

The name game

THE LIST Tim Crow explains why sponsorship still works for brands – and how to get the best value for money

#01

SPONSORSHIP WORKS

The recession created a lot of negativity about sponsorship, but don't let that distract you. Executed well, it's a powerful marketing tool that has the proven ability to positively influence consumer behaviour and attitudes for companies in any and every business category, and for established or new brands alike. The recession changed many things, but it hasn't changed that.

#02

IT NEEDN'T BE EXPENSIVE

The media characterise sponsorship as being all about megabucks deals, but it's not how much you spend, it's how well you spend it. Many of the techniques used by big brands on large budget sponsorships work well on smaller ones. In 2005, for example, on a comparatively modest budget, we helped Chivas to create a global sponsorship programme, from elephant polo in Nepal to a Snow Golf Championship in St Moritz.

#03

MEASURE PERFORMANCE

Successful sponsorships create significant added business and brand value – and can demonstrate this. The key word is demonstrate: if you don't know, you don't know! So, be clear about your objectives upfront, and put research in place to measure how your sponsorship is performing. Best practice is to spend around five per cent of your sponsorship budget on research, and to focus on measuring outcomes – in particular, how the sponsorship has changed people's attitudes to your brand and, where possible, had direct effect on the bottom line.



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#04

THINK PARTY TIME

When planning a sponsorship with clients, I often ask them to imagine this scenario: becoming a sponsor is like being invited to a party where everyone has known each other for years, but nobody knows you. What can you do to make everyone want to get to know you and, in time, become everyone's friend? Whether you're thinking about sponsoring or already doing it, try this exercise and apply it to your sponsorship activation.

#05

FIND YOUR WHITE SPACE

In the best sponsorships, the brands involved find and leverage a 'white space' that is true to the brand, and also credible and compelling for consumers. Coca-Cola and Guinness both do this brilliantly. Think of it this way: when you activate a sponsorship, it should feel like something only your brand can do. If you can substitute another brand

into the activation – especially one of your competitors – it's time to start again.

#06

GO DIGITAL

Sponsorship enables brands to connect emotionally with communities of consumers around their shared passions – sport, music, film and so on. Digital marketing and social media have transformed the potential of sponsorship to reach and engage with these communities using their passions as the basis for the conversation. It's made it faster, easier and cheaper for brands, and far more

engaging for consumers. We used these insights to great effect last summer in a campaign for Belfair around its sponsorship of the Ashes: two former England and Aussie players squared off in a series of offbeat challenges hosted purely in the online environment – with fans of both countries able to 'back their boy'. So if you don't put digital marketing at the heart of your sponsorship activation, you're missing out on a massive opportunity.

#07

SPONSORSHIP IS NOT JUST FOR B2C BRANDS

Sponsorship can be very effective for B2B companies too, as a showcase for specialist capability. This is now a well-established B2B brand strategy: many sporting events have B2B sponsors who provide vital specialist products and services as payment for the sponsorship – look, for example, at the amazing work Atkins has done for London 2012.

#08

DON'T ONLY PLAN FOR THE BEST OF TIMES

Every sponsorship involves an element of risk – particularly star or celebrity endorsements. So if you're considering a sponsorship, be sure to do really thorough risk analysis upfront, build financial and reputation protection for your company into the deal and have a crisis plan of action ready – just in case. ●



Driving brands
Phil Tufnell and Jason Gillespie (above) add extra spice to Belfair's sponsorship of the Ashes. If you don't do digital, you're missing out, says Tim Crow (left)

details

Tim Crow is CEO of Synergy, a multidisciplinary specialist sponsorship consultancy. Visit synergy-sponsorship.com