What Digital can do for SPONSORSHIPS

The television medium has, until recently, offered the greatest ROI for Sponsors. Because of the brand’s mass visibility during a rugby game, for example, Sponsors get the equivalent of forty 30-second TVCs shroud across screens to a riveted audience - your brand will be associated with any sports highs. But people don’t source their information from television screens as much as they did five minutes ago – let alone five years ago. The rate at which technology is shifting is staggering. While penetration for digital may be slower on the uptake locally compared with the rest of the world in terms of numbers, this medium is going to forever change the way Sponsors leverage brand-awareness. Globally. Its reach is far greater than TV for most events. It can go anywhere on the net for a fraction of the price of TV, both in production costs, as well as advertising costs.

Digital Media

Digital media allows for an advanced, enhanced experience for the sports fanatic. With content on websites, mobi sites and social media, Marius van Rensburg can follow the Boks’ performance in realtime even in Hong Kong. And you are never out of reach of a Sponsor’s banner. Digital allows fans to view live action, get real-time results and scores, event schedules, review highlights and book tickets – all the while, brought to them by ‘x’ brand.

In an article titled Consumers Prefer Online Sponsorship to Banner Ads posted by the US-based Performance Research Experience, 500 respondents found sponsors in the digital realm to be more ‘trustworthy’ (28% to 15%); ‘credible’ (28% to 16%); ‘in tune with (their) interests’ (32% to 17%), and ‘likely to enhance (their) site experience’ (33% to 17%) than advertisers. More significantly, 41% said they were more likely to consider purchasing a sponsor’s product or service, compared to 23% for advertisers.¹

‘Web users both recognise and appreciate the difference between online advertisements and sponsorships’. Recognition and appreciation are surely only worth anything when browsing turns to buying, right? Right. Figures show that some digital clients see up to 25% of their viewers initiating engagement with vidgets, while others report that viewers who engaged with vidgets watched on average three times more. This is the kernel of your online community, built on social media platforms around the love of a common sport. They then interact with each other around your brand via Facebook and Twitter, for example, and thus the closer you are to making bank.

Playing a role in what goes where

Whether our digital turn-on is based on Freakonomics or the innovation of the medium, what you can do with your handheld device doesn’t need further explanation. Whether the content is created by a production team or driven by the audience itself, it guarantees a far more palatable experience. Roaming cameras offer perfect plug-in sponsorship opportunities for android or smartphone corporations, offering endless opportunities for big brands looking to affiliate with the sport. The digital realm then turns searches by people at home into audiences that engage through RSS feeds, Video on Demand (VOD) highlights, live chats and advertising- and marketing-sponsored widgets. Moreover, the production opportunities are massive; the most sophisticated and advanced broadcasting equipment is brought down to the size of a cellphone, and a camera to the size of a thumb nail.

How much can I have?

Coverage depends on the client’s budget. Within the online realm, Sponsors can choose mobi or webpage real estate based on their needs, target-audience and the extent of coverage and impact aimed for – all the while putting their brand in direct line of sight with their digital audience. From naming rights and advertising vidgets that overlay on live VOD, to fixed sponsor messaging, and from permanent banners and portal take-over to viral wave generators and online competitions, the scope of possibilities within a screen the size of an iPad (or smaller in the case of mobi) is fuelled by the browser’s keenness to always see more. Steve Jobs says that innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower. Whichever you choose to be – get involved. There’s no doubt about how innovation influences everything we do. The playground for Sponsors just got a whole lot bigger and all the cool kids are coming to play!