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SPONSOR PARTNER CLIMATE - LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE "GETTING WISE WITH SPONSORSHIP" PANEL

Posted by Scott Aller On March 13, 2018

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In February, the Boston chapter of WISE (Women in Sports and Entertainment) and KORE Software hosted a panel on sports sponsorship. It was a wide-ranging discussion that touched on:

- The differences between sponsorships 10 years ago and now
- What sponsors are looking for from the properties they partner with and how they evaluate those sponsorships
- The role of mobile and social in today's sponsorship climate

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- The use of data to measure their sponsorships to ensure they're meeting their objectives

The panel discussion, sponsored by KORE Software, featured one executive representing the team, research, consulting and brand perspectives:

- Moderator: Zoe Panayides, Senior Activation Manager, Oakland Raiders
- Team: Erin Prober, Director of Strategic Partnerships, LA Clippers
- Research: Alexa Linger, Vice President of Business Development, Navigate Research
- Consulting: Rebekah Stevens, Vice President, Nielsen Sports
- Brand: Ellie Malloy, Director of Sponsorship Marketing, John Hancock

You might be interested in our tip sheet: 8 Tips on Using Data to Activate in Today's Sports Sponsorship Climate

From Then to Now

Ten years ago, the decision-making process for deals and renewals was completely different. It used to be a lot about passion or affinity. There were long-lasting partnerships, ones that were created because it felt good to do and were great for the community.

In the current climate, brands want more from their sponsorships. They want to justify the value of the money they're investing. So everything starts with understanding what the company's objectives are and determining if the sponsorship is delivering against those objectives.

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What Brands Want

Properties need to think about their partners' businesses and be an extension of the brand's marketing team. They should build a program for their partner in which each component is specifically going to drive their partner's business. And properties should want to know how, at the end of the term, the program would be evaluated against the objectives. Whether it's demographics, ROI drivers or KPIs, knowing that information up front is important to help drive the value of the partnership.

Brands now want to sell

product. They need to find a way to build relationships. They also want to give the people who sell their products a way to create once-in-a-lifetime experiences for their customers, to give their customers an experience they couldn't get with another brand. Companies want to build awareness of their brand and what they sell. And they want the properties to know what their goals are and be able to adjust with them as their goals change throughout the term of the sponsorship.

For brands, reach used to be a major factor, but not today. Brands need people, not to

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engage with them, but to be a qualified lead. For people responsible for sponsorships, that is a slim definition. The sales funnel for qualified leads gets smaller and smaller throughout the process.

Due to the way the world is changing, it's hard to stand out as a sponsor. Fans might not notice a sponsor unless the brand does something that is custom to them. So brands want to make their fans' experience better – such as getting them into the stadium quicker. Companies want to do something for their fans in a memorable way. At a game, they could have a photo booth that prints out a picture that includes their hashtag. They could provide something campaign-related that sits on the refrigerator for a year. Navigate Research has found that over 50 percent of sponsorship assets are going to be seen outside of arenas and stadiums in the next five years.

The Growth of Mobile and Social

Mobile ad revenue just surpassed desktop this past year and is close to a $37 billion industry. One out of every four people, 26 percent, who click on a Facebook ad make a purchase from that ad for a product or service down the road. People who click on Facebook ads have high purchase intent. For brands looking for a quick conversion, Facebook is an important platform to use.

The Clippers are shifting most, about 90 percent, of their partners away from digital and the web and moving them to social. They're activating on social in creative and

authentic ways. They're working to integrate their sponsors' products with a particular type of content. They've found associating sponsors' social with their players or with content coming from game action is the most effective. The Clippers are also getting smart about hyper targeting and collecting data through trivia games and other activations to learn more about their fans. Then they use that information for retargeting on Facebook or other social platforms. Throughout this process, they measure that engagement from a data perspective to optimize the fans' interactions.

Evaluating and Using Data to Optimize Sponsorships

The advantage of mobile and social in general is the amount of fan data that can be collected. That data can be segmented and a content-themed partnership can be created that will target a specific group. The different themes can be monetized more optimally because the brand knows they have a certain number of tweets or posts to reach that particular group.

The metrics that are now available for the quantity of data is no longer a challenge on the low end; it's a challenge on the high end. The focus, for both rights holders and brands, is on determining how to make sure they're using that data in a way that can help them understand what's happening, tells a story and measures against objectives. And then to use that information to optimize their partnerships.

If you're looking for a comprehensive, end-to-

end sponsorship management system that replaces your spreadsheets, streamlines sales and activation processes and takes profitability to a new level, you'll want to check out our **Sponsorship & Partner Engagement™ application.**

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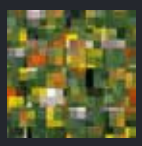

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