

Migala **THE REPORT**

Overdelivery: Understand simple tactics to consistently add value for sponsors

Underpromise. Overdeliver.

Like a drill sergeant barking out instructions, property executives are trained to adhere to these concepts like some sort of code. More than likely, however, their efforts fall on deaf ears of the sponsor because the client defines overdelivery differently than the property does.

The intention of this Report is to generate a discussion on overdelivery from the sponsor and agency perspective in order to help provide properties with insights into better servicing their sponsors, that will deliver benefits that can be realized during renewal negotiations.

Defining moment

If one were to look up overdelivery in a dictionary they would be disappointed. *(It doesn't even show up on spell check for this article.)*

The word doesn't technically exist in the English language. The term, however, is very alive in sports marketers' daily vernacular even if there is no universal definition.

This inconsistency creates a communication gap among property and sponsor executives who see overdelivery differently.

Relay Sports & Event Marketing Vice President Jim Kenyon, who represents sports marketing accounts like McDonald's and U.S. Army, said that defining overdelivery is all about incremental value.

“Overdelivery based upon ROI is what we are looking for.”

“Overdelivery based upon return-on-investment (ROI) is what we are looking for,” Kenyon said. “If you can justify truthfully that your efforts are contributing to selling more product, then you have overdelivered in our eyes.”

The challenge for properties in overdelivering based on ROI is that it requires them to know their clients and essentially what makes their business tick and most importantly, their cash registers ring.

The demand for ROI is always increasing and with it, so should the desire to overdeliver.

To do list

While the desire is undoubtedly there for most property executives, the feeling from many sponsorship executives is that the property don't deliver based on the client's needs.

Kenyon advises property executives to challenge themselves with some simple questions to help them identify areas to overdeliver:

- What is my client's brand about?
- What is the property's brand about?
- What can we create in addition to things we are currently doing that can add value?

“This exercise shows me that the property has the creative thinking to understand our business and deliver

opportunities that are relevant,” Kenyon said.

Mass Mutual Sports Marketing Specialist Michelle Duff offers her own checklist of questions for properties looking to improve their overdelivery tactics based upon helping sponsors better understand the property and the ever-evolving tendencies of the brand and its fans:

- Are there internal measures I can share with sponsors?
- When doing my own research or collecting fan data, can additional questions or information be culled that will garner useful tidbits for my sponsors?
- Can I improve the value of the sponsorship with ideas that don’t have new fees?
- Are there any cause-marketing initiatives or other sport sponsorships/relationships that my sponsor can promote in my venue?
- Can two or more of my sponsors team up for a special promotion?

“Sometimes to me, what I consider to be basic things are very important,” Duff said.

For Duff, these basic things include properties asking themselves these questions as well as simply spending quality time with her and just checking in to see what is coming up for her staff in the near future.

“Believe me, it’s obvious when a property is trying and their actions are sincere,” Duff said. “Properties can overdeliver by focusing on basic business practices like returning phone calls quickly, amending bad situations and make goods promptly and communicating their new initiatives. The simple action of returning a phone call in a few hours can really go a long way. I know this seems very easy, but it makes an impression and is highly valued.”

“What I consider to be basic things are very important.”

In addition to these theories, the consensus among sponsor decision-makers is that “no-cost” overdelivery tactics are the most powerful. For the property, these opportunities obviously have value but are still inventory that can be offered on a partial basis to increase the sponsorship value.

For MassMutual, the company was a game sponsor for the University of Massachusetts men’s basketball team. The athletic department provided an additional 2,400 complimentary tickets that weren’t included in the contract for the company to give to its employees. The university created some goodwill and marketed itself to a potential new fan base, while also increasing vending sales for the night and gaining tremendous favor from our employees. At MassMutual, the gesture elevated the value of the sponsorship.

“It’s obvious when a property is trying and their actions are sincere.”

For U.S. Army, Kenyon pointed to an example from the military branch’s sponsorship of the Professional Bull Riders.

The PBR understood how important military pageantry is to the U.S. Army, so the property produced a series of two-minute video packages featured prior to every event that show soldiers and bull riders talking about pride, toughness and families.

The property prepared the video using their resources and asked the U.S. Army for raw footage.

“The PBR didn’t do it for any reason other that it was just the right thing to do,” Kenyon said. “That’s what every property should strive for when they overdeliver.”

To don’t list

Now that properties have an understanding of what to strive for with overdelivery, it is important to also know what not to do.

An agency executive, who spoke under the condition of anonymity, spoke of receiving a proof-of-performance report that included an index of overdelivered tactics and the property's perceived value of these offerings.

To the agency's surprise, this list also included opportunities that they passed on, like complimentary tickets.

"Overdelivery that doesn't drive ROI for the client isn't overdelivery because it simply justifies that property and not the client," Kenyon said. "Lots of properties go through the motions and have worthless inventory added on and call it overdelivery. It's really embarrassing for them because it shows they not only don't know our business, but don't even know their own and how to create value for us."

"It all comes down to how a marketing partner sees overdelivery impacting us for our benefit."

This self-serving method to overdelivery is consistently viewed as the leading pet-peeve of sponsorship executives.

"It all comes down to how a marketing partner sees overdelivery impacting us for our benefit," Duff said. "Not yours."

Related links:

<http://umassathletics.collegesports.com>

<http://www.massmutual.com>

<http://www.pbrnow.com>

<http://www.relayworldwide.com>

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Group Therapy: Both sides voice frustration in sponsor relations

The parallels between sponsorship relations and marriage are infinite.

In lieu of counseling, property and sponsorship executives share their thoughts on what frustrates them in marketing partnerships and suggest some tactics to improve relations.

Nancy Altenburg
Manager of Sponsorship Marketing
FedEx

"When FedEx signs on to sponsor a property, the expectation is that the sponsorship will be mutually beneficial to both parties; that by the end of the negotiations for contract benefits, both parties will understand what is important to the other; and that going forward, each will honor the priorities of the other. The most successful relationships between client and property occur when sponsors include the property owners in brainstorming discussions.

"A sponsor that does not activate their sponsorship... does not maximize the value for the sponsor or the property."

When their ideas are actively solicited and their expertise sought, the leveraging programs that result from an all-inclusive environment are generally much stronger because everyone has a stake in their success."

Alan Blount
Chief Advertising and Sponsorship Officer
BellSouth Corp.

"Most properties don't take the time to really understand our business and provide custom solutions. They focus on selling what they have versus selling a solution for a unique business opportunity or challenge. Most properties still sell on the brand-exposure value proposition, which is terribly out of date."

David Brown
Assistant Athletic Director for Marketing
The Ohio State University

"As much as we would like to have all our sponsorship deals the same, the reality is they are all different. The inability of a sponsor to effectively communicate the goals and objectives of their sponsorship creates a barrier in the development and execution of a successful sponsorship program. Also it can be very frustrating when we present a package that meets a sponsor's goals and objectives but the sponsor declines it for reasons not explained.

"Most properties don't take the time to really understand our business and provide custom solutions."

Additionally a sponsor that does not activate their sponsorship while maintaining exclusivity within a category does not maximize the value for the sponsor or the property."

Rick Dudley
President
Octagon

"Properties must appreciate that taking every last nickel off the table should not be the goal. Deliver rights, privileges, and assets to sponsors and treat them as partners."

Greg Gerlach
General Manager
Gopher Sports Properties

"I would have to say my frustrations lies with clients that either don't clearly define expectations at the time

of formalizing the relationship or clients that are not able to clearly define their expectations at that time because of changing leadership, strategy, budgets or branding. Thus, it becomes very challenging to fully deliver on the partnership during its term.”

Jason Pearl
Vice President of Sales
San Francisco Giants

“My biggest frustration is sponsors that do not activate. I think about 50 percent or more of the time working on the sponsorship should be spent on discovering tactics to leverage a sponsorship because a program cannot be as successful if it is not integrated.

“Deliver rights, privileges, and assets to sponsors and treat them as partners.”

For example, let’s say an auto manufacturer does a cap giveaway but fails to take it a step further. Rather than have automobiles displayed at the entrances to the park or a promotion to give away a year's lease on the latest models, the sponsor fails to help in the activation process. They just use the cap giveaway as a base promotion with no other creative elements integrated and potential value is not reached.”

Tom Whaley
Executive Vice President
The Goldklang Group

“Sponsors always default to attendance and reach. Yes, we can deliver great attendance, but that is not the real power of a sponsorship. This comes from having an open dialogue. The sponsors that recognize this are the ones that get the most value from it.”

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Better to Give – Better Giveaway Items to Drive Ticket Sales

Measuring the true “success” of a giveaway item is often subjective when looking at promotional nights in general. Each individual team has its own reasons and motivations to do what they want to do, when and how they want to do it. The common thread among successful promotions, however, is that there is a defined strategy and personal commitment that goes into every successful promotion- in addition to a killer giveaway item.

The aim of this Report is to detail that common thread, and provide properties with the tools to succeed in their next promotion.

Effectively Incorporating the Sponsor

Most teams must work together with their sponsors to formulate a mutually beneficial promotion and giveaway item with the fan’s interest at the front of their minds.

Northern League St. Paul Saints’ Executive Vice President Tom Whaley mentions there are three equally important objectives from the property’s perspective. Number one, create an atmosphere where fans enjoy their entire experience. Secondly, establish the team’s brand. Lastly, you need to make sure the sponsor is satisfied and having fun.

For two seasons, the St. Paul Saints have partnered with sponsor Select Comfort to create a game day experience where all three objectives are met, while also touting the world’s largest pillow fight. The first 1,000 fans through the gate receive special T-shirts, co-branded with St. Paul Saints and Select Comfort logos. Sleep is the theme of the night, and fans participate through promotions and trivia in the ballpark. Later in the night, the 1,000 fans wearing T-shirts are taken down onto the field and given pillows, courtesy of Select Comfort. Upon conclusion of the game, the pillow fight begins. “The noise is great,” said Whaley, “The sponsor chose to renew, we saw higher attendance, and the media coverage was there.”

“A giveaway when it’s used best is about something much more than an item in-hand.”

“Most giveaways are boring because some of these items are all about just plain branding,” Whaley said. “When you give someone a stake in it and establish an entire experience for them, that’s when it grows legs. A giveaway when it’s used best is about something much more than an item in-hand. That’s not necessarily always a quick fix to fill a park every night. It’s an investment in your brand and an experience for fans to look forward to- a reason for them to come back.”

Young at Heart

One team’s approach to promotional giveaways is threefold, bringing us back to our first experiences in sports as children, to our adult experiences in sports as executives and fans, and to our company’s bottom line. In the past five years specifically, the Philadelphia 76ers have seen an increase in overall attendance by 65 percent due largely in part to their creativity and innovation in their marketing and promotions.

Dave Coskey, who recently left the 76ers in a full-time capacity as President, remains a consultant for Comcast-Spectacor, the parent company for the team, and spearheaded the organization’s promotional efforts.

“Listen to your fans,” Coskey said. “What is hot right now? It will likely make a great giveaway. At the time we jumped in with beanie babies, you couldn’t buy them in stores. We saw fans line up at 8:00am, and subsequently we brought in 18,000 fans for the game.”

Another important component is children. The 76ers generally offer 5,000 giveaway items with their promotions, which is great when those are given

to children 12 and under- almost every child receives the item. "Children have a much purer view on everything. They're less affected by price point, as well as what they might see on the news," said Coskey. "If you can make a great first impression with a child, you've made an impression for a lifetime. We've all used our childrens' feedback, and chances are if you can get them to buy into it, everyone will. The most important thing is to groom the children into fans- if we can do that, that's our #1 goal. #2 is to sell tickets."

"Listen to your fans."

With a similar strategy to the Saints', the 76ers designed unique events surrounding every giveaway item to create an all-encompassing experience for the fan, not just an item in hand. Coskey mentioned a "pet-rock" promotion with Alexander Global Promotions. They adapted the pet rock to basketball, playing on the moniker "rock" for its casual reference to a basketball, and formatting the traditional pet to look like a basketball. They also customized and replaced the booklet inside the traditional package to be relevant to their team and the unique pet.

Before the giveaway took place, the promotions staff at the 76ers utilized their media partnerships through the team to promote the item and develop an aspect of exclusivity to it. After the promotion, the 76ers established a high value associated with that particular giveaway, though the actual cost incurred by the team was minimal.

For the future, Coskey recommends pursuing branded and licensed giveaways like Etch-A-Sketch and Hot Wheels that maximize the perceived value to cost.

The Sold-Out Team

For some teams who are luckier than others, pushing tickets is not a concern. The Class A Aberdeen Ironbirds have been sold out for all four of its seasons. Part of what has made the team so successful is their undivided attention to their fans. "Fans' needs predicate our needs," said Aaron Moszer, Assistant General Manager for the Ironbirds. "We need our fan's experience to be one they can't get anywhere else."

Another part of the team's success is due to the Ironbirds' top-of-the-mind attitude toward their season ticket holders.

With this in mind, the Ironbirds have implemented a plan where their season ticket holders receive coupons for every giveaway item that is distributed. This strategy ensures that every season ticket holder receives the giveaway items, and no one of their most loyal fans is left out of a promotional giveaway night. "These fans' participation through season tickets qualifies them for special treatment," said Moszer.

The Ironbirds also place an interesting twist on a traditional giveaway through an online vote on their promotional T-shirt design. Moszer said that through the team's Web site, fans are given the opportunity to vote from 12 different designs for their favorite tee shirt design. The fans' collective favorite design is selected to be printed on all of the team's promotional T-shirts distributed throughout the season. Moszer mentioned that the team regularly surveys their fans asking for feedback, including their comments and suggestions for giveaway items as part of that survey.

The Team's Responsibility

"The responsibility to generate ideas for promotional items ultimately lies with the team," said Dave Slyby, NFL Division Coordinator for Associate Premium. "You can create the greatest item in the world, but if no one knows you're giving it away, it won't drive ticket sales."

Associated Premium, prefers to be involved in the giveaway item selection process from the beginning. Based on product trends, feedback, time, and the client's budget, Associated Premium offers their help from the selection process going forward to minimize the team's stress, and to showcase the company's industry expertise. "The idea is to give the fan a perceived value that is great, with an affordably priced item," Slyby said. "The wider that gap, the better for the team."

Based on trends, some of the hot items with maximum impact that teams have been ordering lately include bobbleheads, action figures, fleece caps, and lunch boxes.

We are the Champions

When a team wins a championship, often times the ticket sales take care of themselves. But if that team invests some of their resources to reinforce the fans' support and participation, the accomplishment is predictably just a little bit sweeter for everyone. After the Florida Marlins won the World Series in 2003, they invited fans to help celebrate with them by offering them replica championship rings.

"The main goal was to commemorate the championship, and give fans an opportunity to be a part of it and share in the experience- the Marlins team received their rings that evening as well. The popularity was unprecedented," said Sean Flynn, Vice President of Marketing for the Marlins.

The Marlins gauged their success on the line of fans waiting outside the ballpark, and the sold-out attendance at that game.

The demand generated after the Marlins' ring promotion was so great, they decided to produce another, slightly modified replica championship ring for a second giveaway. This way, fans who didn't receive one the first time around were given another chance to receive a ring, and fans who were lucky enough to get the first one could come back and collect the second model.

"If no one knows you're giving it away, it won't drive ticket sales."

According to Flynn, the sponsor involved, Miccosukee Resort & Gaming, was thrilled. Although the championship ring giveaway idea was the Marlins', Flynn mentioned the sponsor's interest in producing the second ring, despite additional cost and involvement, based on popularity.

Flynn advises, though, that there are times when the teams need to take the lead.

"Occasionally, a sponsor will bring us a specific item- we'll take the request to heart, and see it through fruition," Flynn said. "However, if you consistently give sponsors that opportunity to decide, you risk setting expectations that cannot be met."

The ideal situation involves the team and the sponsor working together to create an interesting promotion and giveaway item tied to that, while putting themselves in the fan's position.

Related links:

<http://www.alexanderglobal.com>

<http://www.associatedpremium.com>

<http://www.marlins.mlb.com>

<http://www.nba.com/sixers>

<http://www.saintsbasedball.com>

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Honesty is the best policy: Learn how to earn trust (and long-term sales) with your season ticket holders

The foundation of any relationship is trust and the bond between a team and its season ticket holders is no different.

While there are benefits to trading short-term gains for an immediate sale, many teams are finding that being open and direct with season ticket holders is leading to greater sales figures and an increase in ticket usage among their best customers.

The aim of this Report is to showcase how teams are creating an open sales environment to generate more sales and foster a healthier season ticket holder base.

Not exactly roughin' it

The ticketing department of the Class AA Frisco Rough Riders received a dream e-mail from a business owner earlier this year. The message said they were interested in buying four full season tickets for the upcoming 2005 season.

While traditional sales people would turn into order takers, the Rough Riders' ticketing executive picked up the phone and asked the business owner a few questions about their reasoning for buying season tickets for a full season.

The first question was to see if the business owner knew how many games were in a typical month. He did not. The answer was 14.

The second question was to see how many employees the business owner has. The answer was 12.

"It shows that ticket buyers are probably not accustomed to being treated with openness and honesty."

The ticketing executive responded by suggesting that even though the business owner would like to spend more money with the team on tickets, it would be more appropriate for his needs to purchase a partial season ticket plan.

"The reasons for our open policy with incoming business is simple and rooted in honest communication," said Brent Stehlik, Vice President of Ticket Sales for the Rough Riders. "We want them to get full value for their tickets because we know they will come back in future years. Selfishly, if we took the money from these types of customers on a full-season basis, our usage numbers would drop. This is an exercise that proves honesty is the best policy and I'd strongly recommend it to any team."

Stehlik said that in addition to these reasons, a bond is created between the team and the ticket buyer.

"I think they are always surprised and thankful to know they are not being oversold," Stehlik said. "It shows that ticket buyers are probably not accustomed to being treated with openness and honesty."

Stehlik said that even with this exercise, the team still has a few customers that will buy the full season ticket package for a myriad of reasons. One customer spends upwards of \$75,000 for a suite that is only used for about 20 percent of the games.

"It's the customer's choice but it is nice to know that we discussed our concerns with him prior to purchasing the tickets," Stehlik said.

Gold stars

The Dallas Stars, like every National Hockey League team, faced a tough challenge in communication with their season ticket holders during the recent labor stoppage.

Rather than hiding behind the stoppage, the Stars embraced it as an opportunity to be direct in their communication with fans—even when it was difficult to disclose the hard facts.

“The communication with our fans has been very strong, and it was all built upon the only focus we could channel our energy on during the work stoppage and that was building trust with our fans and telling them everything we could,” said Colin Faulkner, Vice President of Ticket Sales for the Stars.

A post-work stoppage example of this openness was realized in a season ticket holder meeting with team President Jim Lites. Lites broke away from tradition of delaying an announcement and shared with season ticket holders what the playoff ticket pricing was going to be.

“Attitude relates to how honest you are and how a ticketing executive will deal with a situation.”

“It just shows to season ticket holders that we are open to them and there are no surprises and you can tell how much they appreciate it,” Faulkner said.

Faulkner said the realization has swayed the team’s hiring practices away from pursuing the shark tank philosophy of aggressive sales people and seeking people with the right attitudes.

“Attitude relates to how honest you are and how a ticketing executive will deal with a situation,” Faulkner said. “Usually the people that just want a job in sports don’t have as good of an attitude as the ones that want a career in sports. These are the people we want to hire because we are more confident they will make the right decision all the time and be honest with our customers.”

This renewed realization on honest communication with ticket buyers is one of the reasons the Stars commission structure is divided between individual and department goals.

“This set-up eliminates even the temptation of doing something shady or doing something the wrong way,” Faulkner said. “Building a solid trust, both internally and externally, is what we are driving towards.”

Related links:

<http://www.dallasstars.com>

<http://www.ridersbaseball.com>

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Book it: Sports marketers share their favorite books and resources that fuel their creativity

Jason Baum
Vice President of Partner Marketing & Innovation
The Washington Redskins

The book: "Blink"

Focusing on the process behind how people make split-second judgments, Blink is a fascinating study that helps to teach one how to make better judgments based on first impressions. Not a bad skill to improve.

Brooks Boyer
Vice President, Marketing
Chicago White Sox

The book: "Good to Great"

In my position, aren't I obligated to pick "Veeck as in Wreck"? Although I enjoyed "Veeck as in Wreck" and recommend it to anyone in the sports industry, my personal selection is "Good to Great" by Jim Collins. The book challenges any executive to ask himself/herself the following questions: Is your Organization truly great or just good? What is the individual doing, as well as the leadership, to help the Organization go from good to great? Just like baseball, business success boils down to executing a plan based on solid fundamentals. "Good to Great" gives real examples of people and Organizations committing to basic business fundamentals and succeeding. That's the goal.

Other "honorable mention" picks: "Catch!: A Fishmonger's Guide to Greatness" by Cyndi Crother and the crew of World Famous Pike Place Fish and "Purple Cow" by Seth Godin.

Bill Carter
Partner
Fuse Sports Marketing

The book: "On Bullshit"

The book I'm suggesting is the recently published by Princeton University Professor of Philosophy Emeritus Harry G. Frankfurt called, "On Bullshit." Frankfurt is one of the most respected moral philosophers in the world today and this is his 3rd book.

The book inspires me and I think will inspire others, because as the title indicates, it's a reminder that the straightforward truth is the most powerful message.

"One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit" writes Frankfurt. I feel that, at its worst, the marketing and advertising is not only an example of this, but actually a leading contributor! The book reminds me that our culture (and our industry) don't need to operate this way. Truth, directness, candor, can and should be the cornerstone of marketing.

This book makes you take stock of how much bullshit you are contributing into the world...and it's made me think twice about what kind of marketer I want to be.

Gregory D. Feasel
Senior Vice President Business Operations
Colorado Rockies

The Book: "Man's Search for Meaning"

It is not what happens to us in our lives that matters it is our response.

Richard A. Krezwick
President & CEO
TD Banknorth Garden

The books: "Winning" & "Brand Warfare"

Two contemporary books that are "must reads" include Jack Welch's "*Winning*" and David D'Allesandro's "*Brand Warfare*." (Both Boston Guys!) Welch's approach to business and leadership are well documented, but this book summarizes his management philosophies through an easy, step by step, approach. D'Allesandro may be lesser known, but created a powerful brand in John Hancock and documents his thoughts and opinions powerfully in his book. But, the most basic and still effective book to understand branding and customer behavior is an old \$10 paperback back titled "*POSITIONING: The Battle for Your Mind*" by Ries and Trout. I read this book early in my sales career and the basic philosophy sticks with me today. Your brand position needs to be unique, credible and based on a key benefit. This statement stands the test of time and translates well, from the sports franchise to Cocoa Krispies.

Dr. Darryl Lehnus
Director, Sports Sponsorship and Sales Program
Hankamer School of Business, Baylor University

The book: "Success is a Choice"

As an educator teaching university students how to succeed in the sports industry, I am always looking for books that will provide key principles for students as they enter the work force. Rick Pitino's book is easy reading and very applicable for life lessons. He provides excellent and interesting illustrations while still making a cogent emphasis that individuals can choose to be successful. This would be a great book for executives to require of all new hires.

Laurel Prieb
Executive Vice President
Major League Baseball

The book: "The Power of Positive Thinking"

I gave this some thought and conclude with a book I read often. It's an old book (1952 copyright) and its lessons very basic, but I find it to be as relevant today to professional and personal life (which often blend together) as when it was written: Norman Vincent Peale's "*The Power of Positive Thinking*."

A strong and practical spiritual faith is the underpinning of the book, applied to the daily challenges (and routines) we all maintain. Its seventeen chapters deal with the topics of believing in oneself, maintaining constant energy, expecting the best and achieving it, not believing in defeat, relaxing for easy power and getting people to like you.

I find the business lessons (running in tandem with personal growth) to be compelling and critical to developing an attitude promoting a positive consistency in one's approach to life.

Jon Spoelstra
President, Team Division
Mandalay Baseball Properties

There are plenty of books that have inspired me. Not in any order, here are some:

1. "***The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing***" by Al Ries and Jack Trout. I wish I would have written this book. It's so fundamentally sound. I reread it every three years or so.
2. "***Atlas Shrugged***" by Ayn Rand. This novel to me is about not being intimidated by different ideas. There's 1,100 pages reinforcing that.
3. "***Ogilvy on Advertising***" by David Ogilvy. For any marketer or copywriter, this is an essential read. I read this about every 10 years.
4. "***Advertising Secrets of the Written Word***" by Joe Sugarman. Joe might not have invented writing, but he sure perfected it. I think this is also essential to any marketer. This is part of a trilogy that includes *Marketing Secrets of a Mail Order Maverick*.
5. "***The Wizard of Ads***" by Roy Williams. While Joe Sugarman might be the king of the written word, Roy Williams is the king of the spoken word.
6. "***Marketing Outrageously***" by Jon Spoelstra. How could I not put my own book on this list?

Frank Supovitz
Senior Vice President, Events
National Football League

The book: "*Creativity: How to Catch Lightning in a Bottle*"

This is a great read from time to time as a refresher to help you rediscover your creative side. The author suggests that all of us are engaging in the act of being creative all of the time, often without knowing it. He describes techniques to help us get "unstuck" and to channel that creativity into productive thinking.

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Driving Revenue Generation with Purpose-Built Marketing

Beyond "Image-Built" Branding & Marketing

This month, National Football League teams are beginning their quests for the Super Bowl in Detroit and each week will bring us closer to arguably the biggest day of the year in the marketing world: Super Bowl Sunday.

As that day in early February nears, the anticipation of the on-field match-up is likely to be equaled or even eclipsed only by anticipation for the Super Bowl advertisements, making it a stage not only for a battle of the best teams in football, but also a battle of marketing campaigns.

Super Bowl Sunday is the closest thing we have to a National celebration of marketing because it offers a platform unlike any other for launching clever, innovative and out-of-the-box marketing campaigns. The event typically puts a spotlight on only one kind of marketing: "image-built marketing." Super Bowl ads have provided some of the most memorable marketing campaigns of our time but these image-driven campaigns are a luxury that brands simply cannot afford.

Image-built campaigns do drive revenue, but in order to do so a range of other promotions and product-benefit-focused campaigns that collectively translates those images into purchase decisions must complement them. These campaigns work very well for the large consumer brands we're all familiar with, because those companies have the extensive resources needed to turn high-concept branding ads into consumer purchases.

Marketing with a Purpose

Outrageous, imaginative and inventive sports marketing campaigns can be fun, but in a world of limited marketing budgets and high revenue demands, most sports organizations need to be more practical.

For sports organizations with limited resources, the most powerful way to drive revenue with branding is to use "purpose-built marketing." Purpose-built marketing is:

- **Clear** – Purpose-built branding and marketing has a clear set of financial objectives, a clear set of external audiences, a clear understanding of those audiences' needs and wants, and clear, consistent messages
- **Customized & Compelling** – Purpose-built branding and marketing understands those external constituencies (season ticket holder, individual ticket buyers, sponsors, etc.) and adapts its core messaging and content to communicate to each audience in a compelling, customized way
- Organized around a **Call to Action** – Purpose-built branding and marketing also always has an unmistakable call to action for each external audience, communicating why and how they should spend their dollars on your sports organization
- **Creative** – Purpose-built branding and marketing is also highly creative, both in terms of content, and in terms of how you reach the market. Visual and verbal creativity is critical for communicating your call to action in an attention-grabbing way. In addition, marketing creativity is critical for magnifying limited budgets by utilizing a range of traditional and non-traditional means to communicate with the market

Each of these qualities differentiates purpose-built marketing from the expensive image-building campaigns, making the former particularly effective as a tool for helping organizations with limited budgets achieve their revenue objectives.

Simply put, organizations with limited marketing resources need to focus on selling the steak first, rather

than focusing only on the “sizzle”, and purpose-built marketing provides a means of accomplishing that. Our collective secret weapon in this approach is that we in the sports industry are fortunate to be involved with products that have their own “sizzle” built right into the steak.

What Does Purpose-Built Marketing Look Like?

As sports marketers, we have some of the most entertaining and exciting products around. And while our marketing efforts need to leverage this excitement, they also need to be constructed in a way that provides a clear, compelling call to action for each external audience in our revenue plan. Simply stated, sports marketing expertise requires straddling a line of both inspiration and persuasion. This means a lot of things:

Logos need to be designed in a way that moves merchandise and translates well to all sizes and formats. The Dallas Cowboys star, while not necessarily original, is a simple, clean icon with infinite staying power. It has resulted in what may be the most successful sports brand of our lifetime.

While television spots can be emotional, they also need to spell out what your product can do for the consumer. Season tickets get you a seat into the best action in town, which means fun for your client, your employees and your personal acquaintances. Some of the most impactful sports marketing spots are well-edited, and expertly-produced action collages, defining a distinct call to action.

Corporate marketing collateral needs to clearly communicate ROI for the sponsor. Demographics, impressions, and testimonials may not seem sexy, but they are often just the ticket to secure your next corporate partner. And interspersed with game imagery, your corporate assets tell a visually exciting and impactful story.

Print advertisements need to inspire the reader to pick up the phone, go online, or head over to the box office. Don't overcrowd the format with multiple messages. Focus upon your offer and the benefits of acting now. Make it easy yet necessary for your customer to participate in your product.

5 Key Questions for Putting the Purpose Back in Your Marketing:

There are a number of key questions that a sports organization should ask in order to develop a purpose-built branding and marketing campaign that effectively drives revenue. Below are five of the most important questions to ask at the beginning of the process—whether you are building a campaign in support of an entire brand, or one simply for a small marketing initiative. For the sake of discussion, we address these questions below in the context of a logo redevelopment project.

- Start by asking the simple question: ***Who are we now?***
As if through the eyes of your customer, ask yourself where you are now versus where you want to be. Are you a classy, traditional organization, or do you offer edgy, hip products? Sometimes the review of your current situation requires an outsider's understanding of the market's perception of your product. For instance, a new logo is often best developed by utilizing focus groups to understand the perception of your organization.
- Next ask: ***Where do we want to go?***
Determine the core objectives of your project and campaign early. Establish where you want to and realistically can go, and maintain your grasp on this understanding throughout the process. A new team logo might be unveiled to demonstrate to the marketplace that a new youthful era has dawned for your team. In which case, your color scheme may change to represent a fresh new start.
- Once the objective is understood, we need to determine our target audience by asking: ***Who do we need to reach?***
By asking this simple question, all components of your purpose-built marketing initiative will begin to take shape. With finite resources, we need to focus on the audience for whom a successful message will resonate. A new logo, if properly executed, will speak to the sensibilities of your audience. If your audience is regional, develop a logo that incorporates regional elements as opposed to a single municipality.
- At this point, the project is moving forward and we need to determine: ***Where do we tell our story?***

Consider where your message will find its audience. This requires consideration of various mediums, events and platforms. With a logo, you need to work closely with constituencies such as the local media and your season ticket holders in order to keep them apprised of the new and exciting direction the organization is heading as represented by the pending logo launch. Develop a plan to maintain anticipation, as well as a newsworthy logo unveiling.

- After the branding initiative is underway, the payoff begins and every person in the organization needs to ask: ***What is my role?***
Revenue-driven branding is accomplished only through a disciplined, consistent and integrated effort by all departments and organizational entities. It is often amazing how inconsistent an organization's messages can be from one employee to the next. To make branding effective, every detail counts. Fax cover sheets, phone greetings, solicitation letters, etc. all need to reflect the campaign's message. With a new logo, this means out with all the old. Nothing that incorporates the old logo should slip through the cracks.

By taking this approach, your branding and marketing efforts will provide powerful support for your business plan without outrageous external spending. With honest analysis, detailed planning, strategic execution and comprehensive cooperation, one's brand can be taken to new heights. More importantly, revenues should see corresponding increases.

The best branding and marketing is not necessarily the most off-the-wall. The best campaigns are the ones that are carefully designed to directly drive revenue-generation and achieve your financial goals.

About the Authors:

Dave Smrek is the vice president of sale & marketing and Daniel Price is the president and creative director of Adrenalin, Inc., a full-service branding, marketing & design agency that specializes in supporting the brand-expansion goals of sports organizations.

Dave Smrek has more than 18 years of sports marketing experience, with a background spanning all sports revenue-generating activities. Smrek played an instrumental role in starting up (3) major league franchises; the Vancouver Grizzlies (NBA), Colorado Avalanche (NHL) and Phoenix Coyotes (NHL). Additionally, he launched two sports technology providers, specializing in web-based CRM and Advanced Ticketing and Sponsorship applications.

Daniel Price co-founded Adrenalin in 1997 after working for the Denver Nuggets and Colorado Avalanche as Creative Director for almost a decade, where he oversaw all internal creative solutions for the teams and arena.

Founded in 1997, Adrenalin develops, expands and differentiates the brands with a single goal – to drive revenue for sports organizations. Adrenalin's integrated brand expansion services include strategic planning, campaign development, logo design, collateral materials creation, advertising direction, multimedia design, sponsorships and other services.

Related links:

<http://www.goadrenalin.com>

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