Raising The Bar On Sponsorship Fulfillment Reports

As sponsors and properties have grown more sophisticated in their approach to the medium, many of the essential elements of sponsorship, from the sales process to negotiating strategies to valuation to benefits, have undergone major changes to meet demands.

That includes post-sponsorship recaps, which not that long ago were not even considered essential. Today they are an expected deliverable, and the type of information they need to contain must go beyond an overview of an event and directly relate to helping corporate partners determine their return.

“You should not be in this business if you don’t do them. They are as important as the contract or the event itself,” said Kathy Emery, president of The Sponsor Placement Co., a sales agency that represents Taste of Minnesota, Detroit’s Comerica Cityfest and other civic festivals.

Especially in tough economic times, properties that don’t produce reports, or provide only superficial summaries, are at risk of losing their sponsors.

“There is a lot of pressure on corporate budgets. If you are not offering post-event sponsorship reports, you are opening yourself up to being replaced by a property that is,” said Kyle Caddell, director of sponsor sales and services with the NFL Carolina Panthers.

Slingbox Goes National, Younger With Latest Sponsorship

A year after being acquired by satellite TV provider Echostar Communications Corp., Sling Media, Inc. has chosen American Collegiate Intramural Sports as its first national sponsorship for its flagship Slingbox product.

Slingbox will title ACIS Football, which encompasses 200 college campuses and culminates in a national championship tournament Dec. 28-31 in New Orleans.

The company began sponsoring for Slingbox—a device that lets consumers watch live cable, satellite and DVR-recorded TV programs on Web-enabled computers, PDAs and mobile phones—two years ago.

Those deals focused on pro sports teams and collegiate sports properties, and were primarily located in the tech-savvy Bay Area. They include the MLB San Francisco Giants, NFL San Francisco 49ers—including title of the press box at Candlestick Park—University of California-Berkeley athletics, and the MLB New York Mets.

Sling Media is adjusting its portfolio in the wake of last year’s $380 million Slingbox and ACIS continued on page 6
**Assertions**

Accenture is not renewing its title sponsorship of the Chicago Triathlon, but is interested in maintaining a lower level position, most likely as “official technology provider,” continuing to supply its popular alert system that allows friends and families to track their favorite participants, among other benefits. Don’t be surprised if the company makes the same decision soon around its title of San Francisco’s Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon. In fact, look for other naming rights or high level sponsors to explore the option of downgrading. More than outright dropping of existing deals, downsizing may be one of the main effects the current economic crisis will have on sponsorship in the short-to-mid term. In good times, a company may be willing to spend the extra dollars for the presumed prestige of having its name on an event or venue, but smart sponsors recognize that most of their returns are earned around activation—and leveraging rarely hinges on title status. Given that fact, the fees many properties charge for naming rights are disproportionate to the benefits, particularly for well-established brands that don’t need exposure and sponsors targeting niche markets.

Other likely impacts of the financial, credit and housing crises and the overall economic malaise will be a reduction in activation spending (because it is easier to cut those budgets than completely exit sponsorship agreements) and a lengthening of the time it takes to get deals negotiated and approved.

A change made by Congress to the tax code could require a little more work from the folks responsible for sponsorship at nonprofit organizations. The change does not effect the regulations regarding sponsorship revenue. Rather, it relates to potential penalties imposed on those who prepare tax returns. The upshot for preparers: The IRS will now hold them more responsible for the positions taken in tax filings, including determinations of whether specific revenue streams are taxable as unrelated business income. The upshot for nonprofit sponsorship personnel: Your preparers will be paying closer attention to how your organizations determine whether their sponsorship revenue falls under safe harbor or cannot be excluded from UBIT. So don’t be surprised when they start asking to see sponsorship contracts, and be prepared to make those documents available and to answer questions about specific benefits and valuations.

Tire giant Continental is crediting its sponsorship of FIFA World Cup and UEFA soccer with helping the company become the global market leader in passenger tires for the first time in its history, earning a 25 percent market share as of the beginning of the year. Continental’s primary objective for the 2010 World Cup is more focused: “become one of the top three premium replacement tire brands in the growth regions of Eastern Europe, Russia, Asia and South America.” Secondary goals are: “Charge the image of the… brand with even greater emotion through its association with… football; set the brand apart from its competitors through product exclusivity; and forge close ties between football sponsorship and business customer relations.” The company showcases its soccer sponsorship activities at ContiSoccerWorld.com.

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**Sell Smarter continued from page 1**

for doing so to targeted, cost-effective opportunities that offer flexibility, service and the best prospects for earning return.

With that in mind, IEG SR spoke with veteran sponsorship sellers regarding strategies for navigating through turbulent economic times.

Consider alternative deal structures. To accommodate the needs of cash-strapped sponsors, properties should consider pay-for-performance and other deal constructs that don’t rely on an up-front, all-cash rights payment (IEG SR, Aug. 6, 2007).

“Properties must be receptive to them; the choice may be between an alternative deal structure or no deal at all,” said Kathy Emery, president of sales agency The Sponsor Placement Co.

Emery—whose firm represents Detroit’s Comerica Cityfest, Milwaukee’s Festa! Italiana presented by U.S. Cellular, Taste of Minnesota and other civic festivals—this year crafted pay-for-performance deals with seven sponsors, up from one two years ago.

It is in a property’s best interest to understand such deals and be willing to bring them to the table at the appropriate time, she said.

“If a sponsor is hedging, it really becomes the responsibility of the property to know about these types of deals and bring them up. If the sponsor brings it up, the property is out of the driver’s seat.”

When structuring agreements that have lower up-front fees and back-end payments based on property performance, Emery recommends that properties stay away from deals based on a sponsor’s return on investment in favor of attendance numbers and other metrics that a property holds some control over.

In addition to performance incentives, other nontraditional deal structures include:

- Revised payment schedules. The total fee for a multiyear deal can be allocated so the sponsor pays a lower amount in the first year of a multiyear contract and higher fees in years two and three.
- Promotional commitments. Sponsor pays part or all of a sponsorship fee through ad buys and other marketing programs that promote the property.
- Fundraising partnerships. Sponsor pays by conducting a fundraising program through a cause marketing effort or employee giving campaign.
- Escrow accounts. Sponsor places fee in an escrow account to ensure the property provides all deliverables. Funds are released once the property has met its contractual obligations. Similarly, a sponsor could require a property to post a performance bond that would reimburse the sponsor if established conditions were not met.

Stick with winners. Although the effects of the credit freeze and other current economic fallout are widespread, some industries are better able to stay the course.

In addition to recession-resistant categories, properties should target those industries that recently have shown increased interest in sponsorship. They include those facing heightened competitive pressure, such as cable providers (IEG SR, Sept. 22, 2008); hotels (IEG SR, May 19, 2008); and energy drinks (IEG SR, Feb. 18, 2008).

Properties would also be wise to prospect among utilities, a
category increasingly using sponsorship to promote alternative energy options; technology companies, which are using sponsorship to gain one-on-one marketing opportunities; tribal casinos, which are using sponsorship to build awareness and drive traffic; and packaged food companies and retailers, which are seeing sales rise as more consumers opt for home meal solutions.

Emphasize sponsor servicing. The need for properties to offer more than just a package of benefits is paramount in a challenging economy.

“Properties need to spend more time with their corporate partners, be more creative, and be willing to do some things that they might not have done before,” said Kyle Caddell, director of sponsor sales and services with the NFL Carolina Panthers.

“It’s not about cutting fees, but being more flexible; you almost have to be an unpaid employee for your partner,” he added.

The Panthers have added a handful of new sponsors this year, including Duke Energy Corp. and Hyundai Motor America.

Resist temptation to discount. Properties should avoid lowering fees, a strategy that can result in lost credibility.

“Properties need to stick to their guns,” said Joel Heath, president of Untraditional Marketing, producer of Vail, Colo.’s Teva Mountain Games. “It’s easy to bring an asking price down, but it’s hard to get it back up.

Additionally, “companies that you discount the most tend to require the most amount of work,” Heath said. “They don’t value the property in the first place, and they are looking to get in and get out.”

Make the case for multiyear deals. When there is a lack of confidence in the economy, sponsors tend to look for short-term versus long-term commitments. To overcome that challenge, Heath explains to sponsors that one-year deals are penny wise but pound foolish, particularly because they often can’t be leveraged properly.

“Especially when you are looking at packaged goods companies, which need a good 18 months to get an activation program on the floor of a retail account,” Heath noted.

Heath offers potential sponsors a checklist that outlines the inefficiency of one-year deals, including the fact that negotiating renewal can eat up time better spent elsewhere.

Diversify offerings. All Access Entertainment, producer of Los Angeles’ AT&T Fiesta Broadway presented by State Farm, is branching out beyond the Latino festival to represent other properties for sponsorship sales for the first time.

The company has partnered with three mass-market events and is negotiating representation with 12 others, said Peter Bellas, senior vice president of sales and marketing.

Events currently under contract include next month’s Winterfest, which features a public concert by Disney Channel star Demi Lovato and occurs prior to L.A.’s Hollywood Santa Parade.

“We’re expanding and diversifying,” Bellas said. “This is a way to introduce my sponsors to new opportunities, or go after new sponsors that may not get involved with Fiesta Broadway.”

The strategy also allows the company to target general marketing dollars, a funding source that is significantly larger than Hispanic or other ethnic marketing budgets, he added.

SOURCES

Carolina Panthers, Tel: 704/358-7000
All Access Entertainment, Tel: 310/914-0015
The Sponsor Placement Co., Tel: 800/334-1821
Untraditional Marketing, Tel: 970/926-4799

IEG SR Online

Spending On U.S. Marathons And Other Running Events To Total $84 Million In ’08

North American-based companies will spend an estimated $84 million to sponsor marathons, triathlons, 10Ks and other running events this year, up 8.4 percent from $77.5 million in ’07.

While the increase is down from last year’s 14 percent increase, the affluent demographics of runners and triathletes continue to attract new players to the sport.

For example, next month’s ING New York City Marathon brought on four new corporate partners this year, including Diamond Foods, Inc.’s Emerald Nuts, The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co.’s The Food Emporium and hearing aid manufacturer Widex USA, Inc.

The Food Emporium this month will kick off a three-week in-store promotion with Asics Corp., Emerald and other sponsors that offers shoes and other sponsor prizes. The retailer will tout the promo in a circular and through displays.

In addition to its location and status as one of the world’s major marathons, the New York City Marathon credits its sponsorship success in part to positioning itself as a sports and entertainment event offering proprietary programming that sponsors can claim ownership to.

“We have broadened the scope of the marathon with additional assets. That lets us give sponsors elements of the weekend,” said Mary Wittenberg, president and CEO of New York Road Runners and race director for the marathon.

For example, Wittenberg points to Continental Airlines, Inc.’s title of the International Friendship Run.

Other recent deals in the marathon space include CIGNA Corp.’s presenting sponsorship of Walt Disney World Marathon; Foot Locker, Inc. presenting Disney’s Princess Half Marathon Weekend on behalf of its Lady Foot Locker retail brand; and BP plc’s sponsorship of Washington, D.C.’s Marine Corps Marathon.

Those deals follow partnerships signed earlier this year between Nissan North America, Inc. and USA Track & Field and 10 endurance events.

For more information on sponsorship activity in running, including a one-on-one interview with Wittenberg, please visit the Marathon Roundup section of IEGSR.com’s Subscribers Only area.
Raising The Bar On Sponsorship Fulfillment Reports continued from page 1

To be sure, properly crafted fulfillment reports are highly valued by sponsors in both good times and bad. According to the 2008 IEG/Performance Research Sponsorship Decision-makers Survey, post-event reports are ranked as the most important service provided by a property, valued more highly than research on sponsor recall and loyalty, among other services.

Connect The Dots

Where once a simple summary of what took place at an event and a review of media coverage may have sufficed as a sponsorship report, sponsors say they now need more information that demonstrates how the sponsorship helped meet their objectives.

“Properties can add value to their partnerships by providing recap reports that are less about what the organization accomplished and more about what it did to help a company meet their sponsorship objectives,” said Constance Mosher, sponsorships and events manager for Wells Fargo & Co.’s Minnesota marketing territory.

“A property must do a good job understanding a sponsor’s objectives at the beginning of the relationship, and then tie that back to the recap report.”

One way to ensure delivery of valuable data is to include information that only the property has, such as response rates to a sponsor-related email promotion sent out to the organization’s database.

“A property might not share the database with us, and we understand that, but it’s very helpful if it can share click-through rates, or how our campaign performs versus other campaigns,” said Tim McGhee, director of corporate sponsorships with AT&T, Inc. “That allows us to determine the effectiveness of the program.”

AT&T and other sponsors see a great need for properties to put documentation in context. For example, in addition to reporting and showing that a sponsor received four signs, a report should include information on the number of people exposed to the signs and how that number compared to other available exposure opportunities.

Asked where else AT&T sees room for improvement in fulfillment reports, McGhee pointed to the level of detail.

“Tell us more rather than less. We may not go through an entire 100-page report the first time through, but we will go back and review the document when we are planning for our next cycle.”

Another important piece of advice many sponsors have for properties: play the role of a consultant and provide objective analysis of the sponsor’s involvement. This positions the property as a strategic partner and not just a recipient of funding.

Such an analysis should include a candid review of the sponsor’s and property’s performance and recommendations on how the sponsor can improve its return by tweaking activation efforts, or adding or subtracting benefits.

When reviewing reports, McGhee said he looks for insights from the sponsored organizations based on historical perspective, their work with other sponsors, and additional knowledge they have regarding their audience and other stakeholders.

“We always come up with our own key learnings, but it’s very helpful when a property gives us its take,” he said.

To be viewed as a trusted advisor, properties must be honest about their own shortcomings, including explaining what happened and offering ideas on how to overcome those challenges going forward.

Sometimes, a factual explanation is all that is necessary. “Attendance may be low due to weather or something else,” McGhee said. “People realize some things will be outside the property’s control—you don’t have to make excuses.”

Properties also can use reports to demonstrate where and how they went beyond the terms of a contract, as long as it is done in an objective manner.

“Fulfillment reports clearly show what we delivered versus what we promised, and how we over-delivered,” said Stacey Halpin, sponsorship manager with West Palm Beach, Fla.’s SunFest music festival.

Potential Impact Of Quality Reports

Beyond documenting results for a property’s sponsorship contact, fulfillment reports serve additional and important purposes.

Most importantly, rightsholders use their recaps as a natural launching point for renewal discussions.

In addition, the documentation is an important tool to share with others at the sponsoring company, from senior-level executives to those responsible for on-the-ground execution to personnel who are unfamiliar or not directly involved with the sponsorship.

“There are so many changes in leadership at companies right now,” Halpin noted. “I can use post-event fulfillment reports to show them what my event is all about and what they have gotten out of it.”

Emery shares post-event reports with her primary contacts, as well as with local company reps that also are involved in the sponsorship. “It helps to get everyone’s buy-in,” she said.

It is important that a report contain an executive summary so company execs and staff can easily see the key takeaways without combing through pages of data.

Typically, executive summaries are one to two pages that highlight key deliverables and include a short interpretation of the data, as well as recommendations on improving the partnership.

Outside of the companies they are intended for, fulfillment reports—scrubbed of any proprietary or sensitive information—also can show potential sponsors what they can expect in terms of benefits and servicing.

“It’s an excellent sales tool. It gives someone a clear indicator of what they will receive as one of our sponsors,” Halpin said.

Gather Information Continuously

To ensure all necessary information is compiled, properties should establish a system to collect data.

That often entails enlisting the help of the organization’s PR, IT and other departments that come in contact with sponsorship. For example, a property’s PR staff may be responsible for tracking media exposure, while the IT department will be able to report the number of visitors to a sponsor-related area of the property’s Web site.

SunFest uses an internal checklist that outlines all of the benefits promised to each sponsor to make sure it highlights and recaps all of the promised deliverables.

The festival enlists the aid of volunteer photographers to capture
visuals of each sponsor’s on-site presence. “When I’m putting together a post-event report for Washington Mutual, I know that I’ll have pictures of their stage and their meet-and-greet,” Halpin said.

While compiling data can be a challenge for any property, it is compounded for those that encompass multiple locations or involve affiliated organizations such as local chapters of a national cause. In those cases, the person responsible for servicing sponsors should develop an Intranet or other turnkey system so that its local representatives can easily gather and report information.

Reports tied to events should be delivered within 30 to 45 days after the event while the sponsorship is still top of mind with the sponsor.

Whether or not the report is delivered personally, the property should schedule a meeting or phone call to discuss the findings and next steps, which could include renewal if the sponsor’s contract is ending, or changes to the program if it is mid term.

Format Options Multiply
While fulfillment reports started out as printed documents, technology has created new opportunities for producing them in the formats that will be most convenient and useful for individual sponsors.

“The days of three-ring binders are long gone; you can put information on a CD or a DVD, and it’s all there in one fell swoop,” said independent marketing consultant Doug Pirnie, a former IMG executive.

The majority of sponsors contacted by IEG SR were partial to electronic formats, due in large part to the ease in which the documents can be shared with colleagues.

“I prefer post-event reports electronically,” Mosher said. “Books are not easy to forward to management in other locations, and they tend to go on the shelf and stay there.”

One alternative is a Web site that sponsors can visit to receive their fulfillment information.

Michael Aisner, president of MDA Co., created a site—www.CyberBikeRecap.com—to capture Herbalife Ltd.’s results from its CyberBike activation program at the Amgen Tour of California cycling race.

Immediately after the event, CyberBike rep Aisner posts information, photos and video on the site documenting Herbalife’s use of the interactive attraction that lets attendees compete in a virtual race on stationary bikes. Content includes the goals of the program, attendance figures, media exposure and the involvement of Herbalife’s independent distributors.

Aisner created the site using a Mac laptop, iPhone and video camera. Apart from the hardware, his costs are $10 a year for the site and $100 a year for a shared computer server.

“Anyone could do what I did. It requires no technical skills of any depth, just attention to content, some of which you can write in advance,” he said.

Properties also have the option of using specialized fulfillment report software to produce their recaps, such as eBrandedSolutions, Inc.’s SponsorshipPRO+.

Although hard copies may no longer be the primary format for reports, a growing number of properties are using self-publishing services such as Apple Inc.’s iPhoto Print Products (IEG SR, May 19, 2008) to create supplemental leave-behinds.

IEG Advisory Services recommends the following approach to documenting fundamental elements of the sponsorship:

**Participant/attendee information.** In addition to attendance and demographic information, reports should include data collected through research. This can include lifestyle and product purchasing information, as well as awareness, and attitudes and loyalty toward sponsors.

**On-site exposure.** Photos of signage, display space, posters, billboards, scoreboards, T-shirts and other merchandise with sponsor ID, etc. The report also should include information on the number of samples, coupons and literature distributed by the property.

**Off-site exposure.** Document through photos, samples or reproductions your sponsor’s inclusion in collateral materials (brochures, schedules, etc.); online exposure via the event’s Web site, email blasts, etc.; and property-initiated or cosponsor promotions at retail outlets or other off-site locations.

**Media exposure.** Document media exposure for the property and the sponsor, including advertising and editorial coverage.

- **Print.** Provide all ads and articles in which the sponsor’s name or logo appears, along with circulation figures and advertising rate card values.
- **TV.** Detail the dates and times of all airings; live or tape-delayed programming; purchased or traded advertising; public service announcements; talk shows/interviews; and news coverage. Include ratings for all broadcasts along with rate card values. Video showing ads and coverage should be included with the report.
- **Radio.** Obtain a notarized letter or audited report from the station documenting the number of ads, promotional spots and on-air mentions promoting the property and sponsor. Where possible, properties should try to negotiate the documentation into their contract with the station. All mentions of the property, whether purchased or bartered, should be measured against the station’s rate card to give the sponsor an idea of the total value of the radio exposure received.

**Additional outcomes.** This section should include ancillary information that may not be directly related to the sponsorship. It can include donations made to the property’s charitable beneficiary; participation by a corporate partner’s employees in the event; and economic impact studies.

For example, venue owner and event producer Newport Harbor Corp. last year began using iPhoto to create custom books for two major sponsors. The property uses the coffee table-quality books to supplement its post-event reports and stay top of mind among sponsors.

**SOURCES**

AT&T Inc., Tel: 210/821-4105
Wells Fargo & Co., Tel: 866/878-5865
Carolina Panthers, Tel: 704/358-7000
SunFest, Tel: 561/659-5980
Doug Pirnie Consulting, Tel: 917/847-1992
MDA Co., Tel: 303/444-5501
The Sponsor Placement Co., Tel: 800/334-1821
Slingbox and ACIS continued from page 1

acquisition by the owner of Dish Network.

“We’re entering a new phase of our growth,” said Jason Krikorian, Sling Media’s executive vice president and co-founder, who notes Dish Network will soon start offering Sling Media’s mobile TV technology through its set-top boxes.

“Dish is a national offering, and we’re looking at the national reach of our marketing mix,” he said.

The ACIS deal also reflects a new market beyond the upscale 25-to-55-year-olds Sling Media has targeted: college students.

“Students are almost always connected and they are consistently online,” Krikorian said.

“Sponsorship provides a method to demonstrate our product to our target demographic,” he added. “We have a product that is interesting in concept, and when people hear about it they are intrigued. This is an opportunity to introduce our product in a personable way.”

Slingbox will use ACIS—which pays a fee to 200 colleges and universities for access to intramural programs—to build its brand at all 200 schools, in addition to offering product demonstrations on 100 of the campuses. The demos are hosted by some of the 300 students hired each year by ACIS.

“One of the things that attracted me to ACIS was its formal relationship with the universities and its ability to hire influencers,” Krikorian said. “It allows us to take some risk out of the picture, because finding the right people to execute is difficult.”

ACIS also will distribute discount coupons to students for product purchases through SlingMedia.com. In addition, Sling Media will conduct a sweepstakes dangling a trip to the Allstate Sugar Bowl—which takes place in New Orleans the same week as the ACIS Football championship—a promotion it will use to generate a database for follow-up marketing.

Sling Media will determine success by measuring changes in brand awareness and the number of product demonstrations and coupon redemptions, said Krikorian, noting that tracking overall sales is a challenge.

“It’s very possible someone may see the product, learn about it and purchase it. We can’t completely track that, but to a large degree we can get some sense of the success of the promotion through coupon codes.”

In addition to e-commerce through its Web site, Sling Media sells its Slingbox and SlingCatcher products through Best Buy Co., Circuit City Stores, Inc. and other consumer electronics retailers.

Sling Media uses San Francisco-based Echo Marketing to oversee sponsorship execution. It signed a one-year deal with ACIS with an option to renew for two more years.

Sling Media replaces General Motors Corp.’s Pontiac Division, which had titled ACIS’S football and basketball programs since early ’06, and which didn’t renew due to budget cuts, said ACIS president and CEO Ian Leopold.

ACIS Revenue Up 35 Percent

In addition to Sling Media, ACIS has signed first-time partnerships with two other corporate partners.

Sara Lee Corp.’s Ball Park Franks has become one of three presenting sponsors of Slingbox ACIS Football—and Twinlab Corp.’s eponymous sports nutrition products is a new supporting sponsor.

Ball Park, which will sample 30,000 hot dogs, is activating with the Ball Park Punt, Pass & Kick Team Challenge contest at 100 schools. The promotion offers a party with hog dogs and other food items to the campus team that can punt, pass and kick with the highest accuracy.

Twinlab is using the sponsorship to promote its nutritional supplements. The company will sample 50,000 units of 100% Whey Protein Fuel and 50,000 units of Ripped Fuel 5X.

**Research Investment Pays Off**

As it has for the past six years, ACIS includes market research on behalf of its corporate partners as a benefit in its sponsorship packages.

For an annual cost in the neighborhood of $100,000, the property gains a critical sales and renewal tool, as well as a bit of insurance against sponsor personnel turnover.

“The beautiful thing about research is that an individual may leave an organization, but the research stays and gets more people involved, including finance and research guys,” Leopold said.

ACIS provides each sponsor the opportunity to include six to eight questions in its surveys. Sponsors typically seek information regarding product familiarity, usage, perceptions, intent to purchase, and awareness and usage of competitive products (see table).

ACIS representatives conduct intercept surveys in or around each school’s intramural sports facilities. They also survey students on campuses that don’t have an ACIS affiliation to provide a control group against which to measure. Both test and control surveys are conducted before and after intramural seasons.

Orem, Utah-based True Vision Research tabulates and analyzes the completed surveys.

In addition to providing a measurement tool to sponsors, ACIS also uses research on product consumption among college students to identify prospective sponsor categories and secure conversations with potential sponsors, Leopold said. “It helps open the door to meetings that we may not otherwise get.”

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**PURCHASE INTENT RESULTS ACHIEVED BY ACIS SPONSORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand/Company</th>
<th>Sponsored Program</th>
<th>Purchase Intent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Xbox 360 Microsoft Corp.</td>
<td>ACIS Football ’07</td>
<td>92 percent higher than non-ACIS schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinactin Schering-Plough Corp.</td>
<td>ACIS Basketball ’08</td>
<td>78 percent higher than non-ACIS schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontiac General Motors Corp.</td>
<td>ACIS Football ’07</td>
<td>175 percent higher than non-ACIS schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Bond Chattem, Inc.</td>
<td>ACIS Football ’07</td>
<td>180 percent higher than non-ACIS schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philips Norelco 7000 Series</td>
<td>ACIS Football ’07</td>
<td>200 percent higher than non-ACIS schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The table above shows the purchase intent results achieved by ACIS sponsors.*
Lens Maker Eyes More Sports Sponsorships

Having just taken the wraps off of multimillion-dollar sponsorships with the PGA Tour and title of one of its stops, Transitions Optical, Inc. is mulling additional ties with running and cycling events in the U.S. and abroad.

The joint venture between PPG Industries, Inc. and France’s Essilor Int’l SA is using sponsorship to promote its eponymous line of photochromic eyeglass lenses. The lenses are clear indoors and at night, and automatically darken outdoors in proportion to the intensity of UV light.

“Golf will not be the only thing we do to get our message out,” said Dave Cole, general manager for Americas, Australia and New Zealand. “We see opportunities for our entry into areas of performance sunwear products, whether it’s sports performance or driving performance.”

In addition to its flagship lenses, the company has partnerships to market Drivewear Activated by Transitions and Oakley Activated by Transitions glasses with Younger Optics, Inc. and Oakley, Inc., respectively.

The company may develop lenses that are customized to the needs of specific sports activities, Cole said at a press conference announcing the PGA Tour sponsorship in late August. “Our capabilities are far, far greater than the products that you see just as our core product today,” he said.

Unlike traditional advertising, sponsorship provides a targeted marketing platform to explain the lenses and highlight the relationship between healthy vision and sports performance, Cole said.

“Thirty seconds is not long enough to talk about the product and what it delivers.”

Transitions kicked off its sports marketing push earlier this year as part of a larger campaign designed to raise consumer awareness of the importance of healthy vision. The program includes national TV and print ads, the relaunch of the company’s Web site and a presence on YouTube, Facebook and other social networking sites.

Transitions announced in June that it was signing a four-year deal to title the former PODS Championship PGA Tour stop in Palm Harbor, Fla. The first Transitions Championship For Healthy Sight takes place next March.

The company grew its golf involvement two months later with a four-year global marketing partnership with the PGA Tour, a tie that confers official eyewear status of the PGA Tour, Champions Tour and Nationwide Tour.

Transitions expanded to the tour sponsorship to gain a global marketing platform, Cole said, citing golf’s popularity in Japan, a key growth market for Transitions.

“The PGA Tour comes up at the top when you look at brand association within sports marketing,” Cole said. “It is highly regarded and respected. It was just too perfect a fit to pass on.”

The company also is negotiating endorsement deals with several PGA Tour pros, he added.

Transitions is activating the tour partnership with an Improve Your Vision, Improve Your Game educational marketing campaign conducted via point-of-sale materials and marketing collateral available at retailers, eyecare professional offices and golf pro shops.

The company also is promoting the campaign through Transitions.com, where consumers can download a branded widget that offers PGA Tour content, golf tips and advice from experts in sports vision training.

The Web site also hosts a sweepstakes offering a weekend getaway for two at Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club, home to the Transitions Championship.

On the business-to-business front, the company plans to leverage the Transitions Championship through a golf-related trade program offering incentives for eyecare professionals for recommending selling Transitions products.

Transitions also will host current and potential retail customers at the event’s pro-am, Cole said, and may leverage the tournament through a ticket sweepstakes with a national retailer. The company sells through LensCrafters, Inc; Pearle Vision, Inc. and other chain and independent retailers.

The company will track changes in brand awareness and incremental sales to determine success, said Cole, who signs off on sponsorships.

Transitions, which claims 17 percent of the photochromic lens market, targets 35-to-64-year-olds for its $75 to $90 lenses.

Transitions worked with IMG to identify and negotiate the tournament and tour sponsorships.

SOURCES

Transitions Optical, Inc., Tel: 727/545-0400
Armour-Eckrich Takes Bigger Sponsorship Bite

In the two years since parent Smithfield Foods, Inc. purchased Armour, Eckrich and other brands from ConAgra Foods, Inc., Armour-Eckrich Meats LLC has steadily increased its use of sponsorship to reintroduce the brands to consumers.

The company this year has signed new deals with the NBA Detroit Pistons and NHL St. Louis Blues, and last month inked an endorsement deal with ABC/ESPN college football analyst Kirk Herbstreit.

Those ties add to a year-old partnership with the NFL Chicago Bears and a two-year-old sponsorship of college athletics’ Southeastern Conference.

Armour-Eckrich is using sports marketing to rejuvenate its primary brands and gain marketing platforms for retail promotions.

“These brands have had a variety of owners over the years, and they have historically been marketed to the trade, not the consumer,” said Mike Paribello, Armour-Eckrich’s director of marketing. “What you’ll see in the future is our fight to become more of a consumercentric organization.”

The company uses its affiliations with pro teams primarily to gain on-site sales, while its links to college football are designed to drive sales via in-store promotions.

Sports sponsorship is a natural due to the association between tailgating, spectating and processed meat products, Paribello said.

In addition to hot dogs, the company markets lunchmeat, bacon, smoked sausage and other products under the Armour and Eckrich brands. The brands are sold in the Midwest—their core market—as well as in Texas and the southeastern U.S.

Armour-Eckrich also markets other national and regional brands, including LunchMakers, Healthy Ones, Margherita, Mayrose and Schickhaus.

Program Builds From Regional Roots

Armour-Eckrich kicked off its sponsorship campaign in ’06 with a tie to the Southeastern Conference on behalf of Eckrich.

The company aligned with the conference to build its presence in the Southeast after identifying the region as an expansion market, Paribello said.

Armour-Eckrich uses the tie to build relations with key trade accounts through SEC-themed promotions.

“We looked at some key retailers that we wanted to grow with, including Kroger, Bi-Lo and Winn-Dixie, and we began to think how we could develop programs that would bring some excitement to retailers and consumers,” Paribello said.

An in-store and online promotion dangles tickets to the SEC football championship game, free groceries for a year and other prizes.

Consumers can register for the promotion through EckrichFootball.com; the company uses the site to collect email addresses and info on purchasing habits. Armour-Eckrich also runs account-specific promotions.

The company also connects the sponsorship to its two-year old alignment with the American Tailgaters Assn., a deal it struck to gain sampling opportunities through the organization’s mobile marketing program. The ATA promotes tailgating and tailgate-specific products through events held at retail locations and sports events, including eight SEC football games.

“We were looking for retailtainment events that could go to our accounts and have product demonstrations. The ATA had a sponsorship opportunity, and we decided to join them,” Peribello said.

In addition, the ATA’s Trust the Taste tour is tied into Smithfield Foods’ title of a Team Rensi Motorsports’ NASCAR Nationwide Series entry. The tour has featured appearances by Rensi driver Bobby Hamilton Jr., as well as a race car simulator and NASCAR ticket giveaways.

Smithfield recently announced it will end its four-year-old relationship with Rensi at the end of the NASCAR season. The company had leveraged the tie by selling on-car inventory to its independent operating units, with the Eckrich brand having primary sponsorship at five races this year.

Armour-Eckrich is using its endorsement deal with Herbstreit—a former quarterback for The Ohio State University—to expand its college sports affiliation into the Midwest and to promote the family of Armour-Eckrich products.

The company will tout Herbstreit on product packaging, through an FSI drop beginning next month, and in an in-store sweeps dangling a trip to the Ultimate Eckrich Party at a game at the start of the ’09 college football season.

Armour-Eckrich’s partnerships with the Bears, Pistons and Blues were signed by the company’s foodservice unit when existing vending deals with the teams’ concessionaires came up for bid.

While the deals include signage and other standard sponsorship benefits, the company does not activate the ties, Peribello said. However, that may change, he added, noting some teams have sponsorships with Armour-Eckrich retail partners.

“We’re in the midst of understanding the best ways to leverage these programs.”