

Judith Mugeni - Sponsorships must be fit for purpose and for business

By [Judith Mugeni](#)

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Sponsorship marketing works wonders when applied appropriately. It has been proven as an effective channel to positively promote the brand, drive commercial growth and allow the brand to live out its purpose and values.



Image supplied. Sponsorships must be fit for purpose and fit for business says Judith Mugeni.

This means that sponsorships must be fit for purpose and fit for business.

In 2024, brands should aim to use sponsorship to harness the power of positive brand perception and growth. They can do this through:

- Brand messaging
- Unearthing growth opportunities by studying the full ecosystem
- Being intentional with community engagement and purpose-driven presence.

Sponsoring a sport, entertainment, arts, and cultural platforms offers significant, different, and exciting marketing opportunities to actively engage with audiences in a media-fragmented landscape as well as showcase support for the things your target audience cares about.



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Strategies for brands

Below are the strategies that brands can use sponsorship as a source for growth and good.

- **Unlock new growth opportunities – ecosystem thinking**

Sponsorship goes beyond B2B or B2C thinking, it requires a human 2 human (H2H) engagement model to resonate and thus drive growth.

Brands with strong growth aspirations need a sponsorship marketing platform and property fit to deliver that growth. Brands seeking growth will use sponsorship as a vehicle to drive their commercial growth (beyond the much-needed brand visibility) as well as showcase their commitment to responsible business and doing good.

However, unlocking commercial growth requires sponsorship market ecosystem thinking.

This helps brands to consider broader possibilities beyond targeting just the end user (the traditional, linear thinking of just the fan or spectator) of your service or product.

Start by asking the question “Who are the customers that we want?” and create a company culture around sponsorship.

This expansion in thinking lets your marketing and sales teams intentionally look at the bigger picture, at the segments you are focusing on and how they consume the property you sponsor and where your brand could authentically plug in, which ultimately paves the way to an increased impact.

Map out your different targeted segments' user journeys to gain an understanding of how companies, customers and suppliers connect and the value they exchange within the sponsored property ecosystem.

As an example, start with the rights holder – a possible business customer, the suppliers they use to bring their property to life (a possible SMME segment), the participants e.g. the talent (a possible segment) and of course the spectator – the consumer of the passion.

If done correctly, your brand will know how to truly engage its different target audiences in their passions, and improve how you show up by plugging in your products and or services authentically. Eco-system thinking will lead to an enhanced customer experience.



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• The power of a positive perception: Purpose-driven presence

The core of marketing is understanding the customer and how to capture their attention. Sponsorship is about sponsoring what your customer cares about and meeting them at their most passionate.

Sponsorship makes a meaningful connection with customers. Purpose-driven marketing is a strategy used by brands to centre their marketing messaging communications efforts around a social cause that aligns with their core values.

Sponsorship has the power to bring a brand's purpose to life in a meaningful way.

Align your sponsorships/partnerships with purpose-driven initiatives, that have a deeper societal purpose, which will enhance your image and contribute meaningfully to society.

It requires authenticity and full commitment. A genuine alignment between the brand, the chosen sponsorship, and the cause.

Sponsorship goes beyond lip service; beyond the cosmetics – beyond painting the town in your brand palettes through branding but fosters a deeper connection with the consumers. It is purpose-driven, and goes beyond brand visibility or profit margins; it's about making a meaningful impact.

It demands that we ask ourselves key questions:

- What do we as a brand value most, and what do our customers care about most?
- What cause are we dedicated to that aligns with who we are?
- How does our business make the world a better place?
- What impact on the world do we want to achieve?
- Are you a brand that cares about forging enduring connections with people through their love of sports, entertainment, and culture?
- Are you a brand that cares about people spending time in the great outdoors?
- Are you a brand that cares about people taking care of their health?
- Are you a brand that cares about people's emotional well-being?



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Answers to some of these questions will allow you to show up on purpose and point.

Brands need to give greater consideration to the purpose and potential societal good of a sponsorship or partnership that ultimately leads to more efficient effective engagement with your target audience.

ABOUT JUDITH MUGENI

Judith Mugeni is the co-founder, chief strategist and managing partner of Ganizani Consulting Services, a strategic marketing and tech firm. Her passion lies in the integration of all marketing activities. Previously she founded YzeUp.Africa, a knowledge sharing platform tackling personal branding, mental health and personal development.

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