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BEST SPONSORSHIP ACTIVATIONS

7 SPONSORSHP TRENDS FOR 2016

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THE 2016 SPONSORSHIP GUIDEBOOK BY ELEVENT

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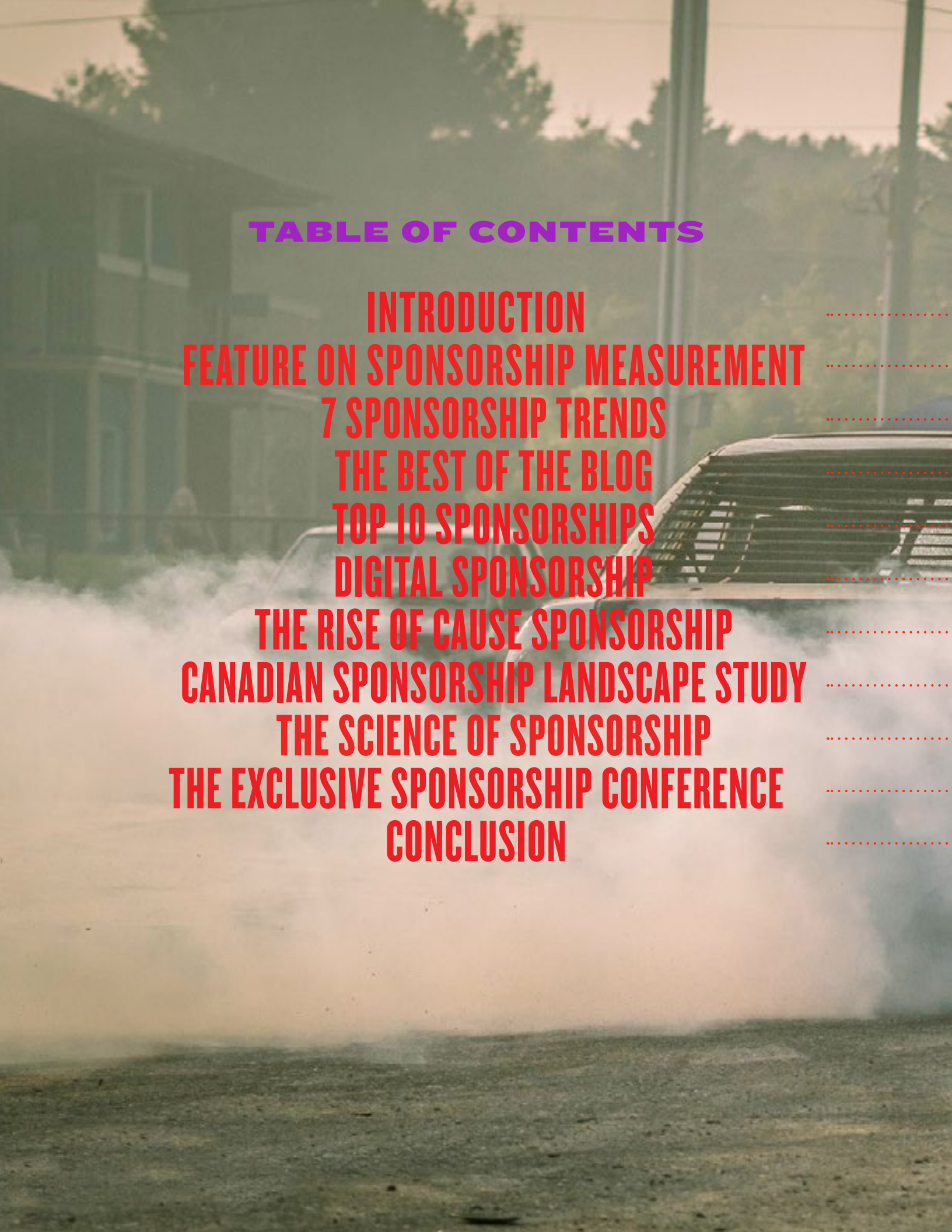

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A year has already gone by since we launched the 2015 edition of our Sponsorship Guide, and the one thing we could have used more of in the interim was… time. That has no doubt been the case for you as well, as sponsorship initiatives are on the rise all over the world and are showing no signs of slowing down.

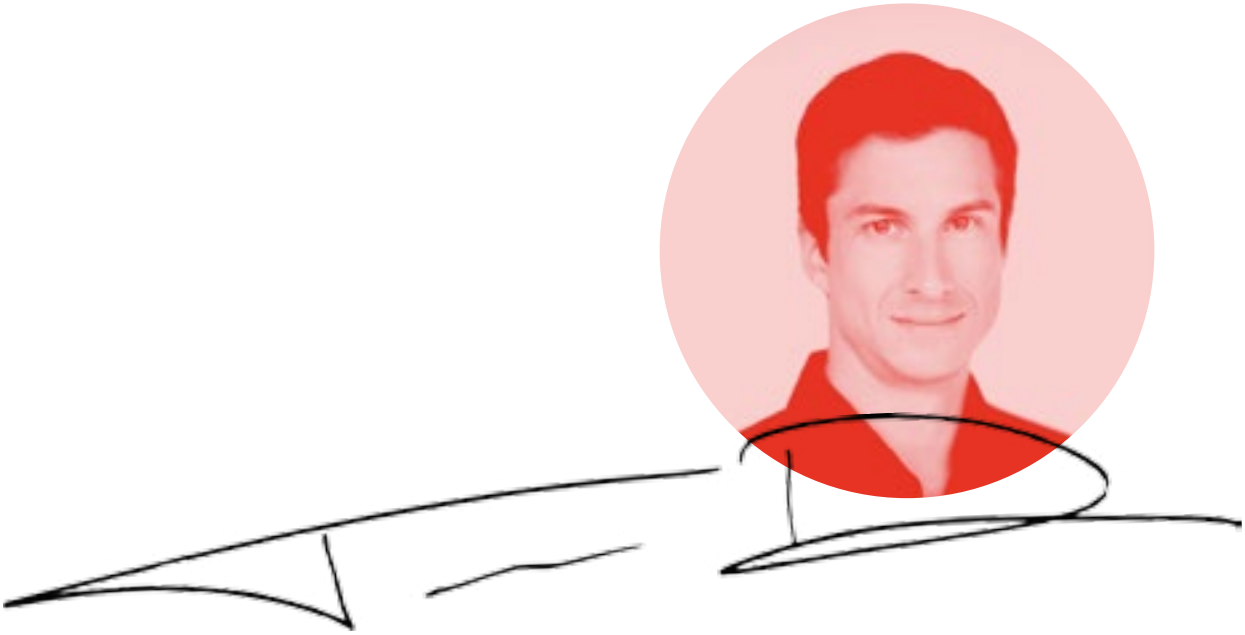
We spent this past year meeting marketing professionals, attending industry events, and poring over a phenomenal amount of articles and studies. We also organized our first ever Relevent Conference, an event dedicated exclusively to sponsorship that sets itself apart from most conferences with its engaging formula and an overall spirit of creative effervescence.

The conference was an opportunity for us to engage with great thinkers and come to a humble recognition of our own knowledge and its limitations. Sponsorship is a constantly evolving field. It unfolds in an abstract context where there are no absolutes. But rather than being daunted by such an observation, we were inspired to push ourselves to new heights in the practice of our trade. And we're convinced that, to succeed in that endeavour, it's important to take risks and stay on top of the latest innovations. With that in mind, we're excited to invite you to participate in the 2016 edition of the Relevent Conference, which will take place in Montreal this coming September 28 and 29. (http://www.elevent.co/pages/relevent-conference)

Armed with our discoveries over the past year (not to mention a little hard work), we are all set to launch the fourth issue of our Relevent magazine. Inside you'll find new management programs that perform better than ever, the most effective sponsorship activations from the past year, exciting new data, a piece on university research into sponsorship and a selection of our best blog articles from 2015.

Happy reading!

FRANCIS DUMAIS
Editor of Relevent and Co-founder of Elevent



FUTURE

ON SPONSORSHIP
MEASUREMENT

Sponsorship measurement is a key issue for our industry, but sponsors and promoters generally shy away from tackling it head on. By not taking the whole concept of measurement seriously, we are undermining the growth of sponsorship and its role as a powerful communication tool. To be fair, companies have begun to take the situation in hand and are implementing internal processes, but, broadly speaking, not much progress has been made and there remains no clear consensus on the issue.

Measurement has become an industry buzzword, but very little money is attributed to it. This paradox is one of the trends featured in the current edition of our guide. At a time when budgets are limited, it may seem surprising that there isn't more emphasis on accountability when it comes to results—even if measuring such results is often more costly and complex than it is for traditional advertising initiatives.

And yet, precisely because budgets are limited, the pressure to show the concrete impact of a sponsorship program is higher than ever, forcing us to take measures that often go far beyond those used in traditional advertising. Such pressures tend to rise during tough economic times and ease when there is an upturn in the economy. Even so, this question of measurement in our industry needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

FEATURE ON SPONSORSHIP MEASUREMENT

Things have improved since back in the day when a sponsorship choice was dictated by nothing more than an executive's personal preference. Tobacco companies in particular played a huge role in bringing sponsorship back to a more strategic foundation. They also introduced the idea of measuring the impact of their initiatives after their massive investment in sponsorship during the 1990s. That said, we are now living in a time where measurement programs have reached a certain stasis and investments in them are on the wane.

It's true that current measurement tools remain imperfect, especially media equivalence, which offers an incomplete portrait of a sponsorship's value. But the measurement of qualitative data (commonly called "intangible data") is gaining in sophistication and popularity. In fact, several university studies have uncovered the specific variables that have a positive or negative impact on a sponsorship. We took those studies into account when we created our valuation tools. We're convinced that, as marketing professionals, we can only gain from building solid ties with university researchers.

To those who still believe that sponsorship initiatives can't be measured, we say that almost anything can be calculated, even in dollars, when you're working from valid hypotheses and estimates. Sponsorship shouldn't be condemned to speak a different language than other sectors of an organization.

The key to developing an effective measurement program is to study a sponsorship not as an abstract whole, but with a view to its individual components. In the case of event sponsorship, there are three key phases to consider: before, during and after the event.

Before

Before the sponsor and the promoter need to know the value of their sponsorship assets. To do that, it's important to evaluate the benefits that are included in a partnership agreement. This makes it easier to compare the cost of an offer with a media equivalency. It also gives the sponsor the assurance that he is paying the correct amount, and helps the promoter maintain parity among partners of the same stature.

The market value of a sponsorship offer is determined by keeping a close eye on the market. It is a function of supply and demand in every sponsorship category. Certain sectors like gaming, telecommunications, air travel and financial services tend to have a higher price of entry.

Though there is no infallible measurement tool that can put an exact price on a sponsorship offer or assess its real value, brands generally expect a return that exceeds their investment. The inherent lack of certainty with regard to measurement is tied to the very nature of sponsorships. Not everyone will see all of your assets and, as is the case with most sporting events, visibility varies depending on how things unfold. And a lot of unpredictable things can happen (ex: a race car pulling out at the beginning of the race).

During

Once an agreement is signed, it's time to build a comprehensive research program based on set objectives. Though the promoter can play a facilitating role, it is the sponsor's responsibility to measure the success of the initiative. That's where sponsorship measurement tools come in. It's important to find the sweet spot between the quality of information you're looking for and the time and effort required to obtain it. Simply put, the research methods need to reflect the team's capabilities and the pre-determined budget.

To start, you need to keep in mind the objectives of the organization. And for each of those objectives, a key performance indicator must be set. This is where the sources of data will vary considerably. For example, you may want to evaluate the use of a promo code to estimate the impact on sales or the results of a questionnaire to measure brand awareness and appreciation.

This step tends to be quite complex. Research firms can be called in to help, but not all companies can go this route because of the costs involved. It's also possible to develop an in-house measurement program using digital resources like online survey tools. Just remember that compromising on the methodology can have a negative impact on the quality of the information you obtain. Still, collecting imperfect information is better than having no primary data at all.

After

Every industry has its own method for determining the return on investment of a sponsorship, but it's usually a mix of media values, direct sales and estimated future values (brand value, purchase intention, etc.).

Some elements significantly increase the value of a sponsorship, but are rarely measured. Such is the case for television or digital broadcasts and, to a lesser degree, public relations, which can also be an interesting addition to the mix, particularly for title sponsors.

Finally, though the sponsor is responsible for measuring the effects of its program, the promoter is generally expected to offer some support, like access to basic data (i.e. data on brand awareness for each of the sponsoring brands). This information is often supplied by the property in the post-event report. It's important to note that, though a lot of reports mention the media coverage of an event, this actually has little to no value for sponsorship partners.

Measurement programs must be effective decision-making tools. They should enable companies to answer the following questions: Did the sponsorship generate more money than it cost? Are there improvements to be made? Should we work with different partners or modify our current agreement in some way?

Whatever a sponsor's specific context may be, one thing is clear: we need to start measuring results, even if it means starting out small.

SPONSORSHIP VALUATION TOOL: THE FUTURE OF SPONSORSHIP EVALUATION

You are sitting at your desk wondering what to do with the tons of sponsorship requests pouring in. You just received an email from the finance department asking you to do an in-depth review of sponsorship spending and effectiveness. Your budget has been cut and you need to optimize your partnership portfolio.

Elevent is the world's first and most innovative sponsorship valuation software, built with groundbreaking research, an optimized user experience and relevant data. It can build a strong business case for you, with all the arguments you need to make the right decision and strongly justify it.

Experience
The software feeds itself with an easy-to-use questionnaire. Custom profiles allow the software to evaluate the sponsorship in terms of YOUR brand, YOUR objectives and YOUR targets.

You can fill out the questionnaire for any sponsorship proposal you wish to evaluate. It consists of basic questions about the event, the structure of the potential partner's organization and an assessment of the property assets and the core consumers.

With all the data in hand, it should take you less than an hour to generate a custom report.

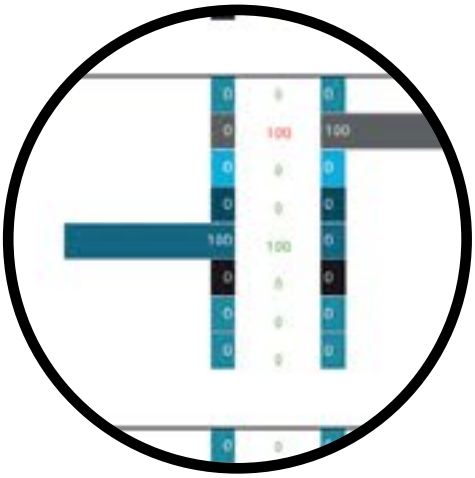
Knowledge
The report includes the dollar value of the sponsorship proposal, specific to the market you are targeting. It also boasts innovative qualitative measurements to better aid decision-making, beyond mere numbers.

Objectives
The software can assess the value according to your specific objectives: whether it is to increase your share of voice in a market, generate a more positive brand image, build a connection with your consumers, generate sales or engage your employees. You get a score per objective, as well as an aggregated, easy-to-understand score.

Relevent™ tool
Sponsorship effectiveness depends a lot on fit. Measuring fit beyond a simple gut feeling can be a difficult endeavour. Our report gives you a simple fit index based on the brand image, product relevance and scope of the two brands.

Audience-o-tron analysis
Have you ever wondered if the property had the right audience for your brand? Our sociodemographics analysis tool tells you the gap between your target and your partner's audience. Again, all of our qualitative indices have a simple score (x out of 100) that you don't need to decipher.

Industry standards
Last but not least, you will be able to compare the proposal to the score of hundreds of others in the same category, allowing you to gauge the performance of the property and the assets that they are offering, giving you more tools for an enlightened decision.



Technology
The Elevent valuation tool is second to none. Its algorithm is built with the latest research on sponsorship. You get a fully automated report in less than an hour, filled with actionable data: the dollar value of the assets according to YOUR objectives, value-to-cost ratio and industry comparables. Unlike the traditional offering, you get objective results and the most sophisticated measurement method, whenever you need it: a true game changer for the industry.

The result?
An unbiased and very precise report that can serve as a decision-making tool or a business case within your organization. Everything you need to accept, decline, invest in or divest a partner.

Evaluating sponsorship proposals based on media values is just the beginning. The future of sponsorship valuation lies in having an advanced tool that allows you to know how much your assets are worth, whether your objectives will be met and how the partnership in question will fit with your audience. That's what we can provide.

We offer yearly, unlimited licenses, but we want you to try it first. Contact us now for a test drive.

EVALUATING BROADCAST: MYTHS AND PRECONCEPTIONS

For events that are broadcast on television—or are available for streaming on the Web—the sponsorship value for brands has more to do with the viewers seated in front of their screens than it does with the spectators sitting at the venue.

So how is the value of brand exposure in a broadcast measured? While this type of evaluation has been around for years, it is plagued by a number of myths and preconceptions. But developments in broadcasting and broadcast technologies are changing the way it is done. Let's take a closer look.

What's the purpose?
Evaluating a broadcast sponsorship helps determine the monetary value of the overall visibility generated for the brand during a televised broadcast or rebroadcast.

This analysis, which used to be relatively straightforward, now requires the factoring in of an array of new media, like webcasting and social networks, and of the wider range of ways to integrate a brand into a broadcast resulting from the extensive media creativity now available to advertisers.

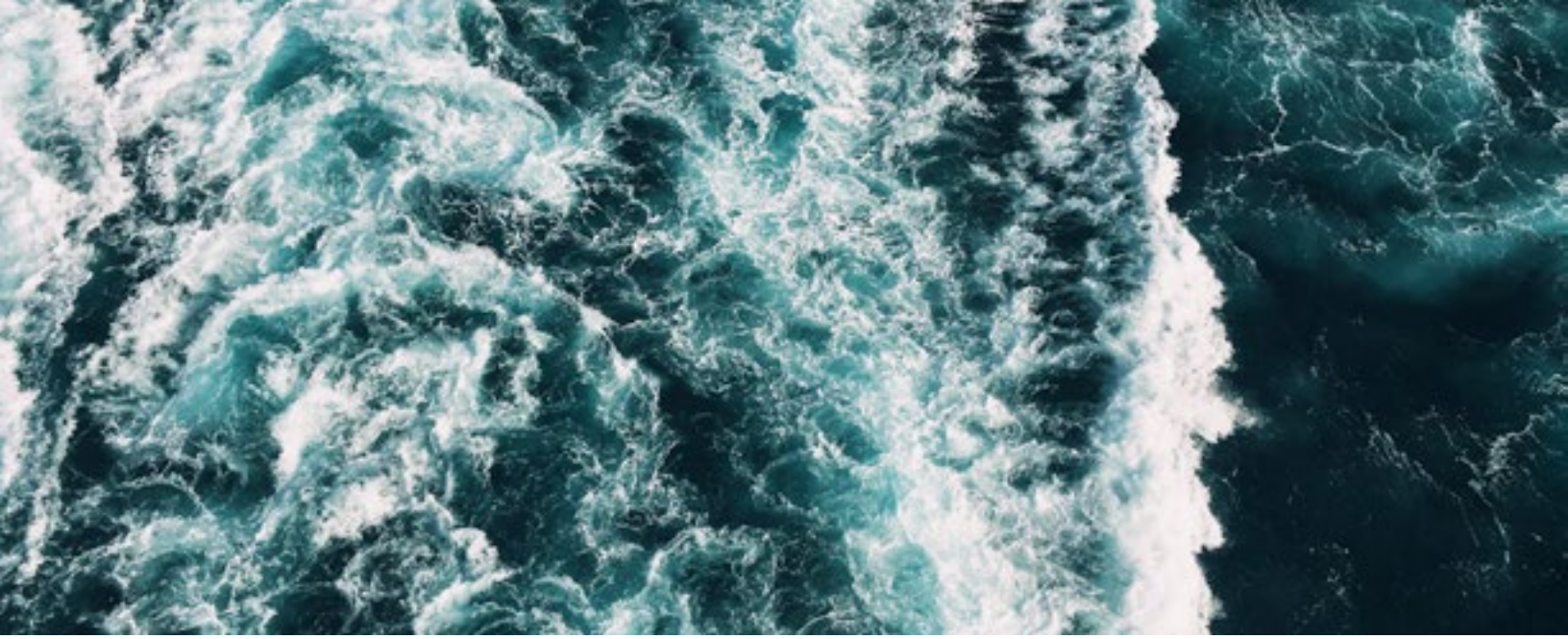
Is evaluation really necessary?
Both the promoter and the sponsor have everything to gain from knowing the number of TV impressions generated for a brand, as it is an important determinant of value. In-person attendance obviously offers a far more limited potential for exposure than does the extensive coverage of a broadcast.

Detailed impressions by market can also be used to see if the investment is suitable for reaching the brand's target markets and to provide a basis for comparison with the benefits of more conventional forms of advertising.

How does it work?
At one time done manually, the evaluation process has now been automated thanks to a new generation of highly-accurate analytical tools. These rely on sophisticated algorithms that use the power of artificial intelligence to enable brand recognition in various contexts, including in the determination of media impressions during a broadcast.

Local versus international value
Visibility in a global broadcast, as in the case of Formula I racing, for example, is calculated by the major media groups, who content themselves with making a rather rough estimate based on the average value recorded in each of the markets.

Many other large-scale events also broadcast over the Web, however, use much more precise means for measuring the size and geographic location of their audience.



Is all visibility created equal?
The value of brand exposure varies significantly according to the quality of visibility, notably in terms of its prominence, clarity, synergy and type.

In other words, a brand will benefit from greater value if its logo is placed in the heat of the action, as in on the players' jerseys, for example, and if that presence is reinforced by other elements of visibility, such as on the home screens or in other placements during the broadcast.

But value cannot be measured through mere media exposure alone; expertise in sponsorship is also needed to fully understand the factors that can influence that value. Qualitative or so-called intangible elements come into play, on top of the media equivalencies, to affect the value for the brand. A straight evaluation of media value can therefore only tell one part of the story.

What will likely be the future trends in broadcast analysis?
There is a growing trend among consumers worldwide to pull the plug on cable or even toss out their television altogether. This is going to have a direct impact on the old model whereby promoters negotiate lucrative exclusive broadcast deals for which broadcasters then have to sell ad space to secure a return on their investment.

Although still marginal in some spheres, online listening makes it possible to pay only for the desired content by cutting out the middleman, i.e. the broadcaster. Online listening means the ability to instantly determine the location, time and number of plays, which will greatly facilitate the painstaking job of measuring the broadcast value.

Does an evaluation have to be done every year?
While this exercise is essential, it doesn't have to be repeated unless major changes have been made to the broadcast environment. In fact, a certain "routine" tends to settle in that keeps the value of a broadcast relatively stable from one year to the next. For example, the Mercedes logo that used to be beside the net in the Rogers Cup generally produced the same level of visibility during the games because the brand was seen by the camera angles and the same audience.

However, any significant development like a modification of the visibility area, a change in broadcaster or a difference in the site or positioning of the logo would necessitate a new evaluation.

How much time and money is required?
Evaluation is still a relatively lengthy process. As a general rule, about 3 hours of analysis are required for every hour of broadcast time. The cost will vary according to both the length and complexity of the sequence to be analyzed: the number of markets being evaluated, the nature of the visibility, which may be of different types and formats, the use of media creativity, webcasting and social media, and so on.

Knowing the value generated by television or Web exposure remains an important piece of the puzzle in determining how much a sponsorship is worth.

Contact us to find out more about Elevent's broadcast evaluation service.

SPONSORSHIP REQUEST MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE: A NEW TIME-SAVING TOOL

The number of organizations that have jumped into the sponsorship ring in the hope of growing their revenues has skyrocketed in recent years, resulting in an overflow of requests in sponsors' inboxes...

Is there a simple tool out there that can spare a promoter the futile hassle of filling out lengthy forms and save a sponsor from drowning under a sea of requests? There is now!

The illusion

Any sponsor will tell you that most of the requests they get online don't meet their sponsorship policy criteria. Yet, even when there's never any chance a company is going to sponsor a soapbox race, for example, the promoter still wastes a good hour answering the detailed questionnaire and the sponsor still loses valuable time having to read and decline the request.

80% fewer requests to analyze

Our tool—which can be seamlessly incorporated into an existing site by taking on the brand's colours—is the first litmus test in determining a request's fit. The result? Eighty percent of requests are weeded out right from the start, saving promoters who don't qualify from wasting their time and ensuring the fit of the remaining requests, which the sponsor can then go on to analyze.

A needs-based solution

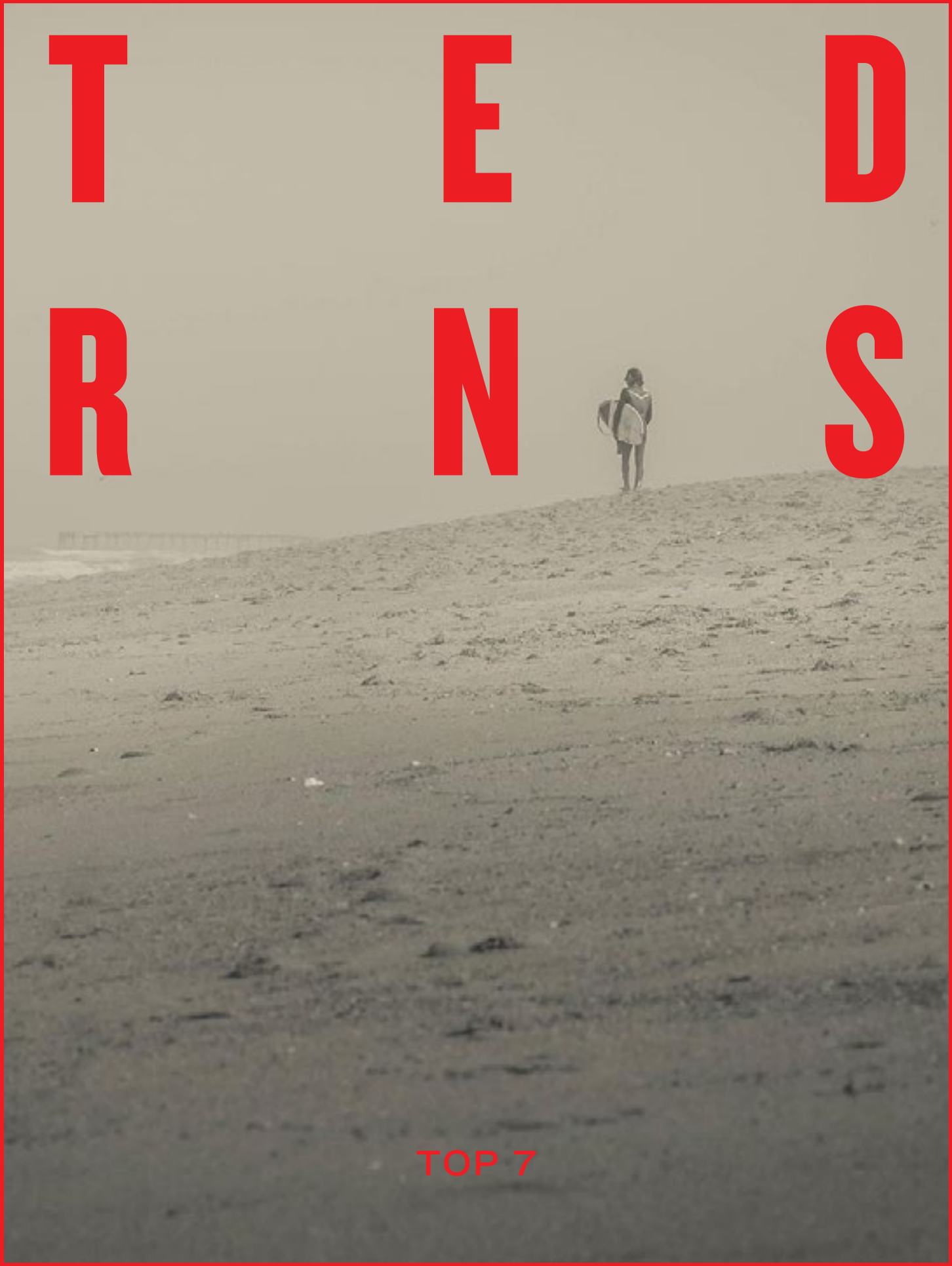
A sponsorship policy, which sets out the criteria to help guide in building a sponsorship portfolio and selecting specific properties, is based on a company's communications objectives and sponsorship goals. It usually takes fewer than 20 questions to determine if a request is a good fit with a company's sponsorship policy.

Our tool generates questions to eliminate the requests that don't match the sponsorship criteria. The system is user-friendly and easy to manage: criteria can be added or modified with a few simple clicks, without the need for programming. It includes the option of sending an immediate notification to the promoter or an explanatory email at a later pre-determined date.

This tool has been designed to simplify the process of filtering sponsorship requests—to benefit brands and promoters alike.

Contact us for a demonstration: info@elevent.co

TRENDS



TOP 7

Fashions come and go, but there are always some trends that run deeper and tend to stick. Here are seven of them, in no particular order, that have influenced—or will influence—our industry, from new technologies used for activations to the increased competition among properties to social tendencies that affect how we plan and execute sponsorships.

01

EPHEMERAL CONTENT

The changes in the media landscape over the past few years have created a huge paradigm shift when it comes to content consumption. The public now exerts more control than ever on what they want to see and hear.

More and more, they're abandoning the traditional live broadcast model based on advertising revenues and turning toward ad-free content that they can enjoy at their leisure.

Behaviours differ depending on the type of content. When it comes to sports, we're seeing a counter-current trend, where 95% of content is still consumed live.

This can be explained by the fact that sporting events are communal moments that are best experienced live. In this time of media upheaval, companies are taking advantage of the stability such events can offer, and are ready to pay a premium to be associated with them. Live broadcasts, far from being a thing of the past, remain an excellent venue for sponsorship activations.

From a sponsorship activation standpoint, content can be created as a support element to capture the consumer's attention before, during and after an event. It can also serve as a second screen to support the broadcast or as standalone content. We're not just talking about brands reacting live to ensure that they're part of the conversation (see the 2015 Guide). We're talking about creating exclusive ephemeral content that is specific to certain platforms and less polished than classic advertising.

Though live events remain a rich playing field for brands, ephemeral content is gaining ground, as it has compelling characteristics that trigger strong consumer reactions. First, the feeling of urgency and the fear of missing out stimulate the consumption of content that disappears instantly or only lasts for 24 hours. Secondly, the exclusive transmission of information to a limited group of consumers creates a feeling of being special and of belonging to an inside circle.

Snapchat is a good example of a platform that features ephemeral content. According to comScore, the social app has a 33% penetration rate and is the third most popular platform for the 18-34 target, behind Facebook and Instagram. And when we look more specifically at the 18-24 target, we see that the platform reaches one out of two people, which is huge.

Snapchat's Live Stories feature makes it easy to submit images and videos from marquee sporting events like the NBA All-Star Game and the Super Bowl, and grants insider access to all the fans who can't attend the event in person.

The platform signed its first ever sports partnership with the NFL for a two-year period. The first year, an impressive 65 million users consumed content, including 40% from outside of the United States. The content posted as part of Live Stories generated an average of 10 million views in 24 hours, which is massive when you consider that a popular TV show in the United States generally reaches 15 million viewers.

This strategy has turned out to be a smart one for the NFL. Not only are they reaching a younger clientele and new audiences, but they're also tapping into commercial benefits. For example, Skittles was the first brand to get on board with 10-second ads that were specifically aligned with the league's content on Snapchat.

Heineken, which has a history of doing innovative sponsorship initiatives with the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, also took advantage of this platform, giving fans of its Heineken SnapWho account hints about which bands would be part of the Heineken House line-up.

Taco Bell also pushed the limits of ephemeral content with its "Spicy Chicken Cool Ranch Doritos Locos Tacos" campaign, which clearly targeted a young audience on Snapchat. The initiative brought together brands that appeal to young people—Taco Bell, Doritos, Snapchat and MTV—as well as several film and Internet stars. They created the film (whose storyline focused on the new taco) "snap-by-snap," and posted it live, adding each new scene in real time. A tour de force for this platform.

When the time comes to activate a sponsorship using content that is either live or ephemeral, there is one golden rule: always put the partner forward. This gives the brand the chance to engage with the partner's fans and to ensure that the content is desirable. The result has to feel authentic, as the audience isn't expecting to find content that's as perfectly executed as in other media.

Within this context, it's also important to leverage the social aspect of the platforms to start a conversation among consumers (often grouped into smaller communities) and, ideally, between consumers and the brand.

New content platforms have recently arrived on the scene, like Periscope and Meerkat, and others will soon follow. To tap into them and adapt to their respective audiences, brands will have no choice but to proceed by trial and error.

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02

CONTENT PARTNERS

The time spent on the Internet each week now exceeds that spent watching television for people aged 18 to 34. In the same vein, 14% of the target are no longer consuming cable or are cancelling their subscriptions altogether. As a result, a number of advertisers are shifting their investment to online platforms, which are taking up a larger and larger slice of the budget pie—up from 19% only five years ago to 30% today.

Content consumption is also migrating online, especially with the younger demographic, which is forcing companies to react accordingly. The Content Marketing Institute claims that 69% of brands produce more content online than one year ago. And when we talk about content, we're talking primarily about video content. Seven billion videos are viewed on YouTube each day, and on Facebook, which got into video content later in the game, the number of daily views already exceeded four billion in 2014.

The video format is also richer than the traditional 30-second ad format and leads to a stronger connection with consumers, as the content naturally draws people in rather than imposing it on them. The platforms that host the videos also have a more social aspect, which makes the interactions more meaningful.

That said, a brand doesn't always succeed in creating strong content on its own, or in interesting consumers to engage in the discussion. It can be helpful to join forces with another brand or with a celebrity who can lift the brand's image and introduce the brand to a larger consumer base. The new Internet celebrities have a genuine connection with their audience, and more and more companies are taking note.

Partnering with YouTube stars gives brands the chance to engage directly with their communities—you could almost call them tribes—and to tap into their deep attachment to the stars.

Some brands are succeeding in reaching large audiences by creating their own content or by sponsoring an existing content producer. Here are some examples of this:

GE found their ideal partner to talk about technology with the Slow Mo Guys, a duo that films content in slow motion and then mixes in scientific concepts.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3jA4Oarq9Y

Nissan partnered with the popular Action Movie Kid and has found a nice fit with this web series where a father brings his young boy's imagination to life.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDeEOIHJRpI

On a larger scale, Samsung signed a partnership with the film Avenger: Age of Ultron and featured athletes to draw attention to its Galaxy S6 and Gear VR products.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgokImGJeu4

Partnering with content producers to get consumers to engage with a brand isn't always a simple endeavour. You need a good story. You can't water down the content. And you have to integrate the product or service in a way that feels natural and doesn't steal the show or make the content producers look like sell-outs.

In short, a good content partnership follows the same basic principles as a good sponsorship: the brand and the content producers should share a purpose and a common goal, the brand should never draw too much attention to itself and brand integration should never alienate fans.

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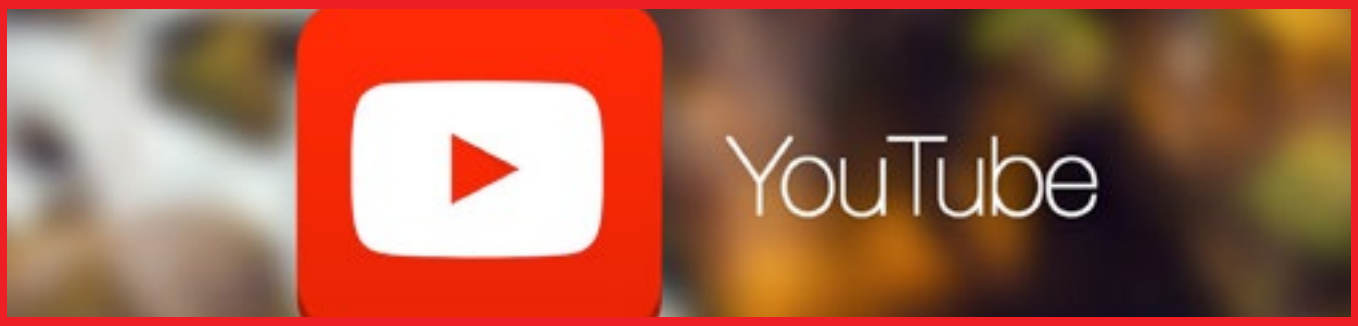

03

CO-CO-(CO) BRANDING

Co-branding—also referred to as brand alliances—is the short- or long-term partnership of at least two brands. As sponsorship is already an association between two brands, it accelerates two types of co-branding phenomena: 1) several brands joining forces to create a unique activation or 2) a sponsor leveraging several of its brands in its partnership with a single property.

Why should two different brands join forces? Managers opt for this approach to improve their brand positioning, a tactic that the science of consumer behaviour tends to support, specifically when it comes to the sale of co-branded products. In fact, consumers generally perceive such alliances as positive, making it a winning strategy even if one of the two brands has weaker brand equity than the other.

Concretely speaking, each brand inspires a series of associations (or nodes) in the consumer's mind. When a new brand association arises or a new co-branded initiative hits the market, the consumer trusts his or her current opinion of the respective brands. Usually, the sum is greater than its parts, but such associations can also bring about certain risks—like the danger of associating with a partner that will damage a product's brand equity.

The bicycle brand Specialized leveraged its partnership with the Tour de France to launch an exclusive edition of its S-Works Tarmac bike that it jointly developed with car and F1 manufacturer McLaren. This partnership has proven to be interesting for both brands: on one hand, it gives McLaren the chance to target a segment of high-end cyclists—a potential market for its luxury sports cars. And for Specialized, it reinforces its innovative image. Beyond product sales, which were limited to 250 bikes, this partnership created buzz and reinforced the positioning of both brands.

In the sponsorship context, a lot of brands use co-branding as an ingenious way of showing their support for certain causes. Bank of America successfully communicated its support for veterans by leveraging its high-level sports sponsorships with NASCAR, Major League Baseball and the NFL. The bank rallied sports fans—who proved to be receptive to the cause—to express their thanks to the troops, and the bank, in turn, made a donation for every message of support.

In Canada, there are other examples of companies using their sponsorships to show support for a cause, like Sun Life and its fight against diabetes and TELUS with its support for Opération Enfant Soleil in Quebec.

Co-branding can also take on another form, where big companies with a wide-ranging brand portfolio use the same sponsorship property to activate multiple brands. Pepsi is a good example of this: it leverages its partnership with the NFL and MSL to do marketing initiatives for Gatorade, Quaker and Frito-Lay.

The same criteria used when selecting a property must also be respected when considering a partnership with another brand. It has to feel like a relevant fit, be it in terms of brand values, brand image, the consumer base or a functional attribute (complementary competencies). The fact that companies sponsor the same organization already serves as a good foundation to explain the association to fans. Always remember: confusion is a brand's biggest enemy.

The association between brands or with a sponsorship property serves to create a competitive advantage that other companies have difficulty replicating. In itself, the amalgamation of multiple brands is interesting, but to have a real impact, the association must be deployed over the long term, which can be tricky when several brands—and therefore several managers—have to collaborate and get on the same page.

04

FOCUS

Because anything can be sponsored—or almost anything—you'd think that companies would be busy transforming their sponsorship portfolio every time a new trend hit the market. Instead, they tend to focus on their existing partnerships because long-term relationships have a way of paying off.

We are seeing a stabilization of partnerships in the major sponsorship categories, which suggests that brands are adopting a more strategic approach. The average duration of a partnership has also gone up. There is less movement in the marketplace overall, with the exception of brands pulling out during more difficult economic periods.

We know that partnerships become more effective over time. Consumers make the connection between the brands more easily, and increasingly appreciate that the fit is a relevant one. Building a solid alliance over the years is also an excellent way for a brand to gain a competitive advantage, as a rival would be hard pressed to reproduce such a strong partnership.

Recent research has shown that consumers continue to falsely associate an event with a former sponsor even when the partnership ended several years before. This is considerably more problematic when the former sponsor and the current sponsor are competing brands.

Many companies that use sponsorship as a core communication strategy have been investing in tactics for a number of years, adopting a very focused approach.

Ferrari, Shell and Philip Morris
Two of Ferrari's partners have played the long game when it comes to sponsorship. Shell has been with the team for over 60 years, and Philip Morris has been a partner since 1972, despite the fact that their red and white logo hasn't been allowed on the cars since 2008.

By adopting a focused strategy, Shell has used Ferrari's prestigious brand image to effectively communicate its message to consumers in a category that lacks differentiation and generally inspires indifference in consumers. As a result, the oil company has risen as a key player.

Timex and IRONMAN
The most popular sports watch in the world was one of the very first products designed with sports marketing in mind. Since 1986, Timex's success has rocketed, in large part due to its focused partnership with Ironman, selling anywhere from 500,000 to one million co-branded watches every year.

[1]Journal of Advertising: McAlister, Kelly, Humphreys & Cornwell.

which got sports enthusiasts on board fast. It is also a smart business partnership because it gives the brand legitimacy within the Ironman circle and with athletes at large. The partnership is still going strong today.

Gatorade and the NFL

The story of the partnership between these two brands, which have become almost synonymous during playoff season, began in 1968. The drink itself had hit the market shortly before, in 1965. Doctors at the University of Florida developed it after the coaches of the Gators, the local university team, had brought it to their attention that the players needed help with overheating. (Hence the name "Gatorade").

Other teams quickly adopted the thirst-quenching beverage in the 1960s because it solved a need specific to athletes, but the partnership strongly influenced the emergence of a new category of products and assured Gatorade's leadership position in the market. The success of this partnership was such that an end-of-game ritual took hold that still exists today: the classic "Gatorade shower," where the coach of the winning team gets a cooler of the beverage poured over his head.

Gatorade is now associated with a broad range of sports, but its ongoing partnership with the NFL has been a huge factor in its success. Now owned by PepsiCo, the brand has more than 80% of shares in the sports drink market, which adds up to an impressive two billion dollars US in annual sales.

As the cases above illustrate, a brand's steady commitment to a property can pay off big, making it more profitable for a company to restrict its portfolio, to focus on its assets and to better activate its existing sponsorships than to compensate for gaps in its marketing plan by signing new partnerships and making frequent changes.

Clearly, there are other key factors that must be in place aside from longevity. The partners need to have shared values and a shared vision, an understanding of their respective roles and the ability to collaborate effectively.

With this long-term approach, there is an increase in the number of contracts with flexible clauses that give brands the right to leave the partnership before the end date or to make ongoing modifications.

Such clauses reduce the risk associated with long-term contracts that could weaken a brand's competitive edge. Imagine if a company sponsoring a sports team suddenly saw its competitor sign a contract with the league in which that team plays. In such a setup, the brand would obviously become subordinate in relation to its rival.
In closing, a long-term commitment is generally worthwhile, but it's smart to build in some flexibility.

Examples of long-running sponsorships:

- SLAZENGER AND WIMBLEDON – SINCE 1902
- FORD AND THE GEELONG CATS (AN AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB) – SINCE 1925
- COCA-COLA AND THE OLYMPICS – SINCE 1928
- RBC AND THE OLYMPICS – SINCE 1947

A few more modern examples:

- ROLEX AND WIMBLEDON – SINCE 1978
- GATORADEAND THE NFL – SINCE 1968
- TIMEX AND IRONMAN – SINCE 1986

SOURCES

http://espn.go.com/espn/sportsbusiness/news/story?id=1742115

05

RIGHTS CAPPING

In 2014, the Canada Sponsorship Landscape Study noted a 6.7% decrease in sponsorship spending in the country after years of steady increase. This sector is once again seeing growth—IEG predicts a 4.5% increase in 2016—in large part due to the arrival of new players and the increase in activation budgets (which is often taken from the amount paid in rights). As a result, several properties are facing a cap on their sponsorship revenues, especially in high-level professional sports and important music festivals.

As we revealed last year (see the 2015 Guide), some brands opt for a modest sponsorship level, and then invest massively in activation to optimize their commercial gain. But that model doesn't benefit the rights holders (the properties), who often feel that they're giving the sponsors far more than what they're getting in return.

Properties are also facing other challenges, like finding ways to profit from new digital platforms, adapting to a market that no longer justifies increases in rights and holding their own in a context where sponsors often have the bigger end of the stick during negotiations. That said, there are several ways in which rights holders can stimulate growth.

The best sponsorships are structured on agency models, complete with an account management team, creative services and production support. If the relationship is good, both partners will benefit from such a structure. The property can recoup some of the budget dedicated to activation, and the sponsor can save on agency fees and time, and deal directly with the organization, which is more apt to know its fan base. Of course, for this model to work, the property must have a strong and talented team internally.

Properties can also benefit from working with partners that do a lot of activations even if the rights that they pay are slim, provided that the partnership helps the property reach its communication goals (stimulating ticket sales, building its reputation in the market, recruiting other partners, etc.).

Rather than looking solely to increase revenue based on the sale of rights, sponsored parties must also fully invest in the partnership to ensure that it gets stronger over time and that it helps the sponsors reach their objectives. After all, it's the effectiveness of the sponsorship that will ultimately lead to profit in the long run.

06

MEASURING DATA

Data measurement. We talk about it so much that it almost registers as a trending topic. And yet, despite all of our chatter, the truth is that sponsorship initiatives often go largely if not completely unmeasured, and, when we do attempt to quantify success, we often go about it wrong.

There are three gaps that undermine most attempts to measure sponsorships: 1) The gap between the stated intention and the resources invested to measure the sponsorship's effectiveness; 2) The gap between a sponsor's expectations and what the property offers and, finally; 3) The gap between the sponsor's satisfaction and the property's perception of that level of satisfaction.

Intention vs. resources
The latest Canada Sponsorship Landscape Study indicated a marked decrease in the amount of sponsorship budgets allotted to measurement, which went from 3% to 1% in the last year.

Expectations vs. the offer
In such a context, it's worth mentioning that, according to the same study, the three services that properties can offer—and which provide the most value for brands—are all related to measurement. This includes aid in measuring the performance of the sponsorship (53%), post-event summaries (52%) and research conducted with the public (44%). And yet 65% of properties don't fulfill sponsors' expectations when it comes to offering help to measure the return on their investment (IEG 2015).

Satisfaction vs. perception
There is also a huge gap between how satisfied a property believes a sponsor to be with the partnership and the sponsor's actual satisfaction. In fact, properties estimate the satisfaction rate of their partners at 74% when it comes to their return on investment. The brands themselves claim to have a 38.5% rate of satisfaction.

These gaps reveal how difficult it is for the industry to take performance measurement seriously, even though it's been a hot topic for years now.

It's important to note that both partners share in the responsibility of data measurement, and yet so few address the question explicitly. In addition to establishing their respective objectives and inquiring about satisfaction levels when it comes to how the sponsorship is performing, it's important for both players to devise a measurement plan together. Though it's primarily incumbent upon the sponsor to measure data, the property can play the role of facilitator, especially when it comes to an understanding of its own fan base. It is surprising to see that several sponsored organizations are still lacking even the most rudimentary data in that regard. In 2016, companies see this as a serious shortcoming.

We also have to stop measuring the buzz generated by sponsorships and focus on the concrete benefits to brands. Did the brand image improve? Were more products sold? Did employee engagement rise or did we recruit more members? Unfortunately, we have very little industry data to answer these very real questions.

Lastly, to measure data, you don't necessarily need a hefty budget. It is very feasible to create internal measurement programs that won't dramatically reduce the amounts allotted to securing rights or activations. Inversely, neglecting data measurement could lead to a decrease in future budgets because of the inability to demonstrate the positive benefits of the sponsorship for the company.

07

THE DEMOGRAPHIC STORM

Baby boomers, who have left their mark on pretty much every corner of society, are now reaching retirement age, are living longer and are in better health than their predecessors. This demographic evolution means that the number of people over 65 will double in the next 25 years. In turn, this will lead to significant economic changes and will also represent a huge challenge to event promoters, who will have to adapt their offering to attract new visitors or spectators on site and appeal to new television audiences.

Live audience

We know that young people are the primary public when it comes to live events. According to CROP (2015), over the past two years, 41% of people aged 45 or older didn't attend a festival event and 35% of them didn't attend a sporting event.

Though we are nowhere near an apocalypse—no one is predicting a massive erosion of live events—the changes will be significant enough to force organizations to adapt in order to minimize the negative effects. On one hand, the aging population affects how people consume entertainment, and, on the other hand, the challenge of attracting a younger audience is becoming more of an issue for the sustainability of events.

Because baby boomers represent a large part of the population and have considerable wealth at their disposal, promoters can't simply turn their backs on this aging clientele. A number of changes will need to be implemented to ensure that this target is comfortable, like maximizing seating and improving the quality of seats, presenting information in a legible fashion on site and improving transit.

Another consequence of the current demographic shift is that major events that have drawn huge turnouts in the past may see those crowds thin out in the coming years. Newer events arriving on the scene will be more niche in nature and won't reach the same attendance levels as the larger-scale events did in previous years.

Television audience

Professional American sports organizations tend to draw very homogenous audiences. That said, the NBA seems better poised for the future with 45% of its television viewers aged 35 or less. On the other end of the spectrum—and this will come as no surprise—the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) has the oldest viewership (63% of its television viewers are aged 55+) and the lowest number of young viewers.

The sporting events that attract an older viewing TV public will need to reach younger audiences if they want to ensure the viability of their business model. This also means finding new channels that appeal to a younger demographic. They will have to move beyond the traditional model that is based on the sale of rights to broadcasters who, in turn, sell ad space. Though this model is nowhere near dying—we mentioned earlier that 95% of sports-related content is still consumed live—a number of young households no longer have cable and don't have access to the content broadcast via that platform.

Within this context, some sports organizations are finding interesting ways to get on younger viewers' radars. The MotoGP series is an interesting case in that it has opted for a more open broadcast model that gives fans the chance to watch the races on various platforms and at different times or to stick with the traditional TV model. MotoGP doesn't publish the sociodemographic data of its audience, but the data regarding its popularity on social media is very impressive, particularly in comparison to the F1, which has followed a more classic model.

	F1	MotoGP
Twitter	1.82M	1.63M
Facebook	1.17M	10M
Youtube	127K	875K

The changes that will come in the wake of the aging population will be subtle but lasting. Promoters and broadcasters will have to find solutions to offset the negative effects. But let's not forget that every shift in society also spells opportunity for those who know how to act on it.

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BOTH BEFOREST

IN 2015

Our blog has quickly carved out a place for itself as a quality content provider for readers around the world who are interested in the sponsorship industry. Sharing knowledge is one of the pillars of our agency and we hope to set ourselves apart with longer and more in-depth articles that defy the current "snack size content" trend that is so widespread now that people are no longer reading long texts online (or so they say). We are happy to buck this trend even if it means garnering a little criticism for it. Above all, we want to engage with you. So please don't hesitate to share your comments, suggestions and opinions with us. info@elevent.co

We have selected three of the most popular articles from our blog last year and have reproduced them here in their entirety. The topics cover a lot of terrain: one discusses the tools available to sponsors to optimize brand awareness, another is chiefly (but not solely) aimed at promoters and outlines how to improve the consumer experience at events, and the third proposes a method to help companies start building programs to measure the effectiveness of their sponsorships.

BEING THE STAR

4 FACTORS THAT LEVERAGE SPONSOR AWARENESS

How many times have you heard that sponsorship is no longer about visibility but all about engagement? Pretty often, I'd wager. While this is true enough in principle, the fact remains that 1) sponsorship can still be an effective way to build brand recognition and 2) before even thinking about engagement, you've got to first be sure consumers are going to remember who you are. Almost in all cases, the link between sponsor and property needs to be made before moving on to more complex objectives.

So what are the factors that positively influence a brand's recognition as a sponsor? The ones that have the biggest impact are media exposure, activation, sponsorship status and endurance.

Media exposure

A brand that is new, hoping for wider recognition or looking to promote a new sponsorship needs to be able to get adequate media exposure in the target market.

Off the top, this means the visibility benefits in the sponsorship agreement have to be based on quality over quantity, and the medium needs to be suitable. For example, having your logo seen alone during a television broadcast is far preferable to being part of a major mass media campaign where your brand is lost in a sea of tiny logos at the bottom of an ad.

The fit between partners also has an effect on brand recognition. This fit can be expressed in a variety of ways, notably through practice (people using a sponsor's product during an event), image (like Harley Davidson sponsoring the Burning Man festival, for instance) and audience (the brand and property share the same target market).

While properties may have assets that can help promote brand recognition, it's never a good idea to rely on these alone.

Activation
For a sponsorship to generate benefits and achieve results, it needs to be activated. No big surprise there. But the fact is that not all activation is created equal. How sponsorship savvy both the brand and the property are will have a big impact on performance.

First is to come up with the right budget, and there's no ideal ratio for that. In Canada, the average ratio of activation spending to spending on rights fees hovers around 0.50, well below the 1.50 average in the United States—a gap explained by a number of factors, including the larger market size and scale of events. An appropriate activation estimate is one that allows you to achieve your objectives and that you've budgeted over several years before locking yourself into a new partnership.

Some organizations may also have less activation potential or be more difficult to activate for various reasons (non-traditional media, Web platform, B2B, absence of communication tools or direct contact with audience, regulatory controls, etc.). This should be carefully considered and evaluated before plunging into a sponsorship.

Sponsorship status
A high level of sponsorship—as in title sponsor, presenting sponsor or official partner—gives a brand a high degree of visibility. Usually, sponsors in these categories have their logo included alongside that of the property and are assured of greater media exposure in the property's communication strategy.

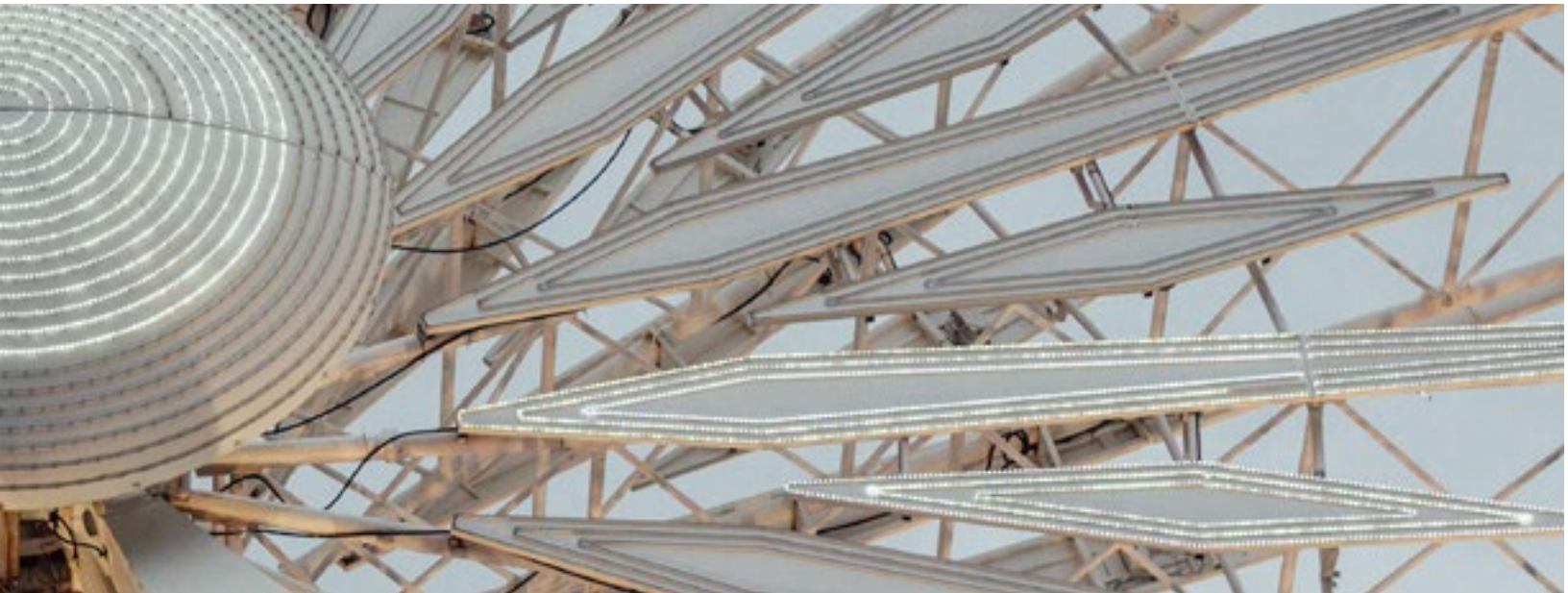
Yet these sponsorships come with a hefty price tag and are out of reach of most corporate pocketbooks. Focusing your efforts on sponsoring a smaller number of strategic properties at a higher status, opting for smaller properties or taking on the organization of the event are some of the options open to you as a brand.

Endurance
The association between sponsor and property usually starts taking shape in the consumer's mind by the third year of a partnership. Sponsorship is therefore a long-term relationship. While it's true that it can take time to reap the rewards, the effect is also leveraged over time.

This has a number of practical implications. For one thing, it's often more worthwhile for a brand to pursue an even imperfect association with a property than to jump from one sponsorship to another. For another, once strong brand recognition has been achieved, a sponsor can claw back the investment and even focus on other targets without it affecting the positive spinoffs from the partnership. Lastly, consumers continue to associate a brand with a property even years after it is no longer sponsoring the event. This is something to keep in mind if ever you're considering replacing one of your competitors as a sponsor.

And last, but not least...
There are a number of good examples of successful sponsorship campaigns whose number one objective was to gain brand recognition. Just think of the many film launches that have used sponsored vehicles, like F1 race cars, for promotional purposes. Or RONA, which adopted this approach when standardizing the stores under its various Canadian banners by sponsoring the Olympics—a program it wrapped up once it had met its objectives.

In short, there's nothing wrong with using sponsorship to build recognition, but it's important that you choose the right organization, how you want to partner and the resources you can afford to put into it. The final key element is a good evaluation to make sure you're on the right track and to adjust course, if need be. That and a whole lot of patience!



A 360 EXPERIENCE: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TOUCHPOINTS

There's something special about the atmosphere at a major festival or popular event that reels in the crowds and has sponsors willing to dig deep into their pockets to get in on the action.

That vibe, unique to every event, is created by a multitude of factors that promoters strive to shape and influence to give event-goers an experience that is positive—and hopefully memorable.

Ever been approached by a rude or overzealous security guard at an event? Did it leave you with a bad taste in your mouth? These kinds of negative experiences, or an excessively long wait at the concession stand, for instance, can seriously tarnish an event's reputation, whereas positive experiences—brought on by good logistical planning—help build and reinforce an event's favourable image.

It's important, then, to carefully analyze each and every contact point a visitor may have with an event, including those with sponsors, which can play a big part in creating a positive experience with on-site activations.

Before

Visitor experience begins before the event even starts. Music festivals are masters at playing the pre-event game, and Montreal's Osheaga is definitely no exception. For its 10th anniversary, the festival launched a mobile game app called The Road to Osheaga that allowed users to play interactive games and collect points to unlock the name of an artist performing in this year's event, before the official lineup was announced. This, along with tools allowing users to build their own interactive festival schedule and customize their Osheaga experience across all platforms, generated a huge buzz and ensured festival-goers were connecting with the event well ahead of the three-day concert weekend.

During

Eliminating every possible irritant a festival-goer might encounter at a major event is simply inconceivable. Just imagine the kind of money and planning that would have to go into ensuring zero wait time at each and every bathroom and concession stand. But well thought-out changes can go a long way in improving perception. In 2013, for example, the Montreal Marathon faced heavy criticism for having too few public toilets available at the starting line of the race. The following year, organizers installed the same number of toilets, but this time concentrated in a designated area for easier access, and they met with no similar complaints.

The role of security staff at popular events also needs to be redefined. It's important to remember that these are

generally the first people visitors see when they arrive at an event and the last people they see when they leave. Often contracted through a security company, these individuals are used to a very different kind of setting: their focus is on maintaining order, not necessarily on making sure event-goers enjoy the very best experience possible. But as much as the effect that security staff has on visitor experience can be a problem, it can also be an opportunity for promoters to improve service. Disney Parks have figured out how to make this work. Their maintenance crews, dressed in Disney uniforms for easy identification, are given basic customer service training to be able to answer questions and bring added value to the guest experience.

Customer service has to be the number-one priority and every situation must be approached from that vantage point.

After

The Montreal Canadiens hockey club has created a vast digital platform to connect and engage with Habs fans all over the world, all year round. Club 1909 elevates the fan experience to a whole new level by offering members the opportunity to interact with the team and its players, upload their own Go Habs Go! chant and receive exclusive rewards, including having their name embedded in the Bell Centre ice!

A two-way street

But properties aren't the only ones with a role to play in affecting fan experience. According to a recent study by HAVAS Sport & Entertainment, 65% of music festival-goers believe brands improve the festival experience. Sixty percent of the survey's respondents reported interacting with two or more brands, with 85% of them liking the brand activations they visited. These positive experiences are highly profitable for brands: not only do they raise sponsor awareness (with fans recalling 6 out of every 10 brands on site), but 36% say they would be more likely to buy a sponsor's product after experiencing the activation.

ANZ

As the presenting sponsor of the smash musical Wicked, New Zealand's ANZ Bank launched a major campaign designed to leverage its investment. A number of initiatives were put in place, including an online game that allowed top scorers to win a "Wicked Weekend," complete with air fare, dinner, spa treatment and tickets to the musical. The game drew nearly 26,000 players during the six weeks of the competition.

To enhance the experience for show-goers before the performance, Bluetooth units were installed in the theatre, giving patrons access to exclusive content like cast interviews and clips from the launch event.

A dedicated site was also created for a "Win a part in Wicked" competition. To enter, fans were invited to submit a short video of themselves singing a song from the musical. The entries were then shortlisted, with the top three finalists going on to give a live audition and the winner receiving a one-night walk-on role in the show!

The bank further promoted the campaign by installing 3D cutouts outside many of its ATMs and branches.

The Devils

With its new home in the Prudential Center, the New Jersey Devils hockey team has succeeded in attracting new high-level sponsors and securing a 98% re-signing rate. The modern sports and entertainment facility features state-of-the-art amenities, including a 3D projection imaging system, giant LED panels and high-definition video displays, that allow sponsors to more easily achieve their goals.

To optimize visitor experience and engage fans, sponsors also need to carefully plan out their campaign over time in order to make the most of their touchpoints across various channels, including through public relations, media buys, grassroots activities, promotions, social networks, employee engagement and content.

A few pointers for improving visitor experience

- Think of the needs that sponsors can fill with activations that relate well to their brand and particular expertise
- Talk to fans, conduct consumer surveys, collect data to help in decision-making
- Identify irritants and try to find inexpensive solutions to address them (e.g. training security staff in customer service, reconfiguring site layout, etc.)
- Capitalize on all available assets and invest in new technology

SIX ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR EFFICIENT SPONSORSHIP MEASUREMENT

With only 3% of sponsorship budgets devoted to research[i], several companies can't answer the following questions with any certainty:

- What was the impact of the sponsorship program?
- Did it work?
- What was our return on investment?

There is no point investing a penny in sponsorship if, as an organization, it's impossible to confirm whether or not the set objectives were met. Of course, the efforts invested in measurement tools should reflect the importance of the sponsorship for the organization. The bigger the sponsorship, the greater the need to measure the results.

To measure the impact of a sponsorship, it's important to understand every piece of the puzzle, and to keep in mind that the criteria will change depending on the company and the sponsorship. But you don't need to be a business analyst or a numbers person: when you understand how the process works, measuring sponsorships becomes an instinctive tool that you can build upon as you go.

A little reality check before we continue: budgets often leave no room for research, and companies often don't have the specific expertise required to build a program to measure performance. Here is a brief guide to help out in that regard.

Objectives
Every partnership has a role to play. In fact, sponsorship as a whole is managed in a proactive way much like a financial portfolio. Sponsorship can be structured to achieve different objectives with different target audiences. It is crucial to identify these objectives at the outset and to validate them periodically, especially when agreements are up for renewal and when new properties are signing on.

There are as many different objectives out there as there are companies, but they generally fall under five major categories: visibility, awareness, brand image, consumer affinity and sales.

You can then choose a precise target for each of the objectives. For example, tickets or hospitality initiatives can be used to generate sales or to thank existing clients.

Output
Many sponsors measure the impact of their partnerships by quantifying the output: the visibility of the logo, the traffic on site, the TV or web audience, the media coverage, the number of interactions with the public, etc. All that data is great—and it's important to measure it—but it must be tied back to the bigger picture so you can determine if your sponsorship met your set objectives. Otherwise, you just have numbers without any context.

Impact
To determine the impact for each objective, you'll need to establish the indicator for success. A little further down, we'll look at the tools to generate relevant data for analysis.

EXAMPLES OF OBJECTIVE-RELATED MEASUREMENTS

1	**BRAND VISIBILITY**	• Value of visibility (media) • Media mentions (PR)
2	**GET YOUR BRAND OR PRODUCT KNOWN**	• Awareness with target audience • Knowledge of products and services
3	**IMPROVE BRAND IMAGE**	• Opinion of the brand • Reputation of the company • Brand associations • Brand equity
4	**BRAND AFFINITY**	• Participant comments • Appreciation of the activation • Relevance of the property/brand • Identification with the brand
5	**SALES**	• Purchase intent / Unsubscribe intent • Changes in sales vs. comparable period • Percentage of coupon use • Direct revenue • Conversion rate
6	**KEEP OR MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES**	• Participation • Engagement rate

Date gathering
Conducting research with the target audience is a key tool to measure impact. It can be done by research firms or with internal survey tools.

For the company's bigger sponsorships, allocate a minimum research budget of $15,000 to $20,000 from your activation budget. This will enable you to conduct direct surveys with your clients, with the public attending the event or with the people who participated in the activation to test the results.

For smaller sponsorships or when you don't have the resources to conduct in-depth research, you can also use web survey tools to gather data in house. To do that, you'll need to build a questionnaire with a series of questions and a corresponding measurement scale.

To complete the picture, you can collate internal data (like sales figures or other in-house research) together with data coming from your media firm or from the property. In fact, when negotiating with a property, it's a good idea to consider sharing the cost of research and doing it jointly.

Analysis
A lot of the data gathered on site doesn't require in-depth analysis. You can draw your own conclusions based on the findings. However, some correlations can be more difficult to establish than others. If it's hard to draw clear conclusions, consult a research firm or consider getting in touch with a department of the organization handling commercial research. There are also lots of students in marketing programs or in business intelligence who can be of service if your budget is limited.

Dashboard
The best kind of dashboard is a simple one. Ideally, you should be able to read and understand it at a single glance. It should also make it easy to compare different sponsorships.

[1]Canadian Sponsorship Landscape Study, 2014.

DASHBOARD
EVENT X

Audience: 23 700
Interactions: 1 267

VALUE

On-site visibility	$ 25 875
Communications campaign	$ 108 107
Sales	$ 32 748
TOTAL	**$ 166 730**

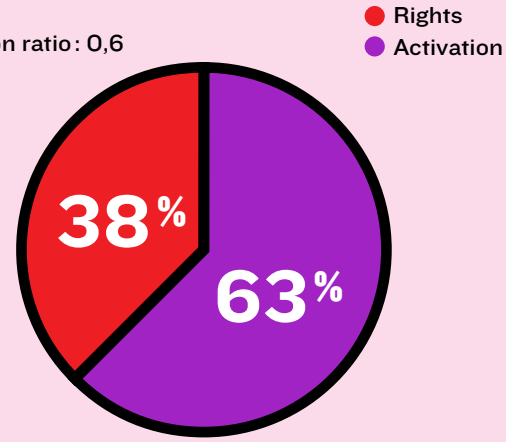
COSTS

Rights	$ 50 000
Activation	$ 30 000
TOTAL	**$ 80 000**

VALUE (NET): $ 86 730

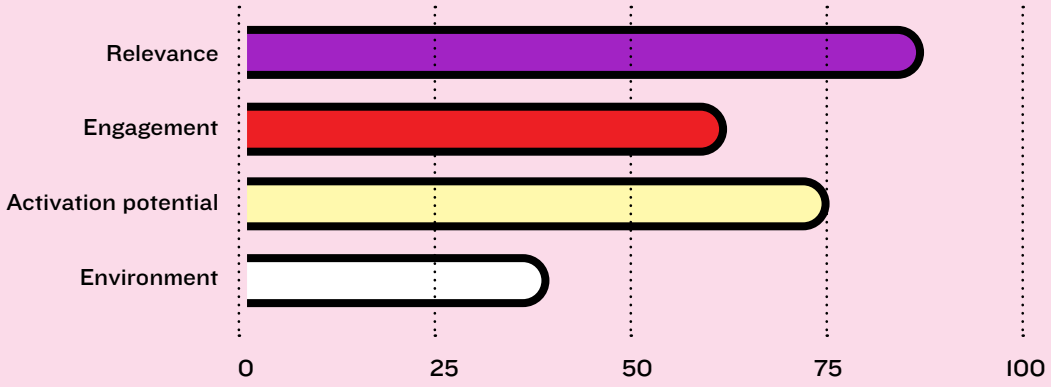
ACTIVATION

Rights/
Activation ratio: 0,6



OBJECTIVES	Score	Norm
Brand image	92%	88%
Appreciation of activation (affinity)	82%	79%
Purchase intention	16%	8%
Employee participation	28%	N/A
Customer satisfaction	77%	68%
Business opportunities	58%	35%

QUALITATIVE PERFORMANCE



It is useful to build an individual dashboard per sponsorship as well a summary for all the partnership events. A program like Keynote or PowerPoint is ideal for arranging the elements and adding relevant graphics, as per the attached example.

An efficient dashboard should include the measurements that have an impact on the objectives of the company and that will ultimately influence the decisions of upper management. For example, if your primary concern is visibility, we'll focus on the number of people reached, the value of the media plan and the amount of visibility offered by the property. If, on the other hand, you're concerned with improving your brand image, we'll focus on consumer affinity, the participation rate in the activation and consumer appreciation. If sales are your key concern, be it with a business clientele or with consumers, we'll focus on the number of potential clients, changes in sales or sales made directly on site during the sponsorship.

Measuring performance is an ongoing process that is constantly being refined. The key is to start simply and layer in more complexity as you get comfortable with the process. In-house measurements are better than no measurements at all—even if the model isn't perfect.

	Audience	Act. ratio	Image	Affinity	Sales	Value (net)
EVENT 1	23 700	0.6	92%	82%	0,6	$86 730
EVENT 2	11 246	1.2	79%	35%	21	$23 289
EVENT 3	58 456	0.46	86%	79%	102	$107 208
EVENT 4	33 486	0.53	93%	85%	76	$57 823

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TOP 10

SPONSORSHIPS
PICKS FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

We have been following the evolution of sponsorship for many years now. Activations have gotten a lot more refined due, in part, to the adopting of better practices and the fact that promoters generally have more expertise. But too many sponsorship programs don't amount to more than simple tactical initiatives. They are characterized by a promo-based approach, a short-term vision and activations of poor quality.

How do you know a good sponsorship when you see one?

- They are devised to drive business objectives that aren't adequately served by traditional communication channels. The objectives are set in advance and adjusted along the way.
- They are rooted in a long-term vision and a firm understanding of their purpose, which is primarily a partnership between two entities.
- They have human and financial resources that align with the objectives and the amount paid in rights, and those resources are sufficient to pull off a good activation.
- They draw attention to the natural tie between the two entities in question, or they create a relevant connection in the eyes of consumers thanks to a smart communication campaign.
- They are intelligent and surprising.
- They come with a measurement program that enables the parties to evaluate the success of the initiative.

These key elements of success are on display throughout our selection of the best sponsorship programs that we're showcasing here. This year, we decided not to separate cause sponsorships from commercial sponsorships, as their success relies on the same factors. Also, there is no specific criterion for the sponsorships presented here. Some have existed for years, while others are no longer active. Some have big budgets, others don't. Some are local initiatives and others are international in their scope.

01 JAMESON IRISH WHISKEY AND THE BEST FEST

THE TIE-IN BETWEEN THESE TWO BRANDS IS SO NATURAL. THE NICHE EVENT GIVES THE BRAND THE CHANCE TO GENERATE CONTENT AND TO GET BEHIND A CAUSE.

A couple of musician friends jamming together was all it took to plant the seeds for The Best Fest, which has since become a New York institution that celebrates rock music greats from Bob Dylan to Tom Petty to The Rolling Stones.

Every year, as part of this event, a concert series brings artists together from different walks of life to create a one-of-a-kind experience that's somewhere between a concert and a huge party. Stars of the music industry and the big screen appear on stage with an authenticity and an intimacy with the audience that is unparalleled. Despite its small size, music critics flock to the event and provide substantial media coverage.

Jameson, a unique Best Fest partner, has grown significantly in the last few years, alarming the brand's faithful who make up the core of its consumer base. Barmen, hipsters and whiskey lovers have expressed concern that their brand of choice is catering a little too much to the general public. It was important for Jameson to show them some love.

The Best Fest is a great fit for Jameson's image, and it gives the brand the chance to create interesting content where the product plays a subtle background role. The brewery finances the undertaking on its own and gives all of the proceeds from ticket sales to the Jameson Neighbourhood Fund, which redistributes the money to local charities that provide education and resources to the local bartender, musician and craft communities. This initiative falls perfectly in step with the brand's strategy of strengthening its ties with its first followers—the very people who inject life into the neighbourhood.

The partnership has been successful because it is aligned with the current trend towards smaller and more intimate events that generate buzz, both on site and online with content generated for digital consumption. Jameson is well suited to such an environment, and it also brings the added dimension of its own cause, which strikes a chord with the fan base. As a result, the company succeeds in pulling off multiple communication objectives.

In sponsorship, companies often make the mistake of getting on board with an event that is already saturated with partners, making it difficult to bring its own brand experience fully to life. There are two other options for sponsors to consider: creating an event from scratch, which can be costly, or finding an under-the-radar event with a ton of potential. The latter generally tends to be a smaller affair with few partners involved.

Joining forces with a growing organization comes with its fair share of risk, but it can pay off big for a company that gets in early and contributes to the success of the event in a lasting way that benefits the brand.

However, compared to building a property from scratch, partnering with a growing event doesn't give a sponsor as much power or control. New sponsors will always want

to come on board. And there's the danger of sponsorship rights increasing as the event draws bigger crowds. Still, for brands that aren't in a position to create their own event, partnering up with one that is growing in popularity can prove to be a profitable venture.

With The Best Fest, Jameson has found a distinctive territory, a unique atmosphere, a sense of authenticity and a bond with the public. They got on board at the right time, and have created a partnership that reflects their image and their target audience to a tee. The partnership also gives them the chance to produce interesting content and communicate their commitment to a cause.

Lastly, by giving all of the profits from the partnership to a charitable organization, Jameson also benefits from a more human brand image—an approach that is part of the rising trend of cause sponsorship, which is becoming more and more popular.

SOURCE

http://jameson.thebestfest.com/

02 H&M WE LOVE HORSES

H&M HAD THE BRILLIANT IDEA OF LEVERAGING A THEME TO FORM A BOND WITH A VERY SPECIFIC SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION. THE PROGRAM THEY CREATED GAVE THE COMPANY THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH THE TARGET AUDIENCE ALL YEAR LONG THANKS TO A SHARED PASSION.

For some brands, their stories—real or invented—often turn to the world of automobile racing (Tag Heuer, Hublot), sailing (Omega) or aviation (Breitling). The fashion industry is well known for exploring such territory.

But for the past few years, several brands have turned to equestrian sports for inspiration instead. Some, like Hermès, do it to maintain a genuine legacy. Others simply invent a story out of a desire to convey a prestigious image. Enter the art of branding, brand image and positioning.

For its part, Polo Ralph Lauren—a fairly young brand launched in 1967—created an equestrian world that most people will never experience, but that is evocative of a worldly life of leisure.

H&M has partnered with equestrian sports since 1996. More recently, they took their association up a notch by creating an entire campaign around the sponsorship of equestrian athletes and events. But they took a different tack than brands traditionally operating in this sector. The platform—H&M We Love Horses—is primarily a digital initiative featuring a range of equestrian-related content, from exclusive behind-the-scenes access at events to live broadcasts to news items to profiles of athletes and their equestrian lifestyle.

Fashion does, of course, feature prominently as part of this platform: several activations are dedicated to it. At the Olympia Horse Show in London, a popular blogger decked out in H&M gear walked around and picked out what she considered to be the best outfits in the crowd.

The program also includes partnerships with four rising stars in the equestrian world: two Swedish athletes who are well established in their respective disciplines and two young Belgian twins. These associations with brand ambassadors have made it easy for H&M to do effective product placement as part of the content.

H&M isn't a luxury brand and doesn't aspire to be one. So why is it following the lead of prestige brands by making ties with the equestrian world? The question becomes even

more relevant when you consider that only a tiny portion of the population actually practices equestrian sports. (In the United States, only 0.02% of the population are actively involved in equestrian events.)

The answer lies in the number of people worldwide that profess a love of horses. They are largely made up of women (74%) and tend to skew younger. That is a prized target audience for an affordable brand, and inspiring long-term brand loyalty is a worthwhile objective. By posting equestrian content that constantly features the company's products, H&M successfully invites them to consider—and purchase—their products.

Because affordable clothing isn't exactly the norm in the equestrian world where high-end brands abound, We Love Horses gives H&M the chance to own that territory and engage all year long with a less affluent—and very receptive—segment of the population.

It's worth noting the unusual approach H&M took with this partnership. At first glance, there is no connection, not even from an image standpoint, between high-level equestrian sports and a mass clothing manufacturer. But an oblique association, when it is well executed, can be just as effective as more relevant partnerships when it comes to generating awareness.

The other element worth noting is how the program fosters segmentation, both in terms of the target choice and the communication channels. This rather discreet platform has managed to reach a precise group of consumers in a very effective way.

Companies are accustomed to segmenting consumers on the basis of demographics. And yet, from a communications standpoint, targeting consumers based on their passions and their consumption habits is far more relevant than assuming that every generation (i.e. Millennials) is homogenous.

Brands would do well to start using qualitative research methods from disciplines such as ethnography or netnography (the observation of consumer behaviour online) when trying to find strong insights. With We Love Horses, H&M just gave us all a master class on how that is done.

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03 GATORADE AND THE NFL

GATORADE IS A PRODUCT THAT HAS BECOME INSEPARABLE FROM SPORTS IN GENERAL AND FOOTBALL IN PARTICULAR. PEPSICO, OWNER OF THE BRAND SINCE 2001, HAS NOT ONLY ENSURED THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NFL, BUT HAS FOUND A WAY FOR THAT SUCCESS TO SPILL OVER TO ITS OTHER BRANDS.

The partnership that ties PepsiCo to the NFL—the most important sports league in the world in terms of revenue—today encompasses several of the food giant's brands, including Pepsi, PepsiMax, Gatorade, Tostitos and Doritos. But though PepsiCo is a majority stakeholder in major league sponsorships in the United States (CFL, NHL, NBA, MLB), it's the partnership between Gatorade and the NFL that stands out in our eyes.

This partnership, which officially began in 1983 (but the groundwork for which was laid in the 1960s), is one of the most impressive in the sporting world. It has played a huge role in the brand's success today, with the company owning 80% of market shares in the sports drink industry and generating two billion USD in gross annual sales.

To understand the strength of the association that exists between football and Gatorade, you have to go back to 1965 when the product first hit the market. In the summer of 1963, an assistant coach of the University of Florida football team—the Gators—called on the team doctors to find out why the players were experiencing discomfort and sometimes even collapsing during games. The medical team quickly arrived at their conclusion: the fluids, electrolytes and carbohydrates that the players were sweating out weren't being replenished. This discovery led the doctors to create a drink that contained those substances so that the players could keep up their strength during the game. Hence the name "Gator-ade."

Five decades later, nothing better symbolizes the unique connection between the league and the brand than the Gatorade dunk. This ritual, launched by the New York Giants in 1986, involves pouring a mix of Gatorade and ice on the winning team's coach at the end of a big game. Bill Schmidt, former Vice-President of Worldwide Sports Marketing at Gatorade, apparently said: "I think I've died and gone to heaven," when he witnessed this gift of free advertising. The company also is reported to have sent $1,000 in coupons to the first "victim" accompanied by the following note: "We do feel somewhat responsible for your cleaning bill."

Among its sponsorship advantages, Gatorade enjoys visibility on the sidelines of every NFL team. This space is one of the most sought after in sport, as few brands ever enjoy pride of place there. This brings with it strong brand integration during televised broadcasts of the games, which is even more profitable because viewers can't help but see it. Players are also constantly seen drinking the beverage during the game—a powerful tool to encourage the public to follow suit.

Co-branding and point-of-purchase promotions—an element of the sponsorship contract which takes place off the field—give PepsiCo an undeniable edge, as they exercise a strong influence on purchase intent in the categories where the company is active. During the week leading up to the Super Bowl, 250,000 promotional kiosks are set up across the United States.

The relationship has evolved a lot since its beginnings, especially from a marketing standpoint, but what made Gatorade a success back then is still valid today. The fact

that the brand was created for the sport essentially made it destined to have a strong and relevant connection in—or more precisely, on—the field. The brand's strong visibility and the perception that it is intimately linked with the act of playing sports help Gatorade assert its leadership position and dominate the category. Its main competitor, Powerade, is pretty much confined to college football and has to settle for supporting NFL athletes directly, which consumers could interpret as a position of weakness, hindering the brand's growth.

Beyond all of this, Gatorade has shown a great deal of discipline when it comes to the relevance and longevity of its sponsorship portfolios, and that kind of focus generally pays off. In fact, the main takeaway of the sponsorship between Gatorade and the NFL is just that: focus. Concentrating your sponsorship portfolio in a single market can be very lucrative, just as supporting an emerging property and contributing to its success—even investing in the organization itself—can prove to be time and money very well spent.

Far from sitting on the laurels of their associations with major sports leagues, the Gatorade team is looking resolutely to the future, exploring new technology platforms that will help promote the science of sport. They have signed contracts with industry giants like Facebook, Twitter, Spotify and even CoreSyte, a young company specialized in connected training tools.

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04 SHELL AND FERRARI

THESE COMPANIES HAVE HISTORIC TIES THAT GO WAY BEYOND A CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP. THEY FORM A TRUE ALLIANCE AND THEIR PRODUCTS ARE INTRICATELY LINKED.

Few alliances in sport are as iconic as the one between Ferrari and Shell. Their collaboration roared to life in the 1930s on the F1 racetrack, but the ties that bind run far deeper than that.

In 1952, the Shell-powered 500 F2 was the best car in the race. Ferrari went on to win 14 consecutive races—a record that has never been broken since. In all, the oil giant and the racing team won 15 World Drivers' Championships and 16 World Constructors' Championships.

The relationship between these two brands deserves a closer look for several reasons. It drives the development and creation of high-performance products. It gives Shell the chance to stand out in a category that doesn't have a lot of differentiation. And it generates useful and stimulating content to promote a product that doesn't typically trigger much interest. In addition to the financial support of this partnership, Ferrari also benefits from recognition and R&D, and from the product placement of its GT models in some Shell ads—which is, in itself, kind of exceptional, as Ferrari doesn't do any advertising of its own for its cars.

In 2015, Shell and Ferrari renewed their historic F1 partnership for five years. The oil company will continue to supply Ferrari with fuel and lubricants (V-Power and Helix Ultra) as well as 50 full-time technicians—the equivalent of 21,000 hours of manpower a year. Outside of the F1 circuit, Shell will supply products to the Ferrari GT teams as part of the FIA World Endurance Championship and the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Aside from the "classic sponsorship" aspects of their relationship—Shell spends several million dollars to place its logo on the car and on the team's equipment—the two companies have developed a true partnership of innovation that enables them to shave off the thousands of a second required to make it to the podium. Shell uses the F1 as a testing ground for its mass products: the products that have proven themselves in the extreme conditions of a race are then launched in the market to supply drivers from around the world with top-notch fuel and lubricants, reinforcing Shell's credibility as an innovative brand.

With this sponsorship, the oil company is successfully conveying the message that 99% of their fuel available in gas stations is the same as that used by the Ferrari team on

the racetrack. They have been telling this story in different ways for years now. They've shown a Shell plane getting refuelled by an F1 car going full-speed in the Mojave Desert. They've invited an F1 driver to pay a surprise visit to Shell service stations. They've even had a pit crew service an ordinary car getting a fill-up at a local gas station. On Shell's website, you can now do a 3D visit of Ferrari's F1 garage—where you'll also find a space reserved for Shell engineers.

Thanks to its partnership with the Italian car manufacturer, Shell is perceived as a company at the leading edge of technology. This image gives Shell a clear business advantage because of the consumer appetite for innovation. A case in point: Shell did a great job of promoting its high-specification V-Power fuels and creating a unique brand image in a way that set this commodity product apart from the competition.

Few companies can create such a strong alliance and synergy between their respective products. A lot has to come together for that to happen, most notably the compatibility of products, values and business objectives. Also, the more overlap there is between the two companies, the more control they have to relinquish when it comes to decision-making. Even so, there is so much to learn from such a successful alliance, starting with the importance of a strong strategic foundation and a clear long-term vision of what the partnership is about.

The near legendary nature of the association between these two brands also means that there is a treasure trove of stories to mine—which is incredibly useful when it comes to reaching a younger audience.

In closing, Shell gains a huge amount of prestige from its relationship with Ferrari and the F1, similar to how premium brands with large-scale distribution (Tag Heuer, Burberry, etc.) benefit from their own partnerships.

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05 BANK OF AMERICA AND EXPRESS YOUR THANKS

BY LEVERAGING A SPECIFIC CAUSE TO COMMUNICATE WITH ITS TARGET AUDIENCE AND BY FINDING A CREATIVE WAY TO ACTIVATE IT ACROSS ITS SPONSORSHIP PORTFOLIO, BANK OF AMERICA ADOPTED A VERY CLEVER STRATEGY.

Causes have become a particularly interesting way for companies to capture public attention, foster a feel-good sentiment—which improves their brand image—and even stimulate purchase intention in some product categories.

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SPONSORSHIP E-VALUATION AND STRATEGY

Philanthropic donations are not a new phenomenon for companies, but brands are increasingly turning to social responsibility to avoid criticism, stimulate their employees and positively influence consumers. For a company, the simple act of being "generous" doesn't guarantee public awareness (or the benefits that can be gained from such awareness). Some brands earmark significant funds for donations but are then outsmarted on the awareness level by less generous rivals who have done a better job of making their actions known.

Bank of America has been involved with American veterans for 90 years. Their main objective is to help members of the military transition into civil life with reinsertion, education and hiring programs. They also provide products and services that are adapted to their needs. The results have been impressive: since 2009, 10,000 new jobs have been created for veterans, more than 14 million dollars has been donated to the cause, two million houses have been financed, 1,900 other houses have been provided free of charge, and bank employees have volunteered 40,000 hours of their own time. In 2012, the campaign Express Your Thanks was launched to drive awareness of the historic ties that bind the financial institution to the veteran cause. The bank also seized the chance to activate several commercial sponsorships under the umbrella of the program.

The program gets rolled out in the form of annual campaigns that serve to communicate the important role that the bank plays in veterans' lives and to increase the public's overall appreciation of veterans. It also helps the public see the challenges that soldiers face when they return to civil life and raises funds to support them at every step of the process. Since the first campaign, Bank of America has raised 2.4 million USD for the cause. One of its many initiatives is to invite people to express their thanks towards active or retired members of the armed forces. The testimonials can take the form of messages, photos or videos and must be shared on social media, on the platform website or in the framework of certain events. For each testimonial shared, the bank donates one dollar to the Wounded Warrior Project, which comes to the aid of soldiers who were injured during their military service.

What makes this initiative so original is that it ties in perfectly with Bank of America's commercial sponsorships—properties like NASCAR and the NFL. The bank effectively chose to activate these sponsorships in a way that would drive awareness of the veteran cause. It's worth mentioning this because it is rare to see such a degree of overlap between a company's commercial sponsorships and its social responsibility efforts. To pull off such a feat, the bank first did a study of some of its large-scale properties and discovered that their respective audiences were receptive to the cause they were championing. This insight enabled the bank to deploy a communication strategy to better interact with the public. For a bank that is part of a product category that doesn't typically inspire much passion, their ability to strike a chord with their target audience proved to be decisive. The fact that the bank is involved in such a concrete way with veterans also puts them on firm ground to communicate their message and protects them from undue criticism.

The other important aspect that makes the bank's positioning so effective from a sponsorship standpoint is their ability to focus on a single cause and rally their existing sponsorship programs around it. Too many companies have a scattered approach to donations and causes, and, as a result, they don't garner any concrete benefits when it comes to communication or business objectives.

Lastly, the Express Your Thanks program has relied on public participation since it began back in 2012—a relatively novel concept at the time—enabling them to generate more media coverage than a commercial initiative could ever have done.

So what should we take away from this partnership? First and foremost: if you can find an original way to connect different properties within your sponsorship portfolio, do it. Also, if you're going to support a cause, it's best to have a relevant connection to it, and it's crucial that your involvement go deeper than a simple donation program. This partnership also demonstrates that focusing your efforts, rather than adopting a more scattershot approach, tends to pay off big.

Brands are beginning to understand that, when executed well, cause sponsorships can provide a lot of competitive advantages. As a result, they are choosing their causes more strategically and considering their own interests in the matter. Charitable organizations are feeling the repercussions of this paradigm shift, as they now have to compete with commercial properties in the race to meet their sponsors' business and communication objectives. In other words, if they want to enjoy the perks that come with sponsorship, they'll have to evolve with the times and take a hard look at their own strategies moving forwards.

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06 AKZONOBEL AND LET'S COLOUR

WHAT WE LIKE ABOUT THIS PARTNERSHIP: IT'S SIMPLE. IT'S RELEVANT. AND IT ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION IN A WAY THAT BENEFITS COMMUNITIES.

With the Human Cities initiative, AkzoNobel—a world leader in decorative paints, performance coatings and specialty chemicals—is helping cities face the current and future challenges of urban growth. Their program reflects above all the company's vision to improve, revitalize and regenerate urban communities around the world. It is estimated that 70% of the world population will be living in an urban centre in 2050. For a company whose products are found in urban buildings and infrastructures, AkzoNobel has an obvious interest in the matter.

In 2010 AkzoNobel launched the project "Let's Colour" as part of the Human Cities program, whereby the company and its paint brands around the world (including Dulux) supply cities with paint as a way of adding colour to people's lives. More concretely, the initiative serves to distribute paint products free of charge and, in some markets, to get employees involved in paint projects in underprivileged neighbourhoods or with community organizations.

One of their latest projects was the repainting of the walls of the Santa Marta favela in Rio de Janeiro. Last August, 450 volunteers repainted 300 neighbourhood buildings there—the objective being to paint 600 of them before the 2016 Summer Olympics. AkzoNobel partnered with a local not-for-profit organization, En quero o Santa Marta Limpo!, to clean up the streets of the favela. All in all, the company has supplied 750,000 litres of paint since the start of the program.

What makes the project so compelling is the volunteer aspect of the program that sees a lot of employees picking up a brush and lending a hand. Anyone around the world can submit a project and get free paint to carry it out with the help of a team of volunteers.

This platform—developed by AkzoNobel itself—ties in seamlessly with the company's social responsibility program and gives them full control to manage and market it as they see fit. It is quite rare to see a worldwide company responding to local needs in so many different markets, which is where having a platform of its own becomes such an advantage. A strategy like this has a lot going for it. It gets consumers and employees involved in local projects, either to help submit projects or to do volunteer work. The projects that are selected also generate content at a low cost, enabling the company to talk about the program on its platforms in each country, and to make sure that its products feature prominently. You can't miss the company's involvement in the program, as its products play such an important role in the end product.

The company's social responsibility programs and its ad campaigns are sometimes treated separately. This program serves as a good example of how to create a platform from scratch and leverage it in a way that achieves multiple objectives—that are usually distinct—with a single initiative.

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07 DISNEY AND SIEMENS

YOU DON'T HEAR A LOT ABOUT SPONSORSHIPS THAT ARE GEARED TO THE B2B WORLD. IT IS AN UNDER-DEVELOPED SECTOR THAT SIEMENS AND DISNEY ARE LEVERAGING TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL.

Generally speaking, sponsorships are geared towards consumers. And yet there are a number of partnerships out there whose main objective is to target the business world.

The partnership between Siemens and Disney serves as a great example. Its main goal is to drive sales, push business development and position the brand with potential business clients. In a lot of ways, the ties between the two companies look more like a joint business venture.

Disney's theme parks already used a wide array of Siemens products before the start of their partnership. In 2005, Siemens deepened its collaboration, specifically from a technical standpoint, throughout the Disney ecosystem—including its theme parks, hotels, cruise ships and other business sectors.

Siemens gets great visibility in a lot of Disney theme parks, including Spaceship Earth at Epcot. Some of the attractions, like Project Tomorrow, are directly based on Siemens technology, and the two companies are constantly looking for ways to integrate technology into new or existing installations around the world.

As far as business development goes, a VIP centre for Siemens customers and employees was built on a site next to the famous Spaceship Earth. This exclusive centre has a hospitality service for guests, conference rooms, a lounge area and VIP access to Siemens attractions. It draws an impressive 14,000 visitors every year and hosts more than 180 private events where Seimens has the chance to showcase its products and tell the story of the brand's impressive innovations.

Siemens had been looking for a way to tap into the growing American market for a while, but the brand was suffering from low awareness, as people mostly associated them with projects oversees. The partnership with Disney played a crucial role in Americanizing Siemens in the US market.

Ultimately, Siemens wanted to increase purchase intention in a B2B environment and do it by presenting its somewhat abstract and complex technology in a concrete way. As a secondary objective, and with an eye to corporate social responsibility, Siemens also wanted to get young people more excited about science.

The company initially considered investing in sports as a way of reaching its communication objectives mentioned above. But the sports world, despite having an impressive number of loyal fans, missed the mark in a number of ways. For starters, because of the high demand to be a sponsor, companies have to pay a pretty penny to be a leading property. And with so many players vying for the public's attention, it makes it hard for a brand to stand out. What's more, the assets didn't provide much opportunity for the company to showcase its technological savoir-faire. Lastly, sports tend to offer seasonal visibility only, and that was a negative for a brand looking to have eyeballs on it all year long.

Disney proved to be an ideal platform to help the brand achieve its objectives, especially since GE, a competitor of Siemens, had recently partnered with Universal Orlando, a Disney rival.

The relationship between the two partners has continued to flourish, with the development of various initiatives tied to Siemen's business sectors, from energy to health to mobility. One of the most interesting collaborations features co-branded hearing aids for young patients with auditory problems, together with Disney books to help them get comfortable with their new device. The effect on sales was huge: thanks to the program, a lot of hearings specialists now opt for Siemens products.

The two companies also produced medical diagnostic campaigns featuring Disney and Marvel characters and logos to better communicate with kids. These tools were a remarkable success and ended up being translated into nine languages.

As part of the partnership, they also developed new attractions, including one based on the popular film Cars. Such platforms and experiences give Siemens the chance to tell its brand story in a way that the sporting world could never have offered.

A lot of the elements at play in the Disney and Siemens partnership can be applied to any type of sponsorship. It is a partnership that is mutually beneficial for both parties, as it goes beyond simple advertising needs. It also makes for an interesting long-term collaboration and curbs the desire for one of the partners to make an early exit.

Partnerships that focus on business rather than consumer objectives can be good for promoters, as they're not necessarily looking to achieve typical consumer market goals like visibility. They provide a supplementary source of revenue without the costs associated with a classic partnership. What's more, companies that are active in the business markets are often less solicited and, as a result, they may be in a position to draw on a healthier sales and promotional budget.

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08 HEINEKEN AND COACHELLA

BY CONSTANTLY INNOVATING AND ADDING BRAND VALUE TO THE FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE, HEINEKEN IS AN AVANT-GARDE PLAYER IN THIS TYPE OF ACTIVATION. THE BRAND SUCCEEDS IN GENERATING BUZZ WELL BEYOND THE PARAMETERS OF THE EVENT.

In a category where a lot of brands have stopped investing in ad campaigns to funnel their resources into distribution and promotional channels, marketing strategies for beer brands often feel a bit like trench warfare. Despite this, from a marketing standpoint, beer remains a category where image reigns supreme—even more so for major international brands like Heineken, which has a big sponsorship budget because of its association with soccer and, more recently, the F1. Heineken is an iconic brand that puts a lot of stock in image, and Coachella serves as a great sponsorship platform to showcase its innovative flair.

The partnership between Heineken and Coachella dates back to 2002, three years after the event was created. The beer brand often looked to the festival as an opportunity to try innovative new activations, and it was one of the first brands to consider the audience experience in its concept development.

Though Coachella is an annual event, Heineken stretches its promotional window to last almost six months, thanks

to the power of social media. The brand also takes advantage of downtime moments during the festival to create a novel and innovative value-added experience. The on-site activations aren't simply isolated tactics. They represent Heineken's long-term engagement in the festival—a plus for both the promoter and the public.

In 2013, as the official and exclusive partner in the beer category, Heineken was responsible for serving more than 80,000 festivalgoers every day. The company had branded tents that featured world-class DJs. High-definition videos were projected on the ceiling, and attendees could control them using iPads provided by the brand.

Heineken also provided a solution to keep beer from getting warm: cold storage fridges that festivalgoers could open by scanning their fingerprints. At any point in time, they could access their beer at the perfect temperature. Heineken also had an express line reserved for people who took advantage of the cold storage so that they could enter the tents quicker.

In 2014, Heineken continued to push the boundaries by serving beers infused with lemon grass, mint and chilli pepper in its exclusive World Fusion Bar. The company had already begun marketing these beer flavours in other countries but this was a first on American soil—a way for the brand to test the products' appeal with influential consumers.

In 2015, the brand continued to innovate when it created its own Shapchat account under the user name HeinekenSnapWho, a first for any beer brand. Attendees could follow the account and get information and clues about upcoming guest DJs and artists who would be performing in the Heineken space (i.e. a piano was the clue for Billy Joel). When attendees guessed correctly, they got more exclusive info on the guest artist's agenda for the festival. This activation was inspired by the following insight: young beer drinkers are constantly on their phones, especially at Coachella, where they are sharing their experience live and consuming content that has a direct tie-in with their experience on site. As a platform, Snapchat has the advantage of tapping into the fear of missing out (FOMO) and is ideal for sharing the kind of surprising content that Heineken was looking to create.

So why is Heineken diversifying its portfolio with cultural events when people generally associate the brand with flagship sports properties? In fact, outside of sports, Heineken already has a strong presence in the music scene. A university study recently compared the effectiveness of sports sponsorships vs. cultural sponsorships and didn't find any significant differences between the two. The characteristics of the event—audience profile, awareness, size—influence the results more than the nature of the event itself. With that in mind, we know that people at music events consume a lot of beer. The events are very social and there's an opportunity for the brand to generate a lot of content. Even if sponsorship spending at sporting events

is significantly higher than at arts and culture events, the latter presents brands with a number of interesting opportunities.

Coachella attracts a lot of important young influencers who are active on social media and who generate a lot of buzz for both the event and the brands that are associated with it. That's why Heineken's activations target consumers looking to create their own experiences, try new things and be an integral part of the event.

"Creating experiences" has become a rallying call in a lot of agencies these days. A lot of brands try to do it, but some, like Heineken, set the bar higher and become the market reference. They bring added value to the experience, and the quality of the execution is always very high. That's important: you can't simply satisfy expectations if you want to move the needle for your brand. You have to know how to impress people. The surprise factor that Heineken brings to Coachella year after year always ties in seamlessly with the event, to the delight of attendees and ad people alike.

That element of surprise is key. Even with successful activations, wear-out can set in, and given the large number of festivalgoers that come back every year, reusing the same concept—even if it's a winner—won't have people cheering for an encore.

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09 TIMEX AND IRONMAN

ALMOST EVERYONE HAS OWNED A TIMEX IRONMAN AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIVES.

The world's best-selling sports watch is on display in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. It is one of the first products sold thanks to a sports marketing strategy.

The best partnerships are those that put sponsorship at the core of their marketing strategy. By leveraging its ties with Ironman, Timex created a product that ended up becoming iconic.

In 1984, Time took an interest in the endurance sports category and collaborated with athletes to develop a new digital watch called the Timex Triathlon. In 1986, after the marketing director at the time sold 1,500 watches to athletes at the Kona IRONMAN race, Timex jumped at the chance to acquire the usage rights to the IRONMAN name. The company then created a triathlon watch inspired by the 1984 model. Sales went through the roof for both models, and every version of the Timex IRONMAN after that quickly became a bestseller for the brand. The watch stayed at the top of the sports category year after year, even thirty years later. The first IRONMAN licence agreement remains the foundation of this partnership and is still used today. It is also the most important licence agreement to date, as nearly 500,000 Timex IRONMAN watches have been sold around the world every year since 1986.

The partnership never lost its relevance over time and contributed to the sales success of the watch models that bore its name. In 2002, a Canadian athlete who made an astonishing comeback is reported to have pointed at her Timex when she crossed the finish line in first place and said, "Takes a licking and keeps on ticking," which went on to become the company's slogan.

How is an affordable watch perceived when high-level sports and professional personalities endorse it? Beyond the functional benefits that triathletes love about the watch, the image of IRONMAN evokes rock-solid durability. It is a symbol of honour for anyone who wears it.

The success of this partnership is due in part to the fact that Timex was a precursor in this category. It maintained its leadership position and stayed relevant thanks to various innovations and multiple iterations of the product.

The watch was also designed and improved over the years with the IRONMAN athlete in mind. For the elite circle of athletes who successfully completed the rigorous race, the object was much more than a watch. It was a symbol that had power far beyond the small group of athletes. That's partly why we saw the product gracing the wrists of stars and politicians like Bill Clinton. Despite its affordable price, the watch was never considered to be a low-end product. Its reputation always transcended sociodemographic groups.

What's more, the partnership helped to shape Timex's brand image, with the IRONMAN brand conveying a strong impression of robustness and dependability.

What can we learn about this iconic partnership? Co-branded products and promotions in the sales network that leverage the sponsor brand are interesting strategies, as few sponsors avail of such rights, even if they are often written into the contract.

It's important to note that this sponsorship played a key role in solidifying Timex's brand image. Research has long identified the phenomenon of image transfer in sponsorship. That can be an effective driver to shift a brand's attributes. Lastly, this was one of the first partnerships to launch this kind of initiative in the sporting world, with a product under licence that has stood the test of time.

Despite the challenges that Timex is facing, the partnership remains as relevant today as it was back in the 1980s, as it gives the company a competitive advantage that is difficult for other brands to recreate. Their expertise in sports watches and their ability to innovate are assets that they continue to draw on, which is exactly what the company did when it launched the Timex IRONMAN One GPS+, the first smartwatch that doesn't need to be connected to a phone.

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10

SQUARESPACE AND JEFF BRIDGES

SQUARESPACE ADOPTED A BOLD STRATEGY AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH JEFF BRIDGES IS BOTH FUN AND UNCONVENTIONAL.

The website creation platform Squarespace surprised us all with the witty and original ad it aired during Super Bowl XLIX. The absurd humour of the concept cut through the Super Bowl clutter and gave the ad the chance to live far beyond the parameters of a simple TV spot.

Squarespace partnered with actor Jeff Bridges to create an album entitled "Jeff Bridges Sleeping Tapes," which featured a collection of sounds that foster relaxation before sleep. The concept behind this superb integrated marketing campaign is simple: it presents an eCommerce website on which Jeff sells his relaxation albums across various media. All of the proceeds from the sales went to charity.

The thinking behind this concept was that you can bring even the craziest ideas to life in a simple and elegant way. That's what the Squarespace build-your-own-website platform offers, in addition to being a transactional site.

This is, first and foremost, an ad campaign, but the Jeff Bridges relaxation albums do, in fact, exist. Consumers can buy them in vinyl, cassette or digital formats on the site created by Jeff Bridges to help insomniacs catch a few ZZZs. All of the money raised goes to No Kids Hungry, an organization for which Jeff Bridges has been a spokesperson for years now and whose mission is to eliminate child hunger in the United States. The project ended up providing 90,000 meals to children in need. The campaign was cool enough to begin with, but the fact that it supported such a worthy cause made it even cooler and eclipsed to a large degree the more commercial aspect of the concept.

The campaign was launched with a highly unusual ad during the Super Bowl, where we see Jeff Bridges sitting next to a sleeping couple, chanting "Om" while he bangs on a Tibetan singing bowl. The ad got nearly 100 million views. The video was filmed in a very sober style, with nothing but the brand's signature in the closing frame. The impact of the spot was huge and cut through the charged and ultra-commercial environment that is typical of the Super Bowl. A very effective media buy indeed.

Other online content was created to promote the project and the functionality of Squarespace, including a how-to video detailing how the build-your-own-website platform works as well as two 30-second ads, including the one that aired during the Super Bowl.

This campaign benefitted from an amazing synergy between Jeff Bridges and the brand, which was looking for authenticity. The partnership is even more interesting in that it wasn't just another ad that featured a star spokesperson—like Danica Patrick and GoDaddy, for example—which we see a lot of during the Super Bowl. The product was at the core of the message and Squarespace's original approach generated significant media buzz and earned the brand a ton of industry awards.

There are a number of reasons why we are such big fans of this campaign. Beyond the media hype, the awards and the impressive number of views that it generated, the campaign went over and above in delivering on the insight that it's easy to build a high-quality site to share your passion, no matter how crazy or bizarre it is.

The content platform was far richer than a traditional campaign and fostered media creativity across the platforms where the content was shared. A genuine ecosystem was created, where the Squarespace product shone as the silent star.

Though we tend to favour long-term strategic partnerships, the originality and ingenuity of this initiative won us over. The product serves as the backbone of the campaign, which lives on a number of platforms. The strong tie-in with a cause and the media buzz that the online campaign succeeded in generating are both interesting elements to consider when developing a sponsorship program.

We often forget the importance of the media plan and public relations as part of classic sponsorships, focusing instead on the event itself. The "Sleeping Tapes" initiative demonstrates the impact that a well thought-out media strategy and an original partnership can have in the market—especially when the campaign that comes out of it is so refreshing.

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D T
I A S S S
G L P O H
I O R I
N P

SAMANTHA PHELAN

MANAGER, SALES AND SERVICE

ST. JOHN'S ICECAPS

Two years ago, in the lead-up to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil, Beats by Dre—a popular headphones brand—took to the internet with a uniquely crafted "Game Before the Game" video featuring famous soccer athletes, Neymar and Sturridge, emulating what their pre-game rituals looked like. The Apple-owned company also brought in key influencers such as LeBron James, Serena Williams, Nicki Minaj and Lil Wayne to secure their success in capturing the attention of their target audience. Through an intelligently crafted combination of rich media and PR advertising, Beats by Dre made themselves a headlining act across all online channels, targeting their content specifically toward the average soccer fan and quickly positioning themselves as the leading brand of the FIFA World Cup. The video went viral its first day on YouTube, inciting fans to become even more engaged by sharing their own pre-game rituals on their social media channels.

The results?
$50m in PR value. 26m+ views on YouTube. 1,502,265,009 global impressions. 33% growth in YouTube subscribers. 130% growth in online headphone sales.

The problem?
Beats by Dre wasn't an official sponsor. In fact, once FIFA caught onto their tactics, they banned the headphones from every stadium to stem the brand's infiltration into the event. Apex competitor Sony had all the licensing rights and exclusivity in the electronics category for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. While Beats by Dre didn't have the rights to advertise in any host facility, to purchase earned media, or to use the FIFA branding in any shape or form, their targeted digital strategy and authentic storytelling campaign convinced soccer fans around the world that they were a top supporter of this global event.

What does this mean for sponsorship?
The point of this story is not to encourage brands to do without partnerships. In fact, had Sony been as creative as Beats By Dre, they could have used the elements at their disposal as part of the partnership to far surpass Beats By Dre's resulting metrics. Complementary signage, social media mentions from FIFA, concourse activation space, access to players over the course of the event, commercial inventory to run the videos in the host buildings: these are all elements that would add significant value in elevating an already amazing digital media campaign. And we certainly see activations of this calibre during premier entertainment events such as the Super Bowl or the Oscars.

Gone are the days when placing traditional signage around an arena is the optimal way to activate a partnership. Signage is a great asset to have in arenas that drive significant crowds, and even more important in arenas that have broadcast exposure, but digital media offers a more-than-compelling argument as to why it should be considered as a necessary enhancement tool to all of your sponsorship activations.

Targeted.
If your audience are males aged 35 to 50, and you choose to sponsor an activation inside the arena for a soccer event, chances are that you will reach your audience. But how many of the 40,000 fans in that stadium fit your desired demographics? Traditionally, sponsors had to cut their losses, knowing that it was highly probable that their messaging would reach an audience outside of their target market when activating on-site activations. On digital platforms, we have the ability to target our messaging to such a precise degree that when properties promise brands 40,000 impressions, they can curate a campaign that will reach 40,000 people from the exact target market in question, thereby delivering a higher quality ROI.

More engagement opportunities.
With the exception of on-site, face-to-face activations, most traditional sponsorship assets provide little to no opportunity to directly interact with your customers. Digital assets in your partnership allow you not only to see who is engaged with your content, but to engage with them in return, building relationships that expand far beyond a single interaction. From lead generation to replying via tweets to hosting contests to analyzing their online behaviour, brands now have significant sales and marketing opportunities to get more out of their partnerships than ever before.

Larger audience.
You may be asking, "What if my objective isn't brand engagement but brand awareness?" My answer to that would be to look at your reach and who your audience is. Most properties have an ability to reach far more people through their online channels than at a specific event or venue.

Attention.
The best sponsors activate their partnerships in ways that engage the target audience on their own terms and on channels that already have their attention. There's no point being romantic about the idea of banner bugs and static signage if people are walking by them with their eyes on their phones. For the most part, the number one place

to capture someone's attention in our day and age is via the screen in their hands. Digital solutions (like beacons that provide opt-in push notifications), social media initiatives (creative hashtags, contests or snapchat geofilters) and enhanced fan experiences (using new augmented or virtual reality technology) are all excellent ways to cut through the clutter and draw attention to your brand.

The key here is to not put all of your eggs in the digital space basket, but rather to integrate digital media into the fabric of your current activations.

If you're already activating through signage at your property, then perhaps you need to build in a social media contest encouraging fans to take a picture in front of it for their chance to win a prize.

If you're already sponsoring a section of a building or event, why not provide a customized, brag-worthy, snapchat geo-filter for those individuals that visit your activation site, or use bacon technology to drive messaging to their phones when they enter your area.

If you're given the opportunity to do giveaway items for an event, why not make it something like Google Cardboard, where you can enhance your customers' experience, and deliver an activation that encourages continued engagement with your brand beyond that one event.
There are a lot of opportunities to leverage, and there's no question that the eyes are on the digital space. What is your brand doing to place itself front and centre by means of innovative partnerships?

TRIBU *expérientiel*

MAJOR EVENTS

BRANDED CONTENT

BRAND EXPERIENCE

CONNECT WITH THE YOUTH AND THE YOUNG AT HEART

TRIBUEXPERIENTIEL.COM

THRIVE

OF CAUSE SPONSORSHIP

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become an indispensable tool for brands looking to set themselves apart from the competition. Consumers today expect companies to contribute to the collective wellbeing by reducing the environmental impact of their activities and by doing their part to alleviate social problems.

A recent study conducted by the CROP research firm notes how such an approach influences the consumer perception of companies. The study confirms that CSR is an effective lever to engage consumers and positively influence them in their purchase intention. What's more, it reveals that CSR not only influences their decision-making, but also how much they are willing to pay: half of the respondents claimed that they would pay more for products made by a socially responsible company.

Social responsibility can benefit a company, and, inversely, a lack of it can be detrimental. One out of six consumers claim that they have rewarded a company for its positive actions in the last year, and one out of five consumers say that they have punished a company that they perceive as socially irresponsible. The harshest judges also happen to be the consumers most sought after by companies: young people, educated people and people with higher incomes.

Being associated with a cause is an effective way for companies to get involved socially and earn the approval of consumers, which is a tack that a lot of companies have taken in recent years. In fact, there has been a significant rise in the number of brands partnering with social causes, both from a qualitative and a quantitative standpoint.

CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

WILL REWARD
A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COMPANY

19% CONSIDERED IT

15% DID IT

WILL PUNISH
A COMPANY THAT ISN'T SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

18% CONSIDERED IT

22% DID IT

% of Quebecers who considered rewarding/punishing a company in the past year

WILL BE INFLUENCED to buy products from a company that is socially responsible — **74%**

WILL REFUSE to buy products from a socially irresponsible company — **67%**

WILL PAY MORE for products from a socially responsible company — **50%**

WILL CHOOSE products solely because the company is socially responsible — **50%**

WILL GET INFORMED about the CSR of a company before buying its products — **32%**

% of people who somewhat agree and strongly agree with the statements in question

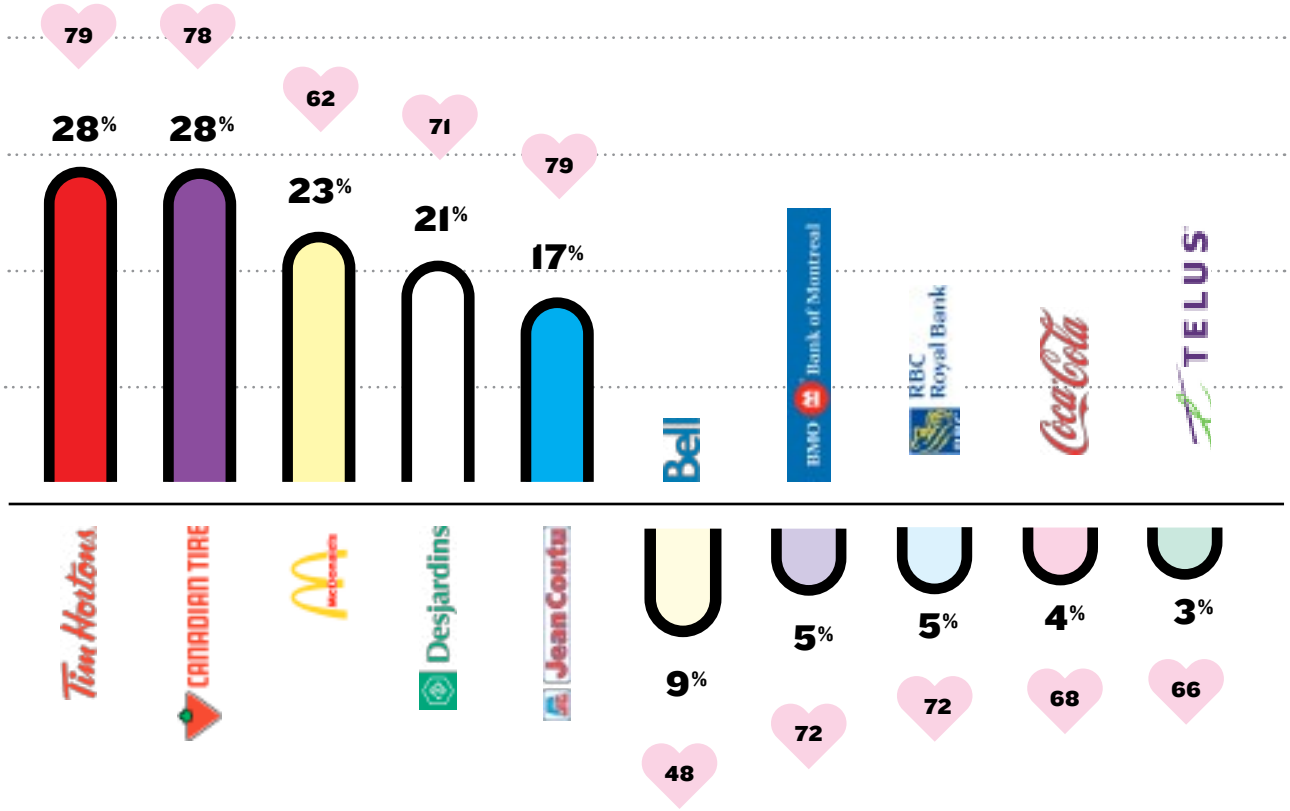
The importance and the benefits of CSR can no longer be cast in doubt. Causes now have leverage with brands, and brands are increasing their degree of investment in them. There is also a trend where we see companies take funds traditionally earmarked for donations and philanthropy and shift them into investments that meet their communications goals. In fact, publicizing support for a cause is no longer viewed negatively and companies are acting on that, even if it means sacrificing a few fiscal advantages along the way.

In Canada, some companies are doing a particularly good job of communicating their support for causes and people are taking note. Tim Hortons is an excellent example with its Timbits program that provides equipment to minor sports teams and encourages kids to be physically active. For its part, Canadian Tire has a Jumpstart program, which supports families in need by helping kids access sports that might otherwise be too costly. And McDonald's has its Ronald McDonald House, which opens its doors to the parents of children who are hospitalized far from home.

In Quebec, four of the top five most socially responsible companies are also historically the most beloved companies, which goes a long way in demonstrating the link between CSR and public appreciation. McDonald's is the only exception: it is one of the least loved brands in Quebec despite having a strong CSR rating.

Companies and causes joining forces is a promising venture. So why do some partnerships have greater success than others? In other words, what makes a successful partnership tick?

TOP 10 SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES



% of Quebecers who state that the company is one of the three most socially responsible on a list of 18 companies

Average score out of 100 according to the panorama study

The key: rethinking the relevance of cause sponsorship

Getting involved with a cause is one thing. Finding an effective and unique way of doing it is another thing entirely. The congruence between a company and the cause or organization that it supports is most often seen as the key element for success. The question of the right fit is huge in traditional sponsorship. In fact, it has been widely proven that a relevant fit between the sponsoring company and a property can lead to better recall (consumers linking the cause back to the brand), higher consumer appreciation of the brand and an increase in purchase intention.

In traditional sponsorships, the notion of congruence can extend to the image, the target audience and the use of products and services. When a natural fit doesn't exist between two organizations, as is often the case with financial service categories, you have to build the partnership from scratch and have an entire arsenal of communication tools at your disposal. This is what is called "articulation."

But do all of these different "fits" really matter that much when it comes to cause sponsorship? One thing is for certain: they seem to be at the core of a lot of campaigns. Isn't the new "Buy a lady a drink" campaign, that brings Stella Artois together with the Water.org organization, based on a shared target audience? This campaign clearly wants to raise awareness about the worldwide water crisis and the challenges that women around the world have to overcome just to find healthy drinking water for their families. And doesn't the "Save the bees" campaign from Cheerios—whose logo is none other than a bee—rely on a good fit in terms of brand image?

Even if these associations make sense from a strategic point of view, there is no guarantee that consumers will connect with them. The results of the CROP study mentioned above show that consumers also expect companies to support causes that are a good fit with their business sectors. It's interesting to note the correlation between the three most important causes for consumers and the three industries they expect the most from in terms of CSR: the environment and oil and gas companies; healthcare and the food services industry; the fight against poverty and financial institutions.

McDonald's and Tim Hortons have adopted a balanced strategy, which has proven to be quite effective. The two fast food chains both operate in the junk food sector, but the negative effects on consumer perception are balanced by their partnerships with causes that support children's health. Inversely, the Royal Bank supports causes that aren't particularly relevant to its business sector, and consumers in turn don't perceive it as being a very res-

RBC BLUE WATER PROJECT

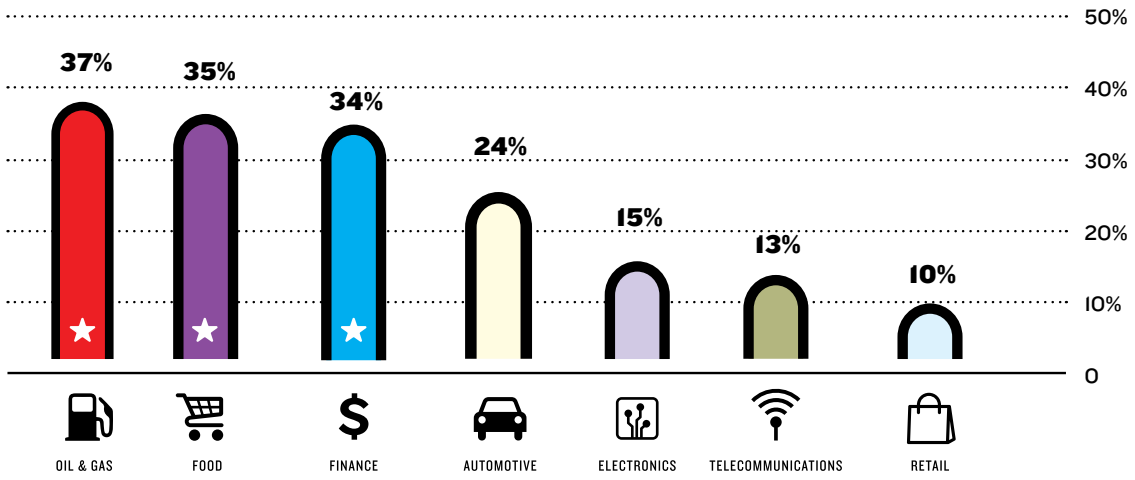
Launched in 2007, the RBC Blue Water Project is a 10-year global charitable commitment of $50 million to help provide access to drinkable, swimmable, fishable water, now and for future generations. We support initiatives that help protect water in our growing towns and cities. We also promote responsible water use with our employees and clients, are committed to reducing the intensity of our own water footprint and encourage the growth of water businesses.

RBC

RBC Blue Water Project™

Source: RBC.com

SECTORS WHERE CONSUMERS EXPECT THE MOST IN TERMS OF CSR

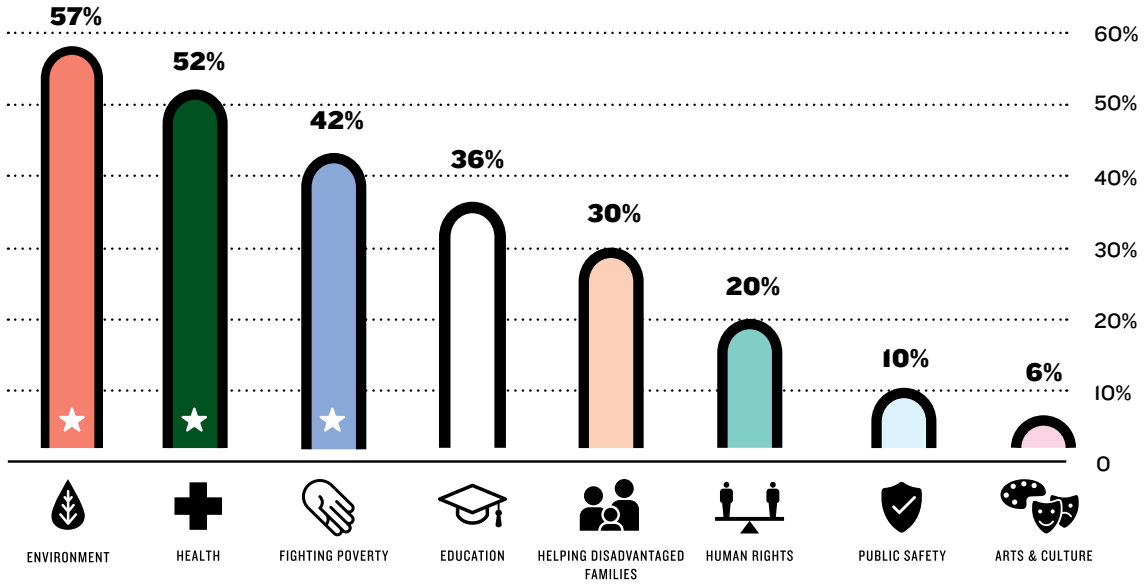


% of Quebecers who state that their expectations are higher with regards to the type of company

ponsible company—despite the fact that it's ranked among the Best 50 Corporate Citizens in Canada by Corporate Knights magazine (which bases its ranking system on how a company does in terms of the environment, social responsibility and corporate governance). Though every cause is a worthy cause, the Royal Bank would no doubt benefit from fighting poverty rather than trying to save the environment.

One thing is abundantly clear: consumers get behind partnerships that are real and authentic. Companies would do well to keep this in mind when choosing their partnerships.

AREAS OF INVESTMENT WHERE CONSUMERS THINK THAT CSR SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED



% of Quebecers who state that companies must get involved in the priority area

S T U D Y

CANADIAN SPONSORSHIP LANDSCAPE STUDY

Ninth Annual Canadian Sponsorship Landscape Study

The Canadian Sponsorship Landscape Study (CSLS) is an annual survey of Canadian sponsors, properties and agencies, which provides an overview of the sponsorship industry in Canada.

Authors

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INDUSTRY SIZE

SPONSORSHIP INDUSTRY IN CANADA NOW WORTH

$1.66 BILLION

2014

THIS IS UP **$55 MILLION** FROM 2006

STEADY GROWTH ↑ **2006 ▸ 2014**

SLIGHT DECREASE ↓ **2011 ▸ 2012**

SLIGHT DECREASE ↓ **2013 ▸ 2014**

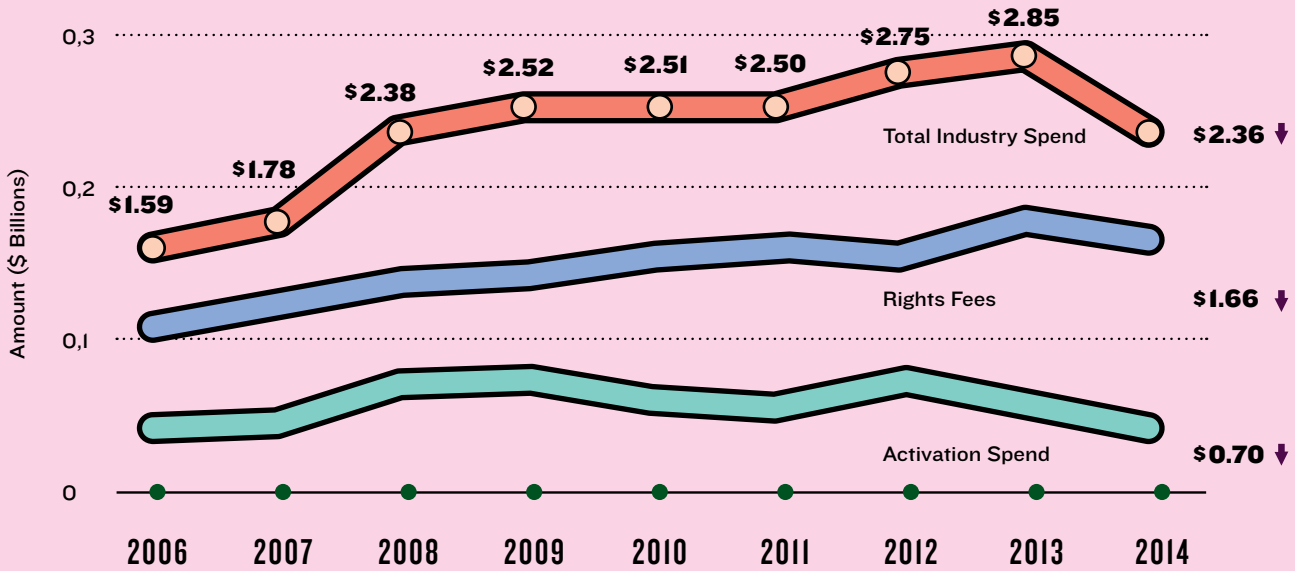
49.6%

RIGHTS FEES HAVE INCREASED BY ROUGHLY SINCE THE CSLS STUDY BEGAN IN 2007.

TOTAL INDUSTRY SPENDING

- In 2014, with a decline in spending on rights fees combined with a nine-year low activation ratio, **the overall industry fell by 17.9%.**
- Spending on rights fees and activation: **$2.36 billion (2014) vs. $2.85 billion in 2013.**
- The decrease in spending in 2014 resulted in the lowest overall spend since 2007.

HISTORICAL TOTAL SPEND TREND ($B)

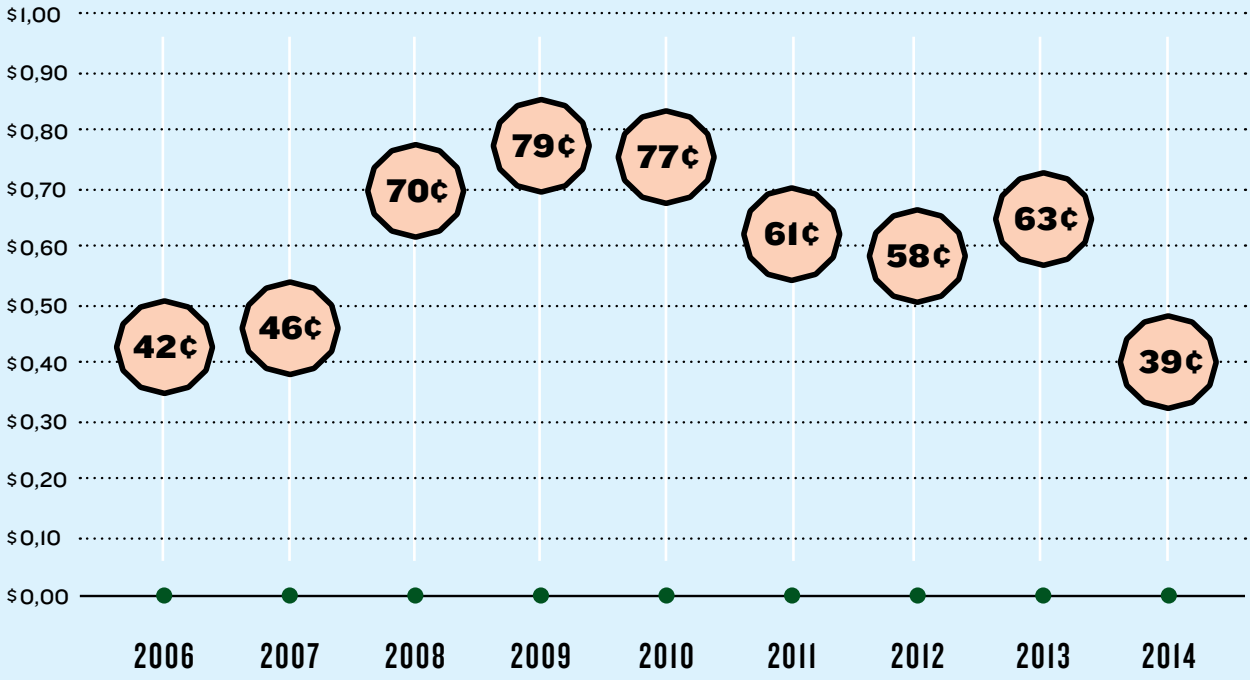


	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
US (IEG):	$1.70	$1.90	$1.50	$1.40	$1.40	$1.60	$1.70	$1.70	$1.70

ACTIVATION RATIO

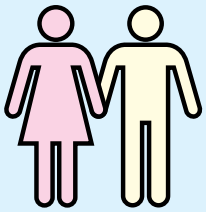
- The activation ratio is determined by dividing the average amount spent on leveraging a sponsorship by the average total rights fees paid.
- In 2014, the **activation ratio** was at its **lowest** since the study began.
- In keeping with historical international trends, the activation ratio in Canada is significantly lower than in the US.

HISTORICAL ACTIVATION RATIO

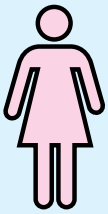


SPONSORSHIP INVESTMENT TARGET MARKET

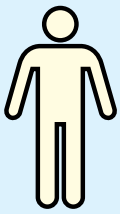
- In 2014, the number of investments targeting females was just over half the number targeting males
- Overall findings showed that the majority of investments were not gender specific, at 53%, while 30.1% of investments were targeted at males, and 16.9% of investments were targeted at females



38.2%
OF INVESTMENTS NOT GENDER SPECIFIC



16.9%
OF INVESTMENTS TARGETED AT FEMALES

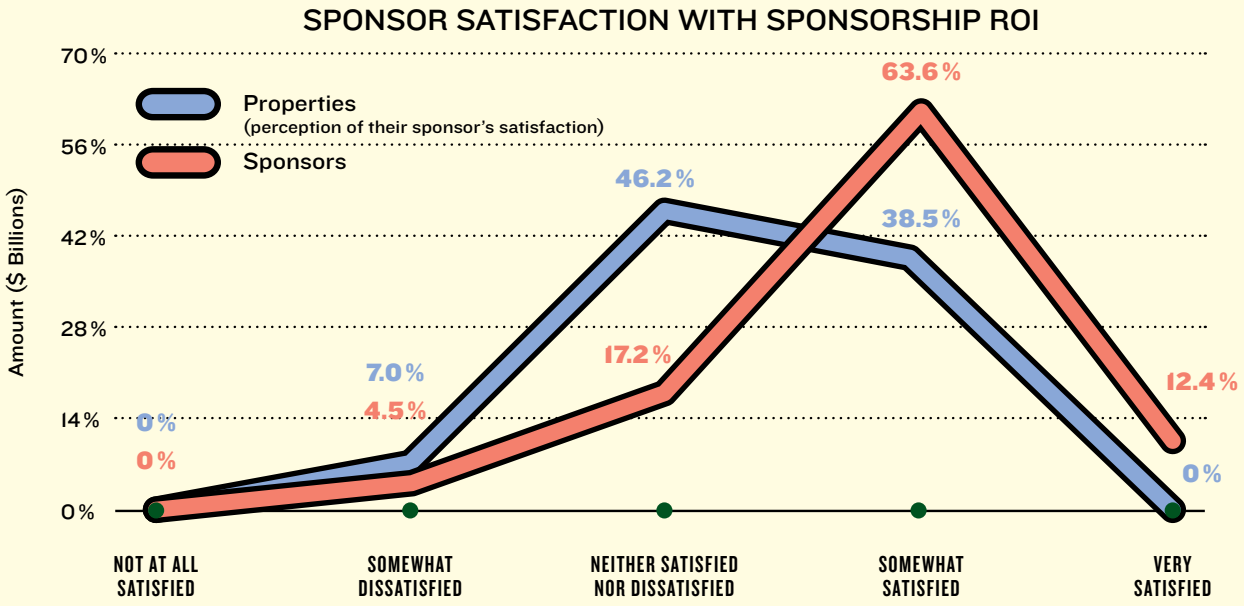


30.1%
OF INVESTMENTS TARGETED AT MALES

TOTAL INDUSTRY SPENDING

- Servicing of sponsorships by properties continues to fall short of sponsor expectations
- There are **large statistical gaps** across the board for what sponsors deem to be important versus what is provided to them
- In 2014, the most significant servicing gaps between what sponsors consider important and what they receive from properties are:

1. **Activation resources**
2. **Recall stats**
3. **Loyalty stats**



To download the full report, visit: http://www.sponsorshiplandscape.ca

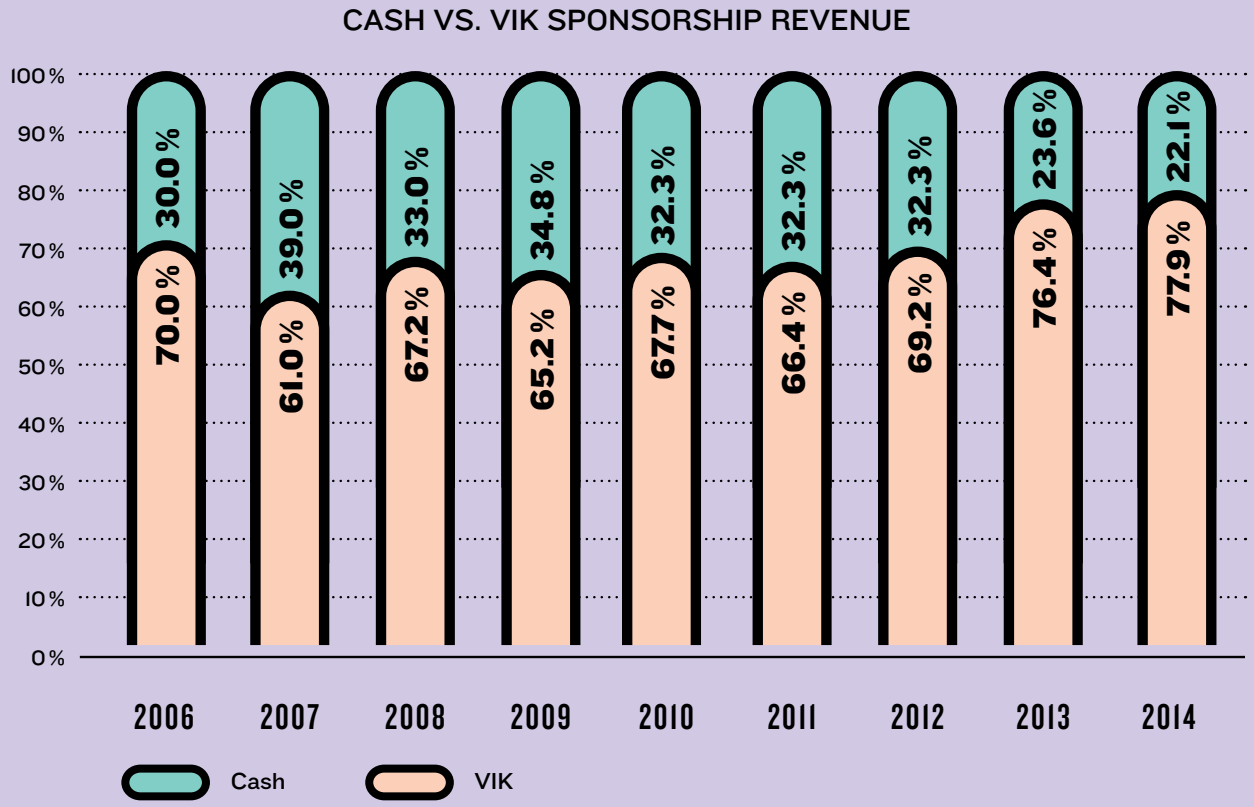
SPONSORSHIP INVESTMENT AREAS

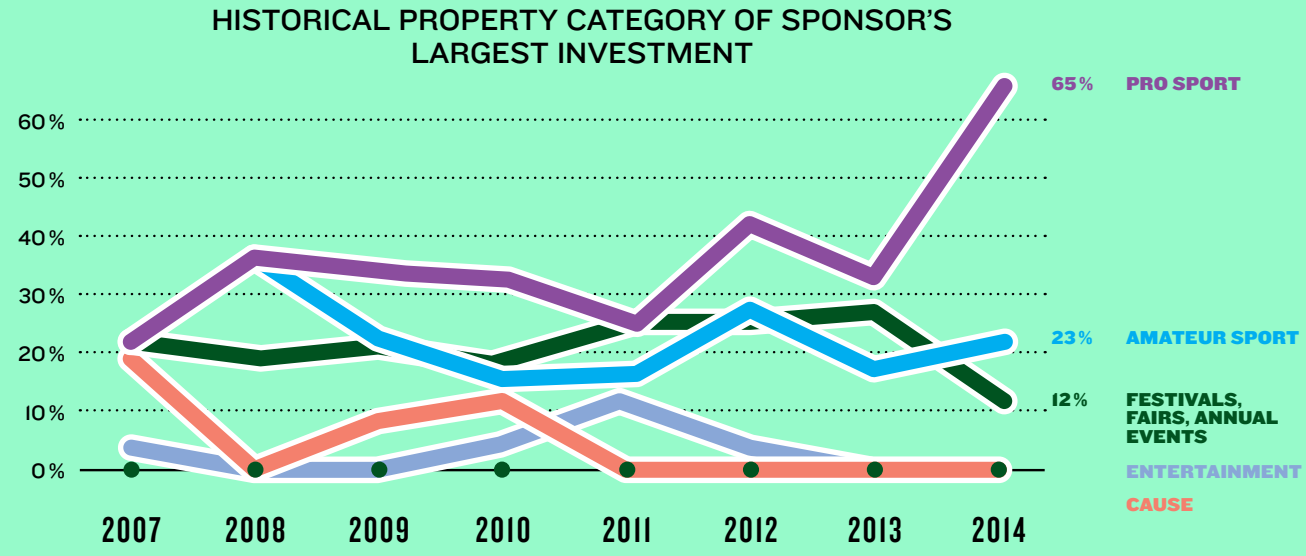
Since the study began nine years ago, the percentage of sponsorship spending by area of investment (i.e. property type) has undergone significant change:

- Sport sponsorships have fluctuated as the most common investment categories over the nine year period.
  - 2014: professional sport ranked first for 38.5% of sponsorship investment, while amateur sport ranked second at 19.4% of investment.
  - Sponsorship investment in professional sport in 2014 was the highest for any area since 2006, at **+$659 million.**
- Festivals, fairs, and annual events have showed an overall increase in sponsorship investment since 2006, but a decrease from 2013 to 2014.
- There was a **steep decline** in investment in **cause sponsorship** in 2014, despite an increase from 2011 to 2013.

SPONSORSHIP REVENUE

- Over the past eight years, value-in-kind (VIK) revenue has accounted for a declining percentage of total sponsorship revenue.
- In 2014, the **22% VIK** percentage was the **lowest** it had been since 2006, indicating that properties received a higher percentage of revenue as rights fees than in any previous year studied.





SCIENCE

OF SPONSORSHIP

They may come from two different worlds, but sponsorship professionals and university researchers in marketing would benefit from putting their heads together more. Too often, sponsorship measurement tools and strategies rely on imperfect methods and intellectual shortcuts.

At Elevent, we decided to bridge this gap by establishing strong ties with professors whose research is well respected in this field. We also do our best to break down the barrier between the two worlds with our blog series called "The science of sponsorship," where we summarize recent articles that have appeared in scientific journals and outline the concrete application of the findings for industry professionals.

Here you'll find three articles from this series. The first is on fan resistance to title sponsors, the second is on the role of cause sponsorship in reaching communication objectives, and the third is on the effectiveness of advertising when doing sponsorship activations.

FAN RESISTANCE TO NAMING RIGHTS

Original article: Fans' resistance to naming right sponsorships: Why stadium names remain the same for fans, by David M. Woisetschläger, Vanessa J. Haselhoff andChristof Backhaus, 2013

Have you ever heard of 3Com Park or Monster Park in San Francisco? No? Despite attempts to name the 49ers stadium after a brand, the team ended up going back to Candlestick Park after San Francisco residents voted largely in favour of bringing back the original name. Fans around the world often react negatively to branded name changes by protesting, boycotting or refusing to acknowledge the new name.

Though title sponsorships attract sponsors that see them as a powerful tool to increase brand awareness and improve their image through association with the property, there are a number of downsides to the deal. Fan resistance can have a negative impact on attitudes towards the sponsor and on word-of-mouth. Fans who identify deeply with the property and the region where their team resides react more strongly to name changes. When a property is steeped in tradition and heritage, a title sponsor can pose a serious threat to its identity.

These negative effects can be minimized if the sponsor is seen as having a relevant connection to the property and if it's bringing added value to the team. By becoming a title sponsor, the brand is also entering into a community of fans that are an inherent part of the property. It's important to make a meaningful contribution to that community, or fans will perceive the brand as being an outsider.

In short, if a sponsor wants to invest in a title sponsorship, it's best to choose a property that:

- Has a relevant connection with the sponsor
- Needs and will benefit from the sponsor's support
- Is young or completely new without an established heritage

So what about Candlestick Park?
The 49ers needed a new stadium that would better suit its needs. A brand new stadium was built, and the clothing brand Levi Strauss & Co., itself a San Francisco-based company, signed on. The mythical Candlestick Park—which had maintained its identity despite various attempts to change its name—suddenly lost its raison d'être and was slated for demolition. But not before a vibrant homage took place during a celebration that featured legends of the game like former quarterback Joe Montana and singer Paul McCartney.

ACHIEVING MARKETING OBJECTIVES THROUGH SOCIAL SPONSORSHIPS

Original authors: Carolyn J. Simmons & Karen L. Becker-Olsen

Social sponsorship is no longer a bland vehicle for corporate social responsibility or philanthropy. Brands use it more and more to achieve marketing or corporate communication objectives. In that light, the authors discovered that social sponsorship, like its traditional counterpart, is most effective when strategically planned and executed. To achieve desired results, it is paramount for a strong natural fit to exist between the brand and the selected non-profit. Managerial implications are covered below.

Firms want to be perceived as socially responsible, often to create a positive image and a differentiating effect over their competitors. In other words, they are looking to build brand equity and define a unique positioning. It was previously thought that social sponsorship endowed the brand with a socially responsible image, and would inherently be positive. However, a social sponsorship can be detrimental to the brand if chosen poorly.

Natural fit—an indicator of how relevant the association is perceived in the minds of consumers—is as important with social sponsorship as it is with commercial partnerships and will have a direct effect on sponsorship outcomes. Indeed, a high fit will result in better recall and will positively reinforce brand positioning. However, the opposite will dilute brand equity, as a poor fit tends to blur brand positioning. Like sponsorship, low fit and its negative impacts can be mitigated by communication actions (articulation) to explain the partnership between the two brands. Furthermore, in a low fit environment, it's generally best for the sponsored organization—rather than the firm—to carry out the communications about the partnership, as it reduces the negative impact.

If done right, social sponsorship will generate better recall than traditional sponsorships, and findings have shown that the effect lasts up to a year.

In summary:

Social sponsorships can do a great job of improving a firm's brand equity, but a bad choice can eradicate and even inverse the positive effect and be detrimental to the company.

- Fit should be a key consideration, not familiarity with the cause
- Low fit can dilute the brand's positioning, create dislike for the sponsorship and lower brand equity
- High fit will reinforce the brand positioning, create a favourable attitude toward the sponsorship and build brand equity
- Message source: It is better to communicate through the sponsored non-profit
- Other elements to consider: "... a well-liked cause, avoiding unattractive elements like heavy-handed promotions, and providing engaging ways for consumers to participate may all contribute to a more favourable attitude toward the sponsorship."

SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING ARE INDEED DIFFERENT: INSIGHTS ABOUT SPONSORSHIP ARTICULATION REPETITION EFFECTIVENESS

Authors: François Carrillat, Alain d'Astous

That sponsorship and advertising effectiveness are driven by vastly different principles is widely accepted. However, observing activation campaigns suggests that many sponsors believe that audiences are immune to growing tired of the same articulation message being repeated over and over again. Take William Hill, the online sports-betting sponsor of the 2016 Australian Open. Its only articulation message on television is interspersed multiple times throughout each match every day of the tournament. In a recent large scale study conducted on an American panel, we set out to investigate whether this repetition strategy could undermine the very feature that differentiates sponsorship from advertising: sponsors are perceived as displaying goodwill when they support an event, but not when they are seen as exploiting it.

About 600 participants were assigned to different experimental conditions, in which sponsors were either congruent or incongruent with events (Adidas or MTV), and they were either exclusive (the no clutter case) or non-exclusive with four other sponsors from the same category visible on players' jerseys (the clutter case). At each wave, respondents' attitudes toward the sponsorship of the event was measured, as well as their intentions to purchase sponsors' products, and their perceptions of sponsors (over)exploiting events to their own advantage.

The results showed that starting the articulation of the sponsorship three weeks out had positive effects in the short-run only when the context was not conducive to perceptions that sponsors are taking advantage of the event. Amid clutter, incongruent sponsors saw attitude and purchase intentions to be initially improved by an articulation message although, over time, no additional benefits were gleaned from repeating the articulation message. On the other hand, in a similar cluttered context, a sports brand sponsoring a golf tournament (congruent case) saw no benefits either in the short- or long-run from repeating its articulation message

In the case of a non-cluttered sponsorship environment however, articulation repetitions did not have any positive impact in the short-run and, in fact over time, consumers grew weary of the sponsorship. This was demonstrated by their increased perception of event overexploitation,

and drops in the favourability of their attitude toward the sponsorship as well as in their intentions to purchase sponsors' products. These detrimental effects were even more pronounced for sports brands than music channel brands due to congruent sponsors having a harder time legitimizing competitive behaviours, such as articulation repetitions, than incongruent ones.

The overall take away is that sponsorship effectiveness hinges on maintaining the audience's perception of sponsors' goodwill: one of the defining features of sponsorship as compared to advertising. Unlike advertisers, sponsors enjoy a priori favourable perceptions; capital that they should be careful not to dilapidate for short-term gains. If audiences are more forgiving with sponsors who repeat their articulation message when drown in clutter, repetition is no longer seen as a legitimate strategy without sponsorship clutter. This is even more true when sponsors are congruent with events. Ultimately, even if articulation repetition may strengthen the sponsor-event link, it may also lead audiences to believe that sponsors are taking advantage of events.

R V E E L N E T

Photo Credit:
Rachel Machalani

RELEVENT: THE EXCLUSIVE CONFERENCE ON SPONSORSHIP

The Relevent Conference delves into the many challenges that sponsorship professionals face every day. As anyone working in the industry knows, we get more than our fair share of curve balls thrown our way. Few other marketing disciplines are expected to master such a complex toolbox. From digital to experiential to advertising to public relations to events, sponsorship casts a wide net. Then there's the strategic thinking that goes into identifying the strongest alliances and the most compelling activations, not to mention the ability to analyze the best properties and measure results in an accurate fashion. Sponsorship is also the art of negotiating and managing a business relationship without losing sight of the fans, the public, the big market trends, and, of course, the competition.

So is it a demanding field? Absolutely. But that's what I love the most about this business.

The conference provides a great opportunity to step back, take a breather from the emails and the whirlwind of activity that comes with this busy season, and reflect on how we can make sponsorship better. Together.

The first edition of the Relevent Conference in 2015 proved to be pretty innovative in a lot of ways. Instead of having a line-up of sponsorship experts presenting case studies, we invited important players working in disciplines that we can no longer ignore to share their experiences and expertise. The founder of a digital marketing agency discussed digital activation, a lawyer demystified sponsorship contracts, a content expert talked about everything content-related. Each 90-minute presentation tackled one of the challenges that are becoming an increasingly important part of our daily lives and gave participants the chance to put their newfound knowledge into practice.

Every session included a presentation, a workshop and an in-depth interview. By limiting the number of participants in attendance, we created an environment that fostered learning and dialogue. This 180-degree shift from the traditional conference structure was a gamble, but I think that it's fair to say that it paid off.

It would be impossible to capture the spirit of the event in a few short words, but I hope that this gives you an idea of the discoveries and observations that last year's edition brought to light. I also hope that it will inspire you to join us this year. It's a fantastic opportunity to sharpen your skills and become even more versed in a field that you already master so well.

I look forward to seeing you on September 28 and 29 for the second edition of Relevent, the exclusive sponsorship conference.

Francis Dumais,
Conference Chair

CONCLUSIONS

Though the sponsorship industry is growing, it remains relatively young in many respects. There are still a lot of challenges to overcome for sponsorship to be accepted beyond the inner circle of believers—of which you are no doubt a card-carrying member.

So, what does the future hold? We touched on this indirectly in the section on current trends, but some elements—both positive and negative—stand out and deserve further review.

To conclude, here are a few things to think about moving forward. Hopefully we'll have the chance to discuss them with you at length in the near future.

Stability
The sponsorship world has come of age in a lot of ways, certainly when it comes to brands that have been active for many years now. There are more medium- and long-term contracts, and partnerships that last for 10 years or more are now common currency. Brands are moving around less and are carving out their own territories, which results in a levelling off of the rights they have to pay as part of their contracts. Their teams have also gotten more experience.

All of this may not be great news for the new players in the market for sponsorship revenue, but the industry as a whole will be the healthier for it, and will benefit from a sharpened focus, a more in-depth expertise and better results.

Segmentation
Many brands have discovered the virtues of hyper-segmentation. We're not talking about classifying people by generation or broad sociodemographic categories—a practice which, to our minds, seems closer to voluntary blindness—but rather by their consumer profile or even their preferences. That's what H&M did brilliantly when they targeted equestrian fans.

Brands that perform well adapt to their targets' media consumption habits by reinvesting in digital, using new tools like Snapchat and producing original content.

For its part, sponsorship gives them the chance to get their messages across to highly targeted groups, an asset that the ad world is starting to tap into.

The power of brands
University studies show that an association between two brands generally stimulates sales when a product is involved.

A partnership of that kind is sometimes set aside in favour of an approach that focuses on the property's fans. But a lot can be accomplished beyond the framework of the event itself, especially if you're looking to build branding.

Co-branding is one of sponsorship's greatest strengths. It helps companies improve their image or attract the attention of an audience to a less-than-sexy product. Brands benefit from taking full advantage of their partner's potential and devising a strategy that goes beyond targeting only diehard fans. Other means—like point-of-sale promos, co-branded products and joint campaigns—can prove to be very effective.

The promo trap
A lot of companies fall into the promo trap. They put their efforts into generating buzz in the short-term despite the fact that a strategy like this does nothing to build their brand.

This all-too-common phenomenon relegates sponsorship to the status of a simple experiential marketing tool. But sponsorship is far too costly to be used in such a limited fashion—unless you get some kind of sadistic satisfaction out of wasting marketing budgets.

A true sponsorship program must have a solid strategic foundation, a long-term brand vision and a clear understanding of the sponsor's communication objectives.

An activation can't be limited to field activations and the distribution of promo articles. Such practices are popular with the public (handing out money to people would be popular too, by the way) but they don't give companies the chance to 1) determine the effectiveness of their investment; 2) reach their communication objectives; and 3) have a lasting impact on consumers.

The role of promoters
Promoters must not only continue to support brands, but also act as facilitators to help their partners reach their objectives with resources that are often limited. They also have to play a role in measuring how each initiative performs, even if this responsibility falls primarily to sponsoring companies.

The most notable improvement undertaken by big properties has been to build dedicated sponsorship teams and bring the necessary expertise together to serve their clients effectively. You can now sense the desire of these pioneers to make sponsorship a key element of their business plans, right on par with ticket sales.

Such an evolution means that promoters can now offer sponsors integrated project management and production services. Similarly, they're also starting to offer a creative service, which enables them to develop customized sub-properties and to deploy unique turnkey activations. Experiential agencies essentially get eliminated from the equation and promoters increase their revenue by taking a bigger slice of the activation budget. This trend will continue to transform the industry, and shows no signs of slowing down. (Quite the opposite, in fact.)

Finally—and this is great news for the industry—cause sponsorships are on the rise as budgets shift from donations and philanthropy to marketing. Companies are now putting money that did little more than provide a tax credit to far better use.

Though this is a boon to charitable organizations, the lack of experience in this sector remains an important obstacle to success.

In fact, brands are having difficulty leveraging their association with causes because of the culture of non-profit organizations. They aren't used to serving brands and working to achieve their communication objectives. What's more, they are often reluctant to hire resources dedicated to sponsorships, as that would increase their operating costs—a criteria on which they are often judged. Charitable organizations still have a ways to go to position themselves as effective players and must keep in mind that they can't have their cake and eat it too.

That said, a partnership of this kind is very compelling for brands that are looking to stand out, as long as it unfolds in a context that generates commercial opportunities. Category exclusivity is key, and it's important for the two parties to have shared values. Otherwise—and we see this a lot—such partnerships tend to be pretty short-lived.

To conclude, we'd like to say a word about the relationship between sponsors and sponsees. Industry surveys suggest that a huge gap exists between the two parties, putting a strain on a relationship that should be symbiotic. The gap in question is due to the considerable difference between the real satisfaction sponsors feel and what sponsees perceive their level of satisfaction to be. This brings to light several shortcomings in the system, starting with the flagrant lack of dialogue between the two parties. Sponsorship is above all a business relationship, and it's up to us to maintain it and see it flourish.

To foster the future of sponsorship, we need to work together to do more research, adopt an objective rather than a subjective stance, improve processes and ensure the transition from artisanal approaches to rigorous professional practices.

A big shout out to everyone for reading our blog, subscribing to our newsletter, participating in our conference and engaging in a dialogue that will give us the chance to take sponsorship to the next level.

Looking forward to discussing with you further,
The Elevent Team

Creating valuable, lasting sponsorships is an art.
And Elevent is passionate about it.

Our simple, powerful e-valuation toolkit makes it easy to understand the things that drive partnerships and provides actionable information to make them stronger and more profitable.

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SPONSORSHIP E-VALUATION AND STRATEGY