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Event Planning and Promotion, Blog 2

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Rachel Gerungan

Self-assessment

October 11, 2015 | [rachelgerungan](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

I'm very thankful VCU offered this course for the semester. It was affordable, easy, and I was able to meet new people. I liked how it was an online course and we were writing blogs weekly. This allowed me to learn how to use WordPress and touch up on my writing skills. I also learned a lot in the meeting with Lee Kallman about event planning. This course also taught me about time management and working with a team. Communication was a big deal in our group. Since this course was online, our group was constantly emailing and texting each other to prepare for bike week project. My favorite part of this whole course was actually going to FanFest and interviewing the sponsors. My group had an absolute blast. We didn't just go to our sponsor's booths but almost all. We watched Genworth's aging experience presentation, raced on bikes at Carmax's Kidzone, and tasted pastries and got henna tattoos from the Doha booth. Aside from the fun, we gained so much insight about what it takes for sponsors to get ready for huge events. My favorite interview was with the marketing director from TacX because they came all the way the Netherlands and he gave us so much information about the preparation for the UCI. I'm glad I took this course because I was able to experience an event that rarely happens in the United States and I was able to make new friends along the way.

Our FanFest Experience – Group 1

October 5, 2015 | [rachelgerungan](#) | [1 Comment](#)

Rachel Gerungan, Grace Oak, and Matthew Mason



The UCI Road World Championships is the largest single event to ever come to Richmond, Virginia. This event is the largest bike race in the world and it is an incredible opportunity to show off a wonderful city. This is the first time in three decades that this event has been held in the United States, and the capital city is honored to take on that responsibility. Headed by the non-profit group Richmond2015 the city put on an incredible showing and showed the world how beautiful and hospitable they are. This amazing opportunity does not happen by itself. UCI and Richmond2015 worked closely along with thousands of volunteers to make this event so memorable. However, there is one group that an event like this could never happen without, the sponsors. It takes a lot of money to put on an event of this magnitude, and it took many generous sponsors to help bring that all together. Sponsors from around the world as well as locally pitched in to make it all happen. The reasons companies sponsor events like this range from direct involvement with the sport, to increased public exposure, and even as simple as wanting to support their own community in such a major Endeavor. To find out more specifically why some companies sponsor an event like the UCI Road World Championships, we decided to visit a few at Fan Fest.



Fan Fest was an event held in the Richmond Convention Center just off the start/finish line. This was a great opportunity for spectators to visit vendors and sponsors to get more out of their experience at the race. While some sponsors were not present at Fan Fest, we were able to talk to an international sponsor, TacX, as well as a more local sponsors, Carmax and Virginia is for Lovers (VA Tourism), to find out more about why they chose to sponsor this event.

Our first sponsor we talked to was the international company TacX. TacX is a Netherlands based bicycle equipment manufacturer that has been sponsoring the UCI Road World Championships for the past six years. Because cycling is such a huge sport in the Netherlands, our interview with TacX's marketing director Leon Kuijt was high in passionate responses. We learned that they are very proud of their products and they really want to share it with the public since the pro riders are already big fans of the company. The UCI came in contact with TacX in March earlier this year and they shared their plans for the booths. They began shipping all the equipment and products to Richmond in June, which takes about six weeks to arrive from the Netherlands. In the meantime they created a social media marketing

plan, which includes videos to post of behind the scenes, interviews of riders, and during the time trials. The use almost all social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube to connect with their consumers. Their main target market they are pursuing is the amateur riders. They believe that by sponsoring one of the biggest sporting events of the year, the amateurs will appeal to the brand's name and products. TacX specializes in a product they call 'trainer', which is basically a treadmill



for bikes. Trainers allow you to prop your bike and control the settings and change the speed or levels to practice your cycling. Lastly, we asked Leon if there was a message TacX would like to communicate to the American market and he said "Our main message is that we can give people the tools to push their limits." Even though their main target market is Europe right now, they are excited to be in another country and continent and does have plans to expand into U.S. markets. Their ongoing sponsorship of the UCI World Road Championships has allowed them to expand their brand recognition, which will allow them to reach more markets like the United States.

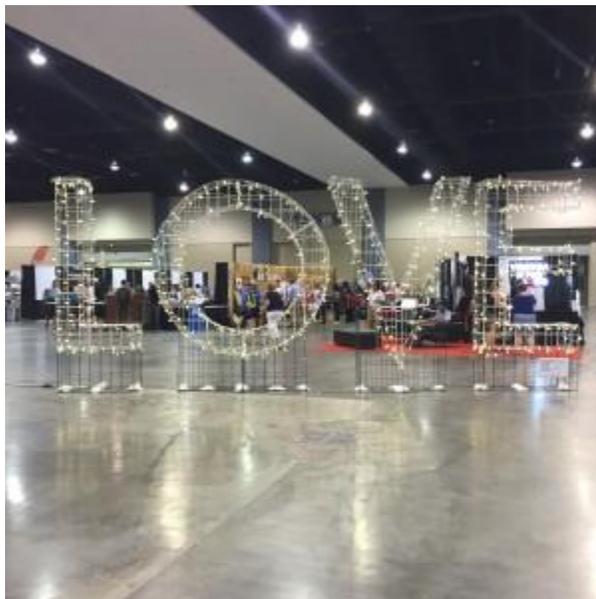


We then spoke to a more local company Carmax. Carmax is the largest used car retailer in the United States and it's a part of the fortune 500 company. An employee of Carmax (not an official representative of the company) was asked why Carmax decided to sponsor the UCI Road World Championships. They felt that sponsoring this event was a good opportunity to continue to get their name out in the public and because it is such a large event for Richmond that would get community involved, and they wanted to support their community. When asked how they prepared for this event, they shared how they had separate departments at their corporate office for coordinating different types of programs, including large outreach events like the

UCI Road World Championships. Carmax has received an abundant amount of emails to promote for this event and was also asked to do a Kids Zone area.



Their Kids Zone area had a miniature race track and bikes to appeal to little kids and the families. Since it was a bike event, Carmax had decided to do miniature bikes for the kids rather than have miniature cars so it's settles perfectly with the theme. Finally they were asked what do they hoped to gain from this event and experience at UCI and Fan Fest. They have responded happily with how they hope this event would bring in more recognition within the company and within the community. The bike race is filled with excitement and it's so unique that it benefits the city of Richmond to bring in people from all over the world.





Did you notice all the LOVE signs everywhere? These lovely works were done by Virginia Is For Lovers, otherwise known as the Virginia Tourism Board. As our last sponsor to interview, we had the honor of talking to Danielle Emerson who works in the Public Relations department, who was sweet enough to give us free merchandise! Virginia Is For Lovers wanted to take advantage of the huge tourism draw because there are tons of international travelers at the UCI Championships. To prepare for this event, the Virginia Tourism partners got together to promote their localities and destinations and each had a separate booth. There were booths for Hampton, Alexandria, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, and other Virginia cities. They also planned for a lot of advertising in the



media and social networks.

They created a hashtag #VisitVirginia for people to share on social media and to get the name out there. Danielle was not certain about the budgeting for this event but she explained to us that there was another department that handled the financing. When we asked what message Virginia Is For Lovers would like to share, she said “Virginia Is For Lovers is for lovers of travel. No matter what you like to do, you can find it in Virginia. Come back, explore, and have a good time here!”



Whether a company was giving away items to help promote themselves, being major publicized sponsors, or sponsors that seemed to lay low, the UCI Road World Championships would not have happened without them. Even though we initially wanted to interview our three sponsors and leave right after, that certainly didn't happen. We ended up checking out almost all of the tables, trying free samples, helping out another group record their interview, and even participated in the KidZone race track! Our group had a blast! If you were unable to visit Fan Fest, we encourage you to visit Richmond2015.org and see the many sponsors that helped put on this amazing event.



Lee Kallman Presentation

September 14, 2015 | [rachelgerungan](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Richmond is a small, unique, artsy, urban city. Just how did we attract an epic sports event such as the UCI Road World Championships?



450,000 spectators from all over the world will be in the city for the nine-day event. And not to mention, the millions of viewers who will be watching the race on television as well. This means there will be a whole lot of events, fans, and of course, advertisements.

Lee Kallman, VP of Marketing Richmond 2015 Inc., saw a huge benefit for Virginia based companies for sponsorships. There will be global visibility for these companies because 300 million people worldwide watch this race every year. Also by sponsoring the race, these companies gain TV, branding, and on-site presence. Fortune 500 companies that have sports marketing departments such as Nike and Gatorade, are mainly concerned about exposure. However, Richmond 2015 used a nontraditional approach selling sponsorships by leaning on community relations and employee engagement. And they were very successful seeing that they raised more money than any other cycling event in the country.

It has been 30 years since the UCI world championships took place in the U.S. With a lot of advances and changes since then, having a foreign company's name on our soil can be a huge opportunity for them. Recruiting international sponsors brings economic development and helps European companies expand to the U.S. There will also be high presence and penetration for new markets. Who wouldn't want to represent in a worldwide event?



Cycling is seen as the European Superbowl. However the sport is not so popular here in America. Kallman mentioned how this race is a big deal for the U.S. Not only for cycling fans, but for the whole country to be patriotic and collective. He then talked about research that found soccer fans more engaged after the games than during the actual game. That's because fans were more excited about the autograph signings at the end than just sitting and watching the game. People nowadays want more meaning to sports events, or any event in that matter. There will be a huge social media platform to impact more interaction and raise awareness about health and fitness. The popular networks will include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Periscope. In conclusion, since cycling isn't a mainstream sport in this country, we see it more as an event than a race. Just like the Richmond Folk Festival, they want to position the World Championships as a fun event.

The Fit in Sponsorships

September 6, 2015 | [rachelgerungan](#) | [1 Comment](#)

Since sponsorships are seen as a win-win for both parties, making sure that sponsors fit the importance of an event is a major deal. The article mentioned that there is research that found a positive relationship between fit and sponsor due to strong associative links. An example would be Nike sponsoring a sporting event. Although this is very accurate, there are also other reasons why a company would be partners or sponsors for an unrelated event.



One of the biggest and obvious reasons why a company outside of the bicycle industry would want to invest in bicycle racing is to increase brand awareness. Sponsoring is definitely an effective way to get a company's name out there. Especially for an event such as the UCI Championships, which will attract cycling fans from all over the world. In fact, Richmond Magazine estimated an attendance of 450,000 spectators. Having the names of sponsors appear during the race is great advertisement and will definitely gain recognition for those companies.



Another reason is so that the company can reposition the brand by associating it with bicycle racing. The current UCI Championship partners are pretty well-known companies but not all of them are related to bicycling at all. Altria, Genworth Financial, Lexus, and Kings Dominion are some of the companies that don't necessarily "fit" in the event. However, these companies not just want to support a huge international event, they also want to be perceived by the public that they do. Let's take Altria for example; It's one of the world's largest tobacco corporations, so why are they sponsoring a bike race instead of a Cigar Expo? We all have perceptions of tobacco of being addictive and hazardous. By associating the brand with health and fitness, such as the bike race, it will ease people's perceptions of the company. Another example, and also a popular one, is McDonald's being one of the biggest sponsors for the Olympics.



Getty Images

These reasons help companies gain access to new and larger target markets. As long as these companies understand the audience's perceptions and have a strategy of "fitting", they will definitely earn return on their sponsoring investments. Sometimes, being a sponsor for an unrelated event can be a better way of advertising your company than any billboard or commercial ever will.

Event I Would Like to Plan

August 31, 2015 | [rachelgerungan](#) | [2 Comments](#)

There is obviously a lot of work that goes in to planning and creating an event. But I believe to make events successful, the people organizing them have to have a passion and truly care about what the purpose of the event is. The Coachella Valley Music and Arts festival is an annual music festival that takes place in Indio, California. It is one of the largest and most profitable music festivals in the United States. Coachella was founded in 1999 by a man named Paul Tollett, and is currently organized by Goldenvoice. When Tollett explained his decision on Coachella's location, he said "*We wanted it to be far. So you surrender. So you can't leave your house and see a couple bands and be back home that night. We want you to go out there, get tired, and curse the show by Sunday afternoon. That sunset, and that whole feeling of Coachella hits you.*" If you are a music-lover, music festivals aren't just a super concert to you. Music festivals are considered as community gatherings that focus on music and arts. The desert heat, the different sounds of musical genres from many incredible artists, and the energetic dance moves from their raving fans, I love it all. The opportunity to organize this dynamic event would be an absolute dream.



The Coachella Festival is two separate weekends full of live music, celebrities, parties, fashion, and art. Some famous performers who have made appearances are AC/DC, Paul McCartney, Kanye West, Jay-Z, Prince, Rihanna, Eminem, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Daft Punk, and Madonna (just to name a few!)



The search for which musicians to book is usually eight months before the festival occurs in April. Another important item to cross off the to-do list is to look for sponsors. The huge attendance, the celebrities, the scorching temperature, and the all-over happy vibe are aspects of attracting sponsors. It's not hard to attract sponsors for Coachella. General admission tickets to this year's festival sold out in 20 minutes with more than a total of 500,000 people attending all six days. So many companies and business would love to reach out to this mass of young people, especially in the hot temperature they're in. Any company can set up a table or a tent selling water, food, clothes, technology, you name it, will definitely make some good business over a weekend at Coachella. Some current sponsors include: Spotify, Heineken, Sephora, H&M, and American Express. One of Coachella's biggest concerns is to make sure not to swamp the audience with so much advertising because it will violate the purity of the event. That really shocked me as a marketing major because even though

partnering up with a corporate sponsor to the festival name can earn additional profit, it is still respecting the audience and music.

Organizing an event like Coachella, just like many major events, can be fun and exciting. But it is also vital to look for the right sponsors to make sure that they have their best interest in the event and not just using it to get their name out there.

