

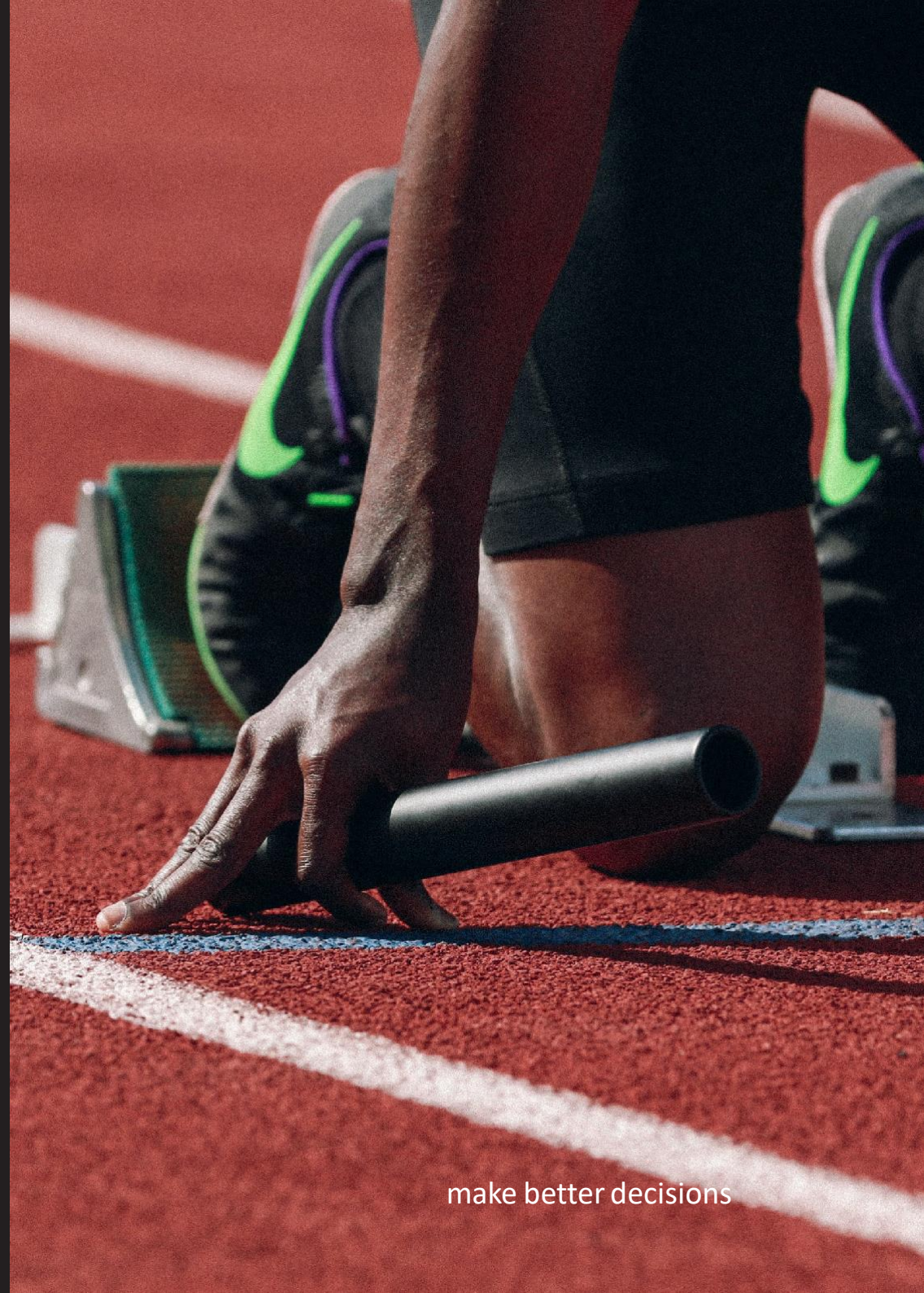
Savanta:

Encouraging participation in sport

The important role that research can play

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The role of research in sports participation

In recent years sporting bodies and NGBs have had to evolve, tasked with attracting and capturing a new generation of audiences and engage them in sports participation. They have become more progressive and commercial in their outlook, all under the remit of complex funding structures. Organisations have also had to justify insight on sporting behaviours and attitudes to maximise ROI.

The success of campaigns like This Girl Can, have epitomised our changing attitudes toward a fitter and healthier society. The latest Sport England figures reflect this. 27.9m people are regularly active, achieving 150+ minutes of activity a week (November 2020). Activity levels were increasing in 2019, before measures to counter the Coronavirus pandemic were introduced in March 2020.

With massive investment in encouraging sports participation, research now plays a key role in understanding how to make a difference.



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Organisations have to think about a broad range of factors:

- 01 Creating a first-rate experience
- 02 Driving participation
- 03 Targeting audiences
- 04 Developing communications that connect to create a sports brand
- 05 Linking sponsorship and events to increased participation

1. Creating a first-rate experience

Evaluating satisfaction levels within a sport is crucial to understanding its continuing appeal. Traditionally participation in sport revolved around playing one sport. However, the way we consume sport is now similar to the way we consume media, choosing from an ever-widening variety of options, doing several different activities during the week, across seasons. Sporting bodies need to understand the participant experience to ensure participation and involvement is maximised. Experience is key to long-term engagement, the motivation to participate in future sessions and habitualise participation is critical.

2. Driving participation

Understanding reasons for behaviour (health, challenge, enjoyment, competitiveness, relaxation, socialising) as well as barriers to participation (cost, time, location/accessibility, weather, training, elitism) helps to understand a sports' potential. In particular, this understanding can be used to break down barriers or perceived barriers and encourage wider participation levels to help build appeal.

3. Targeting audiences

Segmenting a sport's audience by demographics, socio economic factors, attitudes and behaviours, as well as engagement levels and involvement, can help to build an understanding of a sports potential for growth. This helps to position a sport within the market, target participation levels and develop a clear proposition to maximise appeal both in the short and long term.

Organisations have to think about a broad range of factors:

4. Communications that connect

How do sporting bodies engage with participants and non-participants to maintain and maximise involvement?

Attracting new audiences into any sport is crucial to its long-term growth. With a fragmented media, understanding how different audiences engage in communications is key. Whether it's through online, social media or traditional formats, without forgetting the power of word of mouth. Combining this understanding with a detailed knowledge of the motivators and barriers will help shape comms and maximise their effectiveness in driving participation levels.

Creating a sports brand

Brands will often become synonymous with certain sports – whether it's Rapha with cycling, Canterbury with Rugby or Speedo with swimming. Managing the brand of any sport helps build participant involvement but also attracts big name brands and advertising/ sponsorship revenue. All sports have their own brand identity, encompassing their appeal and expectations. Brand tracking is crucial for marketers to understand their brands' position and performance in market. By evaluating the opinions and attitudes of participants and non-participants, sports can identify their competitive strengths and how they fare in a competitive context. Brands are not just competing against other sports or clubs within their own sport. Attracting involvement at any level faces competition from an ever-widening range of leisure activities.

5. Increased participation & sport

Advertising spend will reach more than \$600billion worldwide in 2021, helped by record investment in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games (WARC).

Sponsorship offers a key opportunity for brands to engage with vast audiences, making an ROI measurement crucial for commercial partners to demonstrate the value it delivers.

Sponsorship objectives will vary, from raising brand image to building a sports profile/ presence or gaining competitive advantage. Measuring the effectiveness, particularly of cross platform campaigns, will help a sport understand how to maximise a strategic partnership. Successful events also form a key role in encouraging participation.

From the Olympics, Euro 2020 and Tour De France to this year's cricket Hundred, events are big business. They can have an incredible influence in inspiring people to try new activities, as well as having a positive impact on local economies and cultural benefits, with social legacy now crucial for any event. By capturing, analysing and understanding the long-term legacy of the event; the impact, both in terms of financial return and longer-term effects on sporting participation, as well as sponsorship and local communities can be identified.

The right tools for the job

Behaviour Change Modelling

By using BCM we can begin to understand the journey people go through when deciding to adopt a behaviour – for example, likelihood to take part in a new sport. We can understand the potential motivators and barriers at each stage in their journey to take part. This enables us to develop compelling messaging and benefits to move them through this journey. BCM categorises people into five stages of behavioural change, where 'it' is whatever behaviour we want to measure e.g. exercising regularly, participating in a new sport, watching a sport on TV or going to a live game. Through understanding where people are on their journey, and their experiences towards this behaviour, we can understand how to nudge them along. Statistical modelling is then used to understand which sorts of interventions people need, to encourage them to move from one stage to the next.

Campaign Optimiser

Re-launched in an interactive format, Campaign Optimiser 2.0 helps identify which platforms used have impacted most on campaign awareness, appeal and call to action. It enables you to (a) Input spend per platform to see which over or under index comparative to spend, or (b) Alter spend or % spend per platform to see how things would have turned out differently with a different media outlay. With surveys tailored to your objectives we make sure we cover what we know is important to an advertising and sponsorship campaign: message tone and appeal, social media impact and fit with expectations for your brand.



Savanta:

Savanta is the full-service global market research and data insight company that helps businesses make better decisions.



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