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Sport - the Time for True Partnership is Now

Covid-19 has created many hurdles, endless questions and a feeling of uncertainty surrounding what is next for sponsorship in the sports sector. As one of the five areas Stellwagen Ventures focusses on, working with brands and rights holders is a key component to the company's growth and working with some of the leading professional sports, Co-Founder, Matthew Baxter of Stellwagen Ventures comments on the topic and the ways that they have found opportunities for clients, within the sector, during this pandemic.

Matthew informs that partnerships between rights holders and the brands is absolutely critical as they must now work together on their common goal. Right now, in these uncertain times, together, the parties are all looking at their current deals but must do this in the manner addressing each other's current issues in this climate, the strategy of each organisation and subsequently work in partnership to enhance each other's position. Brands ultimately require sales, rightsholders affinity with brands but also financial targets, and by working and understanding each other's positions and ensuring fair and beneficial deals are being done that both rights holder and brand will succeed and come through this period. This will create absolute long-term value for everyone. The days of sponsor deals being done and see you in three years are truly over, and the sports industry will be better for it.

Treating your existing clients like new ones at all times, building trust and the partnership together to share the common goal is the only route to success. With events cancelled, stadia empty this shift has accelerated especially around activation and delivery. It is all about a shift in assets and it is vital to understand what is working within the sports sector in the current environment in order to act diligently on this.

Digital strategy is more and more crucial within the sports industry, especially through Covid-19, as it provides a way that fans can get involved with their teams

from the safety of their own home. Digital strategy is not to be ignored and should not be a separate strategy, but instead a part of the whole marketing and communications picture. Whilst a lot of sports organisations have a focus on venue marketing, it is now the time to tap into and bring digital into the ecosystem and act as an accelerator. Online content and partnerships have the ability to create a huge reach and enable an increased engagement with fans. Opportunities within the digital market can also help to bring both new sponsors into the game and to increase the right holder's revenue.

Sports Pro Media informs that assets that a company doesn't own, 'such as the social channels of players, fans, influencers and leagues, can offer an ever-greater value. In fact, we are seeing that up to 81 percent of digital channel sponsorship value can come from these assets'.

Contracts moving forward will start to become more complex with agreements revolving around disasters such as pandemics being put into play to ensure a more streamline, lucrative and positive partnership between both rights holders and sponsors.

This immediate impact Covid-19 is having on the industry is where Stellwagen Ventures comes in - we help create and deliver partnerships instead of sponsorships. We know how crucial (now more than ever) partnerships are between both sides of a deal and we guide the way to implement this balance by finding a shared purpose and value for both parties.

We would love to know your opinions on the topic, how you think Covid-19 will continue to affect the sponsorship sector and what new opportunities you have found to extend and create partnerships during this time.