

IEG Sponsorship Report

The latest on sports, arts, cause and entertainment marketing



www.IEGSR.com

SELLING

Sellers Find Success By Looking Internally

In addition to seeking new prospects and modeling successful programs, properties should evaluate what they are currently doing and take other steps to look for ideas close to home.

1/15/10: Whether it was seeing an obvious product tie-in, re-examining a traditional organization structure, or thinking critically about ways to improve existing sales processes, the three properties below achieved recent revenue gains by focusing within.

The Children's Museum Of Indianapolis

An organic connection with a sponsor's product led to a deal for the museum.

Jenny Burch, associate vice president of development, noticed venue staff using The Procter & Gamble Co.'s Swiffer products to clean the museum's three-stories-tall Fireworks of Glass sculpture by artist Dale Chihuly. The work is comprised of 3,200 individually blown pieces of glass.

"I'm always looking for creative ways to partner with corporations, and one of the most popular questions we get about the sculpture is, 'How do you clean it?' " Burch said. "We thought a partnership with Swiffer would be a great way to support the museum and a great way to integrate the brand."

She approached the consumer products giant and the company agreed, signing a one-year cash-and-in-kind deal. Swiffer receives status as "official cleaner" of the 479,000-square-foot museum, on-site signage touting the designation, as well as sampling opportunities.

To determine who to approach at P&G, Burch researched Swiffer press releases to identify potential sponsorship decision-makers. She approached the product's brand manager in August and secured the deal in November.

Wright State University

The Dayton, Ohio school is on track to grow sponsorship revenue 35 percent this year after it combined sponsorship sales for two properties previously sold separately.

WSU now coordinates sales efforts for its athletic department with those of the Ervin J. Nutter Center, the school's sports and entertainment arena, which hosts touring shows and other events in addition to WSU sports.

Until late last year, the two organizations previously sold sponsorship separately, said Bob Grant, WSU athletic director. The school stopped selling its sports teams and the venue separately upon the September hiring of sales manager Jackie Schetter to handle sponsorship sales, servicing and marketing.

“Instead of cannibalizing each other, we can offer everything from radio ads during our game broadcasts to signage visible during visits from the Harlem Globetrotters and Rascal Flatts,” Grant said. “It’s one-stop shopping.”

New sponsors include CytoSport Inc.’s Muscle Milk; gas and convenience store chain Speedway SuperAmerica, LLC; and The Reynolds and Reynolds Co., an automotive retailing solutions provider.

The company ended its partnership with sales agency Nelligan Sports Marketing after hiring Schetter, Grant said.

Big Ten Conference

Replacing cookie-cutter gold, silver and bronze packages with tailored offerings can go a long way in securing new dollars.

That switch played a major role in allowing the Big Ten Conference to lift its annual sponsorship revenue by roughly 50 percent for the start of the current college basketball season.

New sponsors include Avis Budget Group, Inc.; MFS Investment Management; and Verizon Wireless.

“You can’t be afraid to customize; you need to be a good listener to what a sponsor is trying to accomplish, and create a package that accomplishes those objectives,” said Scott Bailey, general manager with Big Ten Sports Properties, which became the conference’s multimedia and sponsorship rightsholder in early ’08. Big Ten Sports Properties is owned by Learfield Sports.

Sources

Big Ten Sports Properties, Tel: 847/696-1010

The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, Tel: 317/334-4000

Wright State University, Tel: 937/775-2771
