

Validating Sport and Sponsorship

The start of the 2012 Olympic Games & the World's largest media event is imminent. But sport is always at the forefront of the public imagination. We all have our favourite athletes and are looking forward to supporting them but their time for preparation is running out! But are there metrics in place which fully validate the huge cash injections from the sponsors?

When sponsors invest money in sport, they spend generously with high profile sportspeople. Various media are used to cement the link between the Media and its stars. As a result, Sport management and Sponsorship has never had such a high profile as in the modern era, and the connection between sport and business, never so well defined and promoted. But the value in this ROI is rather more difficult to quantify.

The EMM point of view

So the question is what do you need to succeed, as an advertiser investing in sport?

First of all, in this area like others, your consumers are of paramount importance.

Your brand must connect with everything you do to make a stronger link in consumer's eyes.

Investing in sport is not merely putting your logo on someone's t-shirt; the message has to go in line with the sponsor's whole brand strategy.

Another central aspect is the huge cost. It's an investment like any other so it should drive your ROI as well. You must be able to quantify the results in hard facts not emotions.

The athlete must therefore embody the values of the brand; e.g. integrity and determination to succeed. Sport can deliver solutions no matter what the challenges. Whatever the cost of sponsorship any advertising has to be coupled with a PR campaign so that the public understand the connection between product and the Athlete. This often doubles the capital investment required from the sponsor!

How does sport transfer into business?

In business the start point is recognition of your strengths and weaknesses; in valuing your advantages over opponents. In sport every given opportunity should be used for practice & development as in business. This means working on your offer, skills and confidence. It's exactly the same for sportsmen who prepare for their challenges. Of course in both fields you have to be prepared to fail. But as long as you learn from your mistakes, you're growing as an athlete and as a business investor. Improvement is gradual not instant but small incremental improvements will yield results in the end. EMM believe that quantifying performances by the sportsman and quantifying the media exposure should have complimentary and measurable metrics.

Risk

These calculated risks can help you differentiate your brand from competitors and gain supremacy in your market. In sport it is the same and team work is exceptionally important. At all stages you need other people to help you develop your talents to succeed and to reduce risk by optimising performances. In team sports your additional motivation is your obligation towards other members of the team. Each individual is working on behalf of the team to succeed and so must perform at their best, just as team Sky had achieved with this year's Tour de France.

These are the same rules for a company and for a sportsman; there is no substitute for hard work. There is limited luck in sport or business if you don't use every opportunity to achieve your goal, and measuring your performances as you go along. As Jan Leschley ex pro tennis player and CEO of Beechams once said, "If you are not keeping score, you are only practicing!"

Whilst in the end, sport may have clearer rules on who is the winner and who loses during actual competition, in business it's very often a more subjective case. However in both, the winning or the losing is only a very small part of the process. The desire to improve and being seen to improve via carefully measured K.P.I's (Key Performance Indicators) where Sport and Business come together.

EMM believe the connections between sport and business are already firmly established. The issue remains, are enough value metrics in place to fully justify the investment the sponsors make? At this point the Athlete leaves the stage. They won or lost. But the Sponsor has to justify the cost, and in many cases EMM have measured independently, the investment rarely gets the gold medal.