



UPGR8

Social Media

Athletes Toolkit

November 2021

The current state of social media in sports

Note that the average user spends upwards of two hours per day on social media, and that number is continuously climbing!

According to Business Wire "**78%** of [Gen Z and Millennials] are '**dual screening**' while watching live games."

According to Business Insider, "being a sports fan is no longer just about the game itself – research shows that **fans want to be apart of the narrative.**"

"Today's **younger fans are getting their sports information exclusively on social media platforms** like TikTok, Twitter and Instagram, and not in the newspaper or via radio talk shows," says Troy Paul – President – Sports Gambling Guides.

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Understanding the role of social media in cultivating relationships among and between brands and athletes.

Key factors in cultivating these relationships

Personal Branding:

Building your brand.

Engagement:

How you connect with your audience.

Interaction:

How you connect with brands.



What is a brand and what can it do for you?

If you're an athlete looking to maximise your financial opportunities, developing your brand can go a long way to helping you achieve this.

A **brand** is something that revolves around an audience. A brand will represent a product or service that serves the needs of that audience better than its competitors, so that more attention is retained and, ultimately, money can be made.

In this workshop, we're going to discuss **personal brand**. This is something that represents you, an athlete looking to grow their influence with the aim of collaborating with businesses or moving into a specific industry.

A strong personal brand will establish two important things:

- 1. Recognition**
- 2. Trust**

A well-maintained brand will continue to grow these two things within an audience. With the correct research, strategy and tactics, more people will be able to recognise your brand and associate with it a level of trust based upon what you have consistently provided.

Growing and maintaining a brand takes planning and hard work. It requires balancing long-term and short-term thinking, a good understanding of your target audience and how you're going to consistently address their wants and needs.



1. Research, Targeting and Positioning

In a perfect world, your passion or initial idea for your brand will match up with market demand. But, if there is no demand for your idea or there is lots of competition, you should think about concentrating on addressing something an audience truly wants. This way you know you're on the right track to establishing a successful personal brand.

Remember: **You are not the market.**

Decide where to focus your efforts:

1. How big is the market?
2. What are the core behaviours of the market?

The UPGR8 team is here for you, to assist you, every step of the way!

Attention will be your currency.

Understanding how many people are searching for, or engaging with, a subject will allow you to build a clear picture of where the demand is and therefore where you should think about focusing your personal brand.

Remember: There's nothing stopping you from growing your brand by offering behind-the-scenes footage of your training or lifestyle, but understand that the more generic the subject is, the more competition you will face for attention. If you choose to take a more general approach, be prepared to offer something far superior to your competitors!



Do I need a logo or slogan as an athlete?

Individual athletes don't need a logo or a slogan. Ultimately, the name and face of the athlete are more than enough, since both are what is always seen in the media. A special logo or slogan would only confuse and be forgotten by the media.

Competitor Analysis

Your goal is to **understand the average audience member's experience with your competitor** and identify the key drivers behind their behaviour. Try to answer these core questions when performing competitor analysis:

1. Who's already engaging the public in your chosen area?
2. How do they interact with the public?
3. What is working well, and not so well, for them?

Asking other people about how they feel when they interact with your competitors will identify areas you can improve in and put you in an even better position to develop your brand.

Targeting

By this stage, you should have a clear idea of the area you want to grow in and who you're targeting with your personal brand. It may help to build an **audience persona** – a picture of who your consumer is – which includes key demographics and behaviours. Keeping this in mind throughout the process of developing your brand will help you to focus on delivering the right service, by answering the questions of where, when and how you're going to reach them.



Positioning

What are you going to be to your fans?

Unless you're an athlete with a global name, it won't be enough to simply give people an insight into your life as an athlete. It needs to be more thought out than that. Hopefully by now you've picked an area that will give you the chance to share knowledge or inspire an audience that isn't simply based on your popularity as an athlete.

The brand positioning is as much for you as it is for the fan. It will allow you to remain delivery-focused and to continue building on recognition and trust.

The key is simplicity – your position needs to be understood and communicated by the average person.

Vetting your positioning

Relevance:

Do my fans care?

Clarity:

Will my fans get it?

Credibility:

Will my fans believe it?

Distinctiveness:

From my fans' viewpoint, does it set me apart from my competitors in a meaningful way?

Attainability:

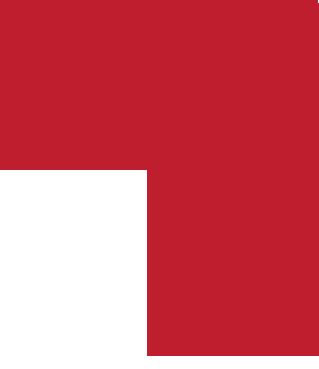
Can I deliver? Are my claims consistent with my performance?

Sustainability:

Can the position be maintained over time?



2. Strategy



The 3Ps

1. Product: Think about your service to your audience as your product. What are you, as an athlete, going to offer your market to retain their attention? Think about how you can create the best product, based on your research, and what investments you need to make to achieve this.

2. Place: These are your channels of distribution. Which channels are best for your audience? Take some time to think about how many channels you can successfully manage in an integrated approach and then pick the right ones for your brand. Will you have a website? Social media channels? You may even end up picking just one...

3. Promotion: The specific details of promotion will fall under tactics – it's how you're going to effectively communicate your brand to the market. Think message, content, advertising, measurement. Have a clear idea of which levers you're going to pull to ensure effective communication.

Objectives must be:

Specific: 'Be successful' isn't a good objective. There is no use in setting a generic objective, so make it specific to your personal brand.

Measurable: Is it quantifiable? If you can't measure it, you won't be able to determine if you've succeeded.

Ambitious: Don't be too cautious, set yourself an objective that will make you work hard.

Realistic: To balance the above, set an objective that is clearly realistic for you to achieve with your resources. Don't do too much too soon, and don't have too many objectives!

Timebound: We all need deadlines. We recommend working off 12-month cycles, remember there will always be other years to achieve more things. Find a timeframe that suits your needs and specify it in your objective.



SET SMART
GOALS

1.

2.

3.

3. Tactics



Best Practices

Here are eight things we think helps makes exceptional content:

1. Your story: A story that is authentic, relatable, entertaining and emotional will grow your audience. Learn how to tell yours so it connects with your audience. First and foremost, people engage emotionally. Communicate your message by using emotional language relevant to your audience, then look to back this up with any rational elements of your personal brand to get people to keep paying attention to you.

Here's a tip: Have a list of words that trigger various emotional responses and try to use these where relevant in your messaging.

2. Get visual! Content formats such as images, videos and infographics are universally understood and will dramatically increase brand engagement. To successfully grow a personal brand in today's markets, great visual content is a necessity.

Fact: Social video generates 12 times more shares than text and images combined.

It's recommended you get comfortable producing and starring in your own videos.

3. Use the right templates and technologies: Proper planning is essential to successful brand development. If you decide to begin creating video content for your personal brand, we recommend you make it as professional as possible by investing in, and learning how to use, post-production software or invest in someone else who has these skills.

4. Frequency: Find the right frequency for your audience. Test higher and lower frequencies of content posting and see what gets the most engagement. As a rule, it's better to do fewer things well than more things not so well.

5. Tracking trends: What is your audience or the wider public talking about? Be part of the conversation in an engaging way and win yourself new fans.

6. Talk to your fans: Something that is often overlooked. Manage your community by responding to mentions, liking their comments, sharing their posts and starting conversations.

7. Go Live: Live content is beginning to outpace other types of online video content. Popular ideas for live content include interviews, announcements and events.

8. Evaluate: This is a fundamental part of successful brand management. Determine from your objectives what defines success for your personal brand and then track your performance accordingly. However, you decide to measure success, set up a consistent reporting process and evaluate your brand every so often to ensure you can optimise your content and keep moving towards your goals.

Remember: Get screenshots of all your branded stories and posts' statistics.

Sharing Engaging Content

Training/competition – for example, where you are and what you are doing. Try to involve team-mates or rivals.

Travel – you'll be doing lots I'm sure, and while it can be mundane, you can turn it into something fun. For example, take a picture of yourself at the check-in desk in your team tracksuit with your passport and tell everyone where your next flight is going to and what you'll be watching on your tablet.

Food – this is an easy one. You can post a picture of you eating your guilty pleasure, your favourite snack or your pre-event/post-event meal.

Home comforts – this brings out your personality big-time. You can post photos of you with your pet, saying how good it is to be back home with them, or perhaps you have a favourite hang-out at home that you like to visit.

Thanking your supporters – whether it's your parents, your governing body, your sponsors or even your followers.

Sharing content that you like – a retweet or share goes a long way to building your network. Make sure you are following your team-mates, athletes from other sports, your rivals, and National and International Federations. You never know, you might learn something along the way to make you a better athlete or person.

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Sponsors aren't looking for exceptional talents, but for distinctive personalities.

Tips for shining in the spotlight

1. Check your current online profile

and manage any potential areas of controversy. Everything is potentially permanent online. If required, make sure you control the conversation with honesty and integrity by preparing the narrative.

2. Make friends with the right journalists:

Journalists are important gatekeepers to the general public. If you're known as an approachable athlete within media circles the more opportunities will come your way to get your personal brand out there.

3. Learn to relax... not everyone is a natural behind the camera. Practice your interview technique and, if you need them, relaxation techniques, so if the opportunity arises your personality effortlessly shines through.

4. Know when to push your message:

A post-performance interview may not be the best time to share your thoughts and opinions. But a planned in-depth interview may be the perfect time. Learn how to react to certain opportunities to ensure

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Screenshots are forever

Social Media No-No's

Plagiarism/ Not giving credits / Using incorrect spelling/grammar.

Any illegal activities / Posting inappropriate photos or videos.

Fiery emotions/ controversial opinions. Avoid emotional, political, ambiguous or poorly thought out content, sharing, liking, or commenting on offensive posts

Negligence. Forgetting you are an ambassador for your sponsors.



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Pause then post. Think before you share.

How to remedy Social Media Mistakes

Delete the post.

Although screenshots may still exist, deleting the post can prevent it from spreading beyond what has already occurred.

Address the post.

Only when widespread and absolutely required.

Learn from the post.

Don't make the same mistake twice.

Privacy

Strong Passwords:

- Use a unique mix of letters, numbers, and signs.
- Have at least 10 characters.
- Change your password every 6 months.
- Use different password for every account.

Manage Your Friends and Followers.

Stay away from:

- Accounts with no information.
- Accounts with only a few friends.
- Accounts that immediately start sending you messages with no real purpose, especially in broken English.
- Accounts that start sending you links, promising things, asking for investment, or promising love.

Research everything before you click and share data.

- Pay attention to what's being sent and shared
- Evaluate sources,
- Take a close look into anything that seems off or slightly suspicious.

Private Conversations

- Use end-to-end encryption apps such as Signal, WhatsApp, Viber.



Good Luck!

Remember, your investment in your personal brand will determine your reward. We would never advocate your investment in this area taking priority over your commitments as a professional athlete – we know succeeding in sport will dramatically help grow your personal brand, so don't lose sight of this. Find what works for you.

Source: Olympics Athlete 365

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