

Masterful marketing and all

A lot of event marketing lessons have been learnt in the move to South Africa of this year's Indi Premier League - not least of all that a huge amount of hype can be generated in a very short time. But, whether the organisers of the Confederations Cup are purposely banking on this or are simply fast asleep, no-one will know until that event is upon us.

 By [Chris Mberdyk](#) 5 May 2009

The IPL organisers are absolute masters at marketing, in my opinion, because their attention to detail is a strategist's dream. It should be remembered, however, that in spite of this all happening within the space of about three weeks, all the planning, set building and other preparation had been taking place in India since the end of the 2008 IPL.

Celebs aren't everything

Organisers have not made the mistake of assuming that big name cricketers were enough of a draw card. They quite rightly put a lot of effort into fan involvement. More than a lot of effort - they made it a priority. Searching for a local future Bollywood star, having cameras constantly roving the crowd, picking out group faces, costumes and especially celebrities. Lights flashing all over the place, cheerleaders galore, bands, fireworks - something happening all the time. Fans seeing themselves on the big screens.

Broadcasters at the Wanderers this week had no less than 26 cameras covering the action and a highlight of the IPL has been a remote overhead camera giving some unique views of batsmen, bowlers and controversy.

And while all the advertising hoardings have been aimed mostly at viewers on the Indian sub-continent, the IPL has gone out of its way to make South Africans feel very much involved, with daily grants being made in the form of "bursaries" to school kids and hundreds of thousands of rands worth of education-based handouts.

Sponsor recognition

Quite remarkable has been the physical placement of advertising signage and sponsor boards at the various venues, gear for spectators and, most of all, the way in which broadcasters through their commentators and presenters have not been shy about giving sponsors numerous mentions.

This is something South African TV companies need to realise. There is nothing wrong with giving a sponsor a mention every now and then. After all these are the people that keep sport going in the world. Without them there would be no sport on TV at all. So it's actually ok to say thank you and say it often.

And yet we still get local commentators never ever mentioning sponsors and newsreaders on local TV newscasts and sports broadcasts talking about "a major soft-drink firm" instead of just coming out and saying "Coca-Cola."

For some strange reason, the myth that if you mention a sponsor's name you are giving them free publicity and therefore doing yourself out of ad revenue, still persists in spite of it being absolute nonsense.

The IPL has proved that in terms of event marketing, the difference between a 90% successful also ran and a 100% successful mind-boggling event is not the big stuff but rather what lies in the detail.

ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK

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