



# MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS FOR ATHLETES

Athletes interested in generating income from the commercial use of their name or likeness through the association of their name or likeness with a company's products or services, should develop, or work with a representative to develop, a marketing plan. Some marketing considerations are listed below.

## Where do you start?

Prior to developing an athlete marketing plan, all existing commercial relationships that the athlete is bound by or has entered into should be reviewed. These will include:

- the rules and regulations of any team, sport association of which the athlete is a member as these may limit the type or nature of endorsements the athlete may enter into
- the rules and regulations of any event which is sanctioned by the sport association as these may limit the type or nature of endorsements the athlete may enter into
- the terms of any existing endorsement contracts as these may restrict an athlete's ability to enter into other endorsement contracts, even with companies producing or providing non-competing products or services.
- This will establish the parameters within which to develop a comprehensive athlete marketing plan.

## Make sure you check the following...

An athlete's goals and desires should be reviewed to determine whether:

- the athlete is generally prepared to endorse corporate products and services (or alternatively, whether there are specific products and services the athlete is not prepared to endorse)
- the athlete is prepared to use the product or service particularly where the athlete is required to either publicly endorse the product or service or use the product or service in competition (for example, athletic equipment).
- the athlete feels comfortable with the sponsor and their organization and supports their ethos, products and services.
- the athlete can successfully deliver on any promises or commitments they make to the sponsor.



## Are all athletes marketable?

Yes! Whether you are a world champion or just starting on your high performance pathway, you have a lot to offer potential sponsors and organizations looking to support you. However an athlete's marketability is usually assessed by:

- assessing the popularity of the athlete
- assessing the appearance and personality of the athlete.

These will help target the athlete's market, determine the size of the market and the kind of compensation the athlete is likely to receive from endorsement contracts. The size of the target market can be local, regional, national or international; however, the larger the market, the greater the compensation.

## What can athletes provide to sponsors?

It's best to identify businesses which best suit the athlete's profile. For example, athletes with a "rebel" image (such as Andre Agassi early on in his career) will be better suited to endorsing products or services which are portrayed as having an "edge". More generally, however, corporate sponsors look to athletes to:

- improve and enhance the image of their company – where the qualities of the athlete are used to portray the qualities of the company
- increase brand name awareness – where the athlete's media exposure increases public awareness of the company's products and services
- participate in corporate hospitality functions – where the athlete's presence, and the opportunity to meet and speak with the athlete – generates publicity and interest in the function
- participate in corporate motivational seminars – where the athlete's commitment to success may similarly inspire the company's staff.

Other opportunities to be involved in sponsor related activities include...

- |                               |                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ○ Functions & Conventions     | ○ Motivational Speaking           |
| ○ Hospitality Events          | ○ Personal Appearances            |
| ○ Host Roles                  | ○ Press Conferences               |
| ○ Master of Ceremonies        | ○ Media Events                    |
| ○ Galas & Corporate Events    | ○ Public Awareness Campaigns      |
| ○ Sports Tournaments & Events | ○ Demonstrations                  |
| ○ Grand Openings              | ○ Team Building                   |
| ○ School Visits               | ○ Training Programs & Conferences |
| ○ Education Opportunities     | ○ Organization Functions          |

Remember that once you have a sponsor that it is essential to ensure you provide the best level of value for them to ensure they continue supporting you.



## How do you approach a sponsor?

Prior to approaching prospective corporate sponsors, a sponsorship proposal should be prepared. The proposal should include the following:

- a biography of the athlete including the athlete's athletic record
- photographs of the athlete including a still photograph as well as a photograph and video of the athlete playing his or her particular sport
- a description of the athlete's image and the image of the athlete's sport, including participation rates in the sport & media coverage of the sport
- a brief proposal for endorsement including:
  - how the affiliation with the athlete will benefit the business
  - the availability of the athlete for endorsement purposes
  - ideas about how the business can promote the athlete and its products and services

Once the portfolio has been assembled, a list of businesses which suit the athlete's profile should be compiled. Finally, any negotiated endorsement arrangement should be in writing to ensure that the company and the athlete understand their obligations. For more information on this, check out the other resources relating to BC Athlete Voice's SportLegal program.

## How do you keep your sponsor?

It is essential to appreciate your sponsor and show them how much you value their support. Below are some other great ideas on how to show your thanks...

- Send a post card from major competitions telling them where you are, how you did, and how much you appreciate their support.
- Send them a Christmas card.
- Make an annual "sponsor scrapbook" with copies of all newspaper clippings mentioning you and your achievements. Get a friend or family member to save clippings for you. Many national sport-governing bodies have a clipping service. Ask yours NSGB for copies of any articles mentioning you.
- Take your digital camera with you everywhere. Have someone take photos of you as a record of the event: talking to children, signing autographs, shaking hands with another country's athlete, etc. Make a mini photo-album of the event for your sponsor.
- Some form of permanent recognition that can be displayed is a good bet, especially when your contract is nearing renewal. A framed photo of you in action or receiving a medal is a good option.

For more information contact BC Athlete Voice at [info@bcathletevoice.ca](mailto:info@bcathletevoice.ca)