

Does sponsorship really strengthen either brand?

 By Leigh Andrews

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Lots of space has been given to the topic of sponsorships lately, with brands throwing their name, weight and money behind all and sundry - sporting events in particular. But do they actually benefit the sponsor and the sponsored party alike?

MSC Sports is a fully integrated specialist agency focused on sport activations and sponsorships for big brands and events. Neil Jankelowitz, joint managing director of MSC Sports, was appointed to a corporate finance team at Appleton in 1991 and saw the launch of MSC Sports in 2001. By 2008, the time had come to sell off 50% of MSC Sports to Bidvest, with the launch of Bidvest Media another career highlight that year.

In 2012 he was involved in the launch of the Ram Slam, with the purchase of majority share in Retroviral in 2015 followed by MSC Sports' successful re-appointment as the sponsorship agency for Toyota, Discovery and Ram Hand to Hand Couriers in 2016. Little wonder they've been nominated for "sports agency of the year" for four years in a row in the Discovery Sports Industry Awards.

The best parts of Jankelowitz' day include "waking up in a country that is vibrant, and where the sun is shining," as well as working closely with clients and making sponsorships count for both clients and the MSC Sports' team.



Neil Jankelowitz, joint managing director of MSC Sports.

Here, Jankelowitz offers insight into whether sponsorships actually work, as well as how to get maximum value from a sponsorship.

■ Let us in on whether sponsorships really work and how valuable they can be.

Sponsorships most definitely work, and have proven to be a valuable component of any marketing mix. The right sponsorships, leveraged effectively, provide brands with the opportunity to connect with their consumers and market in a way that ordinary-above-the-line is unable to do.



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■ Talk us through the various sponsorship options available to brands and businesses.

There are many types of sponsorships available to brands, including:

- Broadcast sponsorships – such as Ram Hand to Hand Courier's broadcast sponsorship of the test cricket on SuperSport.
- Team sponsorships – such as Toyota sponsoring the Cheetahs or Vodacom sponsoring the Blue Bulls.
- Event sponsorships – such as the Discovery Jacaranda Walk or the Absa Premiership.
- Individual sponsorships/ambassadors – a good example of this is Discovery's sponsorship of Chad Le Clos and Wayde van Niekerk as Discovery ambassadors.

■ **How can a brand derive maximum value from a sponsorship?**

The key to attaining success and maximum value is for a brand to have clear, focused and measurable objectives from the outset, for each and every campaign or sponsorship. It's also important that there is internal buy-in from senior execs and all teams within a brand or company, in order to maximise support for any sponsorship.

■ **What is important for brands to consider when it comes to sponsorships, especially before spending large sums of cash?**

It's important to understand that for every rand spent on the rights secured, the brand needs to have a minimum of one rand in order to effectively leverage or activate the sponsorship. To provide a bit of a better picture explaining the above, you need to ensure that you have petrol money before you purchase a vehicle.



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So, you may have secured excellent rights to a sponsorship, but if you don't have an activation budget to support that sponsorship, you will not be able to reach the desired results.

■ **We recently lost the Commonwealth Games bid. Does your above response mean sponsorships could have saved it for us?**

In this instance, unfortunately not. Firstly, for any major sporting event, the sponsorship funds generated go to the international rights holder. In this instance, it would be to the Commonwealth Games Federation. Secondly, the budgets for a mega sporting event is essentially underwritten and funded by government. The budget that was initially agreed to for the Commonwealth Games in South Africa was R9bn, so no sponsorship amount could have helped save it for us.

Seems the solutions are clear when it comes to sponsorship. Follow MSC Sport on [Facebook](#) for the latest updates on bringing sponsorships to life.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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