

A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO MOTORSPORTS MARKETING- BUILDING YOUR BRAND

Building Your Brand Strategy

Before you can start crafting content, designing race graphics, ordering T-Shirts, Hero Cards, a custom race suit or helmet you have to start first by **Defining your Brand**. Building a Brand for your Driver early in their career is essential if their long-term career goal is to become a Motorsports Professional - whether that be NASCAR or World of Outlaws. Motorsports and marketability go hand-in-hand and your Brand is the most Marketable asset you have next to talent behind the wheel or the equipment in the shop.

Even if your only goal right now is to obtain Sponsorships and Marketing Partners, then building and establishing your Brand is indeed a serious topic and one that is as equally as important as if you were seeking a future in NASCAR. Sponsors want drivers with a Fan Base. Social Media is how you create and build that Fan Base!

A Brand is comprised of a number of things. In karting this would include your kart number, team colors, logo, team values & driver character. But remember, a brand's worth is only what other people *say or think* it is worth. If all the elements are not carefully thought out and just one building block crumbles (say Character) - you could lose any shot at moving up the Motorsports ladder regardless as to how many trophies or Championships that may have been collected over the years. Behind-the-wheel talent is had by many, but only a rare few understand the concept of total "Marketability factor" at this level of racing. Those that catch on too late may just miss the boat - or worse - miss out on a very lucrative sponsorship deal.

So from the beginning it is helpful in brand strategy to remember that you are indeed selling a product - the Driver. Right now it's to potential sponsors and a local fan base, but in a few years it will be to Car Owners with an open Driver Development spot on their race team.

The brand components can be summed up into these foundational levels:

- **Visual Identity** - Organization/Team Name, Logo design, Colors, etc,

- **Value** - Knowledge, Character, Charity work (id: "Racing for A Cause"), etc,
- **Product Benefit** - driving skills, racer talent, fan base, etc., and finally
- **Emotional Connection** - think about linking the heart of your target market with that of the "Soul" of your brand.

So how do you "Define your Brand" or "Build a Brand Strategy" and what are the steps to follow? Here is my Cheat Sheet Checklist to follow:

"Know your Story". What are your goals? How do you plan to achieve them? How will you tell your story? Your story will more than likely include an evolution of objectives that's leading towards a dream - an energy in motion - development in progress. In fact think about how often you hear the term "Driver Development" in motorsports and career planning as it relates to racing.



As a team when you are discussing your "story" think -again like a business - about what your Mission Statement should be. What are the core values of the Driver, race team - the family as a whole? Write these things down and find your voice - but also let your personality show through, because again - the driver/race team is the "Product" that is being sold.

TIP: Steer clear of too much Industry Jargon when writing your story. You want to sound human and relevant. So be clear and remember your target "Reader" of this story - what are they "buying"?

Your visual identity is very important. As mentioned, those things include the kart number you choose (why that number? Is there a story behind it? Everything needs a story...), the team colors you pick - down to the fonts used in your logo. We have a lot of resources these days for racing graphics and everyone wants to look "cooler" than the next kid one pit over, but that is not what is fundamentally important when picking out these things. Be cautious of a graphic or image that could offend someone, most importantly a potential sponsor - even a team slogan could rub others the wrong way and send the wrong message about your brand.

Choose a font that is easily read on your kart, especially as it flies around the track in 15 seconds surrounded by a crowd of others. You want to stand out - but for the right reasons. You also want to make sure that the font is a "**web safe**" font. In other words, will you be able to use it on your website? Some web browsers don't recognize all fonts. Read this article for more information on this subject >> [Click here.](#)

The same goes for the colors you chose for your team. Use Color-hex.com to find complementary color combinations and/or a contrast that works well together. There are

millions spent on the psychology of colors and case studies about how colors affect people (emotions). So take a little time to put some serious thought into choosing your colors. Other than how it looks on the kart or in your logo, you must keep in mind how it decodes on the internet and in print. That's another good reason to visit color-hex.com to help you choose your colors because you will want to record the 6 digit hex code of each color for consistency purposes as you apply them across all channels of media and marketing.

Make sure your number/letter combination that comprises your "Kart Number" (or car number) makes sense and wasn't picked for its "cutesy" factor. "Cutesy" doesn't read well across the track, media, internet, etc. While I agree your child is adorable, think long-term here. What may be endearing at age 5 may be cause for embarrassment later - so I've seen.

Team Name - choose wisely here as well! Remember this should be the URL address, or Domain Name, for your website/blog that can be used consistently across all channels of Social Media, printed material and team merchandise that you may use for marketing efforts. Use this clever widget to quickly check your name availability as a website address..

In conclusion - bearing in mind the above components, *defining your brand should be taken very seriously* because the results you want is to leave a strong, consistent impression across your website/blog pages and Social Media channels, so that your name and image are searchable and easy to find for fans and potential sponsors. Your Brand needs to have a solid foundation to launch a career from - a *strategy with a plan of action*. That plan includes a lot of elements for which you need to be prepared - in addition to a driver's "seat time".