



**BRITISH
EVENTING**

Providing the ultimate equestrian challenge



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COMMERCIAL STRATEGY

British Eventing Commercial Strategy Introduction

As part of British Eventing's (BE) five-year strategy (2017-2021), one of our key goals for modernisation and innovation is a new and comprehensive commercial approach.

We have been working for some time now on the creation of a new Commercial Strategy for our Sport. This process started in 2015 when we commissioned an agency (Altius) to conduct a commercial audit of British Eventing.

Subsequently, BE commissioned an experienced sports marketing consultant, Rob Pope to develop final recommendations for a five-year commercial plan for the BE Board to consider.

Rob's background is both equestrian, multi sports and global. He has sat on the Steering Group for Blenheim Palace Horse Trials since its inception, having introduced its first sponsor, Audi.

His experience as a Board Director of the agency brandRapport, where he worked with brands like Prudential, Barclays, UBS, Yorkshire Bank, Jaguar, Land Rover, General Motors, AXA, LV and Vodafone across Arts and Culture, Social Purpose and Sports, indicated to us that he could provide an informed and objective perspective.

Driving our new Commercial Strategy are two connecting goals;

1. To increase the commercial revenues coming into the sport across all channels
2. To ensure these revenues are available for the benefit the sport at all levels

To do this, we need to consider a comprehensive commercialisation of our sport, doing this through a combination of;

- a. Finding new revenue streams and improving existing ones
- b. Improving the value proposition for brand partners
- c. Addressing member needs better or ...
- d. Making better use of and awareness for the great assets we already have on offer.

As a Board, we know that any strategy recommendation is only as good as the actions we take from it, the investment we put behind these actions and the level of collaboration we can generate across the sport to help deliver them. What is set out below is a summary of the Commercial Plan that Rob presented to the Board in February and which we have approved

Guy Prest – Commercial and Marketing Director



The Commercial Task for British Eventing

- Although tough to deliver, the commercial task can be simply stated. British Eventing's ambition is to increase the revenues coming into the sport for the benefit of ALL STAKEHOLDERS, notably riders, owners, spectators, volunteers, event organisers and landowners.
- British Eventing's focus is on membership retention and recruitment, containing the cost of competing, improving event viability and making the sport more accessible, understandable and consequently more enjoyable.
- British Eventing recognises that the answer isn't simply about increasing sponsorship income. That will be a consequence of growing the sport's commercial value and appeal, which means looking at everything from Membership to Spectating, from Broadcasting to Market Research and from Event Marketing to Digital Enterprise.
- And British Eventing knows that success will not come easily. This is a five-year plan that will need patience, and a fresh approach in which the sport looks to increase, at all levels the value it can offer brands

British Eventing's Starting Point

- British Eventing's commercial approach must start with acknowledging the need to transform how the sport is positioned and marketed, because it has to be able to command greater attention. Why? Because sports, and the brands supporting them have to be more focused on securing and retaining the attention of consumers, who are very often time poor, weighed down with information and increasingly wary.

BE's Starting Point continued

- So, our sport has to be of real relevance and value to current and future generations of equestrian fans and this means reflecting their changing needs and those of the brands wanting to connect with them.

For British Eventing, it's about acting differently as a governing body. For example, we know that brands are spending more and more on digital marketing. For sports that have been slow to make the necessary changes in digital transformation, the result has been reduced brand support. We also know that digital is directly impacting sport and sponsorship in terms of;

- i. Fans wanting to be 'connected' when attending an event or watching on screen
 - ii. Data and statistics being an essential part of the on and offline fan experience
 - iii. The role social media is increasingly playing in terms of how we watch live sport
- British Eventing must become a more digitally enterprising business, capable of greater relevance in terms of meeting customer needs and making the whole experience of engaging with our sport more enjoyable and simple.
 - In turn, what this will do is create more value for commercial partners because BE can provide better connection with all types of eventing fan.

British Eventing's Commercial Role as Governing Body

- BE's role is to be the ENABLER, acting on behalf of the whole sport and all Stakeholders. In practical terms this means building commercial consensus and collaboration, offering impartial leadership, providing brands with objective advice and solutions and delivering compelling proof of the value on offer.
- Where it directly owns assets, the commercial purpose of these should be to create revenue surpluses for subsequent re-investment in the sport.

The Commercial Focus Areas to be prioritised

Commercial narrative and framework:

- This is British Eventing's starting point. Commercial partners don't buy cost, they buy value and will 'want to know what makes our sport different and what's the rationale for investment?' Our sport has to have a succinct and compelling offer in response.
- British Eventing will therefore provide a clear commercial positioning, justification and trusted assessment of the value on offer, and to do this British Eventing has commissioned a far-reaching market research study to be published later this summer.
- What brands will also ask is "What is BE's commercial structure - Where will my brand fit in - How much attention will investment in the sport bring to my brand"?

- This is about how our sport is ‘packaged’ and will simplify how Eventing looks in terms of organisation and structure and will encourage the spread of revenues across all sections of the sport.
- Using a simple hierarchy, this framework will make sense of the cluttered look of the calendar, will reduce the jargon, and will offer simple signposts to Event status, value, cost, benefits and commercial ‘fit’.

Market Research:

- If Eventing wants to compete effectively for the attention of commercial partners, it must provide proof of the value on offer, in terms of Return on Investment (ROI) and it must also make sure Brands and their Agencies know about this value.
- Hence the commissioning of the leading consumer research agency, Two Circles to help us. They are commercially profiling our sport in the comprehensive, authoritative and professional way that brands today require.
- At the same time, we are also running an Event Survey from which we will be able to create a series of ‘infographics’ on the sport relating to Competition Statistics, Audience and Volunteer Numbers, Commercial Trends and Digital Metrics.

Marketing and Communications:

- With the narrative and framework complete, British Eventing is then planning an ongoing and integrated marketing and communications plan to promote the benefits and value of the sport, not just domestically but internationally as well.
- The plan will focus on increasing the sport’s visibility, appreciation and commercial value to Brand Owners, their Agencies and Partners. It is also designed to help the sport in other ways; e.g. working with Events on joint marketing initiatives and helping to increase the value of various British Eventing direct revenue channels.

Membership Marketing:

- This will involve an integrated marketing plan to increase British Eventing’s Membership size. How we plan to do this is by providing more reasons to join, creating new categories and benefits, making membership better value and developing better communications.

Blenheim Palace International Horse Trials:

- Blenheim is one of the principal assets that BE is directly responsible for and, as such we want our members to have a real sense of this being a showcase for the sport in the UK that’s there to benefit them, directly in terms of special offers and event facilities and, indirectly via the use of Event surpluses to help projects of benefit to the whole sport.

Digital Enterprise:

- As British Eventing progresses its IT transformation project, one very pressing commercial task will be to look at how British Eventing organises the sport's digital presence for greater commercial value. If we can link more of the sport's digital channels, we can build an enlarged, online community with greater reach and value for brands, which will benefit everyone in the sport.

Event Support:

- We know that Eventing's biggest asset is its Events. Every stakeholder in the sport, to a greater or lesser extent relies on them in some way. Fully supported and acting together, we know that Events of all sizes and status can be more successful.
- British Eventing therefore wants to make Events a priority in our thinking. As a first demonstration of this, we plan to create a commercially agile 'Forum' for Event Organisers, to use to share best practice and create co-operative marketing campaigns.

Content Strategy:

- The importance of digital highlights the need for USEFUL CONTENT. Brands need it, whether they produce it themselves or they access it via a 3rd party route like sponsorship. By "useful" we mean customer relevant, enjoyable, well organised and easy to find content that's distributed via the most customer friendly channels.
- Good content results in better customer connections for the brands associating with it. So, there's an obvious commercial value to getting the content BE produces right.
- Hence the need for a content plan focused on how BE meets its customer information needs in terms of look and feel and where and when it can be found
- As an example, BE plans to introduce a lot more video, audio and infographics into its various communication channels.

Broadcast Plan:

- As part of any commercial vision for the sport, it is important to have a long term multi-channel broadcast plan that will make the sport more commercially visible and attractive. It should also act as a promotional showcase to help increase attendances, raise Event profiles globally and give sponsors greater reach and exposure.
- We are looking at a broadcast plan for the sport, that offers a mix of traditional TV (free to air or subscription), livestream (free to air) and in the future, social media broadcasting. Alongside this, we also want to find ways to create revenues from this plan via broadcast sponsorship and advertising.

BEF:

- This is about how BE and the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) work together to build better commercial programmes of mutual benefit around shared assets like Teams.
- And with the potential for a more united equestrian marketing platform, we want to look at what Eventing's role should be in terms of collaborative marketing opportunities.

Next Steps and Building Commercial Momentum

In this commercial plan, it is essential to be realistic and answer the following questions;

Q. Does British Eventing need to be very commercial? Ans. Yes, it does because to do nothing won't just mean British Eventing standing still, it will mean losing ground from where we are now

Q. Is now the right time to act? Ans: Yes, because British Eventing has embarked on a major IT transformation project and we need to capitalise on this investment

Q. Is budget an issue? Ans: It must be for any Governing Body and it is therefore our plan to take small steps and build early momentum that will allow us to do more, later on

Q. How long will it take and what do we need to do it? Ans: We are planning a five year programme of commercial development and we know that for it be successful, we must invest in the resources to help make this plan possible

Q. Where does British Eventing start? Ans: The initial focus will be on Membership Marketing, Blenheim Palace International Horse Trials and Market Research.

