



IF SPORTS FORUM

Executive Summary

Media & Marketing
Intros and Breakout Sessions

26th - 28th November 2007



Breakout 3: Maximising media exposure on a budget

Case Study: Radio news distribution – an overlooked resource.

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Good morning everybody and thanks for attending this session of this IF FORUM. 20 years ago - having worked in TV and radio and on Fleet Street newspapers in London I realised that radio - for promoting sports and their sponsors - was heavily underused.

My thinking was cemented in the back of a taxi cab in Perth in Western Australia. I was heading to meet some friends at their house on the outskirts of that lovely city. A beautiful warm evening, everything was green, the sun was beginning to dip on the horizon and there was that lovely golden evening sunlight flickering through the trees on either side. The cab driver was German. I was in Perth at the time reporting for radio back in the UK and also I did a monthly feature or so for the English service of Deutsche Welle in Germany.

I and the driver were happily chatting about life as we drove along before he turned on the car radio and lo and behold there was a familiar voice - it was me talking about New York where I had just been the previous month. The driver had tuned in to Deutsche Welle.

While he was listening to my 4 minute feature I realised if only we could develop global coverage from all our sports including Olympic sports – and the idea was born.

Today radio – years later - is still underused.

You'll see in your Conference Programme notes Radio News Distribution – **an overlooked resource.**

So why should anyone be interested in radio? Simple - there's a multi-million audience out there not receiving reports and interviews on their sport.

And the main reason why radio is overlooked is because it is not understood. Many sports governing bodies and sponsors and PR companies have a closed mind. Everyone is interested in TV because they can see it along with newspapers and magazines too – but radio is almost an after thought for promoting sport.

The first question we are asked by the governing bodies and sponsors and PR Companies - is how does radio distribution work – a fair enough question.

And then if they are convinced or partially convinced I then hear... oh if we are going to have some radio broadcasting on our sport then the costs – however minor - will have to be added to the budget - instead of it being part of the budget.

If these powers that be realised what radio can do with its multi-million global reach – then radio should be almost the first thing on the budget.

Remember radio gets to the places – remembering that old drinks advert - that others don't always reach.

Our global audience can reach over 800 million people and who knows maybe even more than that. In our company we have 157 global partners including all major networks - the BBC World Service, Voice of America, the American networks, Deutsche Welle and Radio France – they feed on to thousands of other stations.

And among our 157 partners we feed direct to 66 countries including a heavy feed to countries in Asia. There are 35 winter and summer Olympic sports plus all the Federations that many of you represent here.

Many of these sports - by using radio will obviously enhance their profile.

The problems that many Olympic sports face is radio coverage in between the Olympic Games. Sports Editors for instance in the UK are soccer mad followed by rugby and cricket. Sports have to fight hard and usually fail to get their sport on air even if someone has just won a European or world championship. In the States – it's dominated by American football, basketball, baseball and ice-hockey.

When Sports Editors around the world in TV and radio and newspapers continually hear the drip drip feed of radio reports and interviews and clips and copy stories and features - they will take notice. They will want coverage for themselves because they will think everyone else is getting something important and they should have a slice of it.

As these stations take on these particular sports – these sports obviously get bigger profile and a bigger profile means that sponsors become interested. It's a win-win situation for everybody.

What of the consumer – the watcher, the reader, the listener? Well TV and newspaper sports followers select what they are going to watch and read. They put the finger on the TV button to select. Consumers select their newspaper. They are by and large already committed to their sport of choice.

But what of Radio consumers. They are different. They usually switch on the radio and just listen whether it's a music programme or speech-based programme. So when a sports bulletin pops up they may or may not have a direct interest but the chances are they will continue to listen. In other words that sport with its sponsor will attract the ear of someone not necessarily interested in that sport – a new customer if you like.

GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION

So let's get down to the heart of all this. How are radio reports and interviews and clips and features distributed?

New technology in recent years has allowed us to advance dramatically. I remember reporting for several years from the Heineken Golf Classic. This was also in Perth in Western Australia and in later years from Melbourne. Play would finish at around 6.30pm. But I had to feed directly to many countries and networks – MP3s and e-mails just didn't exist and when they did start they were too slow to file.

As the kangaroos bounced around on the massive greens at the Vines Golf Course and nearly every day there were those wonderful sunsets - my writing colleagues and new friends too always asked me, "David when are you going to be ready to join us for a drink. The golf is over for the day?"

Between 8.30 and midnight I would 4/5 times rush into the bar for a quick drink with my friends and then rush back to my desk to feed pieces directly around the world and later in the evening to feed pieces to places where they were waking up say in the United States for their breakfast programmes. Many times my day finished along with my other reporters in other sports in the early hours of the morning.

Nowadays unless it's a live Q and A we can wrap up everything via MP3 within 2 and a half hours of close of play of any event – and sometimes shorter.

As mentioned we have 157 partners – including some of the biggest networks in the world. Many of these partners re-distribute to thousands of other stations. We also feed to news providers in addition to those 66 countries direct and to websites too.

We feed direct at specific times as agreed with stations before the event. We have a general feed at specific times or depending on the current state of affairs of an event – like the end of a tennis match or a round of golf.

We feed direct reports, interviews, clips, copy and features.

We are hired by.

1. Governing bodies
2. Title sponsors
3. Additional sponsors
4. and sometimes Governments - Uzbekistan

SPONSORS

Sponsor branding on radio via the editorial route reaches millions.

If those sponsors took out an advertising campaign it would cost them millions of dollars and they wouldn't reach anywhere near as many people.

STATIONS

The stations and organisations around the world get quality reports and interviews and we have agreements that branding is subtly put in – not overloaded. It's a drip drip feed. Major networks are cutting back on sending reporters to events and thousands of stations never send anyone. They are delighted with the feeds from us otherwise they would get nothing.

TAILORED MARKET

When we make arrangements to feed direct we always feed with that local country or station in mind.

If we fed into China we would interview a Chinese player via an interpreter and after editing we would feed.

Many sportsman are bi-lingual so someone like badminton player Peter Gade of Denmark would do interviews with us in English and in Danish.

We would use the English version as a world feed and his Danish for Denmark.

FEEDS

So we have different types of feeds

1. General feed – the story of the hour or of the day
2. A tailored feed specifically for individual countries where requested
3. Interviews, clips copy – in general and/or in tailored form Plenty of planning is needed and there is always a full evaluation.

WEBSITE

We are now introducing a weekly sports news feed for each sport. We're doing this in the UK starting with Radio Badminton – a 3-4 minute weekly piece with 3 or 4 clips in it. We will then expand this to a world feed depending on you.

This weekly feed would be ideal for Olympic sports.
Sports we have developed - badminton, tennis, golf, darts, snooker.

RECENTLY

Earlier this month was the Tennis Masters Cup in Shanghai.
Some of you will know that the event had the extra dimension that all the top players had been cast as Terracotta Warriors.

We were hired to deliver five different feeds to include all the top players.

1. U.S.
2. Spanish
3. French
4. U.K.
5. World

This went round the world and also put onto the ATP website. It proved a massive success.

Within the last year

1. World Badminton
2. World Hockey Championships
3. Grand Slam Tennis
4. Golf (formerly Johnnie Walker, World Cup of Golf)

ROUND-UP

1. Radio – with DLI RADIO SPORT'S multi-million network of 157 partners and direct to 66 countries will enhance the Olympic sports and Federations – many that get very little coverage.
2. Costs are minimal.
3. By promoting your sport on radio – then there's more awareness especially from the Sports Editors in all media.
4. More awareness and big multi-million audiences will attract sponsors.

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