



Chapter Two

ASSETS

Sponsor Integration in Esports

ABOUT

Shikenso Analytics is a German tech start-up specializing in artificial intelligence solutions for brand and media valuation across streaming platforms and social networks. Partnering with international clients of diverse commercial backgrounds, our metrics empower teams, organizations, and rights holders to track their sponsorship assets effortlessly.

PREFACE

In the first instalment of our series we provided a brief introduction to sponsorship in the gaming and esports industry. We mapped the space's ecosystem with its various sponsors and highlighted the reasons why esports-based campaigns are an effective marketing strategy.

Building on these insights, we now reveal how different industry players activate sponsorships using powerful digital tools.

STATUS QUO

Just as gaming and esports sponsorships have become a proven pillar in the marketing mixes of established companies, they are also raising opportunities for others newly venturing into the space. Some traditional rules of marketing do apply in this world; for example, any potential sales or perception effects require the setting of concrete business goals. Luckily, the platforms relevant for gaming and esports – such as Twitch, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram – are already optimized for ambitious campaigners. But there is one problem. Brand presentation is hard, because esports audiences are notoriously critical of traditional advertisement and mere corporate self-promotion. They do, however, respond favorably to branded attempts to engage authentically and helpfully with the content of their digital adventures. Sponsorship practices typically include logo integration, product placements, or banner advertisements – but results may vary. Venturous brands should understand how sponsorship opportunities differ between esports teams, tournament organizers, and influencer agencies.

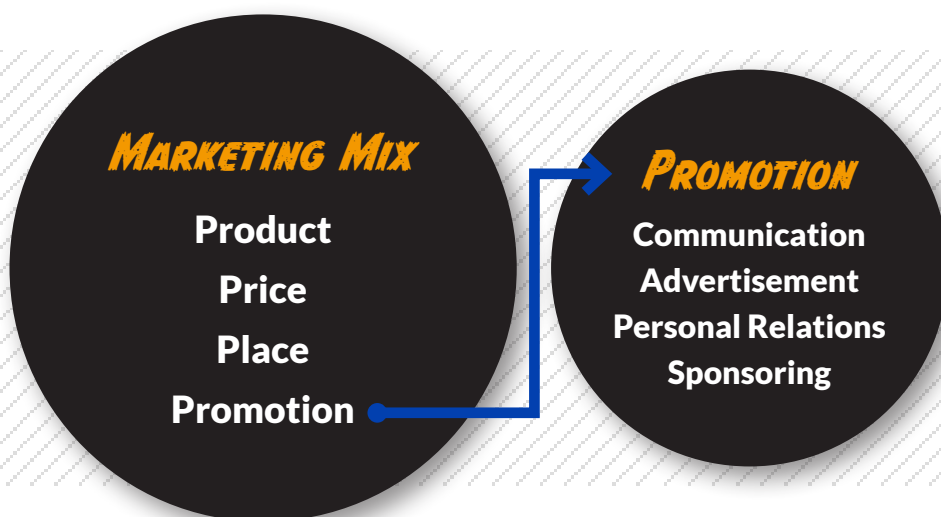


Photo by Toa Heftiba on Unsplash

21ST CENTURY PLAYGROUND

A Wind of Change

Embracing new technologies is critical to competing in a rapidly evolving digital marketplace. That includes companies investing in advertising, sponsorship, and marketing strategies.

As digital natives, today's young people are fascinated with gaming and esports. According to two of Newzoo's *Consumer Insights*¹, 71% of GenZ (age 10-24) and 67% of Millennials (age 25-40) play games and watch game-related videos or livestreams. In addition, they spend a large part of their spare time on social media. If you wish to reach this target group, you have to follow their lead and operate in their territory. Uninitiated or hasty brands may lose sight of the wood for the trees. Knowing your way around popular streaming and social channels is indispensable for a successful digital strategy.

¹ [Gen Z and Video Games](#) & [Millennials and Video Games](#)

78.44%

increase in hours watched in
2020 compared to 2019 on
the most popular streaming
services²

² streamlabs quarterly
report: Q4 | 2020

Popular international platforms

Live Streaming³



Twitch



YouTube
Gaming



Facebook
Gaming

Social Media⁴



Facebook



YouTube



Instagram



TikTok



Twitter

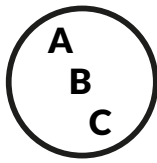
Note: YouTube is listed twice as it qualifies for both categories

³ by streamed hours; ⁴ by monthly active users;

FROM HOW TO WHERE

Sponsorship Assets of the Digital Age

LOGO



Virtual stream overlays or ingame sponsor bars, and physical backdrops or sponsor walls

BANNER



Virtual assets such as wipe-ins, transitions, I & U-brackets, live betting odds, or predictions

JERSEY



Physical logo integration on apparel kits such as chest, collarbone, shoulder, or arm

PRODUCT



Placement or display of physical goods such as snacks, cans, fridges, chairs, cars, or gaming equipment

CLIP



Full-screen ad formats broadcast during breaks, pre-shows, or post-shows

GIVEAWAY



On-stream and on-site raffles such as live quizzes, competitions, lotteries, or signups

FORMAT



Branded original content such as insight sessions, interview pieces, or highlight reels

SHOUTOUT

Spoken sponsor mentions by livestreaming broadcasters, analysts, or influencers

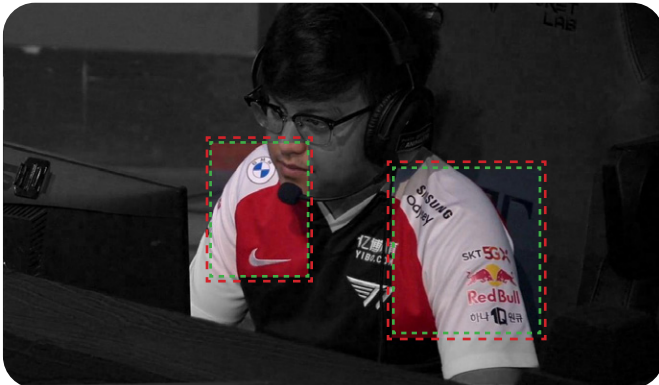
ESPORTS TEAMS

Beyond Competition

Teams and organizations have much to offer for brands. Their fan communities constitute the base of the consumer market. But they also promise a whole range of approaches to how a partnership may be activated and presented to that base. Not only can a team compete in tournaments to achieve reach and visibility for partners. It can build on its own lineup of content creators and streamers to drive partner activation. In addition, some teams like Faze, Cloud 9, or SK Gaming are growing to become lifestyle brands with their own clothing lines, cross-industry collaborations, and popular ambassadors. All of which are trends anchored in and accelerated by deep partnerships.

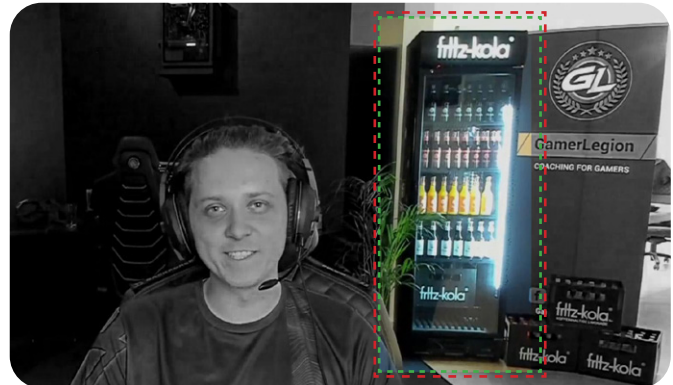
JERSEY

Source: twitch.tv/weplaydota



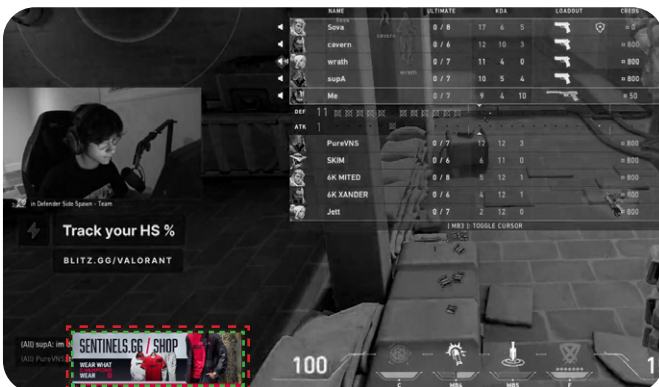
PRODUCT

Source: twitch.tv/primeleague



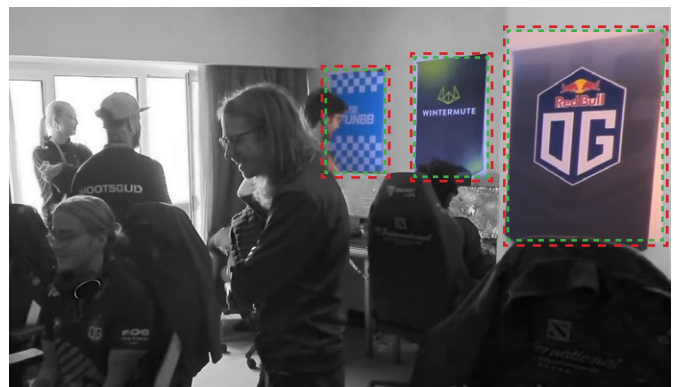
LOGO & BANNER

Source: twitch.tv/tenz



LOGO & BANNER

Source: twitch.tv/dota2ti



ORGANIZERS & LEAGUES

Playing Seriously

Watching the best of the best battle it out for fame, glory, and huge prize pools has become a magnificent spectacle. As suppliers of highest-quality gameplay in a colorful range of genres, tournament organizers and league operators are uniquely positioned for brand partnerships. Global events mean global brand promotion, with millions of people tuning into livestreams and thousands attending events in person. Likewise, partnerships with national leagues highlight a brand's authentic commitment to a specific geographic audience. In the most professional settings, sponsorship activations need to be carefully planned and executed to combine audience interaction with optimal brand presentation.

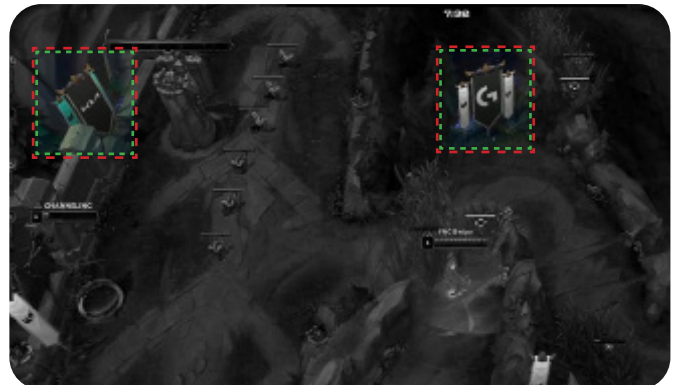
PRODUCT

Source: twitch.tv/esl_dota2



LOGO (INGAME)

Source: twitch.tv/lec



CLIP

Source: twitch.tv/esl_dota2



CONTENT FORMAT

Source: twitch.tv/blazepremier



CONTENT CREATORS & STREAMERS

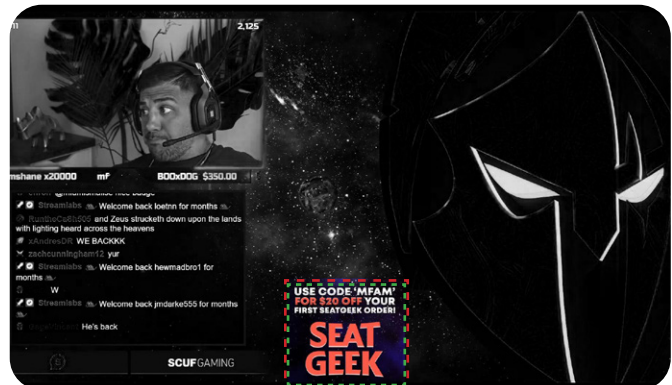
Social Symbiosis

While full time content creators are a great fit for any esports organization, they often are self-employed or collaborate with an agency. For a popular streamer's following, his or her persona is the most important asset. The point is not to watch the best player compete, but the person who provides real-time, often lighthearted entertainment in front of an audience. The creator's personality is superior to his or her abilities - although serious experience doesn't hurt. The audience's emotional attachment to the person creates a powerful, charismatic relationship into which brands can be successfully drawn. No wonder some turn to help: influencer and talent agencies specialize in fostering authentic partnerships between brands and influential individuals. They also create and manage campaigns on social and streaming platforms.

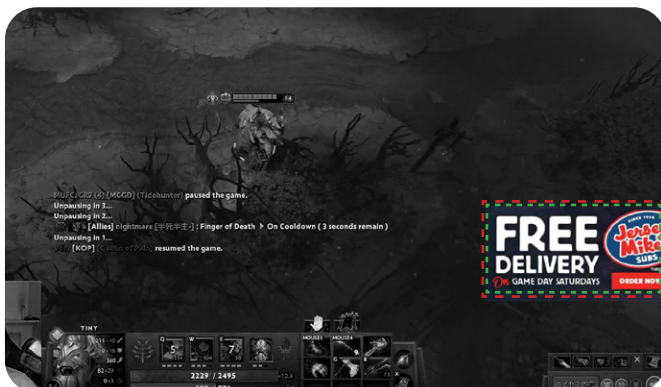
PRODUCT



ACTIVATION

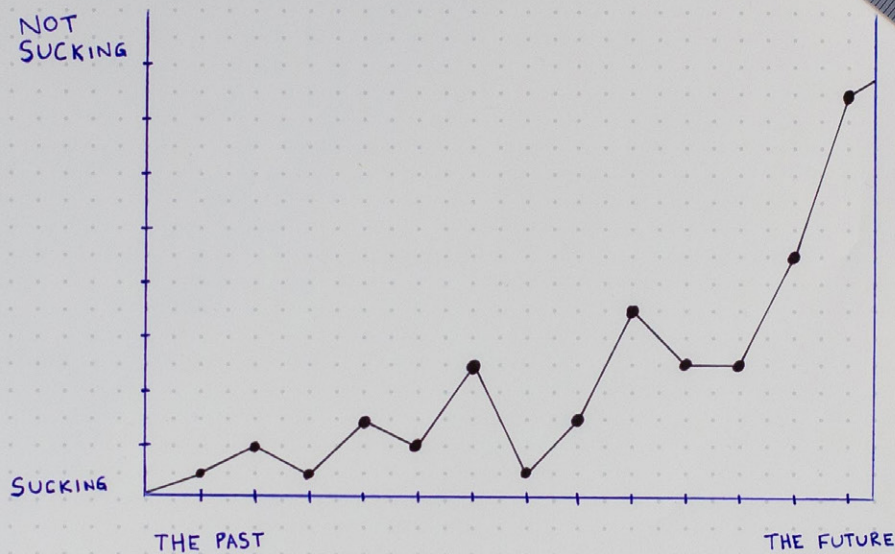


AD OVERLAY



LOGO & BANNER





**DATA
IS KEY**

Implementing sponsorship assets is one thing. But knowing and verifying their value is the other side of the coin.

If you are an esports team, pinpointing the media value you create is perfect for reporting to existing partners while giving you authority to leverage in negotiations with new partners. Keep them happy and keep them coming. For tournament and league organizers, verifying your inventory's value will guide you when putting together packages for commercial use and help attract partners through a larger portfolio. Likewise, influencer agencies

have marketing campaigns to evaluate, while full-on esports agencies need data to manage client assets in a target-oriented manner. For both, proving their added value is critical to their operation. Finally, brands themselves commission data analytics to secure an independent source of authority on the sponsorships they fund, no longer needing to rely on a dependent organization's word for the true value of their exposures. In all cases, for diverse players to cooperate in the world of gaming and esports requires one thing:

Performance-based valuation data

In the next chapter, we unveil the key performance indicators driving the measurement and evaluation of sponsorship in streaming and social media. Making them fully verifiable requires a scalable artificial intelligence solution.

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Questions?



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