Brands considering sports sponsorship should first ascertain what resonates with their target audience, recommends Cint

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Stockholm, Sweden (RPRN) 04/12/13 — Many marketers secure sports sponsorships to raise brand awareness amongst potential customers, but it is essential to carefully manage this process to guarantee its success, advises Cint, a global provider of technology for obtaining market insight. Unless the platform chosen resonates positively with the brand's target audience, it can be a significant wasted investment.

Many large organizations have become synonymous with particular sporting events, for example, the Barclays Premier League or the Virgin London Marathon. In addition, numerous popular sports personalities are often recognized for their successful brand affiliations alongside their athletic accomplishments, such as Usain Bolt and Puma. These partnerships are notable triumphs in the world of sports sponsorship, and many other brands will covet the return on investment the brands have reaped.

Today's global sports industry is reported to be worth between $480 billion and $620 billion, so it is crucial that any brands considering investing their budget take the time to thoroughly investigate the potential benefit. Utilizing a market research panel will allow brands to survey their target audience to find out which sporting events or personalities they identify with and why. This is particularly relevant when considering sports that are open to extensive debate, which can polarize communities and may alienate a certain number of potential customers. When wine brand Casillero del Diablo pursued a sponsorship with English football team Manchester United, it ensured the partnership was visible only to a global audience outside of the UK, to avoid provoking negative reactions from passionate fans of other English teams. By undertaking research in advance, brands can survey their exact target audience to find out which partnerships they are likely to respond positively to in order to avoid similar pitfalls.

Bo Mattsson, CEO of Cint, comments: "Investing in sports sponsorship can be a big outlay for brands – whether it is supplying the strip for a local football team or television advertising featuring a globally recognized celebrity. It is crucial that marketers obtain feedback from their target audience before pursuing any partnership. If it is for a soft drink brand, does its potential customer base enjoy watching basketball, or rugby? And if for a personal finance company, which particular sports events will ensure it reaches a wide and diverse community that is likely to respond?

"By utilizing consumer research panels, brands can simply and effectively deploy a survey to a select group of individuals, chosen depending on location, age and interests, to establish their preferences when it comes to sports. I strongly urge any organizations pursuing sports sponsorship to thoroughly research how specific individuals and events are perceived and enjoyed by their target audience. Before investing in this expensive marketing tactic, it is important to be sure that it will be perceived as an on-brand, authentic and relevant partnership by those individuals that are most likely to purchase the brand's products or services."

For more information on Cint's wide range of tools to gain market intelligence please visit www.cint.com.

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Contact – Keredy Andrews - cint@punchcomms.com – 0044 1858 411 600.

Media Contact Name: Keredy Andrews
Media E-mail: cint@punchcomms.com
Media Phone: 0044 1858411600

Media Web Address: http://www.punchcomms.com
Company Contact Name: Keredy Andrews
Company E-mail: keredy.andrews@punchcomms.com
Company Phone: 0044 1858411600
Company Web Address: http://www.cint.com

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