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Stakeholder Management and Sport Facilities: A Case Study of the Emirates Stadium*

Geoff Walters, Birkbeck, University of London, and Paul Kitchin, University of Ulster

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Abstract

This case study presents an analysis of how Arsenal Football Club, a leading football club in England, manages different stakeholders in the context of the Emirates Stadium. The objectives of this case study are threefold. First, it identifies different stakeholders of the Emirates Stadium and, using the Mendelow power/interest matrix, considers the different levels of stakeholder power and interest. The second aim of this case study is to illustrate various stakeholder management strategies that Arsenal Football Club has implemented in relation to four stakeholder groups – the London Borough of Islington; local community residents; supporters; and disabled supporters. The third objective is to present a number of best practice recommendations in relation to stakeholder management and sport facility management. While best practice in sport facility management has tended to focus on internal-facing benchmarking this case highlights the importance of successful stakeholder management to achieving success in facility operation. However it notes that the tendency to focus on the qualitative aspects of stadium management through stakeholder consultation cannot be measured by traditional quantitative benchmarks.

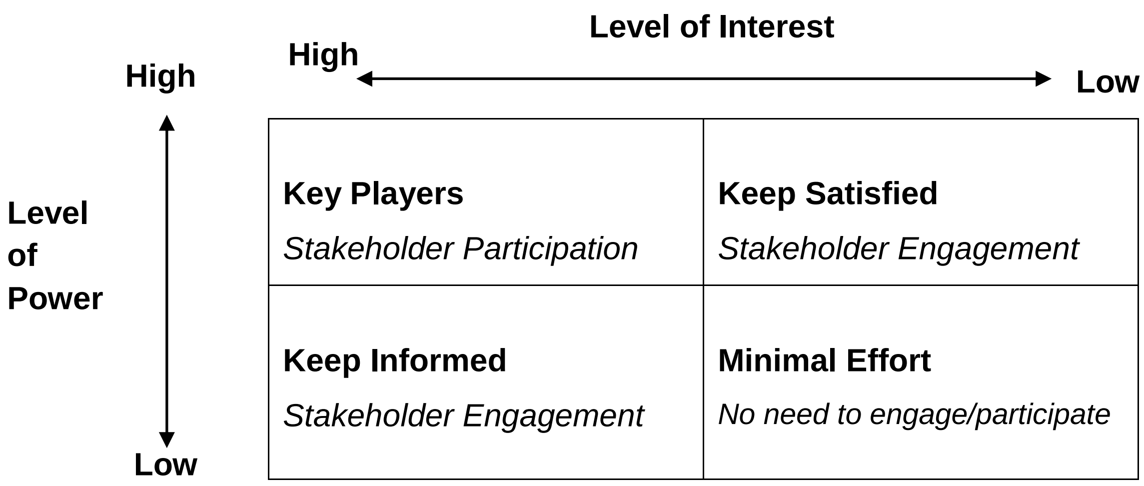
1. Introduction

Over the course of the last twenty five years stakeholder theory has grown in prominence within academic literature (Friedman and Miles, 2002) and has built on the commonly cited work of Freeman (1984: 46) who defined a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organizations objectives”. Recent work by Laplume et al (2008) provides a comprehensive review of academic stakeholder theory literature. They identify five key recurring themes. These are stakeholder definition and salience; firm actions and responses; stakeholder actions and responses; firm performance; and theory debates. From an organisational perspective, the first two issues are critical. There is a need for organisations to identify different stakeholder groups (e.g. Phillips, 2003; Mitchell et al, 1997) and, if they are to create long-term competitive advantage and organisational wealth, they must also manage multiple stakeholder relationships as part of firm strategy (Post et al, 2002; Freeman, 2006).

One way in which firms can identify stakeholders from within the organisational environment is by undertaking a mapping exercise. The power/interest matrix presented by Mendelow (1991) ranks stakeholders dependent upon the level of power they wield and the level of interest that they have in the operations of the organisation. Stakeholders who rank high in both areas are deemed to have a significant relationship with the organisation (Feurer and Chaharbaghi, 1996). By undertaking a mapping exercise, a firm is able to identify which stakeholders are important and whether they will benefit or hinder a major project (Olander and Landin, 2005). The identification of different stakeholder groups can subsequently help an organisation to determine what type of stakeholder management strategy is needed for each group. For example, Olander and Landin (2005: 327) recommend that it is good practice for project teams to identify any stakeholders who can affect the product and “then manage their differing demands through good communication”. Low and Cowton (2004) identify two specific techniques that enable firms to manage stakeholder relationships. First, stakeholder engagement requires an organisation to meet and consult with stakeholder groups, but at the same time they have little influence on corporate decision-making (Low and Cowton, 2004).

Second, stakeholder participation involves a more inclusive management strategy allowing stakeholder groups to be actively involved in decision-making and integrating them within the governance structures of an organisation (Low and Cowton, 2004). By combining the power/interest matrix and stakeholder engagement and participation strategies, a firm can identify stakeholders and implement a management strategy appropriate for that specific stakeholder group (figure 1).

Figure 1: Stakeholder Mapping/Management Strategy



Source: Adapted from Mendelow (1991) and Low and Cowton (2004)

Stakeholder management strategies are an important aspect in the context of stadium management as long-term holistic performance models have begun to include external stakeholder considerations to assist in the measurement of facility management effectiveness (Atkin and Brooks, 2003). The quest for best practice in management has seen a number of performance assessment tools developed. Two such tools used in facility management are total quality management (TQM) (Sashkin and Kiser, 1993) and the balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1996). Each of the systems relies on benchmarking (Camp, 1989) which involves "identifying a point of reference (a benchmark) which serves as a standard against which relative performance may be judged. The point of reference may be internal to an organisation or external in relation to competitors or 'best practice'." (Loosemore and Hsin, 2001: 467).

Facility managers have used these techniques in improving the service standards in a number of built environment contexts (Kincaid, 1994). Previous research into sporting facilities has investigated operational aspects of facilities management, such as quality management (Robinson, 1997; Taylor and Godfrey, 2003), marketing and service quality assessment (Jae Ko and Pastore, 2004; Shilbury 1994; Westerbeek and Shilbury, 1999), and the impact of the servicescape on customer satisfaction (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994; Wakefield et al, 1996). The servicescape is a term introduced by Bitner (1992: 58) to represent the "the built environment... the manmade, physical surroundings as opposed to the natural or social environment". Wakefield et al's (1996) findings on the physical layout of sporting facilities revealed that perceived crowding and the aesthetic quality of the facility have impacts on consumer's levels of satisfaction. Furthermore, Westerbeek and Shilbury (1999) argued for a repositioning of the marketing mix in light of the importance of the stadium to facility-dependent sports organisations. They proposed that marketing activities should be built upon the facility's attributes as the experience at the facility was vital to the customer's assessment of the service.

There is more to the quest for best practice than quality and customer service levels however the comparative nature of these measurements may be a cause for the area dominating the literature. Many of these operational procedures have been used to provide accurate points of comparison between organisations operating in the same business class (Jae Ko and Pastore, 2004). Within England the management of public facilities is measured by quantitative performance measurement and benchmarking (Taylor and Godfrey, 2003). However some authors outside sport facility research have recommended that a mix of qualitative and quantitative data should be used when making benchmarking comparisons (Kincaid, 1994).

While previous research has covered issues related to customers as external stakeholders there is a lack of research on wider external stakeholder groups beyond direct customers and therefore a need to consider whether best practice tools could be extended to the management of additional stakeholder groups. According to Atkin and Brooks (2003) best practice in facility management should examine the long-term external considerations that are relevant to the local community where the facility operates and not just on the internal operational procedures within the facility. It can be argued therefore that facility managers need to implement a dedicated stakeholder management model that recognises that there are many different stakeholder groups and organisations that have an interest in, or are affected by, a stadium. This case study seeks to address this gap by presenting an analysis of how Arsenal Football Club, a leading football club in England, manages different stakeholders in the context of the Emirates Stadium. The case study draws on semi-structured interview data from four individuals including a director from the board of the football club, the Disability Liaison Officer, a supporter representative from the Arsenal Independent Supporters Association and the secretary of the Arsenal Supporters Trust. It is also based on the analysis of documentary secondary data including annual reports from Arsenal football club, financial statements, a range of documents relating to the Stadium Management Plan, publicly available documents from Islington Council, in addition to website information from the football club, the Emirates Stadium website, and Islington Council website.

There are three key objectives of this case study. First, it will identify different stakeholders of the Emirates Stadium. Second, it will illustrate various stakeholder management strategies that Arsenal Football Club has implemented. The third objective is to develop a number of best practice recommendations in relation to stakeholder management and sport facility management. The case study begins with a background to Arsenal Football Club and the development of the Emirates Stadium. The main section of this case study will then focus on two key issues. Firstly, it will use the Mendelow power/interest matrix as the theoretical framework with which to identify a number of stakeholder groups that have a relationship with Arsenal Football Club and therefore a stake in the Emirates Stadium. Secondly, the case study will detail the various stakeholder management strategies that Arsenal Football Club has implemented since the opening of the Emirates Stadium in August 2006. Stakeholder management is an important consideration that stadium managers have to address during stadium operation due, in particular, to the growing importance of community accountability in facility management. The case study will focus specifically on four stakeholders - the local authority, local community residents, supporters, and disabled supporters. A critical analysis of the stakeholder management strategies will be considered, before a discussion of best practice stakeholder management in the context of sporting facilities is presented. A central theme of this case is that stakeholder management is difficult to quantify and that traditional benchmarks are overly quantitative in focus. The use of customer service benchmarks, for example, in comparative best practice does not represent the stakeholder diversity of many modern facilities. This case study will have managerial implications in that it will provide some practical recommendations to assist managers in stadium stakeholder management.

2. Case Background

Arsenal Football Club is one of the leading clubs in English football. Due to increasing commercial pressures in the 1990s and the need to grow revenue streams, the directors at Arsenal began to consider relocating to a new stadium development; underpinning this was the need to increase capacity to further drive commercial revenues to enable Arsenal to continue to challenge within the Premier League and Europe. However, stadium development was restricted by residential properties that surrounded Highbury, while the East Stand, built in the 1930s and of art deco design, was a listed building. The board of directors at Arsenal looked at a large number of sites to relocate before deciding in 1999 to concentrate on Ashburton Grove, an industrial estate located 400 metres from Highbury. An initial planning proposal for a 60,000 capacity stadium was submitted in November 2000. Planning permission was granted in December 2001 after the football club had submitted a number of revised proposals after public consultation. Construction work on the Emirates Stadium began in March 2004, with the stadium completed in July 2006. The overall cost of the Emirates Stadium development was £390 million.

The management at the football club has dealt successfully with the many challenges of moving one of London’s top professional football teams, from its old 38,500 seat stadium, to the Emirates Stadium. The planning and construction of the stadium was delivered on time and in budget, and since it was opened in 2006 has been named as the ‘Business Venue of the Year’ in 2007 and the ‘Best Venue for Meetings and Events in England’ in 2008. In addition to the success of the move and the quality of the finished stadium the move has added considerable strength to Arsenal’s off-field business operations. Average attendance has risen from 38,184 at Highbury in 2005/06 to 60,040 in 2008/09, moving Arsenal from the 37th best supported club in Europe in terms of match day attendance to 7th (Football Economy, 2009). This has had a significant impact on turnover. Between 2006 and 2007, the additional capacity at the Emirates Stadium led to a 111 per cent increase in matchday revenue and was chiefly responsible for the 38% rise in turnover from £133m to £177.6m (Deloitte, 2008). Arsenal Football Club is now one of the highest revenue generating clubs in world football, with the Deloitte Money League placing Arsenal in fifth and sixth position in 2007 and 2008 respectively (Deloitte, 2009). The Emirates Stadium has clearly been central to Arsenal’s turnover, contributing 45% of their overall revenues (Deloitte, 2009). This is a significantly different position to 2001/02 when match day income made up only 27% of revenues and the club relied on broadcasting income for 50% of revenue (Deloitte, 2003). Although Deloitte (2009) raises the issue that commercial revenues are still not as well exploited as its rivals it is arguably in a stronger financial position than it was before the move to Emirates Stadium. This is illustrated by the fact that the value of the Arsenal brand was rated as third most valuable behind Manchester United and Real Madrid by Forbes magazine in 2008, a position that was maintained in 2009 (BBC, 2008; Forbes, 2009).

3. Stakeholder Identification at the Emirates Stadium

This section will use the Mendelow power/interest matrix as the theoretical framework with which to identify a number of stakeholder groups that have an interest in the Emirates Stadium. Mendelow (1983) believed that the process of strategic planning was limited to resource- and market-based analysis. Mendelow (1991) developed the power/interest matrix to assist managers in carrying out stakeholder analysis in the strategic planning phase. By carrying out this analysis the organisation can view alternative strategies to those proposed through other tools and assist in rationalising the level of interaction between competing stakeholder groups. Figure two uses the power/interest matrix to identify key stakeholder groups that have a stake in the operations of the Emirates Stadium. Each of the four categories and the justifications for placing the various stakeholder groups within these categories are considered in turn.

Figure 2: Mendelow's power/interest matrix during stadium operations

Level of Interest (High → Low)

Level of Power (High → Low)

Key Players Stakeholder Participation Stakeholders: *Directors* *Upper Tier Sponsors and Partners - Emirates Airlines*	**Keep Satisfied** Stakeholder Engagement Stakeholders: *Met Police* *Transport for London*
Keep Informed Stakeholder Engagement Stakeholders: *Supporters* *Banks* *Shareholders* *Lower Tier Sponsors* *Upper Tier Sponsors and Partners - Delaware North Companies* *London Borough of Islington* *Local Community Residents*	**Minimal Effort** No need to engage/participate Stakeholders: *Premier League* *Broadcasters*

Source: Adapted from Mendelow (1991) and Low and Cowton (2004)

Minimal Effort

This category is potentially the most contentious class of the four levels. Realistically managers would be reluctant to class any stakeholder as low in power and low in interest. This effectively resigns these stakeholders to a position where there is no need for an organisation to employ an engagement or participation strategy. However, stakeholder rationalization is needed during major projects in order to focus management effort. In the context of the Emirates Stadium, stakeholders such as broadcasters and the Premier League could arguably be classed within the minimal effort category during stadium operations. Essentially for both stakeholders, interest and power is spread amongst a network of organisations hence high scores in each category is minimised and relegated to a contractual relationship. As long as the football club fulfils their playing roster regulations both of these stakeholders require minimal effort on the part of the stadium management.

Keep Informed

This category is characterised by those stakeholders who have high levels of interest but low levels of power. Stakeholders that fit into this category require some form of engagement strategy in order to keep them informed of developments, issues and events at the stadium. Potential stakeholder groups within this category include supporters, shareholders, lower tier sponsors and partners, banks, upper tier sponsors and partners such as Delaware North Companies, local community residents, and the London Borough of Islington. For example, given the high level of financing that was required to build the Emirates Stadium, it is important that the football club keeps the banks abreast of financial performance. It could also be argued that this engagement could have been reduced if not for the economic slowdown of 2008/09. The Stadium Management Plan (see below) also ensures that the club remains accountable to the London Borough of Islington. Moreover given the potential impacts of the stadium (e.g. increased traffic, litter, road closures, etc), there is a need for the football club to keep local community residents informed of stadium developments. While it can be argued that local community residents have little influence and therefore lack power over stadium management, collective community group action might result in a higher level of local community resident power, particularly if it led to negative press for the football club and the Emirates Stadium.

Keep Satisfied

Stakeholders that have high levels of power but low levels of interest in the stadium can be classified in the keep satisfied category. Stakeholders that fit into this category require some form of engagement strategy in order to keep them informed of developments, issues and events at the stadium. However, there is a difference between these stakeholders and those classified within the keep informed category due to the high level of power; this makes it important for the football club to consider the interests of these stakeholders in order to satisfy them. Potential stakeholders within this category include those that provide key services to the club including the Metropolitan Police and Transport for London (TFL). For example, it can be argued that TFL has a high level of power as the club and its supporters rely heavily on TFL's services to get them to and from the stadium. Moreover it can be argued that TFL are less interested in the Emirates Stadium because they routinely deal with event situations like these at other London venues, such as the O_2 Arena, Chelsea Football Club and Wembley Stadium to name a few.

Key Players

Key stakeholders are those that have a high level of interest and power in the Emirates Stadium and therefore require the club to implement some form of participation strategy. It can be argued that the Directors of the football club are a key player as they are a highly powerful and interested stakeholder group who collectively own approximately 70% of the club's shares. This has allowed the Directors to reorganise the legal structure of the club to maintain a great deal of control over the development project while minimising risk to the football operations. It can also be argued that Emirates Airlines – an upper tier sponsor and partner – is a key player. Emirates contributed £100m towards the building of the stadium, which incorporated 15-year stadium naming rights and an 8-year shirt sponsorship deal in October 2004. Given the current recession and the decline in sports sponsorship, it could be argued that this level of investment in the football club, combined with the stadium naming rights, ensures that Emirates have a high level of interest and a high level of power in regard to certain decisions that are taken by stadium management.

4. Stakeholder Management Strategies

This section identifies a number of measures implemented by the football club since the Emirates Stadium was opened in 2006 in order to manage the relationships with four of the stakeholder groups identified above. These stakeholders include the local authority (London Borough of Islington), local community residents, supporters, and disabled supporters.

London Borough of Islington

The London Borough of Islington was identified as a stakeholder group that needs to be kept informed of developments in regard to the Emirates Stadium through stakeholder engagement. Since the opening of the Emirates Stadium, Arsenal Stadium Management, a trading subsidiary of Arsenal Holdings PLC, has had the responsibility to implement the Stadium Management Plan. The plan was a requirement that was placed on the football club as part of the section 106 planning agreement that the club was required to sign in order for planning consent to be granted. The Stadium Management Plan ensures that the football club has to engage with the London Borough of Islington on an ongoing basis, in addition to other relevant bodies, and to keep them informed on developments across a range of issue including public safety, crime prevention and local transport management issues. Three key aspects of the Stadium Management Plan include the Local Area Management Plan, which aims to minimise environmental impact to residents and businesses affected by major events at the Emirates stadium (Arsenal Football Club, 2006a); the Stadium Travel Plan, a traffic management scheme; and the Monitoring Programme, which involves an independent body assessing the extent to which adverse environmental effects are minimised, whether 88 per cent of the spectators arrive at the Emirates using means of transport other than a private car, and that the measures to retain visitors in the stadium after matches are effective (Arsenal Football Club, 2006b: 4).

Local Community Residents

Local Community Residents were identified as a stakeholder group that needs to be kept informed of developments and therefore requires the implementation of an engagement strategy. Arsenal Football Club does this through the Stadium Management Plan; one of the objectives is to minimise negative aspects that the stadium has on the residential community. The football club has also employed additional engagement strategies. For example, the implementation of the Local Area Management Plan has resulted in litter collection and street cleaning after matches, pedestrian signs, supervising spectator flows, and temporary road closures. To ensure that community residents are aware of these developments and to minimise the matchday impact of the stadium, the football club has implemented a communications strategy using a variety of mediums including community newsletters, leafleting and street posters in the residential area, and in the stations around Highbury and the Emirates Stadium. There is also a section on the Emirates Stadium website that provides information for local community residents and also links to the London Borough of Islington website where further information concerning details of the Stadium Management Plan, events at the Emirates, local transport, the traffic management scheme, and the road closures before and after matches.

Supporters

As a stakeholder group with low levels of power but high levels of interest in the operations of the Emirates Stadium, supporters need to be kept informed through engagement strategies. The football club has implemented three types of engagement strategy with supporters. Firstly, there are a number of ways in which the club communicates developments to supporters including the Emirates Stadium website, the matchday programme, and the Arsenal monthly magazine. Secondly, since the move to the Emirates Stadium, the fans forum has been restructured to better reflect the changing supporter composition. It includes representatives from the general admission seats, the more expensive club-level seats, and from the executive boxes, as well as representatives from disabled supporters. The fans forum meets three times a year and provides supporters with the opportunity to raise issues relating to the operational policies of the Emirates Stadium such as ticketing. In addition to the fans forum, the football club has regular engagement with the Arsenal Independent Supporters Association (AISA). Third, the Emirates Stadium Management department at the football club has set up comments boxes around the stadium and encourages supporters to provide feedback on a matchday relating to stadium issues.

Disabled Supporters

Disabled supporters are one sub-group within the broader supporter category. During the transition from the Highbury to the Emirates Stadium, a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) was appointed. Maintaining contact with disabled supporters is the role of the DLO and to do this he uses a number of general communication tools pursuant with other supporter groups. However ongoing match-day communication with different groups of disabled supporters is proving difficult. Where at the former stadium each group of disabled supporters were located in one area within the facility at the Emirates Stadium they are located in a range of seating positions and at all levels of the facility. While this is a feature of best practice design the DLO is spread around the facility on matchday fielding member's feedback. While this offers disabled supporters with a choice of seating options it does restrict the members' social interaction opportunities. To encourage social interaction the DLO organises two social events per year so that members can interact. The club also relies on feedback from disabled members to the DLO. In a number of instances this feedback has also gone into redesigning features of the facility. For instance on the upper levels of the facility it was originally difficult for wheelchair bound supporters to see moments of excitement on the pitch as the standing crowd temporarily blocked their view. This occurred as the Green Guide (DCMS, 2008) only catered sight lines to consider all spectators seating (as seating is now mandatory at certain football facilities). There the DLO petitioned Stadium Management to elevate the platforms for these supporters to ensure that standing spectators would not diminish their view and therefore quality of experience.

5. Critical Analysis

This case study has used the Mendelow power/interest matrix in combination with stakeholder engagement and participation strategies developed by Low and Cowton (2004) to identify different stakeholders of the Emirates Stadium and how Arsenal Football Club has implemented various management strategies to manage different stakeholder groups. However there are three critical issues that can be identified in relation to this case study. These are that stakeholder groups are not homogenous; there is a need to also consider stakeholder actions and responses; and that there is a need for more qualitative benchmarks.

Homogeneity of Stakeholder Groups

The assumption that there is strong homogeneity of interests within generic stakeholder groups is problematic, as Harrison and Freeman (1999: 484) state: "by examining large stakeholder groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, investors and the like, researchers ignore many differences within stakeholder groups". Stakeholder groups are therefore not homogenous. For example, this case study has focused on supporters as a stakeholder group of the Emirates Stadium. However, as Martin states (2007: 639) "the nature of football fandom and supporters orientation both to the game and their clubs has become more diverse and complex". A number of scholars have examined forms of spectator identification in football (e.g. Giulianotti, 2002; Tapp and Clowes, 2002; Tapp, 2004). The dominant theme is that supporters relate to football clubs in numerous ways and have a wide divergence of opinions. While for some, the nature of their support is very much an individual experience, for others their relationship with their football club is through the collective experiences they have with other supporters. This underpins the development of a variety of different supporter-based organisations such as official supporter clubs, independent supporter clubs, and supporter trusts, each with particular values and aims that appeal to some supporters but not others. This requires the managers of the Emirates Stadium to identify different supporter segments and target these accordingly. Although disabled supporters were considered – a sub-group within the broader supporter stakeholder group - there is also an issue with treating all disabled members as the same. For example, Shakespeare (2006) notes that the notion of a disability community is a misnomer and that each group within the larger community has distinct needs. The Disability Discrimination Act of 2005 is quite focused on those with physical disabilities (OPSI, 2005) and stakeholder groups such as Arsenal Disabled Supporters Association are dominated by wheelchair users. Within Arsenal it is noted that there lacks a global community amongst the disabled supporters, that they are quite factional, and that there are considerable problems with checking ambulant supporters. It is therefore important for the management of the Emirates Stadium to be aware and understand the multiple and diverse range of organisations and groups within each broad stakeholder category if a stakeholder management strategy is to be successful.

Stakeholder Actions and Responses

This case study has presented the management of stakeholder relationships from the perspective of Arsenal Football Club. While the organisational perspective has been useful in identifying different stakeholder groups of the Emirates Stadium and in turn, detailing the implementation of a range of stakeholder management initiatives, this case study has not considered these initiatives from the perspective of the various stakeholder groups. Therefore there are a number of issues that are beyond the scope of this case study. For example, how have the stakeholder management strategies been perceived by various stakeholder groups? Do stakeholders consider the strategies to have been successful? Are there some stakeholders that feel excluded from these management strategies? To what extent are different stakeholders able to influence the way that decisions are made at the Emirates Stadium? Moreover, the case study does not consider the complexity of interactions between different stakeholders of the Emirates Stadium and whether they feel able to mobilise to increase influence. These are issues that require further research.

Push for Qualitative Benchmarks

Within the interviews it was noted that certain staff focused on what other competing clubs were doing at their facilities and expressed a desire to replicate certain services. Interestingly the facilities used for comparison scored lower on an independent benchmarking exercise than did Arsenal. Furthermore despite the DLO's work to improve the facility experience for disabled supporters the National Association of Disabled Supporters (2007) reports that the facility only achieved 96% of the Accessible Stadia Guidelines despite catering for vastly increased numbers than Highbury and maintaining tickets at a lower cost than other competing clubs. This failure to achieve 100% was down to the Club having 10 fewer wheelchair access seats than the total capacity of the facility required (based on a calculation of total seats to wheelchair seats). Despite having a range of services above and beyond the guidelines, examples being a guide dog toilet and a fully colour contrasted facility the score allows other facilities to claim best-in-class.

Quantitative measures do not consider the softer aspects of best practice or those services that facilities offer that may be unique. Incidentally the range of literature on providing accessible facilities is extensive with each association for those with disabilities (Royal National Institute of the Blind, Mencap, Royal National Institute for

Deaf People, Scope to name a few) publishing guidelines on facility issues ads further complexity. Therefore the diversity in the stakeholder group in this example makes it difficult for managers to achieve best practice as quantitative benchmarks are by their nature homogenous between facilities to allow comparisons in the first place. The use of the stakeholder analysis tools used in this facility could help alleviate these issues.

6. Discussion of best practice

As mentioned throughout the case there is a lack of best practice focus on stakeholder engagement and participation in sport facility management research. This case has highlighted Arsenal's best practice in stakeholder management and the power/interest matrix has been shown to be a useful strategic planning tool. Nevertheless in order to allow for performance comparisons between facilities a greater understanding of differences within stakeholder groups needs to be understood. Currently Arsenal is in the process of segmenting their supporter base to come to a better understanding of differences between supporters. As an example the club recently examined its Junior Gunners (youth club) supporters, aged below 16. Through market research they found that there were three segments within this category each with different consumption patterns. Therefore although commercially driven, the number of distinct stakeholders is growing, adding further support to the use of stakeholder mapping.

Two benchmarking tools were discussed in the introduction, Total Quality Management (TQM) and the balanced scorecard. While TQM focuses on continuous improvement in operations and services, stakeholder management is qualitative in nature. Ideally therefore the balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1996), with its focus on assessing key areas of performance, could include stakeholder management as a performance indicator. The flexibility of the balanced scorecard is that it uses four key performance indicators which could allow the inclusion of qualitative measurements, such as stakeholder management into the evaluation of performance. It could be argued that these qualitative criteria would be difficult to measure and therefore less reliable however the quality of these 'softer' services may encourage other competitor organisations to implement them in their operations.

7. Conclusion

The objectives of this case study were threefold. First, it identified different stakeholders of the Emirates Stadium and considered the levels of power and interest. The case presented a range of stakeholders that had varied relationships with Arsenal Football Club. The stakeholders all had differing levels of power and interest and the Mendelow power/interest matrix demonstrated how facilities could manage these varied groups. Facility managers should note the Medelow's matrix is not simply designed as a box to store certain types of stakeholders; even within each of the four categories stakeholders differ in power and interest. However for determining stakeholder participation or engagement this tool serves a useful purpose for guiding management action.

The second aim of the case was to illustrate various stakeholder management strategies that Arsenal Football Club had implemented in relation to four stakeholder groups – the London Borough of Islington; local community residents; supporters; and disabled supporters. The coordination of the Stadium Management Plan between the club and its stakeholders highlights Arsenal as operating at the forefront of event management delivery.

The third objective was to develop a number of best practice recommendations in relation to stakeholder management and sport facility management. While best practice in sport facility management has tended to focus on internal-facing benchmarking this case highlights the importance of successful stakeholder management to achieving success in facility operation. The tendency to focus on the qualitative aspects of stadium management through stakeholder consultation cannot be measured by traditional quantitative benchmarks.

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