



Case Study 21
The VELUX Group
and the European
Handball Federation

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PROJECT DETAILS

Sponsorship title:

**VELUX, Title Sponsor, VELUX EHF
Champions League**

Duration of sponsorship:

**Case study covers September 2010
through the current season and beyond
to June 2020.**

Case study entered by:

EHF Marketing GmbH

Sponsor's industry sector:

Building materials

Rights-holder:

**European Handball Federation (EHF)/
EHF Marketing GmbH**

Agency:

None / in-house

CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

The VELUX EHF Champions League is the leading men's club handball competition in Europe involving the continent's best teams and featuring the world's top professional handball players. It is organised by the European Handball Federation, the governing body for handball in Europe.

The 2009-10 men's EHF Champions League season saw a change to its playing model to incorporate a final-four weekend with the four best teams playing for the title over a weekend in Cologne, Germany.

With this new playing system, global building materials company, the VELUX Group, partnered with EHF Marketing, the marketing arm and subsidiary of the EHF, for the first edition of the 'EHF FINAL4' in May 2010.

Following a successful debut event, VELUX signed on as the competition's first Title Sponsor, initially for a three-year period, subsequently extended to at least 2020.

VELUX benefits from the partnership through regional activations, local and international media exposure in numerous languages and, by using on-court and perimeter advertising where logos or campaigns can be shown. This provides further exposure for the brand through the variety of television networks and online streams which show the games worldwide.

An important aspect of the agreement for VELUX is corporate hospitality with the company inviting many thousands of partners, customers and staff to matches



The VELUX Group and the European Handball Federation

across Europe throughout the season.

The VELUX EHF FINAL4 - the showpiece final weekend in Cologne, Germany - is also an important part of this strategy with over 830 guests invited in season 2015-2016. Additionally, the event enables the company to engage directly with fans at the event, many of whom are the brand's target demographic.

Video

Link: <https://youtu.be/OreQYOvdEdI>

PLANNING

In the early 2000s the VELUX Group started to see a declining trend in the effectiveness of traditional media to engage consumers as traditional channels and advertising media started to fragment, increasing costs.

As a global leader in the building materials industry, VELUX raises awareness of its products through mass media and had to seek out new channels. After a review, sponsorship proved to be the most attractive option.

Handball was seen as the best fit for the VELUX due to an overlap between the strongest nations in handball in terms of clubs and exposure, and the strongest markets for VELUX. Many of those teams competing in the Men's EHF Champions League before and after the VELUX partnership was agreed come from key markets. VELUX has a strong presence and business in countries where handball is popular, including Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary and Poland.

At the very start of the partnership, two clear objectives were laid out:

- To generate awareness and exposure of the VELUX brand through the media to reach a broader audience



and connect with existing and future homeowners, resulting in a positive effect on sales

- Reinforce relations with dealers, installers and other key stakeholders, with activation opportunities through unique experiences in handball arenas across Europe.

ACTIVATION

The activation began with a joint-logo and new look giving the VELUX logo and the company name a strong presence. With the creation of a new corporate identity for both the men's and women's EHF Champions League competitions in 2012, the positioning of VELUX remained as prominent as before, with the primary logo featuring in a 50:50 ratio between VELUX and other logo elements and the word 'VELUX' appearing in all copy.

The logo is present on the competition badge on the sleeves of players' shirts (more than 600 players in season 2016-17), on all competition-branded items and on venue decorations, internal and external publications and media channels. Many of these elements are visible on television coverage.

At matches and in the arena

The corporate identity is integrated into all media outputs but will become stronger with the creation of the EHF's new 'Home of Handball' online platform, due to launch at the VELUX EHF FINAL4 2017 in June.

VELUX has a strong presence at all 204 matches of the 2016-17 season, ending with the VELUX EHF FINAL4.

Four prominent floor sticker positions are dedicated to VELUX for every game and are used to showcase the logo, with two static board positions on the short side of the court used in the same way.

The VELUX Group and the European Handball Federation

VELUX takes advantage of having the most minutes on the electronic advertising board systems by showing different VELUX animations. One is always an animated logo and/or claim and the other two are dedicated to different campaigns, partly tailor-made for different territories.

A printed match programme for fans at the venue contains up to three VELUX advertisements – in both the language of the home club and English.

These adverts vary by season and provide an opportunity to advertise products, strengthen image or introduce handball-related campaigns.

Television spot

As part of the partnership, VELUX has the right to produce a seven to 10-second television spot advertisement which must be shown before and after every match broadcast by each of the television partners.

The spot was included on all 29 television stations which broadcast an average of 130 matches per round live or delayed. This allowed VELUX to showcase products as well as to draw attention to campaigns such as 'Let's Play', which has been in place from February 2017.

Hospitality

During the first season of the partnership 3,500 guests were invited to matches by VELUX.

After six years, in the 2015-16 season, this figure had increased to 6,000.

VELUX has sales companies across Europe and, through its Title Sponsorship, offers them corporate hospitality opportunities to bring business partners and customers together in a more informal and social context in handball arenas across Europe over 10 months of the season.

Clubs are contractually required to offer a high level of VIP service, with EHF Marketing ensuring that standards are kept high to provide the best experience for sponsors.

Brand ambassador

Lars Christiansen, a two-time European champion with Denmark and former German Bundesliga player is the VELUX Group's brand ambassador and through television, print and online campaigns, provides a face and personality to the group's handball sponsorship.

Christiansen appears in television spots, meets VIP guests at the VELUX EHF FINAL4, assists in half-time activations and has played a major role in the company's campaign offering a 'money can't buy' training opportunity for junior handball teams around Europe. He is also involved in the 'Let's Play' campaign. As a successful sportsman, he has also been used as an inspirational speaker for internal business and employee events at VELUX.



The VELUX Group and the European Handball Federation

Handball Manager Game

February 2013 – June 2015

- **Prize:** Tickets and signed shirts
- **Description:** VELUX Handball Manager was the first fantasy sports game involving VELUX EHF Champion League players. It allowed fans to compete against each other in private or public leagues for free. Fans had the chance to test their skills against VELUX brand ambassador Lars Christiansen, who also entered a team.

#SCOREMORE challenge powered by VELUX

24 March 2015 – 31 May 2015

- **Prize:** VIP weekend to the VELUX EHF FINAL4 in 2015
- **Description:** Fans had to shoot twice from different areas on court towards goal and hit the crossbar as often as they could. They then had to post the video on Facebook or Twitter with #SCOREMORE as the hashtag and then nominate some friends for the challenge. The best competitors won a VIP weekend to the 2015 VELUX EHF FINAL4 and the chance to compete on-court at half time
- Videos came in from 21 countries and videos posted on our Facebook page were viewed 830,961 times and reached 2,226,884 people.

'Guess the Score' game

Trial period - spring 2016 / currently running from September 2016

- **Prize:** Signed players' shirt, tickets occasionally
- **Description:** Fans guess the score of selected matches on VELUXhandball.com (successor to handballenergy.com). The one who guesses the correct result wins the signed shirt. The game is promoted on the official social media channels of the VELUX EHF Champions League
- The promotion started with graphics and expanded with short videos from players encouraging fans to enter
- The activity has a strong local engagement rate especially towards the home team.
- Participation, reach and engagement are increasing with every round as the competition progresses, moving rapidly from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands now
- Individual participants are now in the thousands.

'Let's Play'

'Let's Play' started with the 2016-17 season and is due to run until the end of the of the current contract period in

2020. The goal of the campaign is to provide youth teams between the age of eight and 14 with official balls as a sponsor contribution to the team.

Applicants complete a very simple form on VELUXhandball.com and wait to see whether they will be drawn as a winner. VELUX will distribute around 4,000 'Select' handballs with each club winning 12 handballs.

A €2,000 voucher for buying team gear will also be drawn – and this will be shared with those teams which send photos of them playing or posing with their new handballs.

The programme will be advertised across multiple channels: a new television spot with young people and Lars Christiansen in the spirit of Let's Play; new animation sequences on perimeter advertising; short clips for social media and banner campaigns. Advertising levels will peak at the VELUX EHF FINAL4.

Match of the Week (MOTW)

Since the 2010-11 season one match per round has been selected as the 'Match of the Week' based on viewers' expectations as well as for marketing purposes. From the 2016-17 season, the concept of MOTW was further expanded. There are more activities organised around MOTW, including live, English language television commentary, as well as additional branding, social media activities, half-time games and activation and additional reporting from the federation's mobile reporter team. The development of MOTW was not only the goal of the EHF but also a strong wish of the VELUX Group, which provides promotion balls for all MOTW events in connection with Let's Play.

The aim is to surprise VIP guests and provide presents for the fans (the players throw out the balls after the entry ceremony and some are thrown by mascots or volunteers at the half-time break). The activation has been very successful for both fans and VIP guests. The clubs have been cooperative and a more extensive activation is planned.

During the VELUX EHF FINAL4

In addition to the regular season exposure – four floor sticker positions, match programme advertisements, LCD board and media backdrop exposure – the VELUX Group gets three pages in the official VELUX EHF FINAL4 magazine available at the event and online, as well as use of the arena television cube, mixing the VELUX logo with product and corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaign presentations.

The VELUX Group and the European Handball Federation



VELUX is always integrated into the VELUX EHF FINAL4 opening shows – partly with products, partly with logos. The tournament is also linked to events such as the 75th anniversary of the company in 2016. According to a qualitative survey conducted at the event in 2015, unprompted awareness of VELUX in Cologne was 88 per cent.

Hospitality

Hospitality is a key area for VELUX throughout the season as well as at the VELUX EHF FINAL4 with guests travelling from across Europe and North America to Cologne to witness the event – the handball equivalent of the Super Bowl – for themselves.

German-speaking guests have a lounge in the arena, set-up and decorated only for this purpose in the area behind the grandstands, while the rest of the VIP guests are seated in VIP boxes, or the best seats, all with a perfect view and excellent catering.

The most important VELUX representatives get special

services including VIP shuttles and invitations to the VIP parties and side events including the opening party and VIP reception, 'Cologne Handball Night' and charity events.

Most VIP guests also stay in the official player's hotel during the weekend, providing another 'money can't buy' experience.

Activation stands

VELUX usually has two indoor stands and one outside for activation, with one of the inside stands traditionally functioning as a product stand and the other as an activation stand presenting CSR programmes.

In the past two years, the activation stand promoted the 'Little Sun' project with handball related activities connecting to charity activities including travelling to Africa to donate solar lamps and while there, organising a handball match for local children.

Outside the arena, the VELUX-branded 'Robokeeper' always attracts long queues of people wanting to try out their skills in front of goal. The Robokeeper provides an

The VELUX Group and the European Handball Federation

opportunity to promote the company's latest products or CSR programmes.

On-court activities

VELUX organises two half-time activities at each VELUX EHF FINAL4 event which have been used in different ways over the partnership: Lars Christiansen threw out balls for fans to win tickets; winners of external pre-match games were awarded on court; on-court interviews were conducted in connection with the contract extension; and games were played like the #SCOREMORE challenge, musical chairs and a giant puzzle with the involvement of former star players.

The participants of the games receive prizes including tickets for the next final event or signed players' shirts.

The VELUX MVP Award is also an integral part of the winners' ceremony with pictures and footage distributed globally.

EVALUATION

EHF Marketing, the EHF and VELUX have developed a close cooperation during the past seven seasons.

The original objectives from VELUX to generate awareness and exposure, and to reinforce relations with their stakeholders have been fulfilled and surpassed while, the partnership has helped to take handball and the VELUX EHF Champions League to new levels in terms of both fan and media interest.

The key performance indicators (KPIs) for the partnership demonstrate how the sponsorship has grown:

VELUX Guests

- **2010-11 season:** VELUX invited 3,500 guests to the matches all over Europe and 558 guests to the VELUX EHF FINAL4.
- **2015-6 season:** VELUX invited 6,000 guests to the matches all over Europe and 832 guests to the VELUX EHF FINAL4.

Fans

- **2010-11 season:** 650,000 spectators watched matches live
- **2015-6 season:** 800,911 spectators watched matches live – with the record single-match attendance of 15,200 (HC PPD Zagreb vs Paris Saint-Germain Handball quarter-final, April 2016).

Social Media

- **2010-11 season:** 9,780 fans on EHF Champions League Facebook
- **2015-16 season:** 261,000 fans on EHF Champions League Facebook
- Twitter @ehfcl launched in March 2013 – 34,000 followers
- Instagram @ehfcl launched in March 2013 – 84,000 followers
- YouTube – 13,505,217 views.

TV statistics (including the VELUX EHF FINAL4)

- **2010-11 season:** 3,552 broadcast items (live, delayed, news), 2,883 hours broadcast duration
- **2015-16 season:** 17,053 broadcast items, 15,863 hours broadcast duration. The 2015-16 season saw matches broadcast in 70 territories over five continents by 33 broadcasters, reaching 107m households to an audience of 383m people.

VELUX related stats (including the VELUX EHF FINAL4)

- **2010-11 Season:** 1,806,508 sequences, 3,027 hours of VELUX visibility at games
- **2015-16 Season:** 10,487,862 sequences, 17,496 hours of VELUX visibility at games
- Media and sponsorship value of VELUX doubled from season 2010-11 to season 2015-16.