

SOCIAL MEDIA'S POWER IN SPORTS BRANDING

a White Paper by **Ingager Sports**

Social Media and the Growth of Sports Sponsorship

Social media provides unprecedented potential for athletes to connect with their fans, in addition it is worth acknowledging that sports content is an especially popular content category on social media platforms. Sport in general, and sport sponsorship, is on the rise which reflects in estimations for investments made in sport sponsorships.

Sports Marketing 2025

\$6,8

Billions are estimated to be generated by Sports Marketing by 2028

9,13%

CAGR = total annual growth

46%

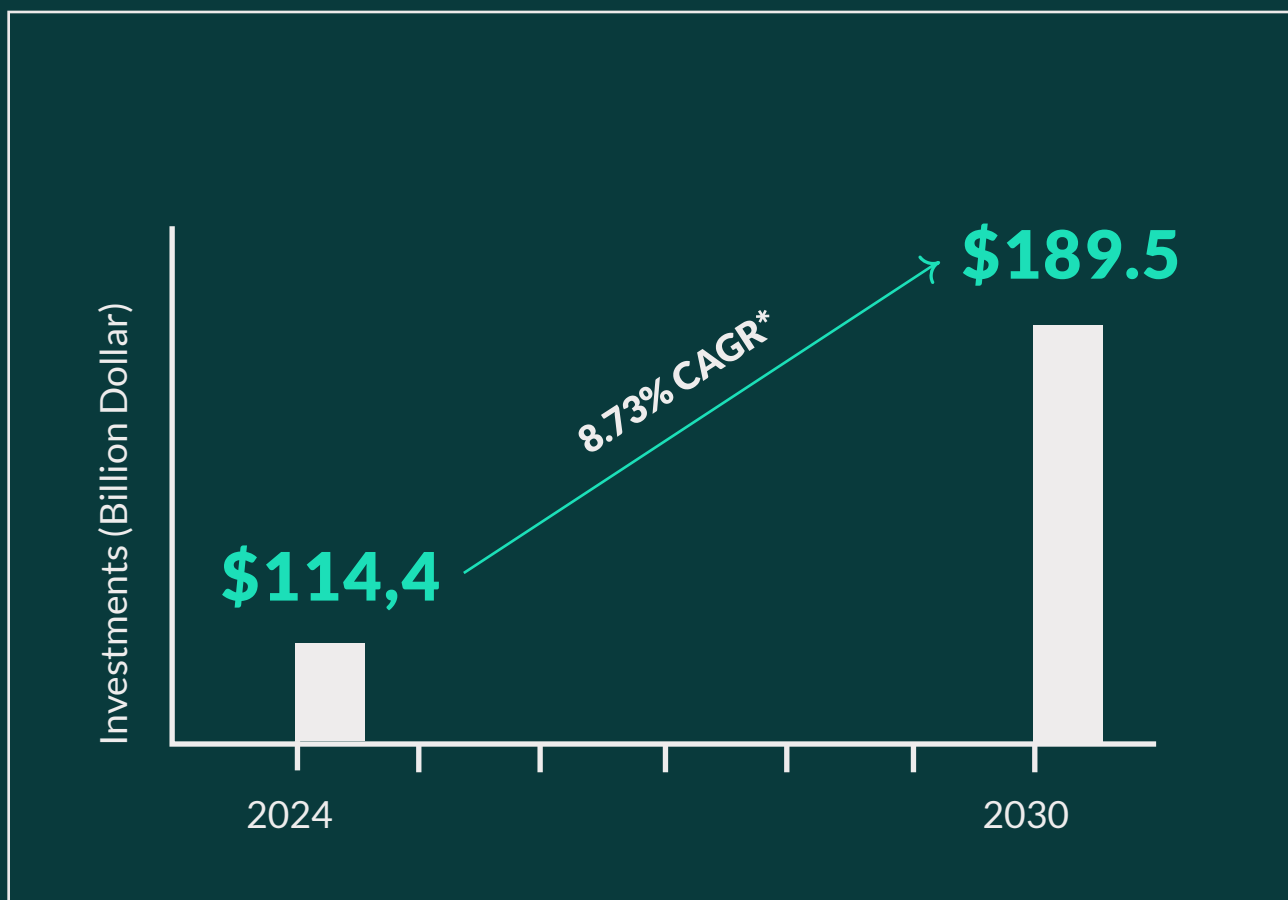
Use social media when watching sports

65% of Gen-Z sports fans
are more inclined to purchase
products or services from brands
that support their favorite teams

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- *Sports create emotions and engagement*
 - *Sports create community and unite*
 - *Social media amplifies the effect and results*

Global sports sponsorship spending is projected to reach **189.54 billion** by **2030** (360iResearch)

With a predicted CAGR of 8.73%, this surge in spending reflects the growing recognition that sports offer unparalleled engagement opportunities. Where is this money going? Traditional sponsorships are now sharing the stage with digital strategies, with growing investments in e-commerce tie-ins and streaming integrations.



*Compound Annual Growth Rate

Social Media



43% of young adult sports fans follow their favorite league on social media (GWI).

In addition to this, 54% of young adult sports fans follow their favorite athlete. **Social media has changed the fan experience**, offering brands a direct channel to engage audiences through real-time updates, behind-the-scenes content, and interactive experiences.

Sports accounts also rank among the most followed on platforms like Instagram. For example, Cristiano Ronaldo's Instagram boasts over 644 million followers, making him a **dream partner for marketers**.

The Digital Transformation of Sports Marketing

Digitization is another pivotal factor transforming the sport marketing-market. As consumers become more tech-savvy, everyone involved in sports marketing **must leverage digital platforms to engage audiences effectively.**

Consumer awareness has also surged, with fans seeking **authentic connections** with athletes and brands. This demand for authenticity is driving agencies to focus on personalized marketing strategies that resonate with consumers' values and preferences.

Current trends include the **integration of artificial intelligence** in marketing strategies, enabling agencies to analyze consumer behavior and preferences more effectively. Additionally, **product customization is becoming a norm**, with brands offering personalized merchandise and experiences to enhance fan loyalty.





SPORTS MARKETING

CHARACTERISTICS

	Sports Marketing	"Normal" Marketing
Driving force	Passion, emotions, and engagement	Product specifications and rational benefits
The role of the target audience	Active participants and content creators	Relatively passive receivers
Community	Builds loyalty and belonging	Focus on transaction, alternative loyalty
Relationship to the experience	Integrated into the experience (sponsorship on jerseys)	Disconnected from an emotional context
Timing	Somewhat time-dependent or reactive	Planned and long-term

Opportunities and Challenges

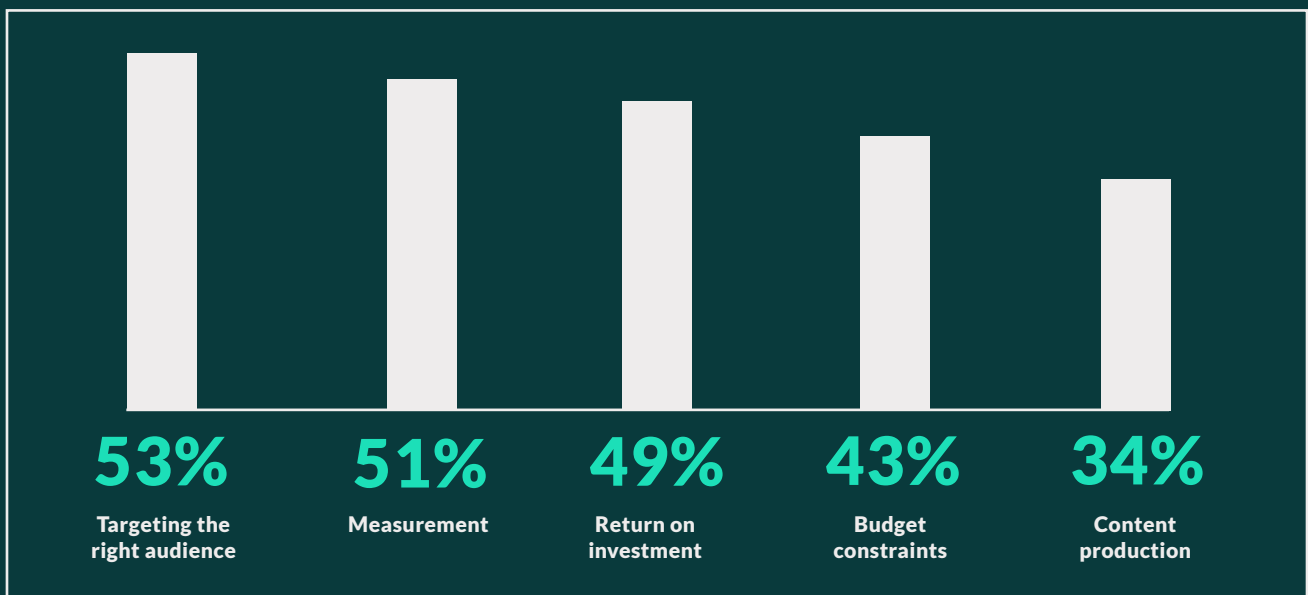
As fan engagement continues to evolve, sports marketing agencies play a critical role in innovating traditional marketing methods.

Nevertheless, **the opportunities for growth are vast**, especially as brands seek to align with athletes and teams that resonate with their values and engage in corporate social responsibility.

The future of sports marketing agencies appears bright, characterized by continuous innovation, a focus on strategic partnerships, and an unwavering commitment to delivering measurable results in a landscape that is increasingly competitive and digitally driven.

Source: <https://www.statsndata.org/report/Global-Sports-Marketing-Agency-Market-291640>

What are your most common challenges when targeting sports fans?



*Respondents chose three answers



Consumer demand and experience

The diversification and personalization of consumer demand are important aspects of sports marketing. Consumers' requirements for sports experience are no longer limited to the field, and they pursue a more in-depth and diversified experience.

Types of video content

%



Source: GWI USA Q1 2022 & Q1 2024 • Base: 18,812 (Q1 2022) and 18,720 (Q1 2024) social media users aged 16+ • Question(s): Which of these have you viewed on social media in the last month?

Game Changer: Social videos have given sports content a leg up.

% increase in the number of US social media users who say they have viewed the following on platforms monthly between Q1 2022 and Q1 2024.

Building out your audience doesn't have to be overwhelming

Prioritizing data

As third-party cookies are phased out, brands will need to focus on building direct relationships with their audience, leveraging first-party data to create personal experiences.

Focus on owned channels

Developing owned channels, like a mobile app or gamified contest, encourages users to share behaviors voluntarily. This first-party data enables segmented audiences and targeted messaging across touchpoints.

Contextual advertising

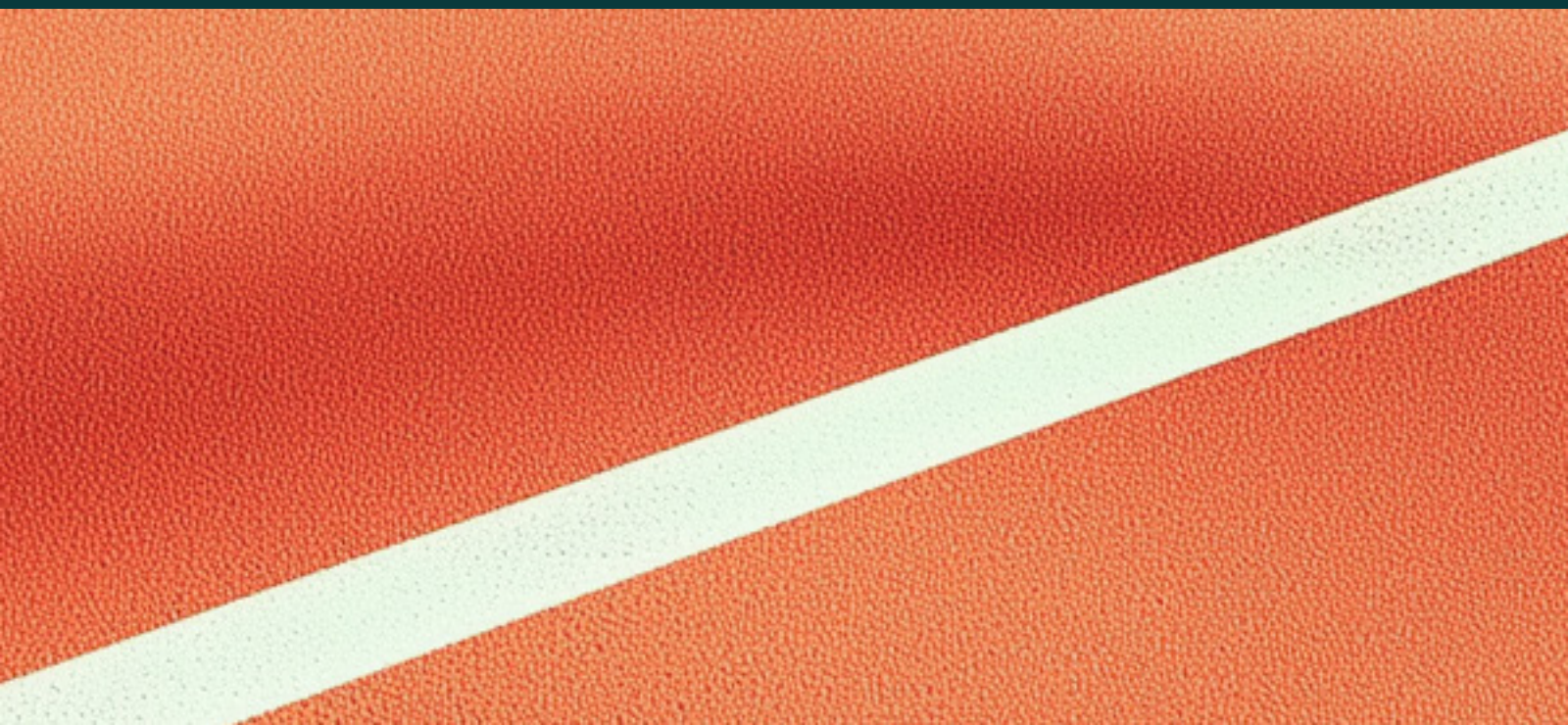
Leveraging advanced contextual targeting technologies, brands can move beyond keyword matching to align ads with sports content and target audiences based on factors such as emotion and intent.

Sports partnerships

A spirit of collaboration will be even more important in a post-cookie world. Partnerships with specialist sports data-driven organizations are essential for effective audience targeting.

Data transparency

By being upfront about how fan data is collected and used, and by providing clear opt-in and opt-out mechanisms, brands can build trust with their audience and foster long-term relationships.



COOKIELESS ADVERTISING: *THE NEED FOR FIRST-PARTY DATA*

The cookie phase-out gives brands the opportunity to get creative with their data acquisition

Google has long-warned about Chrome's depreciation of third-party cookies, but some brands still feel like they're playing catch-up.

With an effective audience data strategy, brands can build meaningful, bi-directional relationships with sports fans.

78%

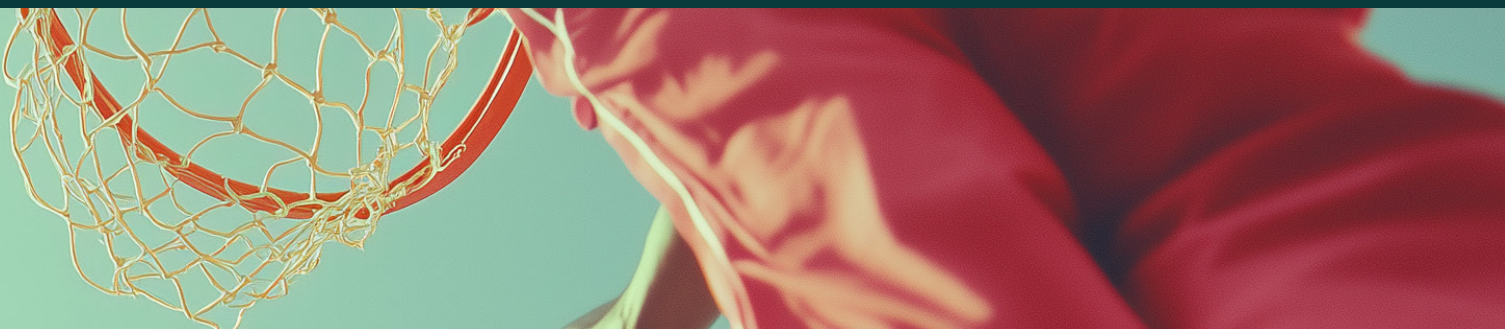
of brands do not yet have a first-party data strategy for sports audiences.

42%

of brands say that it's a priority to build owned sports audiences for the cookieless world.

21%

of brands say that sports audience data would most enhance their sports advertising campaigns.





Ingager ***sports***

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