



LEADERS *Report*

Anatomy of a Sports Fan

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keyper



That's the ticket



Andreas Kienbink
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Keyper

Personal data is a sensitive and newsworthy topic at present. Who holds our data, which bits of information do they have, and what will they use it for? These are all important questions and ones to

which we are all entitled to answers. Fundamentally, though, an understanding of our behaviours – our likes, dislikes and how they all come together to form a picture of what we're likely to want or need in the future – is enormously helpful for service providers who want to offer us products or experiences that make our lives easier, surprise, delight or entertain us.

Over the next pages, you'll read about various approaches being taken by sports entities the world over to the collection, interpretation, and ultimate use of fan data; whether it's measurement systems that allow for tailored content strands to ensure different audience demographics are engaged how they prefer to be engaged; or ever-sophisticated fan experience platforms that drive engagement and capture data; analytics dashboards that collate data from numerous touchpoints and drive business intelligence across the organization; an understanding of sponsor data expectations and how to exceed them; or the thorny issue of ticketing, which is where we at Keyper come in.

The sports ticketing market is worth \$45 billion annually, but the current business ecosystem means a lot of that value is slipping away from rights holders – the event creators themselves – to secondary platforms. And at present, there is no adequate widespread technology that allows fans to distribute their own tickets, while the club retains control of the pricing and the data.

Fans have a problem when they can't get to every game. The secondary market promises a solution, but it's only for the top clubs and the sold-out games, but not for 90% of the rest. It's a trade-off between how easy it is to transfer tickets and to leave it and lose money. When anyone buys tickets, the reality is that the buyer gives away tickets to his friends or his business partners. He only uses one ticket for himself. All the other tickets go to other people. This is at the moment just too painful.

With Keyper technology, fans can simply send on any number of tickets to friends.

It's simple. If I want to send you a ticket I've already bought, I send you a text message with an automatically generated link. You open the link, accept the ticket and the club's terms. You fill in a few details and can use the ticket; it's painless and you don't have the feeling you've been ripped off; and for the club, you've just gone from a visitor to an active customer with a real data relationship with the club.

The technology is currently integrated into the club app of FC Basel in Switzerland, and with others set to be announced soon, the average Bundesliga club can expect to generate around Euros 1.5 million more per season with this technology, and fans can expect a smoother ticket buying and sharing experience than has ever been available before.

Credits

Editorial Director
James Emmett

Head of Marketing
Milly Preston

Art Director
Sam Richardson

Sponsorship Director
Simon Thomlinson

Mouth

The first wave of chatbots are being integrated into the sports rights holder communication mix. Fan engagement – save for shouting from the terraces and perhaps writing the odd letter - used to be a passive endeavour. Social media changed that, and now, for the likes of Golden State Warriors fans making use of the club’s chatbot tie-up with both Facebook and Rakuten Viber, you can take your engagement verbal and keep it going for as long as you like.

Stomach

Mobile-first arenas like the Sacramento Kings’ Golden 1 Center are able to merge several fan data layers together with real-time contextual in-arena information to provide the most cutting-edge data-driven marketing and fan experiences in sport. By merging static information on, say, season ticket renewal likelihood (a score based on your frequency of attendance), with concession purchase information and GPS tracking, it’s able to fire timely and appropriate F&B or unique experience offers to customers as they come through the doors – proving the old adage that the best way to a man’s season ticket renewal is via a complicated set of algorithms to his stomach.

Phone

The Swiss Army knife for the digital era, the phone is the factotum in a sports fan’s pocket. Both chief content receptor and primary tool for content creation, every interaction is an opportunity to engage, to learn, and, from time to time, to monetise. Mobile wallet is the latest area of focus for tech-savvy sports teams – for ticketing – with, or without blockchain - for payments and for push-promotions. Apps are for avid fans, but they’re far more likely to be deleted than a single item in a mobile wallet.

Eyes

Of the social media networks, Facebook currently offers the most useful – and exportable - analytics on video drop-off points and optimum engagement in general. The best performing content production teams at sports clubs are now fundamentally data-driven and deal predominantly in video. At Tottenham Hotspur, for example, the content team works to an output of 100 ‘video concepts’ per month, or around 25 per week – and all producers are educated and KPI’d on data performance.

Ears

Humans like to feel listened to; fans like to feel understood by their club. For the Chicago Bulls, there is no such thing as too much data on the back-end, but on the front-end – ie information taken directly from consumers – the franchise is committed to efficient use of data, showing fans they’re listening by being prepared to act on feedback and show where changes have been made.

Heart

From in-stadium ‘decibel measurement’ activations at NFL and NBA venues across the US, to an attendance tracking application that Surrey CCC uses to produce a visualization of the key moments an individual fan witnessed across a season, by way of scientific studies on in-game cortisol level changes among fans, and any number of crude sponsor activations designed to trade competitive displays of passion for engagement box-ticking, there have been numerous attempts to measure passion in sport. None are definitive.

Feet

Fan footprints – and an ability to accurately serve appropriate content to different demographics in different geographies – are crucial to sports entities with global fanbases. Ticket sale-driving content is more appropriate for an audience viewing it within a certain radius of the venue. Geo-location technology and localization agencies are both gaining in importance

ANATOMY OF A SPORTS FAN

Fan data – who, what, why and how



Fan data – who, what, why and how

Collecting, consolidating, interpreting and using fan data have never been more important in sport. Approaches differ from organization to organization, and challenges and pinch points vary too. The business benefits of doing it right have never been clearer, though, and an inside view on some of the best exponents in the sports industry should prove instructive.

By James Emmett



M When Manchester United declared in 2013 – to no little fanfare – that the club had 659 million followers around the world number, there were more than a few skeptical eyebrows raised. The number was arrived at following a global survey by market research firm Kantar and, no doubt, provided a useful, and usefully large, topline figure for United’s energetic global sponsorship sales team to sell against.

In sports marketing, the real ammunition now lies in the detail. If United were able to know that they have 659 million followers around the world, then it stands to reason they at least know where those people are; how granular that detail goes – who they are, how old they are, what their habits are – dictates how granular the selling process can be. The more you know about a fan, the logic goes, the more you’re able to serve that fan, the more you’re able to understand who or what else might valuably serve that fan.

Knowing, for example, that you have a certain number of followers in China within a certain consumer demographic, who are receptive to club messaging and likely to be open to taking out a new credit card at some point in the next 12 months is useful information. It’s fair to say that Manchester United probably had this information to hand during negotiations with PingAn Bank, the Shenzhen-based financial institution which recently signed on as yet another regional partner of the Premier League giants. Manchester United’s regional partnership model, which has seen the club sell local rights, often in the same category, in different parts of the world, has been both pioneering and successful. And that, despite



| THE PANEL |



RUSSELL STOPFORD

Chief Digital Officer at French Ligue 1 side Paris St-Germain, Stopford oversees all digital product and content across club and third party channels, as well as customer experience through work in analytics, research, digital marketing and UX design. PSG use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap, Weibo, YouTube, and are looking closely at chatbot technology, AI, VR, AR and MR. Stopford previously held senior digital roles at Barcelona, Perform and Manchester City.

DAN MORIARTY

Digital Director at the Chicago Bulls, Moriarty joined the NBA team from a similar role at Hyatt Hotels in 2016. He oversees the Bulls’ output on social, and through the team website and app. Principal channels include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube and Weibo in China.

KYLE EICHMAN

Senior Director of Technology Solutions at the Sacramento Kings, Eichman has had overall responsibility for the design and development of all fan experience elements at the NBA team’s new Golden 1 Center home, arguably the most technologically advanced sports arena in the world. Eichman has held various marketing and CRM roles since joining the franchise from the casino industry in 2007.

JON FORD

Head of Content at Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur, Ford has responsibility for content commissioning and production across all the club’s channels. Seconded from digital consultancy Seven League, which has been working with Tottenham for eighteen months, Ford and the agency also have a broader remit to assist the club with the development of digital strategy, and digital readiness as it prepares to move into a new stadium next season.

MATT KOBE

Vice President of Business Strategy & Analytics at the Chicago Bulls, Kobe works closely with Moriarty and his team having joined the franchise from Deloitte in 2014. He is responsible for the effective interpretation of fan data, and the appropriate use of technology and activation on the back of it.

the fact that the club is nowhere near understanding who those 659 million people are.

In fact, despite that headline number, Manchester United has just 49 million of them in its database. ‘Just’, here, is an unfair diminisher. 49 million is a huge number to have in a sports database, and almost certainly the largest across UK sport. And 659 million isn’t just a headline figure to sell against; it’s a target for what is one of the most advanced CRM and digital media departments in all of sport.

“My objective is to grow reach and engagement with 659 million fans,” said United’s new Media Chief Executive Phil Lynch at the Broadcast Disruptors summit in Leaders Week in October 2017. “Obviously you have to continue to focus on growing the reach but also on really trying to drive engagement. Even if you talk to the social platforms, they’ll explain to you that their key metrics focus on engagement over reach and I think it’s an interesting data point there – as we focus on reach, and we’ve gone year-on-year 50% growth on engagement, but we now account for 44%



MANCHESTER UNITED MEDIA CEO PHIL LYNCH AT LEADERS WEEK 2017

of engagement in the league through the three major social channels – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. So it's about customizing the content; localizing the content, but when you look at a big fanbase like that, it's extremely different to see how many people we have over-65 versus how many people we have under-21 and you have to speak to those audiences completely differently – so what is your voice and tone? We're spending a lot of time trying to speak to these specific cohorts, geotargeting too, rather than speaking to the entire audience. And with that we have 150 million social followers, so there's a lot of different segments and cohorts within that audience.

"We translate our content in over 20 languages, which is a significant investment in terms of both people and cash. But if you're going to enter these markets, you need to be able speak to the people within them. But I would heavily emphasise the role that data plays in that type of exercise."

United launched its GDPR-readiness project in July last year, preparing to switch away from the old opt-out model to a new, best-practice one that more or less guarantees database engagement through a required opt-in. The 'StayUnited' campaign, which has demonstrated the strength and breadth of United's communications channels, has seen all avenues used to prompt United fans to re-opt in.

While the exercise is likely to see some numbers lost from the database in the short term, the depth of

"55% OF OUR SNAPCHAT AUDIENCE IS BELOW THE AGE OF 20. INSTAGRAM IS THE OPPOSITE; IT'S OUR OLDEST NETWORK BY AVERAGE AUDIENCE AGE."

DAN MORIARTY, CHICAGO BULLS

information and the level of engagement left behind is likely to see United end up with a fan database even more powerful and even more valuable than before.

While sports entities take different approaches to their treatment of fan data, it's clear business advantages are there to be taken. In this Leaders Special Report, we got inside the strategies of some of the most forward thinking exponents in the fan data game.

Where does fan data come from?

Fan data comes from more or less any interaction a rights holder has with a fan – either directly or indirectly. "The digital channels are probably our single easiest stream through which to get and to activate data," says the Bulls' Moriarty, and the statement could just as easily be made for any top-tier sports club with a fairly significant fan following. Read an article, watch a video, listen to a podcast, like a photo, send a Snap – these are all actions that can be tracked, traced and used to build a picture of a person.

After digital content engagement comes purchasing transactions: merchandise, membership, ticket sales. Purchase history – why, when and how it happened – is valuable data, but even then it's not straightforward. According to research undertaken by ticketing systems integration technology provider Keyper, only 40% of the people attending a top-tier European sports event will have bought their ticket directly from the club. The rest are invariably chalked down as anonymous visitors. It remains an issue in the more tech-focused world of US major league sports too. According to Matt Kobe, "there's still certainly a blind spot with getting ticket data from everyone in our building. Dan and I are working together to try to use different mechanisms to capture those folks who are there – whether that's in-arena contests or other fan engagement initiatives, or in the future potentially people logging in for wifi. Eventually ticketing will get one-to-one but I don't know that that's happening in the next two years or so."

Beyond raw transaction data, an extra layer of information can be built through human interactions and inputs. Kobe again: "We have an internal surveying strategy where we're doing surveys of different types of ticket buyers, whether they're season ticket holders or single game buyers or forward recipients. And then we partner with a couple of different data services that help supplement the data that we're getting through their own surveys and general customer conversations."

Matchdays tend to offer the richest opportunities for data collection. At Tottenham Hotspur, Ford and his team have developed a matchday engine that brings in datapoints from up to 60 regular inputs. "You're going to have different weightings within your analysis to understand how your matchday content is performing," Ford explains, "and we'll be looking at variables such as the opponent, the time of day, is it a crucial match, are we on television; but the engine allows us to see where the value is and understand the impact."

Despite that, however, the period of the game itself – where real lessons on passion, engagement and habits can be learned – can also be a dead-spot in terms of fan engagement and data collection. "We do all this work to get you to the building," says the Sacramento Kings' Kyle Eichman. "And then we do all this work after you leave the building, but people are really guilty of not doing stuff when you're in the building. That's your big engagement point, so we're going after that. It's like the game experience is like a tunnel. I have visibility of you going into the tunnel. You hit the tunnel, I lose you; you come back out the other side and I start talking to you again. But why don't we do stuff in between when it's really relevant? I think that's probably our next big focus."

What role does data play in driving sports digital content strategies?

Rights holder content production output has always straddled the line between art and science, but as analytics software has evolved, the swing towards science and a paint-by-numbers approach has been tangible. Different content serves different purposes, of course, and there will always be room for hard informational output even if it doesn't drive the highest levels of engagement. But in general, the cycle is defined: create content, measure engagement, create more of the content that engages best. Engagement data is used to refine content strategies, but also fed into business intelligence systems.

continue reading on page 14

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The key to unlocking total ticketing potential

The team at Vienna-based Keyper view ticketing as fertile ground for disruption. The technology company, founded five years ago by Andreas Kienbink, a serial ticketing entrepreneur, and fellow Austrian Andreas Kreuter, a product designer with a background in gaming, provides a white label platform that enables ticket holders to share digital tickets securely and easily. The technology is currently integrated into the ticketing systems used by Swiss Super League champions FC Basel, linking the club's app with its ticketing platform, allowing fans to forward on tickets among themselves, reducing no-shows at games, while at the same time bringing the recipients into the club's database and helping to generate revenue. Kienbink explains how it works:

How does Keyper technology work?

AK: We use a similar proprietary technology to blockchain, and we have an SDK which is integrated directly into the rights holder app. The Android SDK is easy – just four or five lines of code. There'll be a ticketing section in the app where fans can manage their season ticket, and give away tickets if they can't make a game or if they have bought for other people. It's fully integrated across a smartphone's functionality, so if I want to transfer you a ticket, all I need is your number in my address book. I type it in and you receive an email or a text. You accept the ticket by accepting the terms of the club, which is a basic dataset and a requirement to opt-in to receive further communication. You are now a new customer of the club when you would have just been an unknown visitor.

Where did the idea come from?

AK: The major players in sport are the clubs, the players, the fans and the funders – those are the contributors. The secondary ticketing market, the black market – they're a cancer of ticketing. They don't provide a solution for real problems that fans have, which is that they can't easily transfer their season ticket if they can't get to a game. The secondary market promises a solution, but it's only for the top clubs and for the sold-out games, but not for 90% of the rest. Basically, the secondary market removes value from the major players. This value should be at the club or with the fans. In 2013 I could see this problem, that if you had a ticket for an event or a match, you couldn't easily transfer it via a smartphone. There were all these big ticketing



companies focusing on their own labels. One thing followed another and last year we had 60 presentations at sports clubs around Europe and we found out what their needs were. We knew we had the right product but we couldn't address the market, so last year we found out the way to address it was by tackling the no-show problem. The data is the core value, but the next value is to reduce the no-shows by addressing the real need, which is not to resell tickets at the highest price but the real need of the fan is to give tickets away. People want to make other people happy; and at the moment, 50% of the tickets being exchanged with our technology are people giving them as a gift.

What is the scale of the problem clubs are facing?

Our research suggests that the average sports ticket buyer in Europe buys 2.5 tickets for each game. So in your stadium, 40% of the people in there are buyers, and you have their data. But you're not able to address the other 60%.

How do you measure the success of the solution?

We measure three things: how many ticket transfers are made; how many of those tickets are then used –

and with FC Basel that figure is at 50%; and then the final measurement is how much revenue this new person will bring to the club. We estimate that the average Bundesliga club will bring in €1.5 million extra revenue with this solution.

What are your short and long-term objectives with the solution?

Our short-term objective is to onboard clubs around Europe. The technology is there; the hard work has been done so we can get up and running with any other club within a week. We know the sports ticketing market is worth \$45 billion annually, so there's a big market there, but we also work in culture, and we're looking at fairs and then the complete mobility market. But it's ideal for sport. We're mining very special fan data here. We know the fan's transaction history with the club. Mainly, clubs use data to create a newsletter, but that, in my experience, is never on point. With historical transaction data, ticket usage information, combined with content engagement data and other sources of big data, we can create micro-target campaigns to push interesting information at the right time, to the right person to sell a sweater or a t-shirt or whatever. The real thing with this solution is that it has the potential to become an automatic selling machine.

“There’s not much point in making content that you know fans aren’t consuming or engaging with,” says PSG’s Russell Stopford. “The way to do this is to make data-led product and content decisions. That’s the way that all the leading tech companies work in terms of optimizing their offering.”

“It’s not worth doing unless you can measure it,” adds Ford. “If you can’t measure it, then you certainly can’t report back to a commercial partner because that way we’re all just working based on good intentions. On a simple internal basis, the only time we would be on a platform where data isn’t readily available would be as an experiment. Or it would be because we forecast the fact that this would become an important platform for us; or because we know from speaking to the platform that analytics are coming soon.”

The content production teams at Spurs – down to individual producers – are trained to use the analytics dashboards the club uses, and are encouraged to better previous high watermarks across various metrics. As the club enjoys a better than average season on the pitch, and continues to build a new stadium off it, there is plenty to communicate about. Video is the key medium, and Ford says that Spurs would typically produce “100 video concepts each month,” equating to around 25 each week. Those concepts are selected and re-versioned to become platform and demographic appropriate.

For Moriarty and the Bulls, different platforms require different types of content too – since the audience has been clearly defined for each. “The app we view primarily as a resource for the super Bulls fan,” he explains. “A higher percentage of the people using the app are based in or around Chicago, they’re coming to games, compared to people who use the website; people who use the app are opening it on a more frequent basis. Our most recent data shows the average app user used it eight or nine times a month whereas the average website user only used it two times a month. So we make sure we’ve got content in the app but also we’ve added utility in there, like upgrading your seats. We’ve also put a second screen game in it this year.”

The Bulls website is now skinned differently depending on the location of the user, with users in the Chicagoland area pointed towards areas of the site more pertinent to attending a game. As far as social is concerned, the best content is repurposed for multiple platforms, but in general there is different output for different platforms.

“55% of our Snapchat audience is below the age of 20,” says Moriarty. “We’re focused on showing them things they wouldn’t see through the other channels, but also not worry too much about the quality of production, so we have raw behind-the-scenes footage there. Instagram is the opposite end of that spectrum. It’s our oldest network when we look at our average audience age. We really focused on highly produced, polished content there. It’s behind-the-scenes, but produced.”

“Twitter is really focused on timeliness so when we’ve got breaking news, when it’s live in-game, Twitter is where we’re focused on getting things out in a timely manner. YouTube is our more produced content; we do things like compilation videos after games; and then Facebook is much more of a catch-all; it’s a broad audience, large in terms of global reach – something like 25% is US-based and the rest is international – not to mention you’ve got a pretty broad age range which follows us on the platform and a slightly more balanced gender mix too. So we still have content quality standards and then use the data each month to see what’s working, what’s not, and then go from there.”

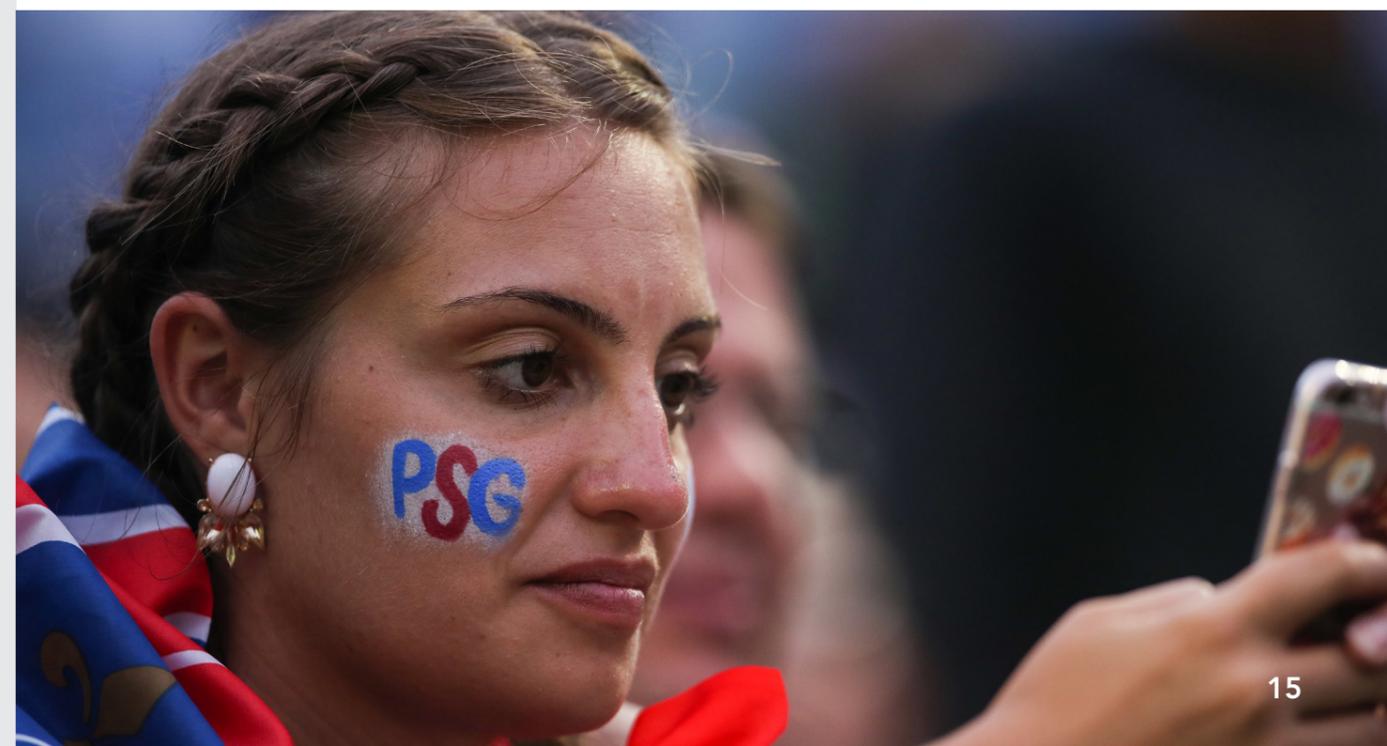
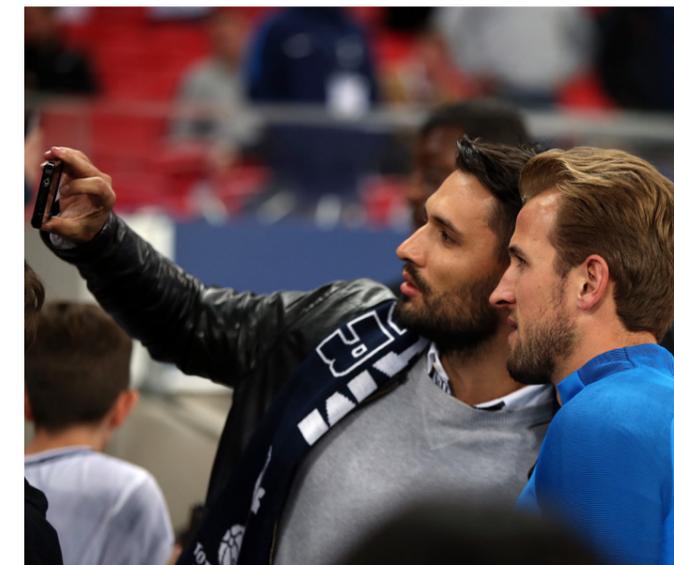
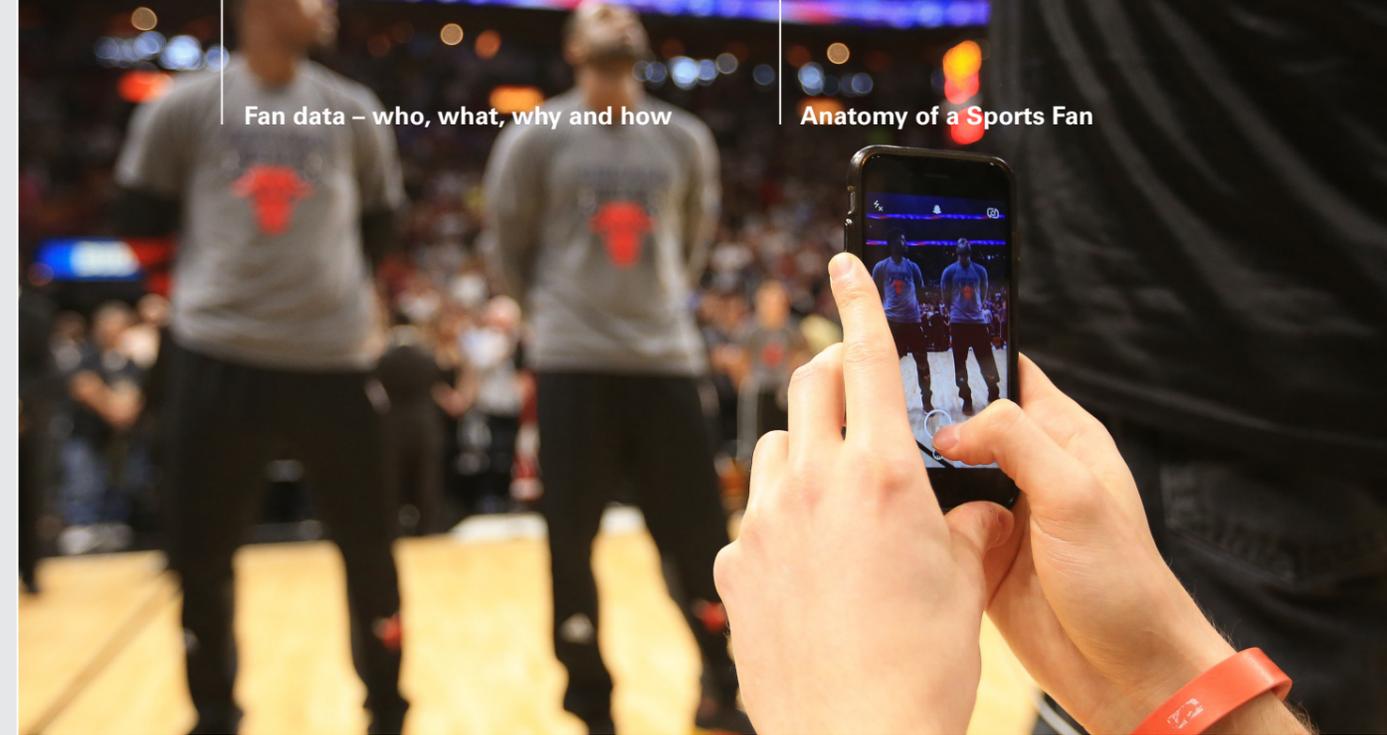
What elevates fan data from useful to business critical?

In short, it’s the ability to know what you’re looking for, how to measure it properly, how to interpret that measurement usefully, and how to communicate that information effectively to the people inside and outside the organization who it could make an impact on.

For the Chicago Bulls, there is no such thing as too much data on the back end, but care is required on the front, consumer-facing end. “When we’re asking customers for data,” explains Kobe, “we’re very thoughtful about everything we ask for. We want to be able to use that information pretty quickly. We don’t want to have a customer fill in a super long survey if we’re not prepared to act on it. On the back end, if it’s

“THE FIRST POINT IS WHAT CAN WE ACCESS? THE SECOND IS WHEN CAN WE ACCESS IT? THE THIRD IS HOW CAN WE ACCESS IT AND WHAT CAN WE DO WITH IT?”

JON FORD, TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR



data spinning off our mobile app, or our website or activity from email, then we'll take all the data we can because though we might not be able to use it today, when you need it it's too late so we need to have the data at the ready for when a business issue or an idea comes up and it becomes useful."

According to Moriarty, the data provided to you as a publisher by third party platforms is of itself not particularly useful. "The really rich data from social networks comes from when you start syncing accounts and doing single-sign-on login, and in that case all of them offer you pretty rich datasets but it's just about making sure that we're being transparent with our fans over what we're asking for and what we're going to be doing with it."

According to Stopford, the reason fan data is so valuable "is because it allows us to measure, to project, to build accurate models which impact all the different commercial variables which impact football clubs." He echoes Moriarty on the level of useful insight currently being provided by social platform. "You have to use third party tools," he says. "The challenge is coming up with a balance of tools which you can actually resource up in terms of having an analytics team which is sufficient to be able to use it, and also not duplicating the data that you're getting, and also being able to visualize it in a way which makes it useful. You can use ten different analytics tools and create a mass amount of data, but you'd have so much data that you wouldn't be able to make any meaningful analysis from it."

"The key thing is to work out what your key data KPIs and datapoints are, and then to find the tool that best gives you access to that in the simplest, most automated way. Where we're going is probably plugging that into advanced analytics engines and machine learning tools to be able to further automate the analysis. Because what we're really looking for are commercial dashboards which give us benefit to our main commercial variables."

How is fan data best disseminated across an organization?

Interpretation and cross-organization dissemination of fan data is probably the biggest challenge facing data and CRM teams across sport. Methods vary, but Stopford, for one, isn't sure anyone's found the best model yet. "The really smart thinking here is in defining how you get the right datapoints and KPIs," he says. "And that's not easy. The real sweetspot is

when you have an intersection between the different commercial teams within a club, business intelligence teams, and the digital teams.

"We're developing algorithms to try to measure what those important datapoints are. But it's not a fixed point in time; you can't say these are the datapoints and KPIs that are relevant and they're going to be relevant for the next five years. It's constantly changing."

Integrating third party social measurement tools with other CRM system and technology datapoints into one bespoke dashboard which can visualize different levels of insight appropriate to different departments of the business is arguably the most effective method.

"We're still trying to figure out the best way to disseminate fan data," confirms Kobe. "We're testing different ways to do that now a little bit more regularly and a little bit more broadly. I think that's an opportunity for us to get a little bit better; it's great when a function comes to us with a specific question but everyone should be relatively aware of what the Bulls fanbase looks like and we're trying out different technologies to help us do that. We have a data warehouse that pulls in all our major fan touchpoints: the CRM system, our email marketing platform feeds into that, which captures a lot of the digital engagement we have; the ticketing data feeds into that, and that's obviously our biggest monetization stream; we have retail feeding into that both physical and online; and then concessions. We pull all of that information together and then we create a system to connect the dots of all the different engagement points, so when you talk about Matt Kobe the ticket buyer, you can also see Matt Kobe's digital engagement, you can see Matt Kobe's CRM activities."

"We're trying to create this holistic view of a specific fan, so that down the road we can be better at predicting fans who may or may not sign up for their season tickets again, but also more importantly being a little bit more targeted and prescriptive in how we market to certain types of fan."

As Ford and the team at Spurs prepare to roll out a new-look website to coincide with the opening of the new stadium, systems for most efficiently disseminating data insight are also being evolved. Currently, Ford says, "we disseminate information through regular reporting. That reporting is either rolling – weekly or monthly – and it's a case of right report, right person. But at the same time, we're

ON THE BACK OF FAN DATA INTELLIGENCE, THE BULLS BROUGHT ON FIVE FULL-TIME STAFF SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTINUOUS, NON-SALES ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SEASON TICKET-HOLDER BASE



always creating ad hoc reports based on requirement. Because of the opening of the new stadium, we have an incredible number of requirements when it comes to understanding where the value is digitally."

How do you strike the balance between using third party platforms and your own channels?

"I come from a non-sports background," says Moriarty, "and I've lived through Facebook taking organic reach from 20% to 0.5% for most brands. I came into sports and saw that we were still enjoying pretty good reach but trending in the same direction for sports. A lot of teams are seeing their organic reach decline over the past season or so. It's definitely something we think about and you can't ignore these social platforms. We were pulling data for a game earlier this season and we saw that just through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, on a one-game basis we reached 17 million unique individuals with about 28 million impressions. We can't get that sort of reach on our own platforms."

"We talk a lot about how we love the reach that Twitter, Facebook, Instagram gives us, but at the same time you're building a product on someone else's platform; you don't own the data, you don't own the fan quite as much. So the second screen game on the Bulls app was something we were trying to do to create a data capture opportunity on our own platforms, and be slightly less at the whim of third parties for data visibility and also things like reach."

It's generally accepted among rights holder publishers that Facebook and Google Analytics provide the most insight through their analytics engines. "Twitter and Instagram give you significantly less information to optimize your content," says Moriarty. "Facebook gives you a lot more around video view drop-off points." Stopford points to Facebook's acquisition and integration of tracking tool CrowdTangle as a "really helpful" development. But even then, it's not perfect, and access to the detail isn't always straightforward, consistent or timely.

"The first point is always access to data," says Ford of his third-party analytics checklist. "What can we access? The second point is when can we access it? And the third is how can we access that data and what can we then do with it? Every platform gives different levels of analytics. Sometimes you're looking to do rolling reports; sometimes you're trying to learn something specific, or test and learn things: we ran a campaign, how did that do? We tried it this way, or



that way, or we split-tested it, how did that do? And as long as the analytics are sophisticated enough, then we can manipulate however we wish.

“You are looking at a difference between reporting, measuring and analysis. At the very basic level you are capturing measurement of what it can do and how things are performing, but at the very top level you can set up APIs in order to bring data through directly into our analytics systems, which allow us to create a live dashboard which we can share with the rest of the business.”

How is fan data commercialized?

At present, fan data is commercialized in three distinct buckets: by enabling smarter selling to fans – whether that’s ticket sales, upsells, hospitality, merchandise or concessions; by adding value for current partners; and by playing a key role in the sponsorship sales arsenal.

Where once a page in the matchday programme might have sufficed, now a whole range of digital inventory is available to sponsors. And the reason that some seem widespread and well-established already – the team line-up graphic, for example – is because they provide clear tentpoles in terms of regularity and volume, and a proven level of engagement.

“A sponsor might be really interested in reaching

millennial fans,” says Kobe, “and they’ll ask us to help them to build out a profile of our millennial fanbase; what are the characteristics of that fanbase, how many are there, and we partner with our sponsorship team to tell that story of that specific segment. But ticketing is different. It’s at the individual level; our sales team deal with people on a one-on-one basis. We try to put our ticketing folks, whether it’s on the sales side or the servicing side, in a position to succeed by having as much information about an account that they can at their fingertips - do they have kids, are they married, things like that that help them formulate a conversation.”

Kobe and his team at the Bulls undertook a ticketing database research project last year and identified two distinct areas in which the team’s ticket sales department were underindexing: families and students. Off the back of that research, the Bulls developed specific ticketing products for both groups – “family packs for seven games with food included and for games in the day time” and a mobile-only, flexible product called Student Pass.

“The other big thing we unlocked through fan surveys was a tie to the response of feeling valued as a season ticket holder and people’s likelihood to renew,” Kobe continues. “And that wasn’t

necessarily a surprise but it helped us reframe and deliver different elements of the season ticket experience to make sure that everything we’re doing is making our season ticket holders feel valued. We built a whole new service team within our season ticketing department.” On the back of fan data intelligence, the Bulls brought on five full-time staff solely responsible for continuous, non-sales engagement with the season ticket-holder base. “The reviews on that have been really positive and retention is strong,” says Kobe.

At the Sacramento Kings’ new Golden 1 Center home, connectivity levels are 17,000 times higher than average household broadband. The building is designed to promote digital behaviour, and with digital behaviour comes datapoints. Kyle Eichman and his team use beacons and push notifications – through both the team app, which has a high usage rate of 35%, and mobile wallet technology – to fire timely offers and fan engagement applications at specific consumers within the building.

“We’re working with a company that is tied in with our data layer but then also able to take real-time contextual stuff and marry the two together,” explains Eichman. “Then we have algorithms which generate what the message is. So it could be that you’re a season ticket member but you haven’t gone to the last three games; your renewal score is 50. That’s your static data. Then we can build something that says, if you come to the building between 5.30 and 6pm, you enter via the Grand Entrance and maybe one or two other data points in there, if that string of events happens then I’m going to hit you with a push notification that says ‘please join us in the wine lounge for a pre-game chalk talk with Coach blah blah’. That combines the static data set with the real-time which nobody else is doing. You talk about fan experience and it’s all about relevance. If it’s not relevant, it doesn’t matter what the messaging is. The same company is tied into the food and beverage inventory system. One of the thoughts we’ve always had is let’s say concession stand A is outside sections 112 and 113 and they have excess hot dog inventory after third period. Send out a push notification to all the fans in sections 112 and 113 for a discount on the hot dog. Nobody is looking at the whole marriage of the real-time situation.”

Ford points to a recent example where Tottenham’s content team were able to be proactive on behalf of a sponsor to put together a concept they knew would

resonate, engage, and add value to Nike’s partnership with both the club, and its star striker, Harry Kane. “When Harry Kane scored his 100th goal, we were ready to create a piece of native advertising with Nike that is essentially the boots that got him to 100,” says Ford. “He’s scored them all in Nike boots. At no point did we tell anyone to buy those boots. At no point did we put up any click throughs or anything like that. We just had Harry with the boots in a studio talking about his memories of playing in each of the individual boots, and the goals he’s scored and his thoughts on each of them. He’s talking about the little idiosyncrasies, the details on the boots – the name of a child – what they mean to him and how they got him to where he is.”

Where’s a good place to look for inspiration?

Data science is an emerging segment within many industries, but companies built on the back of serving appropriate content or messaging to demographic segments and individual users via algorithms are a good place to start: Spotify, Amazon, Netflix etc. The issue with these companies – and the social giants too – is that user data is their currency and their secrets aren’t for sale.

“If you look at data science in a broader sense, and at digital content businesses, there are some really cool companies. If you look at those companies they’ve got data scientists who optimize content specifically for different channels. The role of the data scientists is becoming much more important in figuring out what the important algorithms are and how you modify those algorithms. For me it’s a return to the principles of AI and machine learning and the essential thing is the scale of the data to provide as the input to the model.”

Eichman’s assessment is direct. “I think sport certainly does not lead here. You have the anomalies like us who are pretty cutting edge, but for the most part pro sports organizations are ma and pa shops that sell tickets and don’t really care about anything else. Before I was with the Kings I was in Vegas for ten years. From a data consumption and data usage perspective, the US casino business has always been on the forefront of the whole thing. We still look at what’s going there, and watch what’s going on in Silicon Valley. 🍀

Six myths about GDPR and the sports industry

The General Data Protection Regulation, more commonly known by its acronym, will come into force across Europe on 25th May. An update on the current EU Data Directive – or Data Protection Act in the UK – it governs how organisations can collect, store and use consumer data. The first update on the directive in over 30 years, GDPR has taken into account the rapid evolution of technology and the shift in consumer behavior and explosion in data availability that have come alongside that. It is an attempt to simplify and unify approaches to data privacy, and there's a key shift in focus towards protecting the rights of individual users. At a glance, those reinforced rights for individuals comprise the right to be informed, the right to access, the right to rectification, the right to erasure, the right to restrict processing, the right to data portability, the right to object, and several rights around decision-making and profiling. Sports organisations have been bombarded with third party advice over the past 12 months, and almost all have embarked on a strategy towards GDPR compliance. But there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and there are plenty of myths and misunderstandings around. With the help of Fiona Green, Director and Co-Founder of sport CRM consultancy Winners, we chart some of those myths here:

1

The location of your business is relevant

It's not. Residency of the data subject is the only thing that matters under GDPR. So if your business is outside the EU, but you have database subjects inside the EU, or you're targeting consumers in Europe with, for example, an OTT service for your US sports product, then you need to be GDPR compliant.

2

You have to be 100% compliant by 25th May

"Your local authority is looking to see that you're making change and implementing processes but is not expecting you to be fully compliant by 25th May," says Green. "It's not just about ticking an opt-in box to receive an email; there's a ton of documentation that you need to provide with all your processes; there's back-end system issues; there are HR issues too."

3

You have to be 100% compliant at all

Such is the quantity of documentation and process required that Green believes it's "unlikely that anyone would be 100% compliant." Instead, she advises her clients to focus on the key issues that would prompt authorities to investigate should they come across as visibly in breach. "Authorities will audit if they get a complaint or if they see something themselves," she says. Complaints about unwanted communication from sports organisations are likely to be a hotspot, and could even, Green suggests, become an unlikely new battleground for opposing fans with a chip on their shoulder and a solid understanding of the new regulations. "The complaints will come from disgruntled consumers, or fans of opposing teams, if they've not opted in and have received something, or they've opted in for something, unsubscribed, but then received it again. So you need to minimize the risk of anybody complaining. Is this going to happen? Who knows, but if you've got a Man Utd fan subscribed to a Man City offering; Man City breach and that fan thinks this is how we can get Man City, they may well complain."

4

You won't get fined

You will. Under current regulations, the highest applicable fine is £500,000, and Carphone Warehouse was issued a £400,000 fine for a breach in 2015. Under GDPR, the maximum fine is €20 million or 4% of global turnover, whichever is the bigger. There is plenty of grey area in the interpretation of new regulation like this, and until there is case law, the full range of implications won't be clear. But that means that there will, at some stage, be case law. And the higher profile the subject, the more likely that the message of those implications will be spread

5

You'll lose large numbers from your database

Manchester United won't have been the only rights holder to target its entire database for opt-in ahead of the introduction of GDPR. And it's safe to assume that, having started with a database of 49 million, the number will be smaller when the process is complete. The club will be able to point to a best practice database management example, and confirmed 100% engagement across the new-look audience base, but, according to Green and Winners' interpretation, targeting the entire database is not necessary. "Man Utd have sent me a re-opt-in email three times; I've opened it three times and I've not re-opted in. So they lose me out of their database," Green says. "Our interpretation is they didn't need to do that; they only needed to ask those users for whom they had no history. If you've been sending campaigns for three years and the party's been opening and engaging, we think you've got legitimate interest. As a consumer I happily received Man Utd's campaigns, was asked to opt in and I haven't in order to see what happens next. The mere fact they sent me one and I have not actioned it means they have to take me off the list."

6

There won't be performance implications

"There's a clause in GDPR called the right to portability; this means that any person in your database has the right to request that their data is made available for any other data controller to access it," explains Green. "I've got an account with Spotify, I want to make it easier to join Amazon so Spotify have an obligation to make that data available in an editable format that can be easily transferred over to Amazon. It's not Spotify's obligation to get the data to Amazon; it's Amazon's obligation to get the data but Spotify has to make it accessible. Imagine this in the context of a player transfer. Man Utd sells a player to Real Madrid and then Real Madrid says, 'I want all his biometrics, all his training data, anything you have about this player's performance'. Real Madrid will then have access to an understanding of Man Utd's training processes; how they develop players, how they assess players."



FAN DATA INSIGHT THE HOLY GRAIL OF SPORTS MARKETING



Made to
measure



Made to measure

In the most sophisticated, multi-level relationships between rights holder and sponsor, fan data is increasingly a fundamental asset and being used to build knowledge to help shape, refine and tailor messaging to specific pockets of consumers

By David Cushnan

With sports teams, federation and leagues learning more about their fans all the time and sitting on growing mountains of fan data, there has been an inevitable trickle-down effect to partner brands. A comprehensive understanding of habits, avidity, behaviours and attitudes – and how they change over time – has, thanks in no small part to the advance of technology, become a central focus for rights holders. For partner brands, however, much of that data can be used to build specific activations targeted at particular segments of fans – for example, engaging avid and less avid fans of a sport or team in different ways to elicit the most positive response and higher engagement.

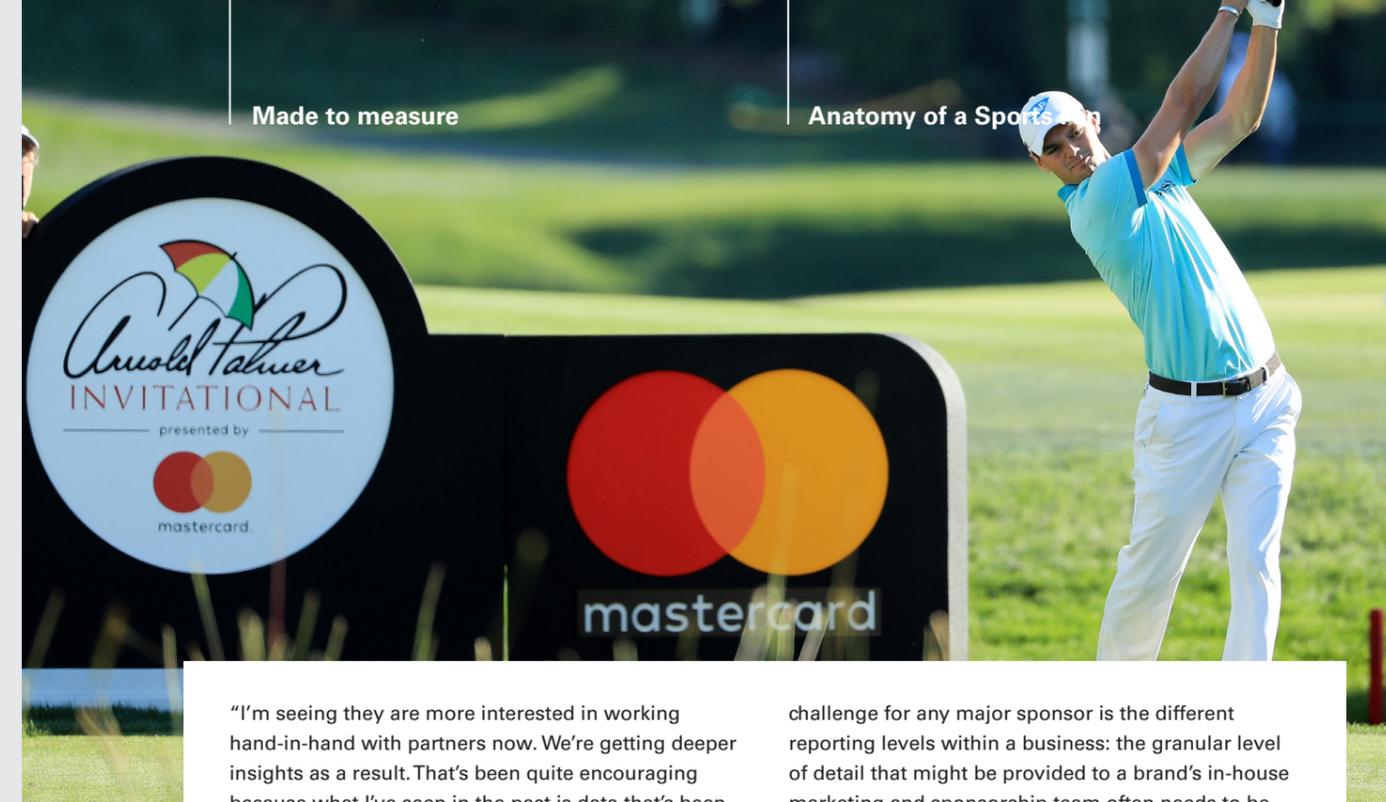
On both sides, a more collaborative approach to data and insights would appear to have only upside: more engaged fans are good for both rights holder and brand, while fans of whatever type are more likely to be exposed to content, campaigns and initiatives that are highly relevant to them.

Over the past two decades or so, an entire – and now thriving – sports industry sector has grown up around measurement of partnerships, from audience figures to brand exposure, sponsorship valuations to, increasingly, more granular information about fan demographics and habits. Throw in the many different data points created through online and social content, a host of metrics which reveal fan engagement levels, and both rights holders and brands now have access to a volume of data unimaginable even just a few years ago. Complicating matters is the fact that many agencies operating in the research and insights space means a variety of methodologies. The biggest global brands, meanwhile, have their own, longstanding models for evaluating the success of partnerships and understanding their consumer base. “We have



very, very quantified metrics that we use to evaluate each and every sponsorship and sponsorship event that happens,” MasterCard Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Raja Rajamannar told the Leaders audience in 2016. “You need to translate that to a business KPI and understand the dots that link the marketing KPIs and the business KPIs. That’s where we have developed several proprietary algorithms, so we can evaluate whether the sponsorship has worked for us – and if it’s not, what we can do about it.”

As Head of Global Sponsorship and Europe Marketing Communications at DHL, Fiona Taag oversees a portfolio of partnerships that includes Formula One, Formula E, World Rugby and Manchester United. She notes recent “progression” in terms of the rights holder-brand data dynamic. “Maybe in the past, rights holders have felt nervous about sharing too much data or a depth of data with their partners,” she explains.



Made to measure

Anatomy of a Sports

“I’m seeing they are more interested in working hand-in-hand with partners now. We’re getting deeper insights as a result. That’s been quite encouraging because what I’ve seen in the past is data that’s been shared with us that’s outdated, that is largely irrelevant because it’s so big picture and macro. What we’re starting to glean now is a bit more detail, insights that give us a better idea of the fan demographic. How do different fan groups engage with the rights holder, with that property, with the partners? And how is that relevant to DHL? That’s even to the extent where we’re starting to hear rights holders tell us they’re going to be surveying their fan base and asking whether we’d like to include a specific question or two that could be relevant for DHL.”

The sheer volume of data available to brands, collected in-house, by third party agencies and by rights holders, presents a growing challenge. “I think people have got on the bandwagon pretty quickly,” she argues, “but the big struggle has been dealing with the wealth of information that is now to hand through technology. Understanding what information or data is necessarily needed and how that should be packaged and analysed and interpreted is something that I see many people – ourselves included – grappling with. The important thing is how quickly you can get to the data that is of most relevance and then use that accordingly.”

“We’re obviously looking to our rights holders to provide us with not only the data but, through understanding our company, to come to us with relevant insights; the stuff they think is most pertinent to our needs. We’ve had to get our heads around – myself included – the masses of data that we generate around our business and our operation, but critical is how we get to the right sort of data and analyse it in the right ways so it influences our future and what we do around partnerships.”

Taag is among a breed of senior marketing executives working for major brands keen to be across what she describes as the data “nitty gritty”, but a further

challenge for any major sponsor is the different reporting levels within a business: the granular level of detail that might be provided to a brand’s in-house marketing and sponsorship team often needs to be synthesised and repackaged for executives or board members further up the organisation. “We’re the ones who know our companies best, we know what our management is looking for,” Taag points out. “I think we need to make clear our expectations but for sure rights holders need to think more and more about how it [data] can be more relevant to partners and their individual objectives.”

How formalised are your requirements around access to data in contracts with rights holders, or does sharing of information happen on a more informal basis?

Fiona Taag: Our contracts generally will cover a certain level of reporting requirements but that’s not specifically talking about fanbases, it’s more related to assets broadcast assets, digital and social assets – the performance of campaigns on digital channels, for example, and the engagement around it. That reporting is generally embedded into contracts. More broadly, the understanding around fanbase is something we talk about even before contracts are done – it’s obviously a big part of the evaluation process, understanding how a fanbase is growing and more importantly in my mind how the rights holder is reacting to technology and changes in the way fans are consuming their property. Can you see them reacting and thinking about how to work with partners to make the most of that?

We’re in a phase, it seems, where there are hundreds or thousands of possible metrics – to what extent now is the key to make careful, critical evaluations about what data is must-have and what is merely nice-to-have?

You still need that macro view but to make it really relevant and to track performance – how and what can we feed into the process that will improve our

DHL HEAD OF GLOBAL SPONSORSHIP AND EUROPEAN MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS FIONA TAAG AT LEADERS WEEK 2017



performance over time, so that on a rolling basis we can keep refining and tuning what we're doing to make sure it's engaging fans for longer? Ultimately, of course we want that to increase their propensity to purchase DHL as an outcome but to get to that we need a lot of information - what is the interest level of the fan, how is that evolving through to awareness of DHL's involvement [in a sport or partnership], to that propensity to purchase. It's all about that funnel, and it's a process towards making DHL top of mind when they need to ship something. Anything that can help us through that process - to make sure we hit those fan needs more squarely - has got to be good, for both parties.

How does a brand like DHL deal with the possibility of real-time tracking, particularly around social content and campaigns?

We obviously want to be able to react relatively quickly, but we don't have the same need for that as a team or a club. But certainly to be able to react quickly, in the social world in particular, is key. We have our own internal resource constraints, so that's where an agency can help us to pull out the key insights. We used to work on a yearly reporting basis, then it became monthly, now it's on a weekly and in some cases a daily basis trying to track trends and keep on top of what's working and what doesn't.

Have you got an example of an activation that has been created or tweaked thanks to rights holder fan insights?

It's never something in isolation, there are many elements that come into play. With rugby sevens, all the research that was done post-Olympics around

how rugby sevens has grown and changed - with more women becoming interested in the sport and changes around the interest in rugby fans consuming data around the sport - was cross-checked with all the content that existed around the World Sevens, to see where we could play a role in bringing some insights to the audience. Through the use of fan data and all sorts of other discussions with World Rugby around the development of the game and how to build awareness in the game, we started looking at what we could do around the profiles of the sevens players - back then they were largely relatively unknown, except for maybe one or two. Together, we developed the DHL Impact Player award, a combination of various performance criteria on the field during a tournament that ranked the players, which has a tournament award and an overall seasonal trophy. We created that initially as a trial with the men and then introduced it for the women's game as well.

What's the next step as far as rights holder and brand data sharing and understanding is concerned?

The next step is rights holders being more tailored in their approach, just as brands are doing, for example, with content creation because we see things like video really enticing fans' interest in finding out more about a property and our companies. We obviously need to look at how we tailor content across different rights channels, so for rights holders it's about how they are providing tailored insights for individual partners based on objectives, based on campaigns that are being planned. A more collaborative approach than a rights holder doing a fan survey and presenting it, in black and white, or just giving top-level highlights. 🌟



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