



SOCIAL MARKET

WHY JERSEY SPONSORSHIP

WILL MAKE YOU QUESTION EVERYTHING

BY BRIAN BLATNICKI

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN fascinated with how brands choose to spend their marketing budget. Like many marketers my age (and older), I come from a diverse background, starting my career in sales, moving into PR, then quickly shifting over to community relations, where I helped our marketing department to sell sponsorships.

It didn't take much time for me to learn what brands would pay for and what wasn't really all that valuable to grow their business.

Then, my career shifted back into marketing, and I was in charge of actually buying media. At this point, I found myself never wanting to buy any form of media that wasn't 100% trackable back to data. That meant I pretty much stopped buying traditional outdoor, TV, print and radio ads and basically poured every dollar available to me into Google AdWords (not surprising, right?).

My decision was not a popular one, and took many of the media sales reps by surprise. No, I take that back, they were undeniably appalled.

Fast forward to today where I now see companies, like a technology company for that matter, SquareSpace, participate as a jersey sponsor for a National Basketball Association (NBA) team. Many thoughts flood my brain as I see this transpire.

First, I'm surprised this didn't happen earlier in professional sports in North America. Kudos to the NBA and its franchises for opening up this essentially no extra overhead cost but massive legitimate source of revenue stream.

Second, unlike other professional leagues, like the English Premier League and the Women's National Basketball Association, the jerseys actually look hype with the subtleness of a patch from a particular company, usually integrated into the colour scheme. As a fan, I'd buy

that jersey and not feel like a "walking billboard."

Lastly, and most important, is this a good marketing move for brands? I mean, it has to be hella expensive. Any one of these brands could make and deploy amazing creative and completely saturate Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google and all audience networks for what they're likely paying for a sponsorship like this. But, then I think, crap, there are literally only 32 of these opportunities in the world. And, while people watch NBA games, you can't help but notice the jerseys, can you? Nah you can't. Is there a better signage placement? Maybe only the apparel sponsor, which is controlled by Nike.

While it's still un-trackable to true ROI and there is really no messaging attached to the sponsorship, it's still a big long-term branding move by a SaS (software analysis software) company like SquareSpace. In my world, I can attest to the fact that business owners (of all sizes) constantly ponder if they should just have a SquareSpace site, which tells me that the word is getting out there. If the sponsored team continues to win, or at least be interesting enough to get games nationally televised throughout the season, SquareSpace wins right alongside of them.

Another offshoot benefit of this type of sponsorship is the free secondary circulation as countless photos are being shared on Instagram, printed in magazines and newspapers as well as team tweets being embedded in the news. And we can't forget about the YouTube videos and sports network highlights from the season that will forever live with the jersey patches on them.

With that said, this type of move, one that demands people's attention, which then is captured to be relived over and over again, might just be a slam dunk branding move.

~BL

Jersey sponsorships are quickly becoming some of the most profitable deals in the world today. Two years ago, when the NBA decided to allow companies to put their logo on team jerseys, they predicted that the move could potential generate \$100 million annually for the NBA. But what does that mean for the sponsoring company?