

TREND WATCH
THE 2010 WORLD CUP

Fifa shows red card

Stringent regulations are in place surrounding sponsorship of the World Cup, but it

When the Dutch football fans turned out to watch their national team play the Ivory Coast at the 2006 World Cup in Germany, little did they know they would be going home without their trousers.

Hordes of them donned patriotic orange lederhosen (a traditional form of knee-breeches or shorts), only to be ordered by Fifa officials to take them off because they carried the name of a rival brand to the tournament's official sponsor, Budweiser.

The result wasn't a pretty sight – proving that watching a match in your underpants should only ever be reserved for the confines of your own home.

Fifa's reaction may seem outrageously over the top, but this instance only serves to illustrate the extraordinary lengths it will go to protect its sponsors' rights.

Given the significant amount of money that brands invest in the tournament, this is hardly surprising. Adidas, Coca-Cola, Emirates, Hyundai, Sony and Visa are believed to have each paid several million pounds for the right to be Fifa sponsors, while several other brands have stumped up huge sums to become World Cup 2010 and National Supporters.

"Brands pay millions of pounds to become an official sponsor of the World Cup, so it's understandable that they want exclusive rights in return," says Slice head of events Will Mould. Yet this doesn't stop other non-affiliated brands attempting to get a share of the action, using tactics that have become known as 'ambush marketing'.

"It's inevitable that with such a major event, where the stakes are so high, there will be a lot of non-official activity going on," says Billington Cartmell MD Jason Nicolas.

This year's 2010 World Cup in South Africa is being widely touted as an unparalleled marketing opportunity, given that it will be the first time that the competition has ever been held on African soil.

In recent years, the growing trend for fan parks has made things more difficult for non-



affiliated brands. "They are the complete consumer experience," says Nicolas. "We will see a rise in the number of fan parks in the UK during this World Cup, bringing together large numbers of people to watch the games at branded screenings."

For the UK specifically, Nicolas believes the World Cup could be an opportunity to dig ourselves out of a hole. "When England failed to qualify for the European Championship in 2008 it cost the economy an estimated £1bn in marketing opportunities," he says.

"In the context of a poor economy and an election year, the World Cup in South Africa could be the driver of economic growth we so desperately need."

Fifa has already laid out its rules on the permitted uses of official marks in a detailed

public information sheet. To put it simply, any mention of official emblems, words, slogans or event titles is prohibited.

But Tim Crow, CEO of event sponsorship agency Synergy, believes it is very difficult for rights holders to police what goes on. "My impression is that the authorities are behind the curve on it," he says. "It is very simple to put together a marketing campaign around an event such as the World Cup."

One brand unfazed by Fifa's restrictions is Nike. The ongoing feud between the official and unofficial sponsor – or the stripes (Adidas) and the swoosh (Nike) – has been well documented.

During the last World Cup in Germany, Nike launched a global campaign titled 'Joga Bonito' (which translates as 'play beautifully'),

to unofficial brands

won't stop determined brands cashing in on the tournament. By Chantelle Thorley

business development director Cameron Day suggests those brands that have no direct relationship with the event, a team or player should avoid just jumping on the bandwagon. Essentially, they risk getting lost in all of the other marketing and event clutter around what will be the busiest time of the year.

"You are in a stronger position events and marketing wise if there is a logical fit for your product or brand with the World Cup itself, because you will have a reason for communicating around this time. You will have to work less hard explaining why this is a relevant time or occasion," Day explains.

"Brands seeking to stand out should avoid hosting any event during the actual World Cup. Target key times in the build-up – the pre-tournament friendly games for example – to avoid the highly competitive timings and establish the link early.

"There is also an anti-World Cup feeling, which is an even bigger opportunity – apart from targeting football fans – for brands to hold events for consumers who have absolutely no interest in the occasion itself. For example, a female-focused brand could host something that gives wives, girlfriends and housemates an excuse to get out of the house while the football is on," Day adds.

The attention may be on South Africa at the moment, but when the final whistle is blown at the last game, all eyes will shift to London in anticipation of the 2012 Olympic Games.

The lessons learnt from the 2010 World Cup will no doubt play an integral part in how brands plan their marketing strategies for 2012. "The build-up to the London Olympics has effectively already started," says Nicolas. "I have no doubt lots of official sponsors are already planning their activity right now for what will be the most significant marketing event the UK has ever had."

"London 2012 has been sold on a legacy, so it will be interesting to see what activity will happen beyond the Games to uphold the UK's position as a world-leading sporting nation."

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an international football tournament that focused on players maximising their skills. It was careful to make no direct links with the World Cup, but still generated a huge amount of media coverage.

Slice is one of Nike's key retained agencies. "What Nike does is two-fold: it utilises its assets and concentrates on its target market," explains Mould. "Firstly, Nike may not have branding rights to the World Cup but it utilises its best players and teams, who all wear Nike kit. Secondly, all that Nike's target audience really want to do is go out and play football, so the brand provides them with this opportunity through the medium of tournaments and experiential events."

The brand will be directing its attention to South Africa's townships and furthering

players' skills during this year's World Cup. "The key to Nike's campaigns is that they are innovative but still relevant to football, without trying to piggyback on the World Cup," adds Mould.

But Nike isn't the only brand planning a so-called 'ambush' campaign during the tournament. According to Nicolas, we can expect to see everything from beers and foodstuffs to retailers and electrical goods showcasing their brands.

"Carlsberg is a long-term client of ours, and the official beer of the England team," he says. "We are planning a major integrated campaign, making use of player imagery and personal appearances."

Despite the enormous marketing potential of the World Cup, Iris Experience global

