

Lisa Duke
Costas Markides
Daniel Oyon

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UEFA 2016: The opportunities and challenges of connectivity

The digital economy and the technologies of the social era brought new challenges to the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), the association responsible for promoting football in Europe. The new technologies allowed sports fans to follow their teams in new ways and in a more interactive way 24/7. They also allowed sports leagues to offer their fans new services to enhance their customer experience both at the stadium and at home. US sports leagues such as the National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA) were particularly active in using the new technologies to enhance their consumers' experience; the European context was not without its challenges compared to the USA. How best to use the new technologies to improve fans' experience of football in Europe was an open question. Many obstacles lay in the way, but the opportunity was too great to be ignored or missed.

About UEFA

Founded in Basel, Switzerland in 1954, UEFA is the governing body of European football. Its headquarters are located in Nyon in the canton of Vaud. It is made up of football associations from European countries. In 2015 it had 54 members (see **Exhibit 1**) and employed more than 500 staff from 34 nationalities. Its parent is the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), but it is governed by its own Congress and has its own President and Executive Committee (see **Exhibit 2** for its organisational chart). Its objectives are to:

... promote football in a spirit of unity, solidarity, peace, understanding and fair play, without any discrimination on the part of politics, race religion, gender or any other reason, to safeguard the values of European football, maintain relations with all stakeholders involved in European football, and support and safeguard its member associations for the overall well-being of the European game.

Costas Markides is Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship at London Business School. Daniel Oyon is Professor, Department of Accounting and Control at HEC Lausanne. Lisa Duke is a Research Associate at London Business School.

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