

# Sponsorship - seven key requirements

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Sponsorship is generally misunderstood, from both the side of the sponsor as well as the rights holder. Most sponsors expect it to produce instant ROMI or even ROI. Rights holders feel entitled to sponsorship without much work in return. The fact is that that sponsorship is an effective tool in the marketing mix and one that may not obtain the consideration and investment required in a marketing plan and budget.



Internationally there has been an increase in the number of events, sporting properties or TV programmes that are making the most from sponsorship arrangements.

Sponsors need to know up front what it is they want to achieve through a sponsorship. They need to make sure they know why you are doing it, what they want to get out of the sponsorship programme, identify sponsorship programmes that best fit their organisational goals, objectives and values, and determine which association or activity will best help you to achieve these goals and objectives.

Some advice for corporates wishing to get involved in a sponsorship programme?

First of all, **link your sponsorship to your wider marketing plan** or campaign. The sponsorship will gain better exposure and deliverance if it is part of a bigger campaign. Depending on the size and importance of the sponsorship, the entire organisation needs to buy into the partnership.

Secondly, **ensure you have set aside the right amount of budget** to 'activate' the sponsorship. In most cases the sponsorship fee only allows you the title or co-sponsor rights and the use of the partners logo. Without leveraging spend, chances are the partnership will not gain the impetus that is needed to truly achieve a ROI both in the form of business as well as communication.

Thirdly, **choose experts that can help you leverage** and get the most out of the sponsorship. Remember the rights holder is in the business of managing their respective rights/sport and you are in the business of marketing your company. There are specialist companies that are able to get the best return on investment for you. Also choose expertise within the right category. It is important to choose an agency that specialises in that particular genre (e.g.: Music, sport, the arts). There are very few agencies that can be everything to everyone. Ensure you choose the right one.

Fourth point, ensure the activity or programme that you end up sponsoring **should be included in your PR campaign** and in your marketing literature. Across all mediums on all channels. You have bought the rights, now maximize them. Include all your staff and clients in the mix.

Fifth, ensure you have **regular meetings with the rights holder** of the programme you are sponsoring. Inform them of your strategy and assist in aligning yours and theirs as a means to strengthen the entire campaign.

Sixth, **sponsorship must be able to engage and interact with the customer** via in-store promotions, competitions, exclusive product offerings linked to the sponsorship, social media and micro web sites for interaction and data capture.

Finally you should always **measure the success of your sponsorship** both from a communications point of view as well as from a business perspective. There are measurement companies out there that specialise in this research. You will be surprised at the returns a good sponsorship campaign can achieve. Testimony to this is the constant increase in partnership in international sports. If done properly sponsorship can form an extremely effective tool in the marketing mix.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eny is the CEO of Optimize.

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