

# Who killed the 2010 World Cup PR guru?

 By [Dr Nikolaus Eberl](#)

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It was a sad moment on Tuesday morning, 26 October 2010, at the Oberhausen Sea Life Aquarium, when cleaners found the lifeless body of Paul the Octopus floating in his by now world famous tank. The eight-armed oracle, which correctly predicted the outcome of all of Germany's FIFA World Cup matches (as well as the final), had become a worldwide PR phenomenon that was broadcast in over 200 countries and made his way into Twitter's top ten global trends.

## Loved by many, hated by some

At the same time, his astounding predictive powers made Paul an object of raw emotions for many fervent football supporters, especially when he started to issue dire warnings about Germany's world cup aspirations in the run-up to the semifinal against Spain. Some German (and later on Dutch) fans threatened to fry Paul and serve him up as calamari for their luckless team members, whilst ecstatic fans in Madrid were seen waving octopus banners and offering a 30 000 fee for transferring Paul to a Spanish aquarium.

Surprisingly, Paul's limelight became even fraught with unexpected perils from political powers. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad [accused Paul](#) of spreading "western propaganda and superstition" and posing as a symbol of "decadence and decay".

## Big screen movie

And in China, [a movie is about](#) to hit the big screen entitled "Kill Paul Octopus," whose fictional plot revolves around gambling and match fixing at this year's world cup.

Following these and other threats, the Oberhausen aquarium posted a security detail next to his tank for an undisclosed period of time.

While Paul's sudden departure had many observers calling for an autopsy and an inquest into the many rumours making rounds in the octopus world, the Oberhausen Aquarium has now confirmed that no foul play was to blame for Paul's premature exit.

[Said the aquarium's general manager](#), Stefan Porwoll. "He was dear to all our hearts and we will sorely miss him. He died peacefully in the night of natural causes. It is a comforting thought that he had a good life with us with the best possible care delivered by a committed team."

## More endorsement deals than Beckham

Following his incredible success run at the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the branding power of 'Psychic Paul' rose to stellar dimensions when he recently appeared in an advertisement for a German supermarket chain (showing Paul in his trademark pose choosing the endorsed brand over a competitor's) and received numerous endorsement offers, including a book deal.

"Paul has turned into a million-plus brand instantly," [said his agent Chris Davis](#), noting that Paul had so far received more than 160 offers to endorse products.

## Great brands live forever: Paul's second life

The aquarium's management, who demonstrated their ability to turn a sea monster into a global media star, is [determined to extend](#) Paul's brand equity into his after-life: "In honor of Paul and in view of the worldwide interest, a memorial will be put up to him in our exhibition. We will show his most beautiful and moving moments on a screen. And we will also display the presents we received from all over the world, along with the two glass boxes. We will also show Paul's urn."

[According to Germany's](#) leading weekly magazine, *Spiegel*, Paul's role in the 2010 FIFA World Cup will be remembered for a long time: "Just like everyone will remember the 2006 tournament in Germany for Zinedine Zidane's astounding head butt, and the 1986 one in Mexico for Maradona's 'Hand of God' goal against England, South Africa will forever be associated with an octopus."

### For more:

- Bizcommunity Search: [Paul octopus](#)
- Google Search: [Paul the Octopus](#)
- Twitter Search: [#paul OR #rippaul OR paul octopus](#)

## ABOUT DR NIKOLAUS EBERL

Dr Nikolaus Eberl is the author of *BrandOvation™: How Germany won the World Cup of Nation Branding* and *The Hero's Journey: Building a Nation of World Champions*. He headed the Net Promoter Scorecard research project on SA's destination branding success story during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, co-authored the World Cup Brand Ambassador Program 'Welcome 2010' and was chairperson of the inaugural 2010 FAN World Cup. Email [nikolaus@brandovation.com](mailto:nikolaus@brandovation.com) and follow [@nikolauseberl](#).

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