

# Stefan Gunnarsson *Senior Brand Strategist*

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📅 7th September 1975 🇮🇸 Icelandic 🤰 Married, two teenage daughters

🌐 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/stefangunnarsson/>



## Profile

Global sports executive and university brand lecturer with 15+ years of experience leading Tier-1 tournament asset delivery, national team rebrands, and multi-stakeholder commercial operations. Former Marketing & Commercial Director for the Icelandic Football Association (KSÍ) and Director at UAE Pro League. Proven track record of conceptualizing brand platforms, managing global kit supplier execution (PUMA), and delivering 360° tournament look and stadium dressing operations. Hold an Executive Master in Global Sport Governance (MESGO), an MBA in Football Industries, and an MSc in International Marketing.

## Work Experience

### Director, Marketing, Commercial & Business Development

January 2018 – December 2025

*Icelandic Football Association*

Reykjavik, Iceland

- **Tier-1 Tournament Brand Architecture & Asset Suite:** Led the end-to-end rebranding of the Icelandic national team identity platform from narrative brief to global deployment. Developed and delivered the complete suite of brand assets—including official marks, broadcast assets, sonic branding, digital toolkits, and kit design with PUMA—winning international awards (e.g., CLIO) and driving a **40% increase in merchandise sales**.
- **Event Dressing & Look Operations:** Directed venue branding and event look execution across all matchday venues, international home fixtures, and domestic cup finals, safeguarding brand consistency, aesthetic quality, and 100% compliance with UEFA/FIFA partner delivery guidelines.
- **Commercial Integration & Partner Rights Delivery:** Restructured the sponsorship portfolio to deliver a **70% revenue increase**, designing commercially relevant branded propositions and managing 360° activation plans for Tier-1 corporate partners.
- **Global Apparel & Supplier Operations:** Managed the global technical partnership with PUMA, leading the brand brief, asset delivery timelines, product rollout, and commercial integration across physical and digital channels.
- **High-Value Contract Negotiations:** Negotiated a historic **2+ Billion ISK betting rights agreement** with Genius Sports and secured long-term media rights packages, leveraging audience intelligence and brand equity.

### Director Licensing & Development

November 2022 – November 2023

*UAE Pro League*

Abu Dhabi, UAE

- **Brand Governance & Stadium Presentation:** Enforced structural governance, club licensing, and league-wide branding guidelines.
- **Stakeholder Alignment & Multi-Market Delivery:** Managed cross-functional relationships with clubs, local organizing committees, and government partners.

### Owner & CEO

September 2009 – December 2017

*Vert Marketing Agency*

Reykjavik, Iceland

- **360° Go-To-Market Brand Execution:** Founded and directed a 25-person marketing consultancy, managing agency creative direction, P&L, and go-to-market strategies for global corporate brands including **Pepsi, Microsoft, HP, and Guinness**.
- **Award-Winning Campaign Narrative:** Awarded the **UEFA Marketing Award** for conceiving and executing the integrated 360° brand positioning, narrative structure, and fan activation campaign for the domestic top-flight football league.

Part Time Lecturer

University of Reykjavik / University of Iceland

**Brand Theory & Narrative Translation:** Teach advanced coursework in *Brand Management*, *Marketing Communications*, and *The Marketing Mix*, translating core academic principles—brand equity, audience intelligence, positioning, and storytelling frameworks—into actionable sports industry practices.

Education

**Executive Master in Global Sport Governance (MESGO)** September 2022 – October 2024  
5 Universities & UEFA  
Advanced international sports governance, commercial strategy, and multi-stakeholder management. Thesis: Strategic Development & Commercial Governance of Women's Football in the UAE.

**UEFA DFLM** June 2020 – September 2021  
University of Lausanne Lausanne, Switzerland  
Specialized framework in complex sports project management, event operations, and stakeholder alignment.

**MBA Football Industries** August 2003 – August 2004  
Liverpool University Liverpool, United Kingdom  
Business management focused on sports economics and rights-holder strategy. Dissertation: "Brand Building Through Sponsorships".

**MSc International Marketing** August 2002 – August 2003  
Strathclyde University Glasgow, Scotland  
Strategic brand positioning, consumer behavior, and global marketing frameworks. Dissertation: "CRM in the UK Football Industry".

Languages

|         |           |           |           |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| English | ● ● ● ● ● | Icelandic | ● ● ● ● ● |
| Danish  | ● ● ● ● ● | German    | ● ● ● ● ● |

Interests

- Trail running (when my knees allow)
- Travelling with my family
- Golf - recently started and love it

References

**Gudni Bergsson**, former President, Icelandic Football Association  
**Gareth Jennings**, Director of Football, UAE Pro League  
other references easily available