A Brand called Handball
- Professional Leagues, clubs, players, trainers -

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'We are a product of our time!'

Europe is a continent that has brought forth civilisation.
Its inhabitants, arriving in successive waves from the earliest times, have gradually developed the values of underlying humanism: equality of person, freedom, and respect for reason. Reunited Europe intends to continue along the path of civilisation, progress and prosperity, for the good of all its inhabitants, including the weakest and most deprived, to remain a continent open to culture, learning and social progression.
The people and the nations of Europe are determined to transcend their ancient divisions and, unite ever closer, are concerned to forge a common destiny.
Speaking about sport and leisure, the education of athletes and the permanent development of handball is of prime interest and of great importance to the structure of European Handball.

Coaches' vocational mobility in Europe was and is currently being impeded by widely divergent education and training systems, standards, and diplomas.

The European Union promotes the mobility of professionals within this expanding open market and in the same way increases the level of activity, assisting the EHF's proposal for Europe-wide structures.

A democratic and efficient education and training system for coaches in Europe would also increase transparency in the labour market and, given the equivalence of diplomas awarded by different countries, would also be in keeping with the spirit of solidarity, otherwise the migration of coaches and the mobility of professionals within Europe would be a problem one day.

Such recognition is already guaranteed in some instances by bilateral agreements as well as on the basis of EU Directive 92/51 on the mutual recognition of professional education and training systems.

The level of handball and consequently the recognition of the game by spectators and the media crucially depend on the way human qualities are utilised and in which direction activities, together with developments in the field of practice and strategies, are channelled. As a starting point, a common basis is therefore a very important step on the long and tough way of social and political integration.

Sport is one of the rare social activities which brings people together without any distinction about race, religion, geographical barrier or level of richness, is a universal vector of **Integration**.

Handball excels by the mere fact that it is a team sport, strengthens and fosters this aspect, being among other political strategies, a true **Facilitator**.

'Playing handball starts in the mind!'

The global media picture has changed radically in the latest years, language and culture barriers are broken by a media explosion with massive coverage of news and sports.

When you cross the sideline of a handball court you enter a new world. A world less complex than the world you normally live and function in. Less complex on human values and opinions. But in the same time your 'new universe expands and opens for a different behaviour. You are allowed 'to be hot' and to show deep engagement and emotions. You can - for a while at least! - change your rational and conventional attitudes and show other sides of your personality, while you are playing the game.

In fact, this is the main attraction and quality of all sports and other physical activities. We are putting ourselves 'on show' and risking the danger of forgetting all ethical and moral values in the relations with team-mates and opponents. The game itself is developing mental reactions and reflexes that we sometimes are not aware of.

The real problems of handball in a globalised sports society are hidden behind the decisions made by media business qualifying a sport on terms of its presence in the reported public.

The handball product is still immature and pretty unknown in parts of the world, even the potential to develop the sport is huge.

Europe looks/is self-satisfied, because *'Europe is the best'* and nobody in the world will dispute it. The *'others'* are looking at European teams; a lot of federations in other continents want to copy our philosophy, our coaching styles, our education etc.

But modern time, in all social occurrences and trends, proves *'Europe is not the world'*.

And perhaps we stay too self-confident, because *'we are the champions'*, at least in handball. Perhaps we continue to confirm our European certainties, because nobody else dares to criticise at least, in this field.

An old and wise Chinese proverb said:
'If you are good, don't forget to continue to learn.'
Education is a cornerstone in daily process – handball makes no exception.

Accordingly, the green leading light could be: improve yourself continuously; never give up expanding your horizon, because:
'Nothing is the right thing – many things can be right'!

If we want to be handball missionaries we have to be convinced and to convince about the handball product.
The idea with a vision is very simple: it is defining where we are and where we want to go. Coming back to our ordinary/daily tasks, the following questions / ideas / comments rose:

▶ How to organise?
▶ How to promote?

► How to develop?

► How to implement?

After this, the mission starts!

Of course, the resources and the way of thinking might differ from country to country, but in terms of values, beliefs and rules of the game we build from the same base.

Some branding principles

■ You can change your shirt, but you don't change yourself – unless you understand the need.

■ Handball won't change by testing a few marginal rules from time to time. Handball starts changing when we look ourselves in the mirror.

■ Principles have nothing to do with size.
Branding simply doesn't care how big you are or how strong you are. But branding cares a lot about how good you are in what you do. How passionate you are about the sport you love.

■ Attention to details:

■ Transparent, creative and cosmopolitan

Handball is entertainment. In every aspect of the game we need to improve the entertainment values of our sport.
For everyone involved the lifeblood of the game is our fans. Therefore we need better, bigger arenas, better facilities for everyone, including the fans.
The influence of TV, players' contracts, sponsorships etc. have created a new future. The old institutions of handball are less relevant than before. A National Federation (NF) has the influence to secure the best for handball in a new handball future.

Making Handball More Professional

In order for handball and handball clubs to survive and thrive in this commercial world a National League/NL has to take a lead in taking modern business professionalism to an old traditional sport.

Bringing Higher Standards to Handball

Handball is a more physically demanding, a more financially demanding sport than ever before. The aim of clubs and NL is to ensure the standards in the game reflect this, whether they relate to players and their rights, coaching standards, stadium comfort for fans, refereeing standards, the role of commercial partners, etc.

- Which way now?!?
- How to decide and to choose?!
- What form should the new path take?!

We believe for the highest level everything should be at the highest level.
We believe the clubs are the key-point of the whole story, the 'departure + meeting + arrival' milestone of the handball development and improvement.

Goal setting

Communication

Cohesion

Co-operation

Social loafing

Aggression

Team building – applied work

A.

Goals are the source of energy that motivates people to action.
A person without goals is like a computer without program.
When people can set and attain goals they are able to gain control over their lives, because they feel able to direct their future.

Why does goal setting work?
- goals direct attention to important elements of the skill being performed
- goals mobilise performer efforts
- goals prolong performances persistence
- goals foster the development of new learning strategies

Basic goal setting principles
- set specific goals
- set difficult but realistic goals
- set long and short – term goals
- set performance goals
- write down goals
- develop goal-achievement strategies
- consider participants personality
- foster individual goal commitment
- provide goal support
- provide for goal evaluation

Common problems in goal setting
- failing to set specific goals
- setting too many goals too soon
- failing to adjust goals when they are not being achieved
- not initiating goal setting evaluation and follow up procedures

B.

What factors make this relationship successful in team / group performance and player / member satisfaction?
There is an optimal coaching, teaching and leadership style?
It depends on:

- **team / group dynamics**
- **size of the team / group**
- **way of practice and the culture and organisation of the sport / work / job and the interpersonal relationship between the coach / leader and the player / member**

C.

'A dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and or the satisfaction of member affective needs' – Brawley 1990.

Antecedents of cohesion:
- **environmental**
    - **organisational factors (rules of leagues, clubs, associations, federations, firms, etc.)**
    - **social environment (pressure from within or outside the group such as family, work, school, friends, etc.)**
    - **group size**
- **situational**
- **personal**
- **leadership**
- **team factors**

Consequences of cohesion:
- **performance**
    - **individual or / and team**
- **satisfaction**
    - **team or member**
- **sport or exercise adherence**

'Success is achieved through the combined efforts of the individual on the team' – John Wooden (famous college basketball coach).

One of the biggest problems which is considered as a destructive force on the team / group = selfishness.

Group / team cohesion + competitive state anxiety

The team / group cohesion affects anxiety states.

Anxiety states are influenced by several psychological factors such as:
- **trait anxiety**
- **trait sport / work / job confidence**
- **goal orientation**
- **trait self-handicapping**
- **perceived readiness**
- **individual skill level**
- **gender and previous experience**

A member would perceive higher anxiety from the fact that they felt more responsible for the task at hand!

Cohesion has a positive effect on many parts of the team / group:
- the team / group performance
- the team structure

There are a lot of beneficial consequences such as:
- better performance
- satisfaction
- adherence

Cohesion – might develop itself without any interference by coaches / leaders. Interaction will develop a feeling of cohesion in a group, but the leader can influence the team in their cohesiveness.

Sport teams / working teams are composed of athletes / persons with different ability levels.

It would seem natural to assume that a team / group with the best individuals would perform best. But a team is more than the sum of its part.

⟹ **POTENTIAL PRODUCTIVITY** refers to a team' / group's best performance (if every team / group member's abilities are effectively used.

In the real practice, two kinds of faulty team / group processes can be identified:
- motivation losses
- coordination losses

MOTIVATION losses occur when team / group members do not give 100% effort.

COORDINATION losses occur when the timing between team / group members fails.

Based on researches: if the number of persons in the group increases, the individual performances decreases – phenomenon known as the RINGELMANN effect:
- the decline in relative individual performance is primarily the result of loss in motivation, not in coordination
- the loss in motivation for individuals in a team / group not giving 100% effort has been termed **SOCIAL LOAFING**

D.

Factors of influence:
- group dynamics
  - group of factors being critical in determining the performance
- group norms
  - the standards for behaviour that are expected of group members
- group role
  - the pattern of behaviour expected of an individual in a social situation
- group leadership
  - formal
  - informal

- group interaction + communication
    - are essential in order for the group to come to an understanding about itself and where it is going
    - these process are fundamental to the development and maintenance of group structure
    - **INTERACTION** – how effective group members are in making use of each other's abilities
    - **COMMUNICATION** – how effective group members are in exchanging information
        - Verbally
        - Nonverbally
        - visually

Level of co-operation = in any team / group of people, four levels of co-operation may be seen operating:

Co-operation level	Puzzle example	Handball example
1 – Old Maid Level	-to give pieces away whether or not the person receiving them needs them	-to pass the ball to someone because it is in your best interest rather than that of the team
2 – Charity level	-to give pieces away to people who need them and you don't	-to be satisfied with what it has been already achieved and to no longer continue to play as hard as before -in this way it could be generous to other players and allow them a chance of glory
3 – Sacrifice level	-to give pieces away that you could use yourself but feel the other person needs them more	-to accept playing in a less preferred position for the sake of the team. -to keep making hard unselfish runs to wear out a strong opponent making it easier for team-mates to get through to score
4 – Solidarity level	-to be prepared to split up your own square for the sake of the group task	-to be in position to score but to pass on to a team-mate who is also in a good scoring position

E.

Reasons for Social Loafing:
- athletes / members believe that team-mates are less motivated than they are and, not wanting to start out, they put forth less effort.

- athletes / members may feel that they are lost in the '*crowd*' not getting the attention they deserve of working hard.
- athletes / members may feel they don't have to try hard because they believe they have less responsibility than their team-mates.
- athletes / members may feel that they can hide in the '*crowd*' and thereby avoid the negative consequences of not trying hard.

How can social loafing be minimised?
- emphasise *the importance of individual pride and unique contribution*. Each athlete / member must assume the responsibility for his/her own efforts and not assume that a team-mate will take care of things.
- *increase the identifiably of individual performances* – when athletes / members believe that their individual performances are identifiable (known by others !) social loafing may be eliminated because athletes / members no longer feel anonymous.
- *determine specific situation* where social loafing may occur
- *organise individual trainings / meetings* to discuss social loafing

⇨ To discuss social loafing with everyone individually, while he/she may have reasons for motivational loss that are more complex than feeling lost in the '*crowd*' or assuming someone else will get the job done.

- taking a team-mate's role
  - athletes / members must not only know their own role on the team / group, but also the roles of his/her team-mates in order to understand their contribution to the team Everyone must be aware of the implications of his/her loafing for other members of the team / group.
- forming subgroups
  - forming subgroups within the team / group allows for greater recognition of responsibility to others and helps develop a cohesive unit

F.
Is likely to occur when athletes / members are frustrated ands thus aroused.
Participants typically feel frustrated when they:
- are losing
- perceive unfair officiating
- are embarrassed
- are physically in pain
- are playing / working below their capacities and capabilities

The frustration is translated in different levels of anger.
-assertive aggression is a 'good' aggression
-aggression appears to interfere with essential concentration, attentional focus.
-individuals with high ego orientation goals are more likely to be hostile and aggressive than individuals who have high task orientation goals.

G.

Evaluation of a team building project:

- **how do you like to participate in the team project building ?**
- **what do you think is most rewarding ? why?**
  - **norms**
  - **goals**
  - **roles**
  - **conflicts**
  - **communication**
- **what do you think is the least rewarding ? why?**
  - **'paperwork' (created project which is hidden afterwards somewhere in a forgotten corner !)**
- **do you miss anything that you thought should be included in the team development project ?**
  - **suggestions of role-playing exercises / activities**
  - **team / group exercises / activities**
  - **trusting exercises / activities**
  - **group problem solving**
  - **time to develop the individual to function in the group**
- **what do you think the team building project can give your team ?**
  - **short terms**
    - **better knowledge of the**
      - **roles**
      - **goals**
      - **co-operation**
      - **understanding for others**
      - **openness**
  - **long terms**
    - **greater team unity**
    - **cohesion**
    - **better understanding for others**
    - **safer environment**
    - **enhanced performance**
    - **better co-operation**
- **what do you think the team building project can give you ?**
  - **greater self knowledge**
  - **positive feed-back**
  - **a new experience**
  - **better role knowledge on the team**
  - **better contacts with the team-mates**
  - **how to achieve goals**
  - **to be positive even in time of adversity**
- **other comments**

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