



BRITISH EVENTING

COMMERCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

August 2018

Introduction

During 2017, a significant piece of work was undertaken by British Eventing which resulted in the five-year Commercial Strategy. The BE team has worked closely with Rob Pope, an experienced sports marketing consultant, and there has been excellent work carried out over the last year.

Driving the 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 of the sport at all levels

This is, and will continue to be, achieved through a combination of;

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

As a Board, we know that it is important that members can see what work is being done, and the value that work is generating. This summary sets out the work that has been carried out by the team since the Commercial Strategy received Board approval, and highlights some of the benefits which are already being seen as a result.

Jude Matthews Commercial & Marketing Director



Action to date

Highlights

- Two Market Research projects completed and results summarised and available to events and Sponsors as Commercial Content Guides ([see page four to read more](#))
- 2017 3* ticket sales campaign run in social media producing a 4.7:1 return on investment in terms of each marketing pound spent
- 2018 guaranteed advertising revenue from BE publications increased 64% year on year
- New 2018 BE Supporter Membership marketing campaign started ([see page six to read more](#))
- New BE Members Pavilion launched at the SsangYong Blenheim Palace Horse Trials add link ([see page nine to read more](#))
- New free 'Sponsorship Proposals Tool' developed for use by events



Overview



One year into British Eventing's (BE) five-year commercial strategy project the obvious question is what has been achieved to date? In the [initial commercial strategy paper](#) published last June, ten key areas of work were identified. This report identifies the progress made in seven of these, and an outline of future work. The remaining three topics; Content Strategy, Digital and the BEF will be developed in detail in the latter part of this year.

1. Market Research

In the third quarter of 2017, BE commissioned top sports research agency, Two Circles, to carry out a significant piece of market research into the commercial value of the sport in the UK. At the same time, BE also ran a comprehensive commercial event survey to which 84 of the 119 BE affiliated venues responded.

This research has been essential in guiding so much of the other work carried out on the Commercial Strategy during the year.

2. Commercial Content Guides

BE has produced two 'Commercial Content Guides' - one for [international events](#) and one for [national events](#).

Each guide is designed to provide a definitive commercial rationale for encouraging sponsors to choose eventing, by analysing the audiences in terms of size, demographics and commercial behaviours. At the same time, the guides use the research gained to create an entirely fresh and differentiated commercial positioning for eventing versus other equine disciplines. Those organisers who have used the guides as part of their sponsorship sales process have reported a positive response.

'BE's commercial strategy document has been a really useful tool for us at Belsay in terms of helping to validate our sponsorship packages. The 'Two Circles' research is impressive in the way it positions our sport and its relevance to different target audiences and our sponsors have really appreciated it. The document also helps to explain the BE brand and what it stands for, as well as to clearly communicate the competitive structure of Eventing.'

Laura de Wesselow, Organiser of the Belsay Horse Trials



'The Commercial Content Guide has been a very useful document for British Eventing affiliated events. It does a great job of communicating the sport's unique demographic, and sponsors have found it very insightful. It has been a valuable tool that has helped us to increase our sponsorship revenue.'

Stuart Buntine, Organiser of the horse trials at Belton, Osberton, Osborne House, Shelford, Oasby, Firls Place and Aske, under the Bede Events banner.

'We greatly admire British Eventing's commitment to training and education across all levels of the discipline, to the extent that we have become involved with both Bridging the Gap through the Mark Todd Collection, and the 1* Points League and Stepping Stones training initiative with Gatehouse Hats. As a sports body, BE is forward thinking and open to ideas, enabling us to tailor these partnerships and utilise our resources for the benefit of our brands, as well as the riders who are using these schemes to come through the ranks.'

Tracey Woods, Westgate EFI Operations Director and BE sponsor.

3. Event Support

For the first time, in 2017, BE ran a three phase Event Marketing support programme for 3* Events. In total, 11 events participated in at least one of the phases.

Social media ticket re-marketing campaign

BE organised campaigns using social media (Facebook and Google) to generate 'new money' on event ticket sales. Events decided how much to spend on their campaign, and seven of the 11 3*s participated.

- Total directly attributable sales: **£81,679**
- Total spend (ads and agency): **£17,315**
- Return on investment: **4.7:1** in terms of pounds spent.
- **4 million+ impressions** or 'opportunities to see' the advert featuring title sponsor logos.



Go Eventing E-zine

- BE designed, produced and distributed an e-zine for all 3* events.
- It was offered to all BE members and BE/Event social media users and users had to register to receive it.
- Event title sponsors were given prominent free advertising space.
- BE collated content and included Equiratings event specific data such as 'ones to watch'.
- Against an industry average 'open rate' of **16.6%**, Go Eventing achieved **46.5%** peak open rate (open rate is the number of opened emails expressed as a percentage of the total number of emails delivered).
- Against an industry average 'click through' rate of **2.5%**, Go Eventing achieved an 8.6% peak click through rate (click through here means someone clicking on the link in the communication that allowed them to open the e-Zine on line).
- Over **8,200** regular subscribers to the e-zine were generated.
- This campaign is running again this year, taking the form of an HTML email.



Livestreaming (Watching live eventing coverage over the internet, via event websites)

- The objective was to create more Live TV coverage at an affordable cost, whilst offering more visibility and value to event sponsors.
- Blenheim and Bramham worked on this programme.
- Other aims were the capturing of user data for re-marketing, creating further revenue from the coverage to help content to help with production costs and delivering broadcasts that matched a basic quality threshold.
- BETV showed live action, edited highlights and hosted a watch again service.
- Horse and Country TV showed a one hour highlights show with a minimum of six repeats and each event got 84 x 30" advertisement spots on the H&C UK channel.
- **56,298** views across **1.88m** mins of viewing time.



Other work

In January 2018, BE ran an Event Organisers Forum in Kenilworth, which was offered to all BE event Organisers. 50 people, representing 30 events, attended and received updates on topics including GDPR, digital marketing and the new commercial content guide for national events.

4. Marketing and Communications

- **Advertising revenues:** Following a review of its advertising platform, BE has been able to increase guaranteed revenue from our space re-seller by 64% against 2017 figures.
- **BE Life Online:** This year BE launched the lifestyle microsite [BE Life Online](#).
- Initial statistics show **2,327** average number of users per week, with **5,178** average page views, which is very pleasing.
- During Badminton week there were **5,794** sessions, with **5,206** users, and **6,204** page views.
- BE is building into the planning of the new website, an updated schedule of advertising formats and charges that should increase these revenues further.



5. Membership Marketing

- Part of the focus over the past year has been on looking at ways BE can enhance existing membership products.
- BE's Supporter Membership has been identified as having a mass-market appeal, and BE has begun developing the offering to include unique event based experiences such as supporter days, yard visits, and use of BE pavilions at events. The figures show that this has been successful with Supporter Membership up 11% in the period January – May 2018 versus January – May 2017.



5. BROADCAST PLAN

Based on the work done last year on livestreaming, an outline media broadcast strategy is currently being discussed with a number of 4* and 3* events interested in finding a long-term, revenue generating solution for the sport.

6. BLENHEIM

As the only event owned by BE, Blenheim is one of BE's principal assets for which it is directly responsible. This means we can use the event to trial things which we believe will benefit both members and the sport more generally.

In 2017, BE developed a Members' Pavilion, which was a great success and is to be repeated in 2018. The pavilion was located alongside the cross country course, close to the main spectator routes and forward parking. It also had sight of the CIC3* dressage arena.

Entry was free on production of a BE membership card and the charge levied in 2017 for Members' guests will be waived for 2018. The BE staffed pavilion offered a limited retail catering facility, CCTV, private loos, security (checking cards etc.), free Wifi, and a garden overlooking the dressage arena.

BE sent a feedback questionnaire to all attendees of the Pavilion, which completed by approximately 25%. Key areas of feedback were as follows:

- **80.23%** rated their experience of the Pavilion as **excellent** or **good**.
- The highest number of visitors was on the Saturday - **43%**.
- **44%** said that the Pavilion would make them more likely to attend the event next year.
- **79.07%** rated access to the Pavilion either **very highly** or **highly** as a member benefit.
- The most important facilities in order of importance were; access to good toilets, screens to watch the action, cross country viewing point, beverages, Wi-Fi and food.



WHAT WE'RE DOING CURRENTLY

1. EVENT SUPPORT:

We have distributed to all event organisers, a sponsorship proposal template that carries all the core commercial messaging that emerged from our research projects last year, but which allows for events to customise with their own sponsorship sales copy and venue specific images.

This should assist events with their sponsorship sales for 2019, whilst ensuring that all sponsors receive the same consistent commercial message about the sport.



2. COMMERCIAL NARRATIVE: A NEW COMMERCIAL FRAMEWORK

In May 2018, the Board approved a new commercial framework, designed to assist in delivering increased sponsorship revenues and ensuring that these revenues benefit as many stakeholders as possible.

The new framework

1. Provides an integrated sponsorship menu, featuring a huge selection of assets available from within the sport in the UK, not just those BE own and/or organise.
2. Tells a consistent and substantiated commercial story about the benefits and value on offer from sponsoring eventing.
3. Places equal emphasis on the commercial opportunities available at both larger and small Events; As part of the work in producing this framework, a number of recommendations have been made for future implementation.

These include:

- Bringing the sport and marketing functions much closer together, so that competition planning reflects the needs of the sport, whilst also creating more commercially attractive sponsorship products.
- Simplifying the competition level descriptions and abbreviations used and removing jargon so that we can make the sport more accessible and understandable to sponsors and new fans of the sport.
- Building the presence of the eventing brand in the UK, in the same way that sports like cycling, netball, ladies football and cricket have been doing recently. This starts with increasing media attention for the sport as a means of building awareness and understanding amongst audiences who don't know eventing.
- Creating more commercially attractive sponsorship formats, which can offer sponsors more value such as number of events, spectators and coverage across the UK whilst providing BE with a better means of distributing more sponsorship income, especially to smaller events.
- Creating a simple regional commercial structure that ensures sponsors can have impact on a nationwide basis if they require it, and standardising the approach to the issues of providing sponsors with exclusivity and 'stand out'.
- The use of commercial criteria as a part of the process for deciding Championship venues in the future.
- Creating new sponsorship frameworks that are more aligned to sponsors' needs.
- The need to develop a more robust framework that protects events and BE as rights holders in terms of commercial rights, trademarking and naming and titling of events.

A new Grassroots Championship Series

As an immediate response to the Commercial Framework project, BE is set to launch this summer, the new British Eventing 80cm Championship at Kelsall Hill.

This is as a direct result of the huge increase in BE80 participation, which has grown from 741 entries in 2009 to 8,027 in 2017 – up 980% in 9 years.

Following this first year the full series will begin in 2019 with eight regional finals and a national Championship final at Kelsall Hill in Cheshire in September 2019.

For the following three years, the Championships will feature twelve regional finals and a high profile National Final.

Sponsorship interest is already high in both the Presenting Sponsor and Official Supplier partnership packages on offer.

For more information on these please contact Claire.walkeden@britisheventing.com



SUMMARY

The new framework has a crucial role to play in our five-year Commercial plan because it touches so many different aspects of the sport. Implementing its recommendations is a priority if we want to attract new money and sponsors to the sport and at a time when we know the commercial environment is very challenging. But to succeed it is clear that we must provide more value (especially digital), more choice in terms of what can be sponsored, more media attention and finally more sponsor servicing support.