uncles have also attended here. So we have a very "Gorilla" family.

R: Yes. That's cool. How long have you been a student and then you remember going to football games or something before you were a student?

I-5: Yeah. I've been a student 3 years but I definitely... I went to a game this season that they won the national championship, and I've been to a few as I was growing up. I do kind of remember even when the stadium looked different, I remember going to some games when I was really little. Pretty much, I would say every other year it seemed like we came down for it. And I remember attending homecoming parade on Broadway and stuff. Lots of activities.

R: How then, how attached to PSU do you feel on a whole?

I-5: Like on a scale of 1 to 10?

R: Yeah you can quantify it, and then just kind of explain where that feeling of attachment... kind of expand on that as well.

I-5: Ok. Yeah, I mean I would say like I have... on a scale, a very heavy attachment to PSU. I would just qualify that with, no matter where I go, what my future looks like career-wise, I would never be ashamed to mention the fact that I earned my undergrad from Pitt State as a gorilla. So I... that's not something that I want to rush through and get out; of that's not the type of college that this is for me. I feel like it's definitely been a solid home for me while I've been here. I'm finding it hard to want to leave.

R: How often do you attend sporting events and what kind do you attend?

I-5: I went to a very good majority of football games this year, and have most of my time here, whether it would be working or volunteering at them or actually sitting and watching the game. I also has been to mostly, outside of that, mostly volleyball and a few women's basketball games and a couple of men's basketball games. Besides that, I've maybe been to one softball, one baseball, and then I also go to more novelty stuff like, watch the lacrosse and rugby games and stuff like that which aren't usually sponsored but...

R: Usually not I think they have that opportunity.

I-5: Rugby, well actually yeah and even the soccer club, their huge sponsor is El Charro. They paid for their soccer club's jerseys, and now that they're starting to compete against some of the regional schools that's kind of cool.

R: That's neat. Ok, so where do you feel like you hear the most about sponsorships? Do you see them when you're at the sporting events or do you think you get most of your knowledge from working with the Collegio [student newspaper]?

I-5: Um, I think that honestly, could you even consider sponsors people that advertise in the Collegio?

R: Yeah.

I-5: Because I know obviously there's a lot, like even car sales and restaurants like Cafe Del Rio and those kind of things there. But, I definitely... what triggers my memory is seeing the logos on the back of shirts like from the BIG Event shirts, and then also hearing them at football games and athletic events. Like, you see Names and Numbers, and then like I don't remember... is it Carpino Ford or something that does the thing with the truck?

R: I think so.

I-5: So stuff like that that you hear so many times that I'm able to just whip it out from my memory I guess.

R: That makes sense. Similar to what you just did here, I want you to say what are some national, what you would consider national brands or companies that you identify with PSU.

I-5: National?

R: Yes.

I-5: Well Via Christi is a regional, so that would be like it could be considered national I believe. Names and Numbers is a national corporation. I don't know about Freeman Health... I don't think national, necessarily, but more regional.

R: There are two categories here, there's national and then local, what you would consider local.

I-5: Ok, so... national... I mean, Pizza Hut, and even Einstein Bros, I mean, having a spot here. Sodexo is an international corporation. Trying to think of what else is, you know, Pittsburg didn't have too many national entities in it. Coca-Cola for sure. Before that Pepsi-Cola (laughs). What else is there? Pretty much I think all of the national advertisers are either involved with the Student Center or athletics, right? I mean, we don't really get

national advertisers, I mean no national advertisers are in the Collegio. You know? Stuff like that.

R: What about local brands or companies... businesses that you identify with PSU?

I-5: Local car dealerships, like Carpino. Even I know that there's a lot, I can't name them all, like Menghini Law, Spigarelli Law, Mitchelson Associates, like a lot of law firms that will hook up. Also, I guess, is Pitsco national?

R: Some people, I think of them as a local company because they are based here but they are a national brand so it's however you want to call it.

I-5: Yeah. And I would also throw in Millers Commercial Imaging because they are kind of national with their website, Mpix.com and stuff. Some stuff that we think of as local, like you said, cause they're based here, but they really are national. Like Names and Numbers, a lot of people think it's just some local thing but they give out phone books in California. But other local stuff, even real estate groups, well let's see, Timepieces has sponsored a couple things. I forget one the other one is... obviously there's University Realty, something like that. So yeah, you get into a lot of those other sectors of business around town like real estate, car dealerships, law firms, any other local things. I think Pitsco was another one I was thinking of. I think of all those places that are over on Jefferson Street, too, like the industrial park kind of stuff. I know that there was the Lego place, but it's not open anymore.

R: Yeah, Lego Education.

I-5: Yeah. Cause they've done Paint the Town Red before but I don't know what else they've sponsored. You know, and then there's banks. I don't know what banks are considered local and national. Like Equity Bank and Labette Bank I consider more local, regional things. Commerce Bank, however, to go back on a national one now that you're making me think about it, Commerce Bank does sponsor a lot. And even for BIG Event they've done stuff before. Yeah, I think also, I think of who advertises with KRPS radio station, which an affiliate of the university. So we get... Millers advertises with us, as well as... it's like an insurance broker that advertises with us... Shelter Insurance does some stuff too. I could sit here and try to keep coming up with stuff.

R: So there's a lot of them? So it's really easy for you to come up with a lot of those.

I-5: I think so, yeah. And like you said, it probably helps working for the newspaper and the radio and hearing them, and listening to public and print media definitely helps. But I really do, on honestly, to answer another question in a more concise way, just sitting at an athletic event, you hear them enough that you ask me a question like that, and I can literally think, "Oh yeah, I hear Freeman Health Systems all the time over the loud speaker." You know what I mean?

R: Yes, that's good. Alright, so, what do you think is the benefit, looking at two categories, local brands and what you consider national brands, what's the benefit of partnering with local brands, and then what's the benefit of partnering with national brands for PSU?

I-5: Yeah I think, and like I said it's mostly the area they stay restricted to is like athletics, but I think national brands advertising with the main hub of the Student Center on campus and with athletics, just creates... like puts us on a more national radar. When people come here, they see the Coca-Cola sponsor has stuff everywhere, they realize like, "Wow, this isn't some school in the middle of nowhere, Kansas." We actually have recognition from major companies that people know about and are aware of. To see Einstein Brothers and Pizza Hut in our Student Center means that we're not just... you know we don't have grandma cooking out of a stove in the back of the Student Center kitchen.

R: Which may not be bad, though!

I-5: Yeah, which wouldn't be bad either! But... and I think Wholly Habaneros has a couple other... stuff out there, too. There not open very much it seems like, though. But yeah, and then with local... obviously, Pitt State is identified with many people as a college town, so when you have that identity and Pittsburg State Gorillas is an identity for a city, a lot of local sponsors want to have their name out there, and they want to be a part of that, have a stake in that game. I think that when you have that identity, a lot of local sponsorships really do matter. For people to sit there and hear about, especially here a name from a real estate agent or insurance broker over and over again, you're going to get a sense of trust that comes along with that name when you hear it over the loudspeaker of something that you love going to like a Pitt State football game or a basketball game. So that's why I really think local sponsorships are really critical and in a city environment like this when you have such a close partnership between the city commerce and the university lifestyle and stuff...

R: That makes sense. Thinking of those places where you've seen sponsors of PSU advertised, what are some of the main places that you remember seeing that sponsorship shown?

I-5: Sure. Um, like I said, I honestly think Labette Bank's done a good job. I associate them with the BIG Event, especially the more community service-style things. I can't think of them right now but I can picture Labette Bank being on the back of even other club's, you know, smaller... just people who go out and do things for the university. I definitely associate the PSU football games with Freeman Health and I think of Palluca's, too, which is local. So that's really awesome that they have an in like that. I think at one point we had Rib Crib in the stadium, and then that disappeared. So that's another national one I guess. But to have a local business like that replace a national... that's awesome for them. Working concessions honestly helps too, like remember stuff. Like the fact that we have Coke and Palluca's, you know, whatever else is in there.

R: And you had mentioned the back of T-shirts, you often see them on...

I-5: Yeah. Yeah, I think... honestly it's easy to forget about because, for you and I we're in the comm and broadcasting world, that kind of thing, but KOAM and KKOW, they sponsor things too and I think of them when I think of back of T-shirts. That's not a really precise answer, but... what is it that... KOAM does something every year. Oh, it's with, so when I think of Apple Day and the contests and dessert stuff we have, KOAM comes in and they cover it, and they're a huge sponsor. Like, KOAM's coming to talk about Apple Day and to actually broadcast it, so that's something that I think about when I think of the news stations, what they do for the university. Obviously there's tons of other stories that happen throughout the year that they cover with us, but in terms of something that they volunteer to come to and sponsor, it's the dessert eating contest like that that I think of for media groups. And that's the fun thing that you want to sponsor, like you don't want a law firm to come and sponsor a dessert contest, because you want a media group to come in and broadcast it and actually take pictures and stuff. What else? Honestly, another national one that comes to mind when I think of prideful days at PSU like Apple Day is Voya. Voya comes in and gives out a big scholarship or bonus check to employees on Apple Day, so that's a name that pops into mind. I think it's like, "Oh, who's this?" It makes you really ask a question. You don't get too many people like that that come in, but when a national organization comes in and hands out money like that you go, "Oh, what do they do?" You want to look in to them. So that's a bonus for them, I guess, too. Any other direct correlations between a sponsor and them... when I think of going to the Student Center to eat, I think of Pizza Hut and Einstein Bros. I don't think of the other local chains that are in there.

R: What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?

I-5: I would say just repetition of hearing them over a loudspeaker or keeping their logo the same for the back of T-shirts for clubs and for university-wide events whether it be the BIG Event or Apple Day, or Paint the Town Red, Spring Break T-shirts, stuff like that.

R: Alright, this is a big question: Does sponsorship benefit PSU, and if so in what way?

I-5: Yeah I think for sure with national sponsorships. I mean, you walk around and you see a Coke machine literally almost everywhere you turn. And they look nice, too. PSU's partnered with really groups that produce nice things. Even Sodexo, I mean, stuff is expensive and I'm not a huge fan of their contract with the building because it puts a limiter on a lot of what clubs and people can do when they come here, but the stuff that they put out is quality. So I think PSU's done a really good job with their sponsor partnerships like that where they actually have contracts and not just people who are paying to be on the back of a T-shirt, necessarily, but that actually are involved in more daily operations. That makes me, I think even when I come on a tour here and I see that and I see that the food that they're putting out is excellent quality, and I see the Coke machines are fancy and new and lit up, it's not just some dungeon hallway, old farmer's school university that I'm coming to. It actually puts an image with the college. Yeah, I

think when you go to a university athletic event, and you hear so many sponsors, like there aren't just two health systems, like Freeman Health and Via Christi Health both sponsor something, and you have five different named insurance agencies or real estate brokerages. Even though you don't think about it, but if it weren't that way, it would be noticeable. If there was one sponsor at an athletic event, it would just... the environment would feel a little different. If you kept hearing the same name over and over again, like, "Oh my gosh, why do they list off Freeman Health every timeout break?" It would get old, and you'd notice that. But the fact that there's so many people that want in on the university image, that says something. You come here and are like, "Wow." And also too, for people that want that local feel, I think sponsorships attribute to that local feel, the small town feel of the university. Even though Pittsburg's growing, you hear some name, like, Joe Smith's Shelter Insurance or whatever it may be, you hear that there's still local names coming out and honestly, you kind of get an idea of even some of the Italian descent of the area. When you hear Spigarelli, Menghini, and all these, like, Palluca's and stuff, you get an idea like, "Oh, ok, there's something to this university that isn't just fluff," like national fluff, that you might get at a D-1 school, or you hear the same sponsorships over and over again like Taco Bell, and stuff like that. It's actually like, you might actually get some local food, you might actually get to talk to people and make connections at this university that you don't normally get when you hear a bunch of national advertisers at an athletic event or at a community service day.

R: So there's more of that local feel... that local connection feels more authentic, genuine than maybe some of the big name sponsors?

I-5: Yeah it really ties this awareness, it creates this awareness that there really is a sense of community that comes with the university. The university just isn't its own city in a city, because you have all of these, like I said, not fluffy national advertisers, but like cliché national advertisers, the ones you hear advertising a lot with colleges in that regard. You get this idea that the city and the university care about each other, and there's more to this university than just what's at the university when you have that many local sponsorships. Like the Bryant Student Health Center, their partnership with Via Christi, that's huge. I don't know how many students actually realize that or know that, but the fact that our doctors are registered with the local hospital and you get that kind of cross-treatment, if you can't be taken care of at our Student Health Center, that same doctor that you saw initially and explained your problem to is going to follow you to the local hospital. That's not something that you hear about when you hear about other universities at all. That's a really unique thing. Stuff like that for sure, is what comes to mind with benefits.

R: What's the likelihood that you would consider buying a product... that you would consider buying a product... from a brand or company after seeing them as a sponsor of PSU?

I-5: Say that again?

R: What is the likelihood that you would consider buying a product from a brand or company after you've seen them as a sponsor?

I-5: I don't want to get too opinionated because I don't know how much you can use that, but like... I think...

R: You can get pretty opinionated, too. It can be your personal experience.

I-5: Ok. I feel like my family generally has been set in their ways with a lot of the products that they buy in the first place. So what comes to mind when you say that, the likelihood of me buying a Coke product now that they've switched here is more. Not that... I don't drink soda a lot, but their more novelty drinks, like the sports drinks and the lemonade and the ice tea that they bring to the table, I'm more likely to reach out and go to that when I see Coca-Cola because I think about what I've had at home, and that's what my mom has always been a huge supporter of Coke and she drinks Coke all the time. So before when it's Pepsi-Cola, I had a less quality association in my head with that company, and so I wasn't as likely to go out and get stuff from that. But there are certain things that I think just match with your upbringing that clicks with you, so when you see those things, I think you're more likely to buy them. I don't know how much that actually attributes to the university and their benefit with having a sponsorship equating to my likelihood of buying something, maybe it doesn't necessarily correlate, but...

R: But it does benefit the sponsors themselves.

I-5: Sure. If they weren't here then I would never have had that likelihood of matching my history of buying products with them being here.

R: It comes more from your personal history and your personal preferences that then match up with the university. Like if you were a Pepsi person, in the university switch to Coke, would you be more likely to drink Coke or would you stay with Pepsi because that's your thing?

I-5: I would probably want to stay with Pepsi I guess. Something that you just made me realize too, I can't completely answer this but I would like to think that after I graduate and move somewhere else maybe even completely out of this region, if I see a sponsor that was sponsoring at Pittsburg State while I was at college here, I may be more likely to buy that product as an alumni out in a different region just because it reminds me of... I have an association with that product for that brand from college where I felt like I was at home. So I may be more likely to buy that product after I leave this place.

R: That's really interesting to think about. Yeah you just think of those things and it's a part of the PSU experience.

I-5: Let's say move to another town that has a Labette Bank and then a bunch of banks that I don't know, I know that Labette Bank was awesome when I was in Pittsburg,

Kansas, and they did cool stuff for the university, so I may want to choose to bank with them verses some national bank or some other local bank that I don't know about.

R: So then, thinking about your attitudes towards the sponsors, not just your buying experience. How do your attitudes change toward a brand or company when you see them as a sponsor?

I-5: I see it has been caring for the university. Especially those sponsors that students go to... you know, like Del Rio, when they sponsor things, the Mall Deli when they sponsor things. Places especially where students go to eat or spend their money at, and then you see them sponsoring stuff at the university, it's like, "Oh, they're not just here to poach the college students and get the little income that they have." They actually care about us and what we're doing at the university. So it does create a positive attitude towards them, even if they are doing it just for that fact alone but it really does. I don't think it... a lot of people don't put a lot of thought into what their motivations are when they sponsor something. They're just happy to see them sponsoring it.

R: Local versus national, back to those two categories. What type of brand, local or national, do you think is better for PSU to associate with?

I-5: That's hard because I really do... can I say both? But I really do think that it is so critical like I said to continue establishing that identity of the university that really partners with the community, to continue to have a solid amount of local sponsorships. However, I think it would be beneficial to this university to acquire more national sponsorships.

R: What do they have to offer that the local ones don't?

I-5: I think about the students that are coming here and what they see when they walk on campus, when they get a tour, they come here for some conference, or something, and they see more national sponsorships, especially those that are coming from bigger cities like Kansas City, Wichita, Tulsa, Northwest Arkansas, they see more national stuff that they have at home. That's going to make them more willing to make a move here I think, even subconsciously. That stuff you don't think about. That's what national sponsorships bring to the table when they have Coke, like, "Oh, my high school also had Coke as their sponsor. That's cool." I mean, it's not something that people normally are going to vocalize or think about but it's all these... advertising and sponsorships truly go after your subconscious, whether it's their colors or their slogans and stuff like that. Knowing that, you also have to use that same mindset that sponsorships have when you think about students choosing colleges; there's a lot of subconscious decisions that happen.

R: Which type of brand, local or national, do you think is more beneficial as a sponsor of PSU?

I-5: I think national is more beneficial, but to a certain extent. If you went any further than 60 or 70% national sponsorships, I would start to lean toward then that's no longer

beneficial because I think you have to have that 30 or 40% solid foundation of local sponsorships that keeps Pittsburg as a city what it is. Pittsburg State, whether or not people think of Pittsburg as the university, it still is in Pittsburg, Kansas. I know a lot of the main question that students have when they came here is, "What else is there to do outside of the university?" I tell them we have these restaurants to go to, these parks to go to, the sporting events to go to, that kind of thing.

R: This one's kind of hard to explain. If you think of the PBR - Professional Bull Riders Association - they have sponsors such as Ford, Wrangler, different beer companies. It's a fit thing. PBR's brand image, then the brand image of these other ones that they fit. So if you think of PSU's brand image, the first question is what is PSU's brand image; what do you associate with them? And then, what sponsors are good fits with that brand image?

I-5: When I think of PSU as an outsider, honestly I really do think of the huge sponsorship that the weight room has with...

R: Promaxima?

I-5: Promaxima. That's honestly one of the things that I think of looking at it from the outside, because I guess I would go on the line of thought of, because people think of Pitt State athletics. When they're done with school here, they come back and they're more worried about the athletics and the new buildings as well, too. So I think of Promaxima giving a huge hand to our athletic training facility. Other brands, honestly even though I hate to say it, I think of Sodexo. I'm not a huge fan but that's something that if I were to see that brand elsewhere, I would think, "Oh, they were at Pitt State." So that's kind of my correlation there that I would make. When I think of Pitt State I also think of Pizza Hut just because it has its roots here, too. They're in the university and they also sponsor stuff for the university, a graduate of the university started Pizza Hut. Yeah. And then coming more generically, when I think of the university I think of certain market sectors that will sponsor with the university because they're things college students care about. You have a lot of health organizations that will sponsor the University athletics because that makes sense, you know? You have health systems that care about the health of athletes. You get banks because college students need to open checking accounts when they're down here. Does that make sense? Like stuff that obviously has an appeal to college students is the first thing that comes to my mind. I don't honestly think of law firms and I don't think of real estate agencies when I think of sponsorships first off, because that's not something that I am already caring about as a college student.

R: That makes sense. So the things you... the brands that makes sense for...

I-5: Food, health, banks, stuff that I'm going to use on my daily. That's what comes to mind first.

R: As a college student.

I-5: An alumni who might, that cares more about a local law firm or car dealership. I'm in college, I'm going to drive my clunker. I don't...to see a nice, fancy, \$32,000 truck in the end zone at a sporting event, that's not what I care about. I care more about Papa John's giving me a discount on pizza the next day or Cafe Del Rio, that's what I care about as a college student.

Interview 6

R: What is your association to PSU, in terms of student, alumni, faculty?

I-6: I am a student.

R: Ok. Do you have any jobs on campus?

I-6: I do. I work at the Engineering Technology office.

R: How long have you been associated with PSU?

I-6: Almost 4 years.

R: How attached do you feel to PSU, and where does that sense of attachment come from?

I-6: I would say I'm pretty attached as I'm about to get a degree. It's an establishment that has taught me what I know to go out into the workforce, so I find pride in it and the faculty and the other students who are in the program as well.

R: What about the city of Pittsburg as more of an entity?

I-6: I feel like the school and Pittsburg is a packaged deal. The community supports the school, it wouldn't be the same without the community there.

R: Do do you feel attached to the community in addition to the school, or more just the school?

I-6: More the school than the community, but I think a little bit there as well.

R: Your attachment to PSU, is it more tied to your department or is it tied to the university as a whole?

I-6: Oh. Probably more toward my... I'd say more towards my department but not that there is nothing to the school as well.

R: How often do you attend sporting events and what kind do you attend?

I-6: Very rarely. Football games is about the only thing.

R: How many football games did you attend in this past year?

I-6: (laughs). Zero.

R: Ok. When was the last football game that you attended?

I-6: 2016. The season before.

R: You just did this on paper, but now I want you to verbally do it: What national brands do you associate with PSU?

I-6: Adidas, because my friend who's in basketball, I see Adidas stuff all the time. And then it used to be "Pepsi State," but no more. Apparently we're Coke, so... that's all I got.

R: How do you feel about the fact that we're a Coke campus now as opposed to a Pepsi one?

I-6: Well I like Pepsi better... I don't drink pop, but if I was going to drink anything it would be Pepsi.

R: So does it change the way that you think about PSU at all or does it make you angry at all? What are your attitudes, if any, about that decision?

I-6: I don't really... it doesn't really affect me because I don't drink pop. So it doesn't change my opinion.

R: Alright. So that was national brands. So local brands or companies that you associate with PSU.

I-6: Gorilla Country, because they have the best apparel... I don't know... local companies? Like that support PSU? I think of Pitt Plastics because I know they support the BIG Event. That was something that stood out because it's a plastics company that stood out on the t-shirts. That's about it.

R: These associations, where do you see them? Do you see them advertising at football games, you said you saw them at the BIG Event.

I-6: T-shirt advertisements, Gorilla Country was a lot of football games because they had deals for students and if they won, there was more deals.

R: What do you like is the benefit of partnering with a local companies for sponsorship? And then, what do you think is the benefit of partnering with national brands?

I-6: Local companies understand the community better. I feel like they can be there more for the students. Larger companies, I think you can get more product or whatever, but they don't have a tie to the community.

R: So they may have more money and can give more money, but you don't feel like they...

I-6: I don't feel a sentimental attachment to them.

R: That makes sense.

R: What are some places you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised?

I-6: Shirts, on the Jungletron... local, or?

R: Either. Just places that you remember seeing somebody that was sponsoring PSU.

I-6: I think usually when someone gives something big there's usually something that says where it comes from.

R: Do you remember any specific instances?

I-6: I do you like the statues have them on them, but I can't remember specifically. It's just what's coming to mind. Obviously our fitness centers and stuff are named after people who sponsored big portions of money. For plastics, I know our machines have... each machine that comes in has who gave it, who donated it. We know who donated our molds, and we typically try to make an effort to do something back for that company to show that we appreciate it.

R: Do you think that those companies, do they often hire from Pittsburg State as well? Or do you see them more just giving equipment?

I-6: The majority of them hire from PSU but also they give because most of the time there are alumni there who start off initial communication like, "Hey, we want to give you guys something because they came from the school and they want to get back."

R: What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?

I-6: If I have a direct tie to it. I know who donated are plastics stuff because I work with it every day. Signs, logos, you remember a logo more than you remember a name I feel like.

R: This it's kind of a big question, and this is just your opinion: Does sponsorship benefit Pitt State, and if so, how?

I-6: Yeah. Because you don't always have to rely on taxes or student funds. Sponsorship gets you either learning material, clothing material for sports, or anything that they deem necessary for students from outside donors, it doesn't affect tuition or anything else.

R: What is the likelihood that you would consider buying a product from a company after you see them as a sponsor of PSU?

I-6: I wouldn't think it would affect me wanting to buy from them more. It might make me respect those a little more, and consider it, but ultimately it's what I like the most or...

I don't think it would affect me wanting a different product just because they sponsor over another company that doesn't sponsor PSU.

R: Ok. So you said it's more that you may respect the company more. Do you feel like it more impacts your attitude of a company if they sponsor PSU as opposed to buying something?

I-6: Yeah. Which might eventually lead to buying something, but I think first companies usually build on...if you want to like, trust them, and the more of that, the more likely you are to buy from them. It's a stepping stone I guess.

R: Ok. How do your attitudes change towards the company when you see them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-6: It might go from no attitude or preference to thinking, "Cool, you sponsored my school." I find a lot of value in my school," it's more like a, "Thanks." More appreciation towards them.

R: What type of brand, local or national, do you feel like is better for PSU to associate with?

I-6: Better?

R: However you would define better. There could be multiple ways as well.

I-6: I'd say local due to the fact that national would be cool to associate with, but we're fairly small. There wouldn't be much recognition. But locally, the more people that are in the community surrounding us, supporting it and seeing more value in it helps the students out more than just being a spot nationally.

R: So locally. And then, what type of brand, local or national, is more beneficial as a sponsor to PSU?

I-6: National, probably, because you can get more money. But that's just by financial measures.

R: Last one. So think of the PBR - Professional Bull Riders Association - their sponsors are Ford, Wrangler, and some beer companies because that makes sense when you think of the PBR.

I-6: "Ford Tough."

R: You think of cowboy, western toughness. What do you think PSU's brand image is. When you think of PSU, what do you think of and what brands do you feel like would fit well with that image?

I-6: Strong. Gorillas. What comes to mind is the trash bags, Flex Trash Bags. (laughs). Cause, like, strong. I guess if you're going on gorillas and you want to play to that advantage, Gorilla Glue or similar products that have a gorilla on it. I don't know how it would market for PSU, but...

R: You really identify with the gorilla and things that would match up with him.

Interview 7

R: What's your association to PSU, whether it's alumni, student...

I-7: Yeah, I'm alumni. I got my bachelor's there and my Master's there. So I was there a long time (laughs).

R: Yes.

I-7: And then, we currently still... we have students work for us through the Career Services and we do the work study program, and we've done that since, basically since I started hiring people. We'll have one or two a year, and have just always done that, the Partners in Progress thing or whatever, we're kind of in that.

R: Can you talk a little bit about that Partners in Progress thing? I've heard of it but I don't know much about it.

I-7: That's mainly, I think, their tagline for recognizing people, businesses that work for them. Mainly what we work with is the Career Services and the work-study. I think the Partners in Progress is just one of those... also if you are donating, or doing anything like that, they have a breakfast and different things. They try to keep you in the family.

R: Alright cool. So, how long have you been associated with PSU. I guess it would start when you were a student.

I-7: Yeah... I don't remember, it's been so long (looks at diplomas)... 2005, so that was my Bachelors. My Master... 2007. So graduated Bachelor's '05 and Master's '07. So since then and before, I was at that place. I think it took me, I think I went 5 for my Bachelor's just because it wasn't what I wanted to do.

R: I get that. How attached to PSU do you feel? And where does that attachment come from?

I-7: Well obviously when you're in school you spend a lot of time there. In doing so, you grow attachments to those professors. I was lucky enough that when I was there, a lot of my art professors showed up the same time I did, so we kind of got started together at Pitt State. And then Marjorie Schick was already there and a lot of the older ones, Malcolm was there, Dr. Moody was the Chair at the time. So you just kind of create that family in itself, especially when you are there till midnight every night, or you're just there and that's your second family. And then, as you started to take other classes, you meet other professors that you kind of cling onto, Dr. Allan, she was there the whole time. And I would sit on student boards and be a part of those kind of things, so I got involved. It wasn't just show up to class. I was the president of the Art Association, and so... you know, try to represent the art kids and that kind of thing. So you automatically grow an attachment to the people, and then of course they do a really good job of promoting and making it more so that you don't forget about those things. But now, I still know

everybody there, and they help you have a sense of pride, you can be proud from going there and knowing them. How attached do I feel? Pretty darn attached (laughs).

R: And also as a community member, a small business owner: has it changed at all or has it expanded?

I-7: When I was in school as an art student, it was always, "Oh, football, it's always about football." So we had that kind of, "They get all the stuff, and the attention." And so, growing up and out of that and becoming a business owner and seeing what that connection can do, and if you foster those links to people, they've supported me through owning the business. So we've done, we do the Taste of Pitt every year since it started. Jon Barlow and them, like we... and I obviously met him while I was at Pitt State. But they're always willing to be there and support and help, and then vice versa. So if the drama kids come in and they are doing a play, "Hey, will you sponsor? Put your name in this pamphlet or whatever." We usually do it. And we don't do a lot of monetary type advertisement, it's mostly all kind of online and guerrilla marketing, but when they come and ask, I do it because that's just what you do. It's kind of a, it's a win-win for sure.

R: This question may not apply to you very much, but how often do you attend sporting events and what kind do you attend if you do?

I-7: We do go to some Pitt State games, football mainly. Not a lot because we work all the time. Trying to think... I mean, it's mainly football, if you're talking about local. Once or twice a year, not a lot.

R: A lot of sponsors and advertisers are at football games...

I-7: And get to go? You see, we work on Saturdays. It doesn't work out. We probably would go, because we've gone and we enjoy it, the whole tailgating, and just the atmosphere and everything. We would go if the opportunity was there, but it's not in our profession.

R: Ok. What national brands or companies do you identify with PSU?

I-7: Well I mean the big hoopla was switching to Coke. I think that was a big deal. And of course I have a little bit of marketing background, so I pay attention to those things. Honestly I don't, I mean, just the Pitt State brand stands out more than anything. And not going to sports, I really see. So, I don't... I just, yeah, just the Pitt State...

R: Alright. And then, what about local brands, local companies, small businesses that you identify with PSU?

I-7: I always see Millers, or Mpix, Watco, like all of our bigger companies in town, I see them as sponsors. Especially if you were at a game, Jumbotron, you see that kind of thing. Lots of the events are always sponsored, Taste of Pitt usually's got sponsors...

trying to think... Pitsco I see a lot. Yeah, the major game players, they're always there, which is nice to see, because then you know that money is going back to the community.

R: Yes. So, with that, think of some other places where you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised. You said the football games and the Jungletron; are there any other specific locations you've seen?

I-7: I mean, any of the... thinking of the printouts you see for programs, what I've been to.... usually if StuCo's putting on something, it'll be sponsored by somebody, yeah. A lot of the Bicknell stuff I usually see a sponsorship. Yeah, I can't... too much, I see it a lot I guess I don't think about it.

R: Is it's sometimes hard to remember sponsors? What makes it easier to remember the ones you actually remember?

I-7: I think for me it's just because I see them all the time and I'm aware of that. I like to see who's giving back to the community, as far as the larger companies in town.

R: Because you're more invested in the community.

I-7: Yeah. And it makes me feel better because I mean, we give all we can give, so it's good to see those. That jumps out. And plus I go to board meetings and I sit in on different conversations and I get to meet those people who are doing those things, so it's that connection. So I see, when I see Pitsco, then I go, "Oh, that must be so-and-so doing this or that." Or if I see Watco on the Board Foundation, I'm on a board with that guy who heads it. So for me, specifically, it stands out more just because I know the people behind it. If I didn't I probably wouldn't remember. You know? I mean, I pay attention to logos and stuff but, it's not like, "Oh that logo stands out." Like, it's not that. It's the story behind it. And do most people pay attention? Probably not, on a day-to-day I doubt it.

R: Ok. What the benefit of partnering with local companies for sponsorship? And then, what's the benefit of partnering with those national companies?

I-7: As far as?

R: However you think that it... what the benefit would be of both of those.

I-7: Like if I was to partner or if, like...

R: Um, let me think. So for PSU, specifically, how does it benefit them to partner with a local brand, and then how does it benefit them to partner with a national brand. And later on I'll get into how it benefits the small businesses as well.

I-7: Ok. So, to partner with local, again it's that connection, that feeling. It all boils down to how does that make you feel, because you're going to be invested more in it, even if it's your job or your... you know, you gotta wake up, you gotta go to this job every day, but if

you're invested mentally and... I'm working with Pitt State today and I chose to do that and we're partnered together and we're doing all these things, so we're going to be more apt to buy into that and probably do a better job and put your best foot forward. And then, if you're sponsoring an event, you're probably going to go to that event. And probably outside of your work, you're going to promote that event, even if you're not getting paid for it you just do it.

R: So you kind of promote, "Hey, this thing is going on and we're at it."

I-7: Right. Not only am I at it, but I think it's a cool event and I know all of these people that are doing it. They're nice people, you know, and you spread the word without even knowing you're doing it. So you're marketing without even realizing it. I think that is a huge benefit if you can make those connections and it's not just giving \$100 bill and that's my sponsorship. Like it's more than that. So, connections. On a larger scale, I think I would ask, "What's your end goal," because if you want to get recognized nationally, then yeah, you should be reaching out to those larger... yeah. I don't know, again if you can make those connections with the people, the actual people and not just the dollars behind it, then maybe it will take you further. And I do know that Pitt State is probably one of the more well-known out there because they do that. They don't just stay local. But for me personally, I don't know what I would benefit from it. It would be cool, but I don't know what my end... I mean, I can't ship a cake three states away or whatever. For school, yeah that's cool because you want those kids to come here, you want to draw them in from everywhere you can. And that benefits our community. For what they're wanting to do, then I think it's good.

R: What makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?

I-7: I think repetition. I think for me, whenever they recognize them when they're giving speeches or when they're doing that kind of thing and they tell a little bit about the company and give a little bit of background, like, "I, went to school with so-and-so, who now runs this company. And they decided that they were going to give back by doing this." Giving a little bit of that thread of background and making those connections, it makes me, like, "Oh, that's cool," when I can see the story.

R: It's more than just a name at that point.

I-7: Yup.

R: This is kind of a big, abstract question: Does sponsorship benefit Pittsburg State, and how do it benefit Pittsburg State?

i-7: Well I mean, no doubt. Money's going to go far if we're talking about if we're talking about monetary sponsorship. And the more they 10 kind of web out and make those connections, whether it's in Hawaii or wherever it might be, you never know where a Pitt State alumni's going to end up. Already having those connections in those locations is good for the students. And I think a lot of people don't think about that. They've already

laid the groundwork for you. You probably have a connection or a Pitt State family member somewhere, wherever you're going to go they're going to be there. So, if you are scared to death of your new job, and you just graduated, and you don't know what's going on or you don't know where to look, that's half the battle. Doing your job's probably the easy part, but getting out there in the workforce is hard and figuring all that out. But if they're doing that and creating that web of people, they can say, "Hey, so-and-so lives in Nebraska. Talk to them, they'll help you out." That kind of stuff. And then, with the sponsorships from companies, obviously those companies are probably going to want to hire Pitt State kids, and just kind of keep that cycle going.

R: Alright. Two questions here about behavior and buying products versus attitudes. So, what is the likelihood that you would consider buying a product from a company after you've seen them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-7: If I'm going to purchase, I do like to look at the companies and say, if it's a larger purchase, I'd like to know that they are giving back and the money's somewhat staying in the community versus someone I've never heard of. Yeah, it does make a difference.

R: And then, more of just an attitude change as opposed to behavior: How do you feel like your attitudes change towards a company when you see them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-7: I don't know that I really thought about it because most of... Watco, Pitsco, I guess Mpix I might have used... I don't use a lot of them because they are larger and they're very specific. But I mean, once again, I'm willing to support those who support us. You know, that kind of thing.

R: That makes sense. Looking at the two categories of local companies versus national companies, which type of company do you feel like is better for PSU to associate with?

I-7: Again, what's the end result? What's the end goal? I think you probably can't go just strictly one way or the other. I think a good mix is best.

R: So just one of them is beneficial in one way, and the other one is beneficial in the other way. So what, with national brands, national companies, what's the benefit of that? And then local brands, what do they provide?

I-7: I'm sure national is going to be able to provide larger funding and bring in that sort of thing. And again like I said before, just making the connection with the people that are running those companies is good later down the road for the students, and opportunities, I guess. And then, local, I mean, if you get your local business owners involved in any way, and you get stuck in their core, then you have them for life. If you've got them sponsoring you and you've got them buying into the idea that is Pitt State, then I mean, that will never go away and that will just keep going down, you know, it's tradition when they have family they're going to pass that down so you can't go wrong with that.

R: Last one: with this question, think of the PBR - Professional Bull Riders Association.

I-7: Not the beer?

R: Not the beer this time. However, their sponsors are people like Ford, Wrangler, beer companies, because it makes sense with their brand image. So if you look at PSU's brand image, what are some things you think about when you think of PSU's brand image. And then, what brands fit well with that image?

I-7: I can't really put a specific product other than that it's its own product. You know what I mean? It's like, it's me, you, it's all of us because they've done a really good job of highlighting people, and it's not just this program, it's, "Look at this person and what they're doing in this program." Or like, "Look at this professor. Yeah, they teach this, but look at what they're doing in the community, or look at what they're doing in their profession." So to me, I think the brand is the possibility of whatever you want, which is a very, that's kind of cool, like, how did you do that? But as far as, I can't put... I mean, obviously Coke is their thing, but... or Pepsi was but... I don't identify, you know, if I see Coke I don't go, "Oh, Pitt State." The gorilla, baby gorilla, you know, that's kind of one thing that stands out because it's fun and cute. I don't know, you know, the gorillas everywhere that's a no-brainer, but there's no specific connection to a company for that.

R: Yeah, but I do think that they found an interesting way to do that with the zoo and with that gorilla and kind of sponsoring it. Because it makes perfect sense that PSU as the gorillas would find a gorilla...

I-7: And they're not here, it's there. It's so cool. Yeah. But as far as connecting specifics, yeah, I don't. I mean that speaks volumes that they stand on their own.

Interview 8

R: What is your association's PSU? Are you a student, alumni, etc?

I-8: I am a student, currently. This is my second go-around, I went 2 years right after high school, was suffering from severe burnout, dropped out for two and a half years and came back in the fall of 2016.

R: So how long have you been associated with PSU?

I-8: Uh, 6 years. 6 years if you go back to when I first started in college because, like I said I went for two years, then I met my wife. At that time, she was still coming here for the two and a half years that I dropped out, and now I'm here for 2 years, so six.

R: Alright. How attached to PSU do you feel, and where does this stem from?

I-8: (laughs). What is my attachment level to the university? Um, that's a very interesting question because, if you'd have asked me 8 years ago what my attachment to PSU would have been, it would have been negative 100, because just how things in my life we're planning on... I wasn't intending on being here. But now that I've come here, on a scale of 1 to 100 I'd say my attachment's probably closer to a 75 simply because I did meet my wife here, and I met a lot of great friends here and professors that I have now here in the Comm department or just the best and it makes me really enjoy being here.

R: Alright. How often you attend sporting events and what kind of sporting events do you attend?

I-8: (laughs). If you're talking here, specifically, I probably attend one every week since I've been here, simply because being a part of the sports broadcasting class, we are required to put those productions on. So when football was going on, we did every football game, sans the Fort Hays one in Hays, because that fell over Fall Break. And then, we did quite a few home volleyball games. I've been a part of every home basketball game, including those that happened over winter break.

R: The majority of the time that you are at these games, are you working or are you watching the game?

I-8: I am working. I am working almost all the time. That includes watching the game with a more critical eye than just a fan enjoyment perspective, but I do work every time I've been here.

R: Ok. Are you able to... when you watch the games are you able to see places where advertisements would be shown, like the Jungletron?

I-8: Yes, absolutely. When you look at the Jungletron itself, you have the main scoreboard that we use for the replays as well as just other announcements that go on

during some commercials. But then there's Physicians off to the sides on the LEDs that you'll see commercials on as well as some of that cycle on there. And then for basketball, with how the court is situated, you could put a lot of advertising on either the official's table, on the far side of the court from where our cameras are.

R: Ok. So you are able to see those even when you are working?

I-8: Yes.

R: Alright. What national brands or companies do you relate with PSU?

I-8: The first thing that jumps out are what you would normally expect with athletics: Nike, Adidas, Riddell, because Riddell's a pretty big helmet company and here football is king. I also associate Pepsi and Coke with these two companies with the university because for a long time, Coke was the official sponsor of PSU and it wasn't until this past summer, or the summer before that they switched over and they signed the exclusivity deal with Pepsi. Barnes & Noble is another one, because our bookstore is technically a Barnes & Noble affiliate.

R: Ok cool. What local brands do you identify with PSU?

I-8: What local brands... Labette Bank, that's one that I would associate with PSU because they've got four or five banks in kind of this Southeast Kansas area, they have two here in town. I would also... it seems weird when you think of national and local, but PepsiCo has a bottling company here in town, so I associate them with PSU. And oddly enough Freddy's. I mean, Freddy's is probably, I realize, national now but it started off as kind of a local thing. I associate them with PSU because if you take your student ID there you get 5 percent off.

R: Alright, that's good. So when you think of these associations, where do they come from? Do you see them on campus, in signs around campus, do you see them, like with Freddy's you can take your ID to the community, in your own department, in your work... where do you see them?

I-8: The associations come more from working just because when you are there, we get there early to set up so you can just see on the video board for football, I keep bringing that up because that's where it's predominantly visible, they'll run through the local ads and you'll just see the same local ad probably four or five times in the two plus hours that we get there early to set up. As far as Freddy's goes, I was going there when that building used to be Dairy Queen a long time ago, and then so just going through the drive-thru they always have that little sticker that says you present your PSU ID for 5 percent off.

R: What's the benefit of partnering with local brands for partnership? And then, what's the benefit with partnering with national brands?

I-8: Local brands, the partnership benefit that's readily available is it just helps boost the economy. I mean, if you think about it, if Freddy's didn't have that 5 percent discount with the university having your student ID, I would think a lot more college students would go to just down the road a little further to Braum's for actual ice cream, which some would say is more subjectively better than custard that Freddy's serves. Additionally, when it comes to the national brands, that one's a little tougher simply because not being as big a college or university that we are, even though you have those national brands like Nike, Riddell, you'll probably see others first. And I am unsure of, without getting the look of how they present their material, whether they actually use PSU as examples two other universities when they're doing pitches.

R: What are some places you remember seeing sponsors of PSU advertised?

I-8: Video board is the first place that comes to mind.

R: Which video board?

I-8: The PSU football video board, here, the Jungletron.

R: Ok, specifically the Jungletron.

I-8: That's the first place that I see it. But you know, you can also see you when you go into, like I drive by Labette Bank and they'll have things that flash up that say, like, "Go PSU," "Home of the Gorillas," things like that. And you'll see that around the city as well. When they do the Paint the Town Red early in the fall for football, they will do all sorts of window paintings supporting PSU. Additionally, some places that I saw it would just be newspapers and magazines that are here in the area, because when I was in high school and younger, I would pick up the local Pittsburg Morning Sun and they would always have something about PSU in it. Same thing when I would go to the mall to eat, I would pick up the Collegio, not realizing it was the actual university paper, I just read it because it had interesting things in there for me.

R: That makes sense. Alright, what makes it easier to remember brands that sponsor the university?

I-8: As bad as it sounds, the first thing that comes to my head is Coke, Pepsi just because of the controversy of taking those deals. Coke jumps out first because Coke's red and PSU's main color is red. But then that immediately falls into Pepsi because there was that huge controversy, falling out whenever they did make that switch since the university technically took a little less money when they took the Pepsi deal and the Coke deal. Outside of that...

R: So that was the media controversy surrounding it?

I-8: Yes, the media, correct. The media controversy surrounding it. Outside of that, just seeing them in Labette, like whenever I go to get a debit card they always have that available as a media print that you can use.

R: When you see them on, maybe sponsors of the football game, are there any signage that pops out specifically compared to others or if they do some sort of activity at football games... is there any way there to make your brand stand out against the rest?

I-8: That's a tough, a little bit of a tough question at least on the PSU front, but when you look at bigger universities, one thing that you will see... I need to take that stuff back. Viewing the Australian Open that I did for a class, it makes me think that with most naming rights on stadiums, they will be named after something because that gives an immediate brand recognition. However, going forward, I can see that there would be advertising logos and pitches just going around the field, because most football stadiums in the country, well, bigger stadiums in the country, they have a wall that goes around like you would see in the NFL. So you can put advertisements. Even now you're seeing advertisements appear on uniforms the professional NBA level. I realize that's higher than here Pitt State, but they can look at those things and implement them in a small fraction. One of which being over the tunnels entering the football stadium or over the doors entering the Weede gymnasium, you could see them going out and actually getting sponsorships to put over those so that you know you're entering this place and it's kind of associated with this brand somehow.

R: Do you feel like that, what you're talking about, the signage that goes around the side of the stadium, does that work? Is it's something that's sufficient in terms of signage? Do you pay attention to it? Do you see it?

I-8: I think it is effective, and I do see it a lot. The more places I will see it are going to be the smaller venues, or smaller sports I should say, like tennis, or even though it's a big floor but it's smaller, baseball, with the way the cameras are positioned, and they was behind home plate, they always have a constantly rotating sign of billboards and advertisements advertising, like the Kansas City Zoo, or the World War I Museum, things like that. And I think those are important and those do help out because if you have any sort of a crowd shot, which you'll see in a lot of productions, there's a good chance you will run over one of those billboards as a camera is panning across the crowd. So I think that is a good way to get your name out there as a brand.

R: Ok, cool. Do sponsorship benefit a university? And if so, how?

I-8: I can see both sides of that. I can see that it can help a university in that it the university clout when they're trying to bring in recruits and say, "Hey, we are aligned with this specific brand and this is something that's important to us. And it can help you along because we can maybe get some inside in there. I can also see it being a detriment, because, going back to Coke versus Pepsi, now the university can only sell Pepsi, they can't do anything with Coke. And while some people view that as, "Ok, it's a positive because we're helping the local community," a lot more people that I talk to prefer Coke,

so then it kind of hurts them because, I mean, it's a trivial thing but that means if I want to go get Coke, I'll have to go to Casey's or Wal-Mart, I'll have to go somewhere off campus to get it. That's, as trivial as it sounds, that is something that's very important to people, the relative ease that they can get things. So if you align yourself with certain brands, you can also risk the missed opportunities of being either aligned with a different brand or just not being aligned at all.

R: Makes sense. What the likelihood that you would consider buying a product from a brand or company after seeing them as a sponsor of Pittsburg State?

I-8: Um, honestly slim to none. If it's not a brand that I would buy as it is, I probably wouldn't buy it going forward. And that's not just PSU, that's all things that I follow, whether that's the Royals, some of the hockey teams that I follow, baseball in general. Unless it's already something I buy like New Era hats like I'm wearing now, if they switch from New Era hats to something, to say, if they switch to Nike hats, I probably wouldn't be inclined to buy the Nike hats any more than I am now simply because I don't care for Nike hats, I like the New Era ones.

R: That makes sense. Does it change...when you have a sponsor and PSU, do your attitudes change toward either PSU or the company that is sponsoring PSU? If PSU is sponsored by Coke, and you don't like Coke, does it change what you think of PSU or does it change the way you think of Coke? Or does it not have an impact whatsoever?

I-8: To me personally, it doesn't have an impact because I like what I like and if it aligns for certain things, great, and if it doesn't, no water off my back. Honestly, I can see how it would affect some people though, I mean, if some of universities were to align with something much more polarizing, let's say, like PETA, I could see how that would really affect certain people. But for me for the most part, it is what it is.

R: What type of brand, local or national, do you think is better for PSU to associate with through sponsorship?

I-8: That's really tough, honestly. As much flack as they got, I think aligning with Pepsi was probably one of the smartest moves they could have done.

R: You mean Coke?

I-8: No.

R: Cause they switched from Pepsi to Coke.

I-8: Oh is that what they did? Oh, hmm. Then yes, switching from Pepsi to Coke is probably the better one, simply because it's ubiquitous in the color scheme of how things are. And as trivial as that may sound, making things easily recognizable is one of the best things you can do with advertising. I mean, look at Apple now. You can go anywhere and you just throw that up and people automatically know what it is and they association a

certain thing, a certain set of quality with it. So I think just starting out with just going from Pepsi to Coke to keep the color the same, that could be a thing that can go and be very beneficial going forward.

R: Alright, so of local versus national, do you think one of those two categories is better to associate with? If not, then that's fine, too.

I-8: I... This is a difficult thing for me because I have a hard time really aligning with much. Like, national or local, I like what I like. I do align with certain things, I should say, but growing up and not being... or being in a whole lot of school systems for a while, I went through a couple different ones, I feel that maybe national would be slightly better because it keeps you open and it puts you out a little more. But I also see the value in the local because it keeps funneling... it has a guaranteed funnel in, whereas with the national there's, it's kind of a high-risk, high-reward thing.

R: How attached do you feel to the local community? Specifically of Pittsburg?

I-8: I feel fairly attached to it. I feel that way because I have some family who lived here and have been here my entire life, and it's kind of all that I've ever really known. I live about 30 minutes Southwest of here, so for a lot of the times we want to do something, this is where we came to do things. I've always felt more of an attachment to, and more of a support to, the United States as a nation as a whole as well as my family and my faith than I have to the Pittsburg area. I don't have a whole lot of, not loyalty, but a whole lot of desire to stay in this small area. I've always looked beyond the horizons of this small town and this small area and I wanted to go and explore and experience it, and just remain true to those first three things I said that I have the most ties in the most desire to remain faithful to: my country, my faith, and my family. Not necessarily in that order, depending on how things fall.

R: What about specifically the small businesses or the local businesses of PSU?

I-8: I don't know if they're truly affiliated, but I feel a very strong attachment to Napoli's. I love their Italian. If I could, I would eat there a lot more than I do and it's probably good that I don't. But Napoli's is one of those places, at least here in the local area, that I really, really like.

R: Ok, so there's specific ones that you're really attached to. On a whole, where do you feel like the level is?

I-8: 3.7-4.5 on a scale of 10. That's probably the best way I can describe it. It's one of those things where if I see them, it's nice, but I don't specifically only do things for them.

R: Ok, gotcha. Which type of brand, local or national, is more beneficial for PSU as a sponsor? More beneficial as a sponsor?

I-8: Um, national. Again, Coke, just from the basic color reference. You'll see red, think of PSU. Locally, I really think Labette Bank is a good one, because they have branches in a couple of "big" cities and towns in the Southeast Kansas area. They've got one in Cherokee, which is right next to the high school. They've got one in Columbus just down the road from the high school. They've got one in Altamont, they've got one in Parsons. So you look at where they can go and place themselves, they put themselves in a decent position to get really good local students, whether that's athletic talent, musical talent, just good ideas, smart thinkers. It gets them in the businesses to where you can expand the businesses out. Even as it is, I think because of them having a little bit of a presence in the area, they've forced... I don't want to say forced... one local community college has just opened up a branch just outside of town here, I think as a way to try and foster relationships between the community college and PSU as well as maybe just get a little bit of those students that right out of high school possibly go to PSU. So I think doing that is really good, because there is a Labette Community College that's in this area, there's Parsons that's got a community college, if I remember correctly. Independence has got one. So, you've got those local colleges and communities where if you focus the branding and the partnership with Labette in those cities, it would foster not only those cities but what you can come in to PSU.

R: Alright, last one. Think of a brand that you feel like fits well with PSU. Think of this in terms of, so, PBR - Professional Bull Riding Association - some of their sponsors are Ford, Wrangler, certain beer companies. They fit well with the brand. Think of a brand that you feel like, a sponsor, that fits well with PSU, either an affiliated one that you know of or an unaffiliated one you think that would go well with PSU. What makes PSU and that brand a good fit, like, identity-wise?

I-8: The first thing that pops out of my mind would be what good technologies could we align because of the tech center that we have? The Tech Center being what it is, is a huge draw to a lot of people even nationally.

R: And what I'm more interested to hear is what characteristics of a brand, or their brand identity, what makes that a good fit with PSU? So what's PSU's brand identity, then what are some specific characteristics that make another brand fit well the PSU's brand identity?

I-8: Small town, great work ethic. That would be the first four words that I could describe PSU as. As for a brand that fits those, I mean an obvious one that jumps out would be Apple. Started out in a very small place but through hard work and dedication, look where they are. Trying to think of another one that would work... Another one, as a slight jump from that, you look at the Colt munitions factory because, I mean, we're in Kansas, it was part of the West as the country expanded, and Colt ammunitions and Colt rifles were very ubiquitous with that type of the area. Started out fairly small and eventually blew up. So, while guns in themselves have a very divisive view in today's political and economic climate, a company along those lines in terms of Colt munitions or Apple to where it was something that started small and then built its way into something bigger and also kind of is the new frontier would be what I think would be a good brand. I can't

think of a specific one of the top of my head, but those would be the qualities I would think would be best to align with PSU.