

■ A SHORT GUIDE FOR OPERATORS AND INVESTORS IN THE SPORTS MID-MARKET

# THE **10 RULES** OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT



Ten Rules, each with one check and one due diligence question. Written for spectator sports, for clubs, leagues and events between five and one hundred fifty million euros in revenue, and for the investors entering that segment.

**ELITE PATTERNS.**  
**MID-MARKET**  
**REALITY.**

NILS STERENBORG  
AUTHOR, POWER PLAY AND THE 10 RULES  
POWERPLAY ONE

## ■ WHY RULES

# IN SPORT, THE MID-MARKET DOES THE ELITE'S JOB WITH A FRACTION OF THE PEOPLE. THE GAP IS STRUCTURE.

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About a hundred organisations worldwide have the strategy teams and the reference data to run the value loop of sport properly. Everyone else runs the same loop with a fraction of the staff.

We take the patterns from the top of the game and turn them into Rules a mid-market organisation can apply. Each Rule is a management decision a chairman, a chief executive or an investor can check. If the check holds, the Rule is in place. If not, you know what to do next.

01

## ATTENTION

You earn attention.

FAN  
CULTURAL

02

## COMMERCIALS

Attention pays.

COMMERCIAL  
MEDIA

03

## SPORTING PERFORMANCE

You reinvest, and the next turn gets easier.

TALENT  
COMPETITIVE

THREE NUMBERS YOU STEER BY. EACH SPLITS INTO TWO, SIX SUB-DIMENSIONS IN TOTAL. WHEN THE LOOP IS INTACT, EACH TURN MAKES THE NEXT ONE EASIER.

**01** Read the patterns and the chain, pages 3 and 4.

**02** Check the ten Rules, pages 5 and 6.

**03** Run PowerSCOAR to score the result, page 7.

## ■ THE VALUE CREATION CHAPTER, IN SHORT

# FIVE PATTERNS THAT KEEP ORGANISATIONS STUCK

- |    |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01 | <b>THE TALENT DEPENDENCY PATTERN</b>  | The capability lives inside two or three people. When they leave, it leaves with them. Nothing has been institutionalised.                                     |
| 02 | <b>THE IDEA ABUNDANCE PATTERN</b>     | Ideas are plentiful. What is missing is a method to select and sequence them, so more ideas produce more noise.                                                |
| 03 | <b>THE SHORT-TERM SUCCESS PATTERN</b> | The seasonal clock sets the pace of every decision. Nobody has installed a longer planning horizon next to it.                                                 |
| 04 | <b>THE MEASUREMENT VACUUM</b>         | Attendance, followers, shirt sales and league position are tracked. The attractiveness of the organisation as an asset is not, so every investment is a guess. |
| 05 | <b>THE DIGITAL FACADE</b>             | Tools are acquired and mistaken for change. The decision-making underneath stays the same.                                                                     |

## EFFICIENCY ASKS

## HOW DO WE DO THE SAME THINGS BETTER?

Faster ticketing, leaner operations, more automation. It pays, and it has a ceiling.

## EFFECTIVENESS ASKS

## WHAT DIFFERENT THINGS COULD WE DO, FOR WHOM, AND WITH WHAT COMPOUNDING RETURN?

An organisation that grows stronger every season, wherever the team finishes.

Five symptoms, one root cause. Long-term value in spectator sport comes from good systems. The ten Rules are that system.

## ■ THE SEQUENCE

# ONE CHAIN. NOT TEN TIPS.

The rules are sequential and interdependent. Apply them in order and something genuinely compound begins to happen.



01 **STRUCTURE** creates the container in which **DIRECTION** can operate.

02 **DIRECTION** gives **PURPOSE** its compass.

03 **PURPOSE** gives **NEEDS** its priorities.

04 **NEEDS** gives **COLLABORATION** its agenda.

05 **COLLABORATION** gives **VALUATION** its options.

06 **VALUATION** gives **INFLUENCE** its material.

07 **INFLUENCE** gives **CLARITY** its audience.

08 **CLARITY** gives **CREATION** its brief.

09 **CREATION** gives **MOMENTUM** its fuel.

## ■ THE RULES 1 TO 5

**STRUCTURE TO COLLABORATION****01****STRUCTURE**

RUN THE ORGANISATION  
LIKE A SYSTEM

**Value compounds in a clear structure. Work in connected phases: Inspire & Assess, Plan & Design, Execute & Evolve.**

**IN PLACE WHEN**

Someone owns the agenda. Decisions are taken in a regular forum and written down, so they survive a change of people.

**DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION**

What depends on individuals rather than on structure, and what happens to the plan if the CEO, the commercial lead or the sporting director leaves?

**02****DIRECTION**

START FROM YOUR CORE

**Your mission, goals and values are the compass. Translate them into clear value objectives, from the core outward.**

**IN PLACE WHEN**

Leadership agrees on what the organisation stands for and what it will not do. Major initiatives trace back to a stated objective.

**DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION**

Does the budget follow the strategy? Which of last year's investments can be traced to a stated objective?

**03****PURPOSE**

KNOW YOUR WHY

**Define why you act by understanding three perspectives: internal goals, fan needs and partner expectations. Purpose anchors the work in tangible value for people.**

**IN PLACE WHEN**

You talk to fans, sponsors and partners on a regular basis, and what you hear changes decisions.

**DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION**

What evidence shows that fans and partners value the product: renewal and retention rates, price tests, sponsor churn?

**04****NEEDS**

FIX THE FOUNDATIONS  
FIRST

**Before chasing big ideas, know whether you can deliver. Assess your capability in people, data, process and tools, and close the critical gaps first.**

**IN PLACE WHEN**

You know your strongest and weakest capabilities. The biggest gap has an owner and a plan.

**DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION**

What is the binding constraint on the plan: people, data, systems or capital? What does it cost to remove, and who owns it?

**05****COLLABORATION**

MAKE THE WHOLE GREATER  
THAN THE PARTS

**Think of your organisation as a platform. Invite fans, athletes, partners, media and stakeholders to create solutions with you under clear rules for data and decision-making.**

**IN PLACE WHEN**

You know which external relationships carry the most value, and you work them actively.

**DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION**

How concentrated is revenue across sponsors, media partners and public funding, and what happens at renewal?

## ■ THE RULES 6 TO 10

## VALUATION TO MOMENTUM

06

## VALUATION

LET VALUE DECIDE

**Measure every initiative by its ability to create lifetime value with fans and stakeholders. Use transparent scoring to decide which initiatives earn investment.**

## IN PLACE WHEN

A shared decision filter exists. Initiatives are funded, scaled or stopped by it, rather than by seniority or enthusiasm.

## DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION

How is capital allocated across initiatives? What did the last major investments return, and what was stopped because of it?

07

## INFLUENCE

ENGINEER ATTENTION

**In sport, attention is the fuel of growth. Build it deliberately through compelling stories and personal experiences, in the stadium, in the city and online.**

## IN PLACE WHEN

You know where your attention comes from, online and offline. You are present in the community with a steady rhythm, and your fans feature as much as the organisation does.

## DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION

Where does the audience come from, and how much of it does the organisation own and reach directly? How much depends on a single platform, broadcaster or star?

08

## CLARITY

MAKE THE PATH VISIBLE

**Use simple scoring models, write concise briefs, and maintain a living roadmap everyone can see. Without clarity, ideas drift. With clarity, they move.**

## IN PLACE WHEN

Everyone in the organisation can say what the priorities are, who owns them and what success looks like.

## DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION

Is there one plan with owners and milestones? How is progress reported to the board, and what slipped last year?

09

## CREATION

BUILD IN SMALL,  
LOVEABLE STEPS

**Don't aim for perfection, aim for real use. Start with proof of concept, create minimum loveable products, and decide early whether to build, partner, or buy.**

## IN PLACE WHEN

Ideas are tried in small, cheap steps before real money is committed, and the result decides what happens next.

## DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION

How does the organisation decide between build, partner and buy? What was tested before the last major commitment, and what was learned?

10

## MOMENTUM

KEEP THE FLYWHEEL  
TURNING

**Value creation is a rhythm that spins a flywheel. Build a culture of learn, build, measure in loops and double down on what works.**

## IN PLACE WHEN

Results are reviewed on a regular cycle, lessons are written down, and the next plan starts from them.

## DUE DILIGENCE QUESTION

Do attention, commercials and sporting performance move together over several seasons, and how did the organisation behave in its last bad season?

# RUN POWERSCOAR.

PowerSCOAR scores how attractive your club, league, event or promotion really is and ranks what to fix first. The Fast Lane takes about twenty minutes and returns a tier-calibrated score, a heat map and your top-ranked initiatives. The Full Diagnostic is a guided workshop under NDA.

## ● SEE WHERE YOU STAND

### CLUBS

[powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/clubs.html](https://powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/clubs.html)

### LEAGUES

[powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/leagues.html](https://powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/leagues.html)

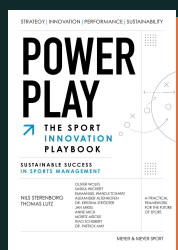
### EVENTS

[powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/events.html](https://powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/events.html)

### PROMOTIONS

[powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/promotion.html](https://powerscoar.powerplay-one.com/promotion.html)

## READ THE METHOD



### Power Play: The Sport Innovation Playbook

English edition, Meyer & Meyer Sport, with ten contributing experts. Nils Sterenborg and Thomas Lutz.

[Barnes & Noble](#) | [Amazon](#) | [Publisher](#)



### The 10 Rules of Sports Innovation

The digital lens on the same ten Rules. Nils Sterenborg.

[Amazon \(Kindle\)](#)

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