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# How to leverage Hollywood: Event sponsorship

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When we flip through TV channels or a magazine, surf the Internet or Twitter, we're likely to see a brand leveraging the power of Hollywood.

While watching the Grammy Awards last month, what stood out was not just Pink's jaw-dropping aerial performance, but the Degree Women's partnership with *both* the Grammy Awards and singer Ciara. This is a great example of a 360-degree partnership that incorporated event sponsorship, media buying and integration, and celebrity endorsement.

Even with the Grammy Awards behind us, we're still in the thick of awards season, making it the perfect time to examine the value of event sponsorship in relation to brand-marketing public relations.

At the most basic level, sponsorship allows PR professionals to make unsexy brands sexy. The brand becomes part of an environment and conversation in which it wouldn't otherwise be included. Beyond the allure of attaching a brand name to an entertainment property, event sponsorship offers quick, tangible results.

First, sponsorship permits PR people to practice celebrity seeding at its best by placing a product straight into the hands of Hollywood's most influential players. Press coverage and buzz generated from these opportunities is instantaneous thanks to social media, a 24-hour news cycle, and the media's obsession with celebrity.

But there is so much more to consider. There is an abundance of brand-right Hollywood sponsorships at every budget level, from title sponsorship of an awards show to hosting an offsite pre-party. With the right creative thinking and strategy, there is a way to create an experience that brings a brand to life in a meaningful way.

This awards season, Hunter PR's entertainment department aligned clients with both sponsorships and events during Golden Globes weekend, the Sundance Film Festival, and the upcoming Oscar celebration. With careful consideration, we've been able to create meaningful brand experiences at all levels – as turnkey as serving our client's wine at dinner events to more involved activations in an effort to engage talent on the red carpet.

Creating “meaningful” experiences is key in reaching a sophisticated consumer. Slapping a brand's logo on a step and repeat no longer resonates. Sure, step-and-repeat photos are great for guaranteed impressions, but what effect does this really have on consumers and their long-term connection to a brand?

The aim of any activation should be to design a memorable experience for those who interact with the brand onsite and that appeals to those who discover the event through social or traditional media. Beyond the one-and-done deal, the true goal is to commit to the right partner, activation, and experience, and most importantly commit with intentions of longevity.

An example of meaningful event sponsorship alignment is Audi, a brand that has leveraged the power of Hollywood for several years.

In June 2013, *The Hollywood Reporter* profiled Audi's influence on the entertainment industry calling it “a full-frontal attack on the hearts, minds, and wallets of Hollywood.” Audi saw the value in the influence of celebrity and in 2006 designed a program that touched Hollywood on a consistent basis through aggressive influencer outreach and event sponsorship. While it didn't come cheap, it allowed the brand to build an identity and drive mainstream awareness. In the end, Audi saw this translate into increased sales.

In my next two posts, I'll examine how media buying and integrations and celebrity endorsements — whether implemented individually or together — allow for brands to build meaningful, long-lasting relationships with the entertainment world.

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