

MONTHLY REVIEW



Mercedes-Benz

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ACTIVATIVE

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Nike's Troubled Endorsers > The Pristorius/Steenkamp shooting is primarily a human tragedy, but should Nike now consider revisiting its use of 'weaponised' ad copy in particular and its athlete endorser strategy in general? Particularly in a month in which its old Lance Armstrong 'What Am I On?' TV spot was revisited by millions on YouTube post Oprah.

Big Oscar Broadcast Ad Buys > There are no official sponsorship slots for The Academy Awards, but the mammoth, multiple spot, TV ad buys in ABC's ceremony broadcast - from mainstream brands like Samsung and JC Penney - are as close as you can get to building a partnership with The Oscars and leveraging its huge, cross-generational audience.

Fashion Week Designer Partnership > While Mercedes and Vodafone led their fashion week marketing by creating their own branded designer/fashion products to enhance their service-led activation (eg 'transport' and 'recharging' respectively), Amex blended concierge services with exclusive mobile-based retail discounts.

Music Award Work: GRAMMYS & BRITs > It's music awards season and 2013 sponsor work saw innovative uses of new technologies and new music platform partnerships. A key trend at this year's GRAMMYS involved supporting new artists, while BRITs title sponsor MasterCard connected consumers to their idols through FAN video remakes.

Google Hangouts & Twitter Takeovers > One key objective for any sponsorship campaign is to bring the consumers closer to the stars. In the past this has been numerically restricted because of physical limitations, but social media now provides open platforms that can connect large numbers of fans with their favourite players (and ex-players too).

Real-Time Twitter Event Marketing > Real-time social media event response (eg Oreo at the Super Bowl and Dulux at The BRITs), can earn brands big benefits without spending big. But in 2013 so many brands are trying their hand with irrelevant (irritating) tweets, that some consumers already admire brands restrained enough to be quiet at big, noisy events.

Kick-Off Campaigns 2013: MLS & NRL > Two different sports on opposite sides of the world launched season kick-off campaigns in February - both initiatives share one thing, a focus on unification. MLS Jersey Week aims to unify all its clubs' shirt launches into a one national campaign, while the NRL takes a top-to-bottom, whole-of-game approach.

About Us > Activative is a sponsorship intelligence and insights company committed to championing new partnership models, spreading leadership ideas, exploring original thinking and showcasing innovative, risk-taking activation. For details of publishing, monitoring and consultancy services visit us online at W. www.activative.co.uk T. @activative

Nike's Troubled Endorsers > The Dangers Of Athlete Ambassador Ads

From Pistorius' murder trial and Armstrong's drugs cheating, to Woods' sex scandals and Vick's criminal conviction, Nike's recent endorser disasters highlight the dangers of ambassador ad strategies. Can more circumspect ad copy, more thorough due diligence and two-track approaches help reduce the brand risk?

Pistorius 'Bullet In The Chamber'

Nike's reaction to the Valentine's Day tragedy was to swiftly remove its 'I Am The Bullet In The Chamber' ads where it could. On 21 Feb it suspended Pistorius' contract saying 'We believe Oscar Pistorius should be afforded due process, we will continue to monitor the situation and we express deepest sympathy and condolences to all families concerned'. While this is a human tragedy rather than a brand strategy story, one can nevertheless question Nike's gun-themed choice of ad copy and its frequent use of 'fighting and weaponry' vocabulary. Considering its recent ambassador scandals, perhaps Nike should review its copy approach. After all, in the digital era ads can never be fully removed, the press run pictures of posters being taken down, while bloggers track the removal of the ads in real-time.

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Armstrong 'What Am I On?'

Another example of how ads now live forever on the internet came alongside Lance Armstrong's February TV semi-confession. Oprah's show wasn't the only drug-related Armstrong video that drew a big audience last month. Armstrong's combative, anti-doping Nike commercial 'What Am I On?' was originally loaded on to YouTube in December 2005, but it has now racked up an impressive 2,466,738 YouTube views and boasts more than 3,000 likes (many of which have been in the last two months). This Nike TV spot, which sees Armstrong use his brand endorser role to answer his critics on allegations regarding him doping, was launched as a US Television commercial back in 2001. Its recent revival illustrates the dangers of how deeply brands can be drawn into the lies of their ambassadors.

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Woods 'Earl & Tiger' Viral

Nike, of course, has always been a brand with an eye for an opportunity, and it certainly took the bull by the horns when it faced the Tiger Woods' sex scandal head on by releasing this 'father and son' viral in 2010. The black and white head shot spot shows Woods' listening as his late father Earl deliver a lecture on ethics and morality via voiceover. The producers selectively spliced audio from a 2004 interview Earl Woods gave (about his wife). The online film was carefully timed to coincide with the golfer's return at The Masters. It aired on ESPN and The Golf Channel, but was primary aimed at online media. A sombre reflection on a sports star who has lost his way, or a cynical attempt at rebranding and rebooting a big brand's star endorser? Whatever your view, it certainly got people talking.

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Big Ad Buys Are As Close As You Can Get To Oscar Sponsorship

Unfortunately for sponsorship directors and partnership VPs there are no official sponsorship slots up for grabs at The Academy Awards. But the mixed, cross-generational audiences are so big that mainstream US brands invest huge sums in giant, multi-ad buys during the ceremony broadcast to leverage one of middle-America's biggest annual quality content platforms.

Samsung's 'Unicorn Apocalypse' Series

Samsung's Oscar's ad buy was so huge it seemed as close as any brand could get to actually sponsoring the 85th Academy Awards. The giant South Korean conglomerate ran no less than six TV spots during ABC's live ceremony broadcast - including a 90-second flagship commercial featuring film legend Tim Burton. All the brand's Oscar spots focus on a small technology company developing a new video game called Unicorn Apocalypse. The final Burton ad, sees the director interested in turning the game into a movie. Thus dovetailing the previous theme with the Oscar's broadcast. This ad, which continues the 'Unicorn Apocalypse' theme introduced earlier in 2013, aims to highlight how Samsung Galaxy products can be utilised for work as well as for play. Samsung also used Twitter engagement during the Oscars and was one of several advertisers (including JC Penney and Pantene) to spent marketing money running promoted trends campaigns on Twitter in support of the TV work.

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JC Penney's 'Yours Truly' Campaign

Like Samsung, long-time Oscar broadcast sponsor JC Penney ran a major series of six new ads during ABC's 2013 Academy Awards show. All ran under the retailer's umbrella 'Yours Truly' big idea. Each spot focusses on a specific range and creatively they are all presented as a letter from the brand to its customers. The highlight was a 90-second ad, 'Dear America', presented as a love letter from the clothing store to America. More specifically it was addressed to 20 different types of people - from dreamers to the faithful - and each was presented against heartfelt, emotional scenes of daily American life with the message 'You deserve to look better. You deserve to live better. That's what we've believed for 100 years. And we will believe for 100 more.' A departure from 2012's humour-led Ellen DeGeneres work, this sentimental approach is in line with recent successful US idealistic/nostalgic spots such as Budweiser's 'Clydesdale' and Dodge Ram's 'Farmer' spots in this year's Super Bowl.

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Fashion Week Activation Focused On Designer/Style Partnerships

While Mercedes and Vodafone led their fashion week partnership marketing by creating their very own branded designer/fashion products/pieces to enhance activation based around event services (transport and recharging respectively), Amex blended concierge services with exclusive mobile-based retail offers.

Mercedes NY 'Fashion Plates'

A stand out feature of Mercedes-Benz's New York Fashion Week activation was its innovative blend of design, style, CSR and social media competition via a 'Fashion Plates' initiative. Focused on promoting its new CLA-Class alongside the brand itself, Mercedes invited 30 designers and fashion influencers to create their own registration/license plates. The custom plates were displayed at Lincoln Centre through Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week during the second week of February. The idea behind the project is that each fashionista's own plate reflects their sense of style and design philosophy. The theme was to project a sense of 'fashion forward thinking'. The big name designer approach then translated into a consumer-focused competition through social media platforms. Fans of the designers could get their hands on the plates themselves through the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Plate Scramble.

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Vodafone Own Brand Nail Polish

Vodafone, principle sponsor of London Fashion Weekend, spearheaded its event marketing on Valentine's Day by launching its own bespoke Vodafone Nail Varnish. The mobile giant partnered with Nails Inc to develop the specially created Vodafone Red nail polish shade, inspired (unsurprisingly), by the company's signature red corporate colour. The PR and photo call launch event at Somerset House was fronted by Made In Chelsea reality star Millie Mackintosh. The actress/model showcased the shade wearing a colour-matched dress and Louboutin heels and demonstrated the brand's bespoke nail varnish vending machine. In addition to the usual round of press interviews, Mackintosh also helped drive the Twitter thread of the promotion, tweeting during the launch event (and through Fashion Week) using the #VodafoneRed and #Vodafonevip hashtags.

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Amex Fashion Insider Partnership

The second season of the American Express partnership with the British Fashion Council sees the Official Card Partner of London Fashion Week (LFW) spearhead its card members special access and event services programme via a concierge team and a Foursquare retail initiative. Amex members had access to a series of special events throughout LFW and the brand's 'Fashion Insiders' concierge team was on-site to cater for member needs - from schedules and retail events, to transport and navigation tips and even helping members' book tables at London's best restaurants or find phone charging points - to maximise their LFW experience. 2013 saw the 'Fashion Insiders' wearing the latest colour block trend in outfits by Irish designer Jonathan Saunders. Amex also partnered with fashion blogger DisneyRollerGirl and ran a Foursquare retailer discount initiative.

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Music Awards Activation > New Artists @Grammys & Remakes @BRITs

February is music awards season and this year's sponsor campaigns saw several innovative uses of new technologies and music platform partnerships. While a key trend at this year's Grammys revolved around supporting new artists, the BRITs title sponsor connected consumers to their idols through video remakes.

The Grammy's #WorldIsListening

'The World Is Listening' is the new campaign from The Recording Academy and CBS promoting the 55th GRAMMY Awards and features creative from current award nominees Black Keys, Taylor Swift and Rihanna. The campaign for the 2013 awards show, on 10 February in Los Angeles and broadcast live on the CBS Network, is the sixth year in a row that agency TBWA\Chiat\Day has developed the awards promotional marketing. The initiative, which includes up-and-coming artists as well as the aforementioned established stars, rolled out across print, out-of-home and digital platforms as well as three spearhead TV spots. The film work drives viewers to a web hub at www.grammyamplifier.com - a platform that allows musicians to share their tracks via SoundCloud in return for the chance to have their music tweeted by a musical icon panel of stars that includes Linkin Park, RZA, and Snoop Lion.

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THE GRAMMYS LIVE FEB 10 8PM CBS **2** HD
SHARE YOUR SOUND ON GRAMMYAMPLIFIER.COM

Pepsi 'New Artist' Links With Vevo

Pepsi linked with The Recording Academy and entertainment platform Vevo for its 'Best New Artist' video series to provide music lovers with a richer Grammy's experience through a behind-the-scenes, in-depth look at the nominees. The Pepsi-backed '5 Questions With' series, which runs on www.grammy.com and across Vevo's web-based mobile/tablet/connected TV platforms, aims to give fans a chance to discover Grammy nominees and potential winners and learn more about them and their music. The '5 Questions' series was shot and released on Vevo in instalments in the run up to the Grammy Awards and it included Pepsi 'Best New Artists' ads both trailing the show in advance and airing during the broadcast itself. 2013 also saw the return of last year's Pepsi 'Best New Artist' Pandora Mixtape project, while Pepsi's Grammy genre stations were also available on Pandora.

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MasterCard's 'Priceless Remakes'

MasterCard's 'Priceless Remakes' campaign leveraged its BRIT Awards 2013 sponsorship and culminated during ITV's coverage of the 20 February O2 Arena ceremony during which the payments brand aired three 60-second ads that were remakes of pop videos from singing stars Conor Maynard, Rita Ora and Delilah. The spots were cut from the final edits of MasterCard's competition search which offered fans the chance to recreate (and sing on) their favourite star's music videos. Of course, midway through the recording the star themselves appeared - much to the surprise and delight of the fan. The campaign, which was developed by MasterCard agency McCann London and with media planning and buying by UM, kicked-off back in early January with the brand asking fans to enter the competition by uploading videos of them singing the relevant tracks as an online audition.

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Social Utd > Player Google+ Hangouts & Coach Twitter Takeovers

One of the key objectives for any sponsorship campaign is to bring the consumers closer to the stars. In the past this has been numerically restricted because of physical limitations, but social media can provide open platforms that can connect large numbers of fans with favourite players (and favourite ex-players too).

DHL's Man Utd Player Google+ Hangout

On Valentine's Day morning, official logistics partner DHL tweeted that Man Utd fans would have the chance to interact directly with several players at the first DHL Man Utd Google+ Hangout. The @DHL_ManUtd tweet drove fans to find further details about the live online, multi-user video chat on Google+ via a bit link and the event was promoted as a platform to give fans the chance to find out more about their heroes and offered an opportunity to pre-post questions. The Hangout, which featured Wayne Rooney, Johnnie Evans and Tom Cleverly in front of a DHL/Man Utd logo backboard, was part of DHL's 'The Journey From Good To Great' campaign which launched on Google+ in conjunction with the new team's training kit. The event was subsequently promoted on Utd's website with a press release that claimed it was a first-of-its-kind event, an innovative platform to bring fans even closer to Manchester United and its first team players. The Hangout follows the launch of the latest DHL training kit - based on the team's journey from good to great - which saw DHL invite players to a photo shoot at the club's former training ground 'The Cliff.' The idea behind the photo shoot was to provide a visual glimpse of where Man Utd started and to reflect the team's hard working values. The pictures were accompanied by a web based history of the training ground, plus video content of players commented on what 'The Cliff' means to them.

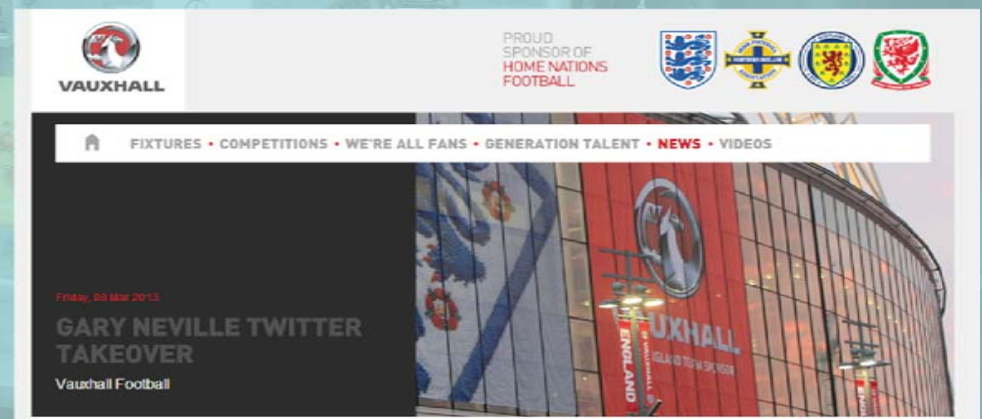
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Vauxhall's 'England/Neville' Training Twitter Takeover

In the build up to March's FIFA World Cup 2014 qualifying fixtures England team sponsor Vauxhall ran a Twitter Takeover led by England coach Gary Neville. The Twitter takeover for @VauxhallEngland saw Neville answer live fan questions through the social media platform. Using the hashtag #askGary, the former Manchester United captain answered questions which ranged from his England career playing experiences to technicalities relating to his current role as part of England manager Roy Hodgson's coaching staff. Following the automotive brand's digital initiative, the Sky Sports analyst (and Soccerex Ambassador) then led a training session for Vauxhall's 'Big Pitch' winners at England's new St George's Park training headquarters. The aim of the initiative was to provide the 30 competition winners with a chance to experience a slice of the professional life an England footballer - this spanned both training at St George's and a run out at Wembley Stadium itself. The winners had all taken part in the nationwide Big Pitch competition which ran across multiple platforms - including Vauxhall's own dedicated football website.

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Real-Time Twitter Event Marketing Goes Mainstream

Low-latency social media creativity and real-time event response mean today's marketers can (sometimes 'must') work at high speed. As the right kind of fast response can earn brands significant benefits without spending huge sums. But post Super Bowl, so many brands are trying their hand with irrelevant (irritating) tweets, we already admire those brands restrained enough to be quiet during big, noisy events.

Oreos Light Up When Super Bowl Goes Dark

The Super Bowl blackout helped CMOs worried that a one-sided blow-out would undercut the millions spent on second-half TV commercials, but it was Oreo marketers who were happiest of all after the positive viral response to their quick Twitter reaction to the power outage. Oreo's agency 360i was flexible and quick-witted enough to turn around a blackout tweet in a matter of minutes that read 'Power Out? No Problem' coupled with a single Oreo image that said 'You Can Still Dunk In The Dark'. By the time the Mercedes Benz Superdome's power returned, the Oreo response had seen 10,000+ retweets (18,000 by the time Baltimore lifted the trophy). Positive replies flooded in praising the brand for its 'quick thinking' and 'smart response'. Its post game earned media numbers will certainly be impressive too. Oreo wasn't the only brand to jump on the tactic. Indeed, Audi (9,000 retweets), Tide (1,500 retweets) and Calvin Klein (several hundred retweets) all exploited the blackout.



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Sapphire
Springs 3

Bermuda
Cocktail 2

Dulux Leverages Hirst's Spotted Statues At The Brits

During The BRITs ceremony the quick response ambush work from paint brand Dulux mirrored Oreo's Super Bowl approach when it leveraged consumer interest in the Damien Hirst designed Brit Awards statues. The superstar artist's awards came with his signature 'coloured dots' pattern (indeed the dots lay at the heart of the Brits 2013 imaging and iconography from the behind-the-scenes backdrops to the stage set designs). While the awards ceremony was being broadcast live on ITV, the quick thinking Dulux marketers sent out a cheeky tweet with an image of the dotted statue alongside the colours it used in the form of a Dulux colour chart. The Tweet's text read: 'Looks like Damien Hirst may have used some of our favourites on the #BRITs2013 award!' The tweet itself was the work of Dulux's digital agency AnalogFolk and it was turned round within a few hours. The agency's social strategy director Stephen Pirrie said the team had devised a framework and strategy for reactive posts that enabled it to plan for upcoming events and to be able to move quickly.



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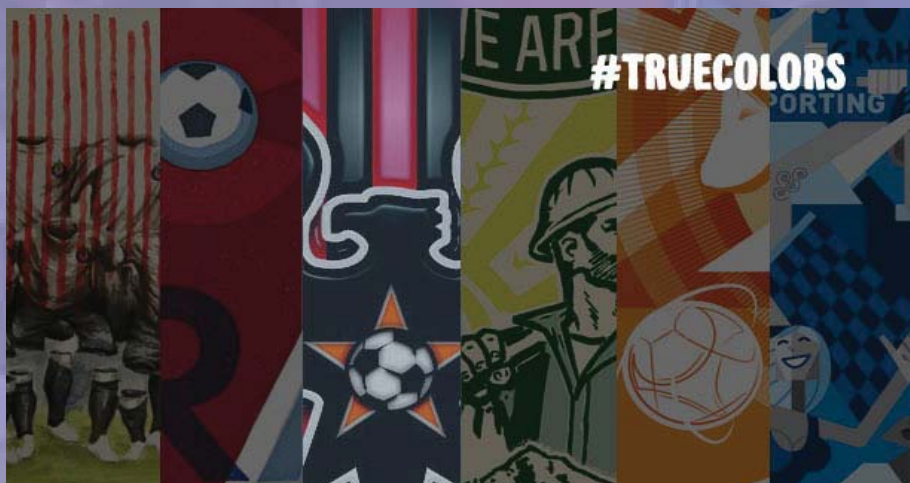
Unification Links Two New Season Kick-Off Campaigns > MLS & NRL

Two different sports on opposite sides of the world launched new season kick-off campaigns in February: both initiatives share one thing - a focus on unification. MLS Jersey Week aims to unify all its clubs' shirt launches into a one national campaign, while the NRL takes a 'top-to-bottom', 'whole-of-game' approach.

MLS 'Jersey Week' & 'March To Soccer'

MLS 'Jersey Week' is promoted as a league tradition, but is actually a new experimental marketing alliance between the league, its franchises, the players and equipment partner Adidas. The MLS and its kit partner coordinated a series of shirt launches in late February to crystallise the start of the 17th season and combine individual team launches into a more powerful unified North American campaign. While not every club took part this year, by 2014 all 19 franchises must unveil a new kit (home, away or third) every season and participate in Jersey Week. The long term plan is that each year will see a new theme and the 2013 central concept is 'Jersey as Art'. Thus, the focus of much of this year's activation and PR is the art, creative process and detail that goes in to each team's collaborative process with Adidas. 2013 saw the MLS ally with the Futbol Artists Network to create the 'True Colors' of MLS. Artists from across the US and Canada created canvas art utilizing club marks, club colours and jersey teaser images.

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NRL's 'Whole Of Game' Inclusive Approach

The 2013 National Rugby League season is kicking off in Australia and New Zealand and is promoting itself with an integrated marketing campaign called 'Rugby League's Got A Hold On Me'. At the core of this multi-layered initiative, which includes fan-customisation and team tailoring elements, is a partnership between the rights owner and Australian R&B singer Jessica Mauboy to create a league anthem - a re-mix of the classic Etta James track 'Something's Got a Hold On Me'. The league song, which has been released by Sony Music and is available for download, provides the central point of a spearhead TV spot. With both 60- and 30-second versions, the commercial aims to be entirely inclusive: it features star players from the national teams, the Telstra Premiership and the Holden State Of Origin, as well as officials, volunteers, fans, amateurs and young under six players from the Coles Backyard League. The TV work is supported by retail, outdoor, press, radio and digital initiatives and the campaign was created by agency MJW and Sony Music Entertainment Australia.

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The activation of sponsorship rights is now more creatively and strategically complex than ever – but the potential rewards are far greater too. The challenge for sponsorship marketers is to keep up with the most relevant ways of maximising value and to keep ahead of the competition.

Activative provides intelligence and insights services that help our clients – rights owners, brands, agencies and professional services – stay at the forefront of this evolving landscape. We focus on emerging strategies and tactics, original and innovative ideas, future facing media and new technologies across the sponsorship community – from sports, music, arts and culture, to education, ecology, cause and corporate social responsibility.

Our role is to advise, analyse, explore, filter and stimulate marketers across the entire space – from traditional sponsorships, to brand tie-ins, strategic collaborations and commercial partnerships. Activative provides clients and subscribers with trends insights, activation stimulus, creative idea generation, competitor/sector analysis and strategic planning. Through our interactive trends, reports and showcases, publishing, online monitoring source and our research and consultancy we guide sponsorship professionals through this changing space.

The old sponsorship model, based on one directional brand-biased claims, vanilla hospitality, badging brands with logos, eye-ball metrics, cost per thousand, reach and frequency, is being replaced by one based on authenticity, customisation, dialogue, interactivity and permissive engagement. Sponsorship is flourishing in this new communications environment as brands seek symbiotic passionate platforms around which to build consumer conversations.

So Activative looks beyond the sponsorship stalwarts of logo rights, arena billboards, shirt sponsorship, celebrity spokespeople, on-pack ticket promotions and traditional above-the-line advertising, and focuses on original ideas and fresh initiatives that leverage new technologies and trends, including: ambush and guerrilla work, branded content and entertainment, blogs and social media, consumer creation and generation, experiential and interactive, gaming and video, utilities, word of mouth and relationship marketing.

We seek out the unconventional, champion daring ideas and analyse breakthrough thinking. The team is committed to innovative thinking. We are not a mouthpiece for the profession, the rights holders or the sponsors themselves. The real value in our work lies in linking trends and making connections, exploring new ideas and identifying original approaches. We offer independent research and objective analysis and use this to make directional insights and actionable recommendations. <

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