



“Ad” dollars to your bottom line

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS turf managers don't have to look far to understand the importance of advertising on their team's and facility's revenue streams. Public and private facilities not affiliated with professional sports may have more difficulty getting a piece of this very large pie. Let's take a brief look at the history of advertising in sports facilities. Then we can consider some opportunities to tap the advertising market. I'll provide some tips on how to close deals. Finally, I'll show how to calculate competitive rates.

Professional sports turf managers don't have to look far to understand the importance of advertising on their team's and facility's revenue streams. Public and private facilities not affiliated with professional sports may have more difficulty getting a piece of this very large pie. Let's take a brief look at the history of advertising in sports

facilities. Then we can consider some opportunities to tap the advertising market. I'll provide some tips on how to close deals. Finally, I'll show how to calculate competitive rates.

Advertisers have long understood the value of associating with athletics. Some athletic venues, however, have been reluc-

▲ DAVID KIMEL

tant to “spoil” their pristine parks, pools, rinks, and other venues with advertising. Public schools are among the last hold-outs, an interesting phenomenon considering the pressure on school budgets. Many schools have cut athletic programs at the same time they have refused to allow advertising that would have supported them. The simple answer to selling school boards is a slow introduction of advertising. Start with a new scoreboard. Next consider the back of the press box. If your Little League Field has signs on their fence, ask to put them on your school's outfield fences.

For many, the first advertising we saw at a sports venue may have been those signs on the fence of the Little League Park for the local bakery. Most of us didn't look at it as advertising. Rather we thought it was more an acknowledgment of the \$100 contribution the baker made because his son was the first baseman. Reality is, the only difference between that sign and the huge sign for a

national food product at a professional baseball stadium is...“zero.” Actually, the difference is several zeros. The Little League sign may be seen by hundreds. The Major League sign will be seen by millions. Not surprisingly, the Little League sign cost hundreds while the Major League sign may cost hundreds of thousands (or even millions depending on terms). Sponsors of Major League Park advertising have large and expensive advertising agencies that analyze every ad purchase. If these experts consider this a sound advertising investment, it should be clear that advertising at your athletic facility will also be a sound investment by simply changing the number of zeros.

Advertising value is determined based on three primary considerations:

Target Audience. While some businesses want to reach “everybody,” most would prefer to target their dollars to reach their best prospects without wasting money giving exposure to people who are not good prospects. If a business is advertising on TV

While some businesses want to reach “everybody,” most would prefer to target their dollars to reach their best prospects without wasting money giving exposure to people who are not good prospects.

to reach children, they’ll buy time on Saturday morning children’s programs. Similarly, you should develop your sales presentation to show how different options reach different target audiences.

Cost per exposure. Businesses want to know how much it will cost to reach a given number of people. The simplest form of this is calculated as Cost Per Thousand. If a newspaper ad will be seen by 10,000 people and the ad costs \$500, the cost per thousand is \$20. The trick, when competing with newspapers, is to recognize that only a small percentage of newspaper readers will even notice any given advertisement. Of those, a smaller

percentage will read the ad. An even smaller percentage will be within the advertiser’s primary target group. Here’s a test. Name five advertisers you noticed in the last newspaper you read. Of the five you noticed, how many did you read? Now think about being on the sidelines of a football game. You can’t help but notice the advertisement on the scoreboard or on the front of the bleachers.

Retention. Retention of an advertisement is difficult to measure. We know, and common sense would confirm, that people retain information better when they see it repeatedly over an extended period of time. Consider, therefore, the re-



A CELEBRATION OF SPORTS

The #1 Turf For Sports

- Fast Wear Recovery
- Beautiful Color
- Less Nitrogen
- Drought Tough
- Shade Tolerant
- Reduced Player Injury

HOME • COMMERCIAL • SPORTS
CELEBRATION
BERMUDAGRASS®

Sod Solutions
researching • developing • promoting
grass

For more information visit www.sodsolutions.com

Calculation of Cost Per Thousand Impressions For A Very Small Facility With Limited Use

Spectators per varsity game x number of games	2,000 x 8	16,000
Spectators per junior varsity game x number of games	750 x 8	6,000
Spectators per freshman game x number of games	500 x 6	3,000
Number of athletes x practices and games	100 x 30	3,000
Number of team officials and support staff x practices, games, and prep	50 x 50	2,500
Practice spectators and casual stadium users		3,000
Total impression		33,500
Cost per thousand for a \$500 sign		\$14.92

Are your games broadcast or rebroadcast on Local Access TV? Will the sign be visible in the background? If so, don't forget to add these numbers. How about the background of newspaper game photos?

tention of a single 30-second TV ad versus looking at that well placed sign for the local bakery every time your kid's team gets past midfield.

The advertising opportunities at a sports venue are vast. Don't look only at scoreboards and fence lines. Consider the front of the snack bar. While the inside of the fence is great for the spectators, how many people drive by and could see the outside of the fence? Could you place banners on parking lot poles? Don't forget the rise of each step on your bleachers. Have you ever seen a Zamboni at an ice rink without an advertisement on it? How about the roof of your service vehicles? You've seen them in restaurants so why

not have ads on the wall in front of your urinals? Is there a track surrounding your field? Tracks are easy to paint (but not easy to erase). Don't forget the Public Address announcer. If Joe the Plumber has an ad on the fence and is then mentioned during a game, all his buddies will be sure to make a comment to him and he'll feel better about his investment. [It would be a good idea to check local ordinances to be sure there are no restriction regards signs that might apply.]

Developing a sale presentation to offer and solicit advertisers does not have to be difficult. Is this the job of the turf manager? Of course not! In smaller venues, however, it might be the turf manager or nobody. The better scenario is for the turf manager to lead the effort to have advertising allowed then work to convince general management how easy it can be for them to sell it. A good start may be to give this article to your facility manager.

Every sales presentation, whether it's selling an ad or convincing someone should go on a date with you, has four elements:

Attention. First, determine who makes the buying decisions and then consider how to best get his or her attention. It might be something as simple as a printed piece that says "REACH MORE CUSTOMERS". Or, it could be a personal visit that leads off with: "I'd like to speak to you about a new way to successfully reach new potential customers at the lowest possible cost while helping your community."

Interest. You must interest them and keep them interested through the sales presentation. This is best done by doing prior research to understand the business's target audience, the buyer's motivation, and what they are currently doing for advertising. You will keep the customer engaged by asking leading questions that will later become sales points. The answer to the question: "Are more of your customers high, middle, or low income", will come back when you tell the customer how your ad will reach people in that income group.

Description. Your written piece or oral presentation will briefly describe a number of advertising options. As they are presented you'll ask leading questions such as: "If you were going to place an ad at our stadium would you be more interested in placement that is seen mostly by the local fans, the visiting fans, or both?"

Action. Close the sale. Remember the question about who the business would most like to reach? Now you'll say, "You told me



Introducing the **NEXT BIG THING** in field marking!

FieldLazer™ S90

The World's First Battery Powered, High-Pressure Field Marker

Brighter, Longer-Lasting Lines with 1/2 the Paint
Easy to Use and Clean • Eco-Friendly

© 2013 Graco Inc. Form No. 342587 Rev. A 1/13 Printed in U.S.A.

you were most interested in reaching the visiting fans. I agree that would be best for your business. We have one space available right [here] that would do a great job with that. Another very good option is this other space. I like the first one better. Which would you prefer?" Never give them a chance to say yes or no. Always give them a choice of which to say yes to.

Selling isn't magical or mystical; it is methodical. If you believe your spectators are good people who spend money, you are doing local businesses a favor by giving them the opportunity to spend money at your facility to reach these fine folks. If there is no one in your organization capable or comfortable with selling, consider suggesting you hire someone to do the work on a commission basis.

The final element is pricing the advertising. The easiest way to do this is to compare what the competition is doing. Here are the simple steps:

Look at advertising rates of local newspaper, radio, and TV. Calculate the cost per thousand being careful to not simply use the numbers they give you. For example, if a TV commercial reaches an audience in three states but your customers only care about three towns, you have to consider the cost for that TV commercial to reach only the number of viewers in the targeted coverage area. Don't look only at viewers. Be sure to make a deduction for bathroom breaks and fast forwarding with the DVR.

Count the number of people that visit your stadium (ballpark or other venue). Try to break it down by local spectators, regional spectators, and total spectators. This can be easily done by looking at the game schedule and considering where teams come from. You can make some assumptions on the number of repeat spectators to show the total number of different people reached. Don't forget to count athletes, team staff, and practices. You'll be amazed at how these numbers add up even at the local public school level.

The table included here shows how to calculate Cost Per Thousand for a very small facility with very limited use. It is interesting to compare this to the earlier calculation of the \$500 newspaper advertisement with a cost per thousand of \$20. A market with 10,000 people who will actually see a newspaper advertisement should be large enough to draw at least five times more people to their stadium field than what we are using in the example below. If that were to be the case, the annual amount you could expect to ask for the Stadium Ad would be \$2,500. At that cost, your advertiser's Cost Per Thousand is still 33% lower than the newspaper... AND... they are helping the community. ■

David Kimel is the Director at Collins Perley Sports and Fitness Center in Saint Albans, VT and is a member of the Vermont Association of Broadcasters' Hall of Fame. He has owned and operated radio stations, an advertising agency, and a business consulting company with offices in seven states. Over 15 years he has led the facility to major improvements in community relations, use, renovation, and financial strength.

VIPOL® Matrix

Professionals prefer VIPOL Matrix to protect their natural turf fields.

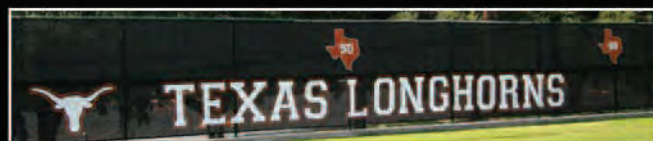
- Cleats and spikes cannot penetrate.
- Fluids drain through; do not absorb.
- Lighter, easy to handle. UV treated.
- Air and sunlight can get to grass.
- Easy to clean. Dries quickly.
- Chroma-Bond® Imprinting optional.



Bench Zone®

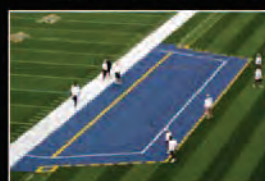


BP Zone®



Tuffy® Windscreen

20 VIPOL Colors Always in Stock



Chroma-Bond® IMPRINTING

Our exclusive double coating process is much more durable than digital printing, and images do not scuff off or prematurely fade due to sun and weathering.

VIPOL Matrix protectors have been used since 2005 by NFL and NCAA teams.

"THANK YOU" to the 80% of NFL and NCAA-DI teams with natural grass fields that use our VIPOL products.

800-823-7356

AER-FLO®

www.aerflo.com

SOLD ONLY BY THE BEST SPORTS DEALERS

© 2011 AER-FLO, INC. TRADEMARKS ARE PROPERTY OF AER-FLO, INC.