



Sponsorship Marketing Council of Canada Mini-Conference Session Summary

May 5, 2010

Concept

A number of players in the media sponsorship industry (sponsors, agency representatives, producers and broadcasters) were invited to take part in a discussion forum with the theme of “Media Sponsorship in 2010.”

Objectives

To provide reference points and recommendations to sponsorship industry stakeholders seeking more informed points of view.

Guest experts

Jean-François Bouliane – Bubbles
Sylvie Charette – Rogers Communications
Viviane Colpron – Metro Richelieu
Ody Giroux – Carat
Michèle LaBarre – Astral Media Mix
Claude Lamoureux – BBR
Monique Lamoureux – Avanti
Edith Perreault - TVA
Richard Speer – Attraction Media

Discussion leaders

Simon Cazalais – Bleu Blanc Rouge
Nicole Dubé – Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec
Hubert Richard – Effix Inc.

Introduction

First of all, the various stakeholders and experts around the table seemed to agree that media sponsorship, more specifically TV sponsorship, has changed enormously in the last few years. Whereas TV sponsorship a few years ago consisted primarily of show opening and closing billboards, it is now showing much greater creativity in content leveraging and integration.

That said, the standard or traditional sponsorship still serves a purpose in cases where the advertiser's primary goal is to enhance its brand image.

According to a survey for the *Conseil des directeurs des médias du Québec* conducted in 2008 by Ipsos Descarie, testing 32 different executions from Québec television, sponsorship also seems to be fairly well tolerated by most audience members, depending on the type of show. Tolerance seems greater among viewers of game, reality or sports shows and less among viewers of drama series or soap operas (see cdmq.qc.ca/dossiers).

On the other hand, whether sponsorship is of the more innovative or more traditional type, and whether it is integrated in a variety show or a series, the group agreed that consumers are increasingly demanding toward it and have less tolerance for "plugs." This explains the importance of intelligent, creative integration and leveraging by the advertiser.

A: Why choose media sponsorship as a means of communication?

Media sponsorship seems to be a highly valuable tool to the extent that it contributes to meeting precise business goals. It must form an integral part of the business plan process and be planned ahead of time. If sponsorship does not meet one of the advertiser's primary aims, it does not serve its purpose.

At the mini-conference, the group of experts who were brought together identified several advantages of media sponsorship, more specifically TV sponsorship. They are:

- TV sponsorship is a good tool for evolving the personality of a brand, product or service. It helps the brand evolve through the image transfer.
- It enables a precise and generally captive target audience to be reached.
- It provides for leveraging through multiple facets such as in store or on the Internet during special events, and so on. This is especially valuable among certain groups such as young people who spend more time on the Web than in front of the TV.
- TV sponsorship, when well leveraged on other platforms (see above), enables consumers of a product or service to be reached and queried.
- Media sponsorship provides for a particular area to be dominated or even owned exclusively. This exclusivity gives TV sponsorship a chance to stand out effectively.
- In some cases, it enables a specific product or service to be demonstrated in a real context. It can thereby make the brand being promoted truer and more realistic.
- It can enable an advertiser to take ownership of the content and enhance it.
- TV sponsorship can be made to measure based on the advertiser's needs. It then allows for plenty of creativity and innovation.

- Finally, as with any other form of sponsorship, it seems fundamental to leverage TV sponsorship for what it is worth. It then becomes important to devote the necessary human and financial resources to it, in addition to a sizable investment in time.

B: With whom is media sponsorship negotiated – the broadcaster, producer, advertising agency?

In answering this question, two basic principles seemed to draw unanimous agreement among the participants in the conference:

- 1) There is no pre-established recipe. The core idea of a media sponsorship may emerge everywhere and be initiated by the producer, the broadcaster or by the client or its agency. The important thing is to seize a good opportunity, regardless of where the idea comes from, once it meets the advertiser's strategic considerations.
- 2) If there is an idea on the table, everyone involved must work together to create the best possible sponsorship. It seems especially important for the content producer in question to be involved right from the start and for this person to have a clear understanding of the advertiser's aims. This provides for intelligent and subtle integration by the sponsor.

Everyone agreed that stakeholders, together, can help media sponsorship to evolve much further. Working closely with each other builds confidence, and this is valuable in future projects and opportunities.

In this collaborative process, open-mindedness among all stakeholders and good communication within the team are basic in creating a good media sponsorship.

C: How can a media sponsorship be assessed?

As with all other forms of sponsorship, assessing a media sponsorship is a tough exercise – despite certain basic measurements, such as the size of the audience reached.

It seems hard to evaluate the cost of integrating a product in a show, because not only must the exposure of the product or service in question be taken into account but also the value it brings to the show's content through its association with the content.

Each case is unique, and the final price of a media sponsorship depends, as with any other sponsorship, on supply and demand in a specific market.

Conclusion

Media sponsorship seems to meet the needs of all stakeholders: advertisers want to stand out and obtain an exclusive platform for speaking to a specific audience; agencies aim to offer a broader range of communications tools; producers want to create true franchises and to be associated with brands that represent a good fit with them; and broadcasters are always on the outlook for solid, well-financed products.