

Study Shows In-Game Advertising Maximizes Marketing Dollars In Sports Category

Contributed by TNS Global
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38% of Sports Video Game Players Say they Spend as Much or More Time Playing A Sports Game as they do Watching That Same Sport on TV During its Season [1]

TNS, the world's largest custom research company, today released findings from the ESPN Sports Poll, a monthly tracking study that explored the similarities among traditional sports fans and the sports gamer audience.

The study was conducted in partnership with Electronic Arts Inc. (NASDAQ: ERTS), and the results suggest that advertisers interested in sports content who are not leveraging in-game advertising are missing a big opportunity.

"Fans consume sports in multidimensional ways, said Robert Fox, Senior Vice President at TNS and Executive Director of the ESPN Sports Poll. "Today's interactive entertainment enables fans to engage with their favorite sports on a platform that looks incredibly close to the real thing. When a person is engaged in the video game, there is no channel surfing, and the game is paused only for necessity. This is a terrific way for real-world advertisers and sponsors to develop incremental affinity for their brands."

Avid Fans Create an Opportunity for Marketers

The average Sports Fan follows six to eight different sports. Marketers are challenged to capture fans' attention. Sports Poll data has consistently shown that the average person is an "Avid" Fan of two to three sports.

By targeting the "Avid Fans", marketing campaigns have a much better chance of being noticed by the audience that is paying the most attention, and is likely driving their business.

At 85 million, the National Football League has the largest number of Avid Fans, followed by college football (64 million) and Major League Baseball (53 million).

Sports Video Games Deliver Avid Fans

Sponsors select a property in part because they want to reach the same type of consumer that follows that sport.

The study shows that sports gamers are much more likely than the overall population and sports fans in general to be "Avid" fans for these sports and others:

About half of the households in the country own a gaming console. Of those households, half of the sports fans and 69% of the avid sports fans own at least one sports video game. The demographic profile of the Sports Gamer is favorable to brands wanting to reach their target market through sports.

- * Three-quarters of these players are male
- * More than half are between the ages of 18-34
- * They tend to be single males with disposable income
- * Most surprisingly, they are more physically active than sports fans in general (60% of Sports Gamers have exercised or participated in a sports activity within the past week compared with 44% of sports fans.)

Advice for Marketers

Sports video games represent an attractive opportunity for marketers to activate sponsor commitments already in place. IEG Sponsorship estimates that about \$12B, or 68 cents of every dollar, is spent on sponsorship that is sports related.

Those sponsorship investments require activation to be effective.

The Sports Poll study shows that three out of four sports fans say that in-game advertising plays a part in reinforcing a company's real-world sponsorship of that sport.

The survey asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement: "If a company is an official sponsor of a sports league, having its logo appear in the video game reinforces the company's connection with that sport in the real world." The chart below shows the percent that agree strongly or somewhat, among fans of each sport below.

"Fans have grown to expect that the game experience mirrors the real world and allows them to be Mark Sanchez for the night. Part of the authenticity is the advertising that is imbedded in the game or that is dynamically served during

connected play, and includes the finer details like in-stadium and in-arena signage,” said Elizabeth Harz, Senior Vice President, Global Media Sales at Electronic Arts.

“For sponsors looking to differentiate their brand in a crowded field, the Sports Gamer is influential and the messaging options robust.”

[1] Question Wording: Thinking of the sports video games you own, in a typical week during that sport’s season, do you spend more time watching live sports on television or playing sports video games (Responses were rotated).

About TNS

TNS, who recently merged with Research International, is the world's largest custom research agency delivering actionable insights and research-based business advice to its clients so they can make more effective business decisions.

TNS offers comprehensive industry knowledge within the Consumer, Technology, Finance, Automotive and Political & Social sectors, supported by a unique product offering that stretches across the entire range of marketing and business issues, specializing in product development & innovation, brand & communication, stakeholder management, retail & shopper, and qualitative research.

Delivering best-in-class service across more than 75 countries, TNS is part of Kantar, the world's largest research, insight and consultancy network.

Please visit www.tnsglobal.com for more information.

About The ESPN Sports Poll

Since 1994, dozens of Fortune 500 companies have used the ESPN Sports Poll to make informed decisions in the areas of sports, events and sponsorships on a national, regional and local level.

Additionally, the major leagues utilize the ESPN Sports Poll to promote their leagues and grow their fan-bases.

The Kantar Group

The Kantar Group is one of the world's largest research, insight and consultancy networks. By uniting the diverse talents of more than 20 specialist companies - including the recently-acquired TNS - the group aims to become the pre-eminent provider of compelling and actionable insights for the global business community.

Its 26,500 employees work across 80 countries and across the whole spectrum of research and consultancy disciplines, enabling the group to offer clients business insights at each and every point of the consumer cycle.

The group's services are employed by over half of the Fortune Top 500 companies. The Kantar Group is a wholly-owned subsidiary of WPP Group plc.

For further information, please visit www.kantar.com.

About ESPN

ESPN, Inc. is the world’s leading multinational, multimedia sports entertainment company featuring a portfolio of over 50 multimedia sports assets.

The company is comprised of six domestic television networks (ESPN, ESPN2, ESPN Classic, ESPNEWS, ESPN Deportes, ESPNU), ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNEWS and ESPNU HD simulcast services, ESPN Regional Television, ESPN International (46 networks, syndication, radio, web sites), ESPN Radio, ESPN.com, ESPN The Magazine, ESPN Enterprises, ESPN PPV, ESPN Zones (sports-themed restaurants), and other growing new businesses including ESPN360.com (Broadband), ESPN Mobile Properties, ESPN on Demand and ESPN Interactive.

Based in Bristol, Ct., ESPN is 80 percent owned by ABC, Inc., which is an indirect subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company.

The Hearst Corporation holds a 20 percent interest in ESPN.

New York, NY – 12th February 2010