

White Paper:

Effective Promotion Beyond the 30 Second Spot: The Sponsoring of Hockey Night in Canada

Tim Glowa

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Tim Glowa is President of North Country Research Inc., (www.ncResearch.com) a Calgary based strategic marketing science company.
He can be reached via email at Tim@Glowa.ca

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Abstract

Sponsorship as a promotional activity has continued to grow in recent years: estimated worldwide sponsorship expenditures reached over \$13 billion in 1996, up from only \$1 billion in 1980. Although event sponsorship now accounts for a significant portion of many companies' promotional budgets, aspects of its management remain largely undeveloped. Sponsorship is a means of persuasion that is fundamentally different from traditional advertising. By associating its name with an event, a company can share in the image of the event itself in much the same way that a product shares the image of the celebrity who endorses it. While sponsorship is a form of promotion, it is different from traditional advertising since the sponsor does not tightly control the medium and creative messages. Correct awareness of the sponsoring company is a major challenge facing sponsors. It is not enough simply to invest in a sponsorship; the firms that are most successful in building a link with the sponsor are those that actively promote the linkage. This research indicates that Labatt's Breweries of Canada, four years into its sponsorship agreement for Hockey Night in Canada, is failing to create a significant, memorable, or lasting linkage. In-depth interviews conducted by the author reveal that the vast majority of hockey fans in Canada fail to associate Labatt's with hockey. This failure has two causes: first, Labatt's failure to co-brand themselves successfully with hockey, beyond the Saturday night telecast, and second, Molson's (Labatt's main competitor) increased rink side presence advertising in major arenas throughout Canada.

The final scores for the games included in this report:

- January 5th, 2002: Montreal Canadiens 4 at Calgary Flames 2
- March 30th 2002: Pittsburgh Penguins 1 at Montreal Canadiens 2 (OT)

Note: The spelling of "Montreal Canadiens" is correct throughout this report.

When sponsorship took off as a stand-in for public funds in the mid-eighties, many corporations that had been experimenting with the practice ceased to see sponsorship as a hybrid of philanthropy and image promotion, and began to treat it more purely as a marketing tool, and a highly effective one at that. As its promotional value grew – and as dependency on sponsorship revenue increased in the cultural industries – the delicate dynamic between sponsors and the sponsored began to shift, with many corporations becoming more ambitious in their demands for grander acknowledgements and control, even buying events outright.

Naomi Klein, No Logo, pp. 34.

Take away sponsorship and commercialism from sport today and what is left? A large, sophisticated, finely-tuned engine developed over a period of 100 years with no fuel.

**Richard Pound,
Former International Olympic Committee Executive member, and
former Chairman of the IOC Marketing Commission**

Introduction

Although event sponsorship now accounts for a significant portion of many companies' promotional budgets, aspects of its management remain largely undeveloped. Surprisingly, few companies rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of their sponsorship programs (Marshall and Cook, 1992; Farelley, Quester and Burton, 1997). Despite this, the popularity of event sponsorship continues to increase and major events, such as the Football World Cup and Olympic Games, generate significant revenues through the sponsorship packages sold.

This paper introduces the concept of sponsorship, identifies the origins of modern sponsorship, discusses the role of sponsorship within the promotional mix, raises potential challenges to successful sponsorship, and finally examines the case of sponsoring Hockey Night in Canada.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship as a promotional activity has continued to grow in recent years: estimated worldwide sponsorship expenditures reached over \$13 billion in 1996, up from only \$1 billion in 1980 (Cornwell and Maignan 1998; Sandler and Shani 1989). Gardner and Shuman (1987) define sponsorships as “investments in causes or events to support corporate objectives (for example, to enhance corporate image), or marketing objectives (for example, to increase brand awareness) and are usually not made through traditional media-buying channels”. Such investments provide funds to a variety of organizations and activities including sports (Olympics), music (jazz festivals), philanthropic causes, cultural events, or community events. Since sponsorships can effectively reach a very specifically targeted audience with well defined messages, they are a powerful tool for establishing meaningful communication links with potential customers.

Sponsorship is a means of persuasion that is fundamentally different from traditional advertising. Sponsorship does not try to change attitudes or perceptions of a brand directly; rather, sponsorship indirectly improves perceptions of a brand by linking the brand to an event or organization that the target audience values highly (Crimmins and Horn 1996). Sponsorship can be individual, or a joint effort with other companies; the event can be a one time affair, or a series of continuing activities. Sponsorship differs from patronage; patronage is based on charity, and altruistic activity in which the patron holds little expectation of concrete benefit (Gross, Traylor, and Shuman 1987).

The ability of event sponsorship to change consumer attitudes and beliefs, in a way that will later be of benefit to the company, is drawn from two effects (Heider 1958; Dean 1999). First, balance theory envisions a triangular relationship among three elements: the endorser, the object of the endorsement and the consumer. The theory postulates that consumers desire the relationship between the elements in the triads to be in equilibrium, and that people may alter their attitudes to achieve this balance between elements. For example, a belief is out of balance and unstable if a lowly valued object is linked to a highly valued object. The sponsoring company, therefore, anticipates that consumer will have a positive valuation of a particular sponsored event, and that in the presence of a company's expressed linkage with this event, the consumer will form a positive impression of the company as well.

Second, once a linkage between the sponsoring company and the event has been established, and feelings of goodwill toward the event have resulted in feelings of goodwill towards the sponsor, a "halo effect" may then suggest to consumers that the sponsor's products are superior to those of competitors. In other words, if consumers rank the sponsor high for being a good corporate citizen for having sponsored an event, then consumer's may assume that the company also produces superior products – the halo effect (Dion and Berscheid 1972; Dean 1999).

By associating its name with an event, a company can share in the image of the event itself in much the same way that a product shares the image of the celebrity who endorses it. Stevens (1984) calls this linkage "brandstanding" and contends that associating a proven product or service with an event or issue of interest to consumers "creates for the brand an aura of excitement, interest, reliability, and renewed vitality" (p. 31).

Origins of modern sponsorship

Sponsorship has been around for over a century, and the first instances related to the sponsorship of European sporting events. The British firm, Spiers & Pond, became the first recorded commercial sponsor when it supported the British cricket team tour in Australia in 1861 (Cunningham et al 1992). Standard Oil and Firestone are considered pioneers in North American sport marketing with their involvement in auto racing during the 1920s. Coca-Cola was also a pioneer with its sponsorship of the 1928 Olympics.

Texaco's "Live from the Met" radio broadcast began in the 1940s as one of the first non-sports sponsorships. However, it was not until the 1970's that sponsorship gained

widespread popularity as being less a philanthropy tool than a mechanism that could drive sales through its influence on channel members, as well as on the final consumer. Cunningham et al. argue that original sponsorships were primarily altruistic, with little expectation of a return other than the possibility of signage during the event.

Role of sponsorship within the promotional mix

While sponsorship is a form of promotion, it is different from traditional advertising since the sponsor does not tightly control the medium and creative messages. Sponsorships are usually, but not always, handled through traditional media. Traditionally, they involve the staging of an event around which advertising might or might not take place (Javalgi, Raylor, Gross and Lampman 1994).

Additionally, event sponsorship differs from advertising by placing additional burdens on the advertiser, who is responsible for: (a) the creation of a linkage between the sponsor and the event, and (b) the “interpretation” of the connection between the sponsor’s product and the event if the connection is not obvious (Dean 1999).

Traditional advertising theory recognizes the importance of both internal and external stimuli on behaviour. Sandage et al (1983) mention that advertisers are interested in two types of behaviour: (1) attending to the advertising message itself, and (2) that moment of behaviour intended by the promotion (for example, the moment of purchase, or donation, or writing to a government official).

In the first case, the challenge is getting the individual to select a promotion from an external environment filled with competing stimuli. The advertiser must not only attract attention away from competition, but also deliver a message. In the second case, concerning the action that the message is intended to stimulate, the promotion is no longer present in the external field but has now, presumably, become part of the significant internal forces within the individual, since its message must be remembered and considered relevant if it is to lead to the intended course of action (Sandage et al. 1983).

The traditional paradigm of advertising effectiveness is the awareness-interest-desire-action (AIDA) model. This model postulates that consumers move through a series of psychological processes which culminate in behaviour. AIDA is also thought of as a cognitive, information processing model, where a heavy emphasis is placed on awareness and attitudes, and the belief that these variables foster behaviour (Hoek 1999).

Despite widespread acceptance of such cognitive models, severe criticism of them has emerged. Ehrenberg (1988; and Hoek 1999) criticized cognitive behaviour models because they comprise variables that are difficult to measure and because the relationship between these variables has not been empirically determined. Further, he also questions the validity of the inherent nature of the sequential models proposed in advertising, as these did not capture the highly repetitive nature of purchase behaviour. As an alternative, he proposed the Awareness – Trial – Reinforcement (ATR) model, which

uses behaviorist principles of respondent and operant conditioning (rather than the cogitative theory of awareness and persuasion), and specifically considers the role of repeat purchases (see also Hoek 1999 and Jones 1990).

The challenges Ehrenberg presents to conventional advertising theory also apply to sponsorship (and any other form of promotion). Hoek, Grengall, Jeffcoat and Orsman (1997) examined sponsorship within the context of the ATR model to assess the extent to which this theory explained consumers' responses to sponsorship. They used a pre-post methodology, in which respondents viewed either advertising or sponsorship stimulus material that had been used in conjunction with Snicker's sponsorship of the 1994 Football World Cup. Hock et al concluded that neither the sponsorship nor the advertising stimuli showed any evidence of having persuaded respondents to purchase Snickers. Instead, they suggested that the behaviourist-based ATR model accommodated their findings more easily than did the more cognitively oriented AIDA model.

This led McDonald (1991) to conclude: "As more people have the sponsorship brought to their notice by publicity, they are reminded of something they already approve of; it is brought to the front of their mind. It does not follow that anybody's mind has been changed about the company because of the sponsorship". That is, frequent exposure of a particular sponsor may lead respondents to associate those characteristics with the brand, but it is unlikely to turn non-users into users of that brand (Hoek 1999).

Challenges to effective sponsorship

The incidence of corporate sponsorship has risen dramatically over the last decade. Research in corporate sponsorship has not kept pace. Sandler and Shani (1989) conclude that "in view of the limited efforts on one hand and the growing amount of resources devoted to sponsorship on the other hand, much more research is required to determined the value and the effectiveness of sponsorship". This theme is consistent with Gardner and Shuman (1987) who discovered low incidences of sponsorship-tracking by sponsoring firms. In their survey, Gardner and Shuman asked executives how they measure success in their sponsorship goals. Over half admitted they do not measure the outcomes of their sponsorship activities, while only 17% said they use some form of audience response research.

Javalgi, Traylor, Gross and Lampman (1994) believe that sponsorship may not be for all firms, especially those with an existing negative image. In fact, they conclude "firms suffering from negative publicity will suffer further if they engage in corporate sponsorship. Corporate sponsorship reinforces prior beliefs about the company. It cannot, by itself, reverse prior negative perceptions".

Sandler and Shani (1989) investigated the effectiveness of Olympic sponsorship and developed the concept of "ambush" marketing. They tried to determine whether audiences could correctly link sponsors with events, and whether consumers could be "fooled" into thinking that other companies sponsored the events.

Correct awareness of the sponsoring company is a major challenge facing sponsors. A study by Crimmins and Horn (1996) examined sponsorship awareness among National Football League (NFL) fans who were soft drink users and determined that 34% believe Pepsi to be a sponsor, while 35% correctly identified Coke as a sponsor. It does Coke little good to be the recognized sponsor of the NFL by 35% of NFL fans who are soft drink users when 34% mistakenly believe Pepsi is the sponsor. The importance of sponsorship awareness led Javalgi, Traylor, Gross and Lampman (1994) to conclude “the strength of the reaction, positive or negative, will be greater among persons who can bring the sponsorship to mind on their own than among persons who must be reminded of it”.

Crimmins and Horn (1996) contend that it is not enough simply to invest in a sponsorship. The firms that are most successful in building a link with the sponsor are those that actively promote the linkage. They conclude, “if the brand cannot afford to spend to communicate its sponsorship, then the brand cannot afford sponsorship at all”. Failing to promote the sponsorship properly can result in a failure to link the sponsor with the event. Even worse, as the case of Coca-cola sponsoring the NFL indicates, is when a competitor is afforded the recognition of being a sponsor without having invested in the relationship.

Such a case of misrepresentation has occurred with Labatt’s brewery and its sponsorship of Hockey Night in Canada.

The case of Labatt’s and Hockey Night in Canada

This paper now turns to the 1998 acquisition of the English language sponsorship rights to Hockey Night in Canada, by John Labatt, Ltd (Labatt’s), for C\$58 million a year for four years. Labatt Brewing Company was founded in 1847, and employs 3,800 Canadians. Today, Labatt’s is part of Belgium-based Interbrew S.A., one of the largest brewing groups in the world, with more than 180 beers available in over 100 countries.

Hockey Night in Canada, the premier regularly scheduled sporting event offered by the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), is a national institution. The theme song, easily recognized by the vast majority of all Canadians, has been called Canada’s second national anthem. As the longest serving continuous sports broadcast, started in 1951, Hockey Night in Canada is as much a part of Canadian culture as are ice and the game itself.

The deal allows Labatt Breweries to become title sponsor and official sponsor for National Hockey League (NHL) broadcasts on CBC, Canada’s government funded broadcaster. The deal gives Labatt’s extensive broadcast time on the weekly Hockey Night in Canada broadcast (HNIC), as well as being named as title sponsor in the pre-game show, called “Labatt Saturday Night”¹. Labatt’s took over the sponsorship from rival Molson Breweries (MOLa.TO), which had been the title sponsor of HNIC for nearly

¹ It should be noted that Hockey Night in Canada is typically broadcasted Saturday nights.

50 years: While Molson decided not to renew its English language broadcast advertising relationship with the NHL, the company continues to hold the French-language rights in Quebec; the decision to keep the French-language sponsorship rights was likely heavily influenced by both Molson's ownership of the Montreal Canadiens and the Molson Centre venue. Apparently, Molson decided in 1998 that maintaining the English sponsorship rights would have meant substantially increasing Molson's commitment to televised hockey, despite declining ratings (Molson 1998). Labatt's seized this opportunity, and claimed the sponsorship rights.

October 10, 1998 marked the debut for the new Labatt's sponsored HNIC broadcast, featuring a game between the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Detroit Red Wings. However, the debut was spoiled by Molson Breweries which, through a separate agreement with the Toronto Maple Leafs, placed the Molson logo on the ice rink boards, at centre ice and behind the Leafs' bench.

The complete Hockey Night in Canada broadcast schedule for the 2001 – 2002 NHL season is included in Appendix 1. The National Hockey League regular season runs from October thru April, and is followed by the playoffs.

Starting Fresh: The Major Challenge Facing Labatt's

The major challenge facing Labatt's in effectively sponsoring Hockey Night in Canada is providing a fresh, recognizable image to the sponsorship that is identifiably different from that of Molson's. Since Molson sponsored HNIC for over 50 years, Labatt's faced a major challenge in communicating its sponsorship to the marketplace. As Crimms and Horn (1996) point out, it will do little to enhance the corporate image of Labatt's if a majority of consumers still associate Hockey Night in Canada with Molson's.

In-depth interviews with male hockey fans

Through the course of completing this study, the author conducted a series of twenty in-depth interviews with hockey fans across Canada². While strictly qualitative in nature, these interviews nevertheless paint an interesting portrait of the associations viewers make towards hockey and beer sponsorship. The objective of these interviews was not to understand the complex process by which promotion affects a customer's behaviour; rather, its primary objective was to examine sponsorship awareness among a captive user base, and secondly, to explore general perceptions relating to viewing hockey games and drinking beer.

As with all qualitative techniques, these results provide a directional glimpse of the attitudes and opinions of one particular segment of consumers. A study such as this generates a wealth of qualitative information. In effect, this approach provides an opportunity to understand the range and nature of the factors linked to a given realm of interest. It also fosters an understanding of the reasons for their occurrence. However, because of the type of study conducted, the observations which emerge from this research

² All interviews were conducted in January 2002 (prior to the 2002 Olympic games in Salt Lake City).

mode must be viewed as tentative and directional. The precise extent to which the observed phenomena occur in the universe of the target group could be determined accurately only with broad scale quantitative research. The discussion guide used for this research is presented in appendix 6, and the participant breakdown is presented in appendix 7. Lastly, it should be noted that all participants were selected by the author, and should not be considered a random representation of consumers.

All participants consider themselves to be hockey fans, and the majority watch at least one Hockey Night in Canada telecast per month. In addition, most also watch their home team on either local or cable TV. Although viewing hockey can be a very social exercise, many participants enjoyed relaxing at home either by themselves or with a friend, and watching a game on cold Canadian Saturday night evening (often enjoying a cold beer in the process). Several respondents indicated that they often watched regular games at home by themselves, but would go to a sports bar to watch big games (for instance playoff games); the reason for this is the “enhanced atmosphere”.

One respondent from Calgary said “There is something special about sitting on the couch in front of the TV having a beer in your hand, and hearing the Hockey Night in Canada theme song... even if it is the Maple Leafs who are playing”.

The linkage between Labatt’s and hockey is not totally lost on these participants. One respondent from Toronto recalled the “Out of the Blue” commercial portraying a street hockey game that suddenly erupts in major downtown city.

The results indicate that, while an overwhelming majority of participants realize that Labatt’s sponsors Hockey Night in Canada, an equal or greater number associates the brewer Molson with watching hockey on Saturday evenings. One participant from Toronto said “I **know** that Labatt’s is the main sponsor of Hockey Night in Canada, but it seems that Molson’s should **still** be the sponsor”. Another from Vancouver claimed “... it is Labatt’s, but I still hear ‘Molson Hockey Night in Canada’ or the ‘Molson Cup three star’ in my mind”. Finally, one young respondent from Edmonton made a linkage between Molson’s “I AM” commercials, and Canada’s national game: “I am Canadian... that is what hockey is all about... I am a Canadian and hockey is my game”. Although the “I AM” commercials contain vague references to hockey, awareness is extremely high, and have become part of popular culture; the commercial has become a voice of pride and inspiration for Canadian youth.

Relating to beer purchases, these brief discussions revealed that many participants display some brand loyalty. Half the respondents preferred a domestic beer (Molson’s Canadian, Labatt Blue, Coors Lite), while the other half either preferred imported beer (Corona from Mexico or Caffrey’s from Ireland) or domestic micro-breweries (Big Rock or Sleeman). The most popular domestic beer is Molson Canadian.

There remains a significant halo effect in the mindset of respondents for the linkage between Molson and Hockey Night in Canada even four years after this sponsorship agreement ceased.

This research indicates that Labatt's, four years into its sponsorship agreement, is failing to create a significant or memorable linkage through its investment in Hockey Night in Canada. As a result of two major events, one under the control of Labatt's the remaining sections of this paper argue that the sponsorship of HNIC by Labatt's is an ineffective sponsorship. This claim is supported by in-depth interviews conducted with male hockey fans from across Canada. The two major events that will ultimately determine the failure of this sponsorship are:

- Labatt's failure to co-brand themselves successfully with hockey beyond sponsoring the Saturday night telecast.
- Molson's increased rink side advertising presence.

Labatt's failure to link its brand to hockey beyond the Hockey Night in Canada telecast

To examine the effectiveness of a sponsorship strategy, the author examined one Hockey Night in Canada national telecast in detail. This telecast, between the Montreal Canadiens and the Calgary Flames from the Saddledome in Calgary, aired on January 5th, 2002 at 5pm Mountain time (7pm Eastern time).

This analysis included a review of the mentions of Labatt's as a sponsor, the number and duration of appearances of Labatt's logo (summarized in Appendix 2), the duration of exposure for the venue-based Molson sponsorship (summarized in Appendix 3), and a review of the strategies of other key sponsors (summarized in Appendix 4). The incidences and duration of appearances for both Labatt's and Molson's products are an indication of brand visibility. It should be noted that the results of examination of sponsorship effectiveness, included with this report, are specific to one game. To be truly representative, counts for both logo appearances as well as cumulative logo time should be averaged across several games.

During this telecast, Labatt's was mentioned as a sponsor three times, while its logo (either Labatt's or Labatt Blue) appeared on screen 27 times for a total of 206 seconds. Labatt's itself did not purchase any advertising during this telecast. [However, one of its brands, Budweiser brewed and distributed in Canada by Labatt's under license from Anheuser-Busch, did purchase five ads during this telecast. The connection between Labatt's and Budweiser, however, is not advertised or communicated during the commercial. Since a formal linkage between Budweiser and Labatt's is not made, there can be no linkage inferred between Budweiser and Hockey Night in Canada (see Appendix 4)].

In fact, Labatt's is the only major sponsor of Hockey Night in Canada that did not purchase additional advertising time during the broadcast. While Labatt's is the main title sponsor, other firms sponsor minor sections of the telecast (see Appendix 4). For

example, Ford sponsored the out of town scores during the first intermission and the game's three stars, MasterCard sponsored a discussion and analysis between the second and third periods, and Moores sponsored "Coaches Corner" with Don Cherry between the first and second periods. All three of these sponsors followed their section with onscreen advertising. Ford was one of the heaviest sponsors of the telecast, airing a total of nine commercials during the telecast. Of all the advertisers, only MasterCard developed creative advertisements that specifically related to the game of hockey.

Although the most common method of gauging the consumer impact of sponsorship is through measures of "visibility", Crimmins and Horn (1996) argue that such measures are weak indicators of persuasive impact. Crimmins and Horn (1996) cite a 1994 reference, from Pokrywczynski, that arena displays need 8 – 20 times more exposure than a commercial to approximate similar impact³. Assuming this figure is valid, the 601 seconds of visibility for Molson's products equates to 30 to 75 seconds of advertising exposure, while for Labatt's the 206 seconds of visibility equates to 10 to 26 seconds of advertising exposure.

Compare this to the marketing strategy employed by Molson's for its French broadcast on the CBC (Radio Canada). Recall, Molson's only surrendered the sponsorship rights to the English version of Hockey Night in Canada, however, retained the sponsorship rights for the French language version. This version of the telecast usually involves the Montreal Canadiens, and is broadcast in French across Canada; the majority of Canadians, English speaking for French speaking, will receive both English and French CBC.

This telecast between the Pittsburgh Penguins and the Montreal Canadiens was played at the Molson Centre in Montreal on Saturday March 30th, 2002, at 5pm MT (7pm ET). This analysis included a review of the number and duration of appearances of Molson's logo, the duration of exposure for the venue-based Molson sponsorship, and a review of the broadcast advertising strategy for Molson's (see appendix 8).

Molson's presence for hockey in Montreal is omnipotent. Consider:

- The Montreal Canadiens play (for the time being at least) in the Molson Centre;
- Due to the naming rights, Molson Export is painted in a circle around the Molson Canadien logo at centre ice;
- The Molson Export logo is displayed on ice (between the blue lines);
- The Molson Export logo is on the boards in two places (both to the immediate left of the respective goalies). This is an extremely desirable rink-side location since a significant portion of the game is played at the ends of the rink, and also accounts for increased visibility during highlights and replays;
- The Molson Export logo is displayed behind the players in the penalty box;
- The name and/or logo are also visible in many other places throughout the arena, but usually not visible on the telecast.

³ the specific reference is Pokrywczynski, James (1994), "The differential Impact of Televised Exposure to Sports Arena Displays vs. Commercials", Presented to the American Academy of Advertising Conference, April 1994.

Unlike the Labatt's sponsorship strategy, which relied solely on sponsorship rights, Molson has invested heavily in supporting its French hockey broadcast. This includes nearly fifteen minutes of logo or name visibility throughout the broadcast, as well as purchasing seven commercials that were aired throughout the broadcast.

Molson enhanced presence in Canadian Arenas

As mentioned earlier, although Molson decided not to renew its sponsorship of Hockey Night in Canada from the 1998 season onward, it remains a major sponsor of hockey in Canada. This includes sponsorship of the men's and women's Canadian Olympic hockey teams and placement of advertising in all the arenas sporting NHL teams in Canada. The extent to which the Molson's brand is visible in the major hockey arenas in Canada varies by market. For example, in Calgary, Molson is limited to a rink (or board) placement, and other in-venue promotions, while in Edmonton and Toronto Molson not only has two board placements in each venue, but major logos painted on the ice (between the two blue lines) as well. Lastly, the marquee jewel in the Molson's crown is the sponsorship of the Molson Centre in Montreal (home of the Montreal Canadiens), and the minority interest in the Montreal Canadiens⁴.

It fact, this strategy of aligning the brand with hockey and hockey fans across Canada is a deliberate and strategic action undertaken by the brand to link itself with hockey. Molson's 2001 annual report (Molson 2001) suggests:

Hockey is synonymous with being Canadian. It is part of the very fabric of Canadian culture, a game loved by fans across the country, in communities large and small. Molson's ongoing research indicates that hockey is extremely relevant and important to consumers, which is why the Corporation continues to be extensively involved in Canadian hockey, both at the national and grassroots level. Much like Molson's involvement in music, sports properties and sponsorships give Molson the opportunity to create a deeper emotional attachment with consumers while strengthening the Molson brands and fostering consumer loyalty to those brands.... As the leading sponsor of the National Hockey League in Canada, and a major sponsor of all six Canadian NHL teams, Molson is continually strengthening its relationship with professional hockey.

Apparently, Molson did not take the decision to remove itself from Hockey Night in Canada in 1998 lightly, but called this "heart-wrenching decision" the right one for shareholders due to declining ratings (Molson 1998). At that time, the ambush marketing strategy was already being developed. In the letter to shareholders in the 1998 annual report, Eric Molson, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Molson, and E. James Arnett,

⁴ After a 36 year relationship, Molson announced in June 2000 its intention to sell its majority interest in the Molson Canadiens hockey team, and 100% of the Molson Centre arena in Montreal. Molson retains a 19.90% equity stake in the company, and received a total of \$190 million from the sale (Molson 2001).

President and CEO (Molson 1998), suggested that “Molson Breweries will continue to be ‘Canada’s hockey brewery’ by pursuing its involvement with Canadian NHL clubs on a regional basis and by investing in hockey at the club, recreational and grassroots levels”.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, Molson has solidified its presence as the brand most closely associated with beer and hockey among young Canadian males across Canada. Despite distancing itself from the main Hockey Night in Canada broadcast, Molson has enhanced its arena presence by sponsoring all six Canadian NHL hockey teams. Conversely, Labatt’s, while being the title sponsor of Hockey Night in Canada, has done little to support this sponsorship through advertising nor has it reinforced any linkage with hockey. It almost seems as if Labatt’s purchased the rights for Hockey Night in Canada simply because its primary competitor, Molson, decided it did not want it anymore; the sponsorship fails to create a lasting impression in the minds of consumers simply because the event and sponsor fail to create a proper linkage in the minds of consumers.

Appendix 1 – 2001 – 2002 Schedule of telecasts for Hockey Night in Canada on CBC

2001-2002 TV SCHEDULE

DATE	GAME	START
Wed., Oct. 3	Ottawa @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Edmonton @ Calgary	9:00 PM
Sat., Oct. 6	Toronto @ Montreal	7:00 PM FULL NET
	Phoenix @ Edmonton	10:00 PM ALTA/SASK
	Detroit @ Vancouver	10:00 PM FULL NET
Sat., Oct. 13	St. Louis @ Toronto	7:00 PM ONT. ONLY (NO OTTAWA)
	NY Rangers @ Ottawa	7:00 PM FULL NET (OTTAWA, NO ONT.)
	Colorado @ Vancouver	10:00 PM FULL NET
Sat., Oct. 20	Toronto @ Calgary	7:00 PM FULL NET
	Florida @ Edmonton	10:00 PM FULL NET
Sat., Oct. 27	Pittsburgh @ Toronto	7:00 PM FULL NET
	Vancouver @ Edmonton	10:00 PM FULL NET
Sat., Nov. 3	Colorado @ Toronto	7:00 PM FULL NET (NO ALTA, QUE)
	Montreal @ Calgary	7:00 PM ALTA, QUE
	Vancouver @ San Jose	10:00 PM FULL NET
Sat., Nov. 10	New Jersey @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Colorado @ Calgary	10:00 PM
Sat., Nov. 17	Toronto @ Ottawa	7:00 PM
	Edmonton @ Vancouver	10:00 PM
Sat., Nov. 24	Boston @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Edmonton @ Colorado	7:00 PM
Sat., Dec. 1	Chicago @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Boston @ Ottawa	7:00 PM

	Dallas @ Edmonton	10:00 PM
Sat., Dec. 8	NY Rangers @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	San Jose @ Vancouver	10:00 PM
Sat., Dec. 15	New Jersey @ Ottawa	7:00 PM
	Detroit @ Vancouver	10:00 PM
Sat., Dec. 22	Ottawa @ New Jersey	1:00 PM
	Buffalo @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Minnesota @ Vancouver	10:00 PM
Wed., Dec. 26	Toronto @ Carolina	7:00 PM
	Calgary @ Edmonton	10:00 PM
Sat., Dec. 29	Ottawa @ Pittsburgh	7:00 PM OTTAWA REGION
	Toronto @ Florida	7:00 PM FULL NET
	New Jersey @ Vancouver	10:00 PM
Thurs., Jan. 3	Toronto @ Boston	7:00 PM
Sat., Jan. 5	Ottawa @ Toronto	4:00 PM
	Montreal @ Calgary	7:00 PM
	Vancouver @ Edmonton	10:00 PM
Sat., Jan. 12	Montreal @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Colorado @ Edmonton	10:00 PM
Sat., Jan. 19	Philadelphia @ Toronto	7:00 PM FULL NET, NO BC
	Vancouver @ Washington	7:00 PM BC ONLY
	Pittsburgh @ Edmonton	10:00 PM FULL NET
Sat., Jan. 26	Toronto @ Edmonton	7:00 PM
	Vancouver @ Calgary	10:00 PM
Sat., Feb. 9	Montreal @ Toronto	3:00 PM
Sat., Mar. 2	Buffalo @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Washington @ Ottawa	7:00 PM
	St. Louis @ Edmonton	10:00 PM
Sat., Mar. 9	Toronto @ Montreal	7:00 PM
	Vancouver @ San Jose	10:00 PM
Sat., Mar. 16	Dallas @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	NY Islanders @ Ottawa	7:00 PM
	Washington @ Edmonton	10:00 PM

Sat., Mar. 23	Buffalo @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Montreal @ Nashville	7:00 PM
	Calgary @ Edmonton	10:00 PM
Sat., Mar. 30	New Jersey @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Anaheim @ Vancouver	10:00 PM
	Dallas @ Edmonton	10:00 PM
Sat., Apr. 6	Florida @ Toronto	7:00 PM
	Edmonton @ Los Angeles	10:00 PM
Sat., Apr. 13	Toronto @ Ottawa	7:00 PM
	Vancouver @ Calgary	10:00 PM

ALL TIMES ET
Dates and times are subject to change

Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/hockey/hnic/tvschedule.shtml>

Appendix 2 – Labatt’s sponsorship of the January 5, 2002 telecast

This section provides a review of the sponsorship for a single game (Montreal Canadiens visiting the Calgary Flames at the Saddledome) on January 5, 2002, at 5pm Mountain Time (7pm Eastern)

Labatt’s

	Mentions of the Labatt’s name by broadcaster	Appearances of Labatt’s logo	Time of appearance of logo
Pre-game	1	2	7 seconds
First period	-	4	14 seconds
First intermission (between 1 st and 2 nd periods)	-	1	5 seconds
Second period	1	7	31 seconds
Second intermission (between 2 nd and 3 rd periods)	-	3	18 seconds
Third period	-	5	20 seconds
Post game	1	5	1 minute, 51 seconds (111 sec)
Total	3	27	206 seconds (3 min, 26 sec)

The majority of appearances of the Labatt’s image occurred with the placement of a Labatt’s Blue logo onscreen with the current game score prior to breaking for a commercial.

Labatt’s received extensive post-game logo exposure through its sponsorship of the post game scoreboard. This resulted in 90 seconds of exposure time, and significantly altered the total cumulative exposure. Additional post-game exposure was recognized through the post-game interview; the announcer and player being interviewed sat in front of a display that highlighted the Labatt’s Blue logo, the Hockey Night in Canada logo, and the CBC Logo. However, the Labatt’s logo was only clearly visible for a total of 21 seconds.

Appendix 3 – Molson’s sponsorship of the January 5, 2002 game at the Saddledome

This section provides a review of the sponsorship for a single game (Montreal Canadiens visiting the Calgary Flames at the Saddledome) on January 5, 2002, at 5pm Mountain Time (7pm Eastern).

While Molson is not a sponsor of the telecast, it did purchase advertising in four locations within the Saddledome (home of the Calgary Flames) that is clearly visible throughout any telecast. Molson’s sponsorship within the Saddledome is:

- Rinkside with a Large “Molson Canadian” placard (with the letters in ‘Canadian’ alternating between red and blue. This logo is positioned on the blue line to the right of the Calgary Flames bench between Husky Oil and Ford.
- Signage behind the players’ benches with the slogan “Molson Canadian”.
- Signage on the stairs behind the players’ benches with the slogan “I am Canadian”.
- Signage within the rink at both ends (behind the goalies) with the slogan “I am Canadian”.

It should be noted that Molson does not have a logo painted on the ice in the Saddledome. The on-ice sponsors are Powerade (2), Compaq, and the Bank of Montreal. In other venues (Air Canada Centre in Toronto, or the Skyreach Centre in Edmonton for example), Molson does have its logo painted on the ice.

	Mentions of Molson by the broadcaster	Time of appearance of logo
Pre-game	-	50 seconds
First period	-	210 seconds
First intermission (between 1 st and 2 nd periods)	-	-
Second period	-	153 seconds
Second intermission (between 2 nd and 3 rd periods)	-	-
Third period	-	188 seconds
Post game	-	-
Total	-	601 seconds (10 min, 1 sec)

A stop-watch was used to record the total time appearance of any Molson sponsorship. Time was recorded only when there was a clear and unobstructed view of either the words “Molson”, “Molson Canadian”, the red/blue “Canadian” on the boards or the words “I am Canadian” in other locations.

Appendix 4 – Other sponsorship of the January 5, 2002 game at the Saddledome

This section provides a review of the sponsorship for a single game (Montreal Canadiens visiting the Calgary Flames at the Saddledome) on January 5, 2002, at 5pm Mountain Time (7pm Eastern).

Ford

Ford sponsors the “up to the minute scoreboard” between first and second periods. During the announcer’s review of the scores in other games, the Ford logo is prominently displayed on screen for a total of 70 seconds.

Ford also sponsored the game’s “3 stars”.

In addition, Ford purchased 9 commercials (not hockey related) that aired during the telecast (with a commercial airing each after the “up to the minute scoreboard” and “3 stars”).

MasterCard

MasterCard sponsored the “satellite hotstove”, a review, discussion and summary of the day’s games with four experts located in cities throughout North America, and connected via satellite between the second and third periods. MasterCard also followed this with a “priceless” commercial involving the Stanley Cup and purchased one additional commercial time during the telecast.

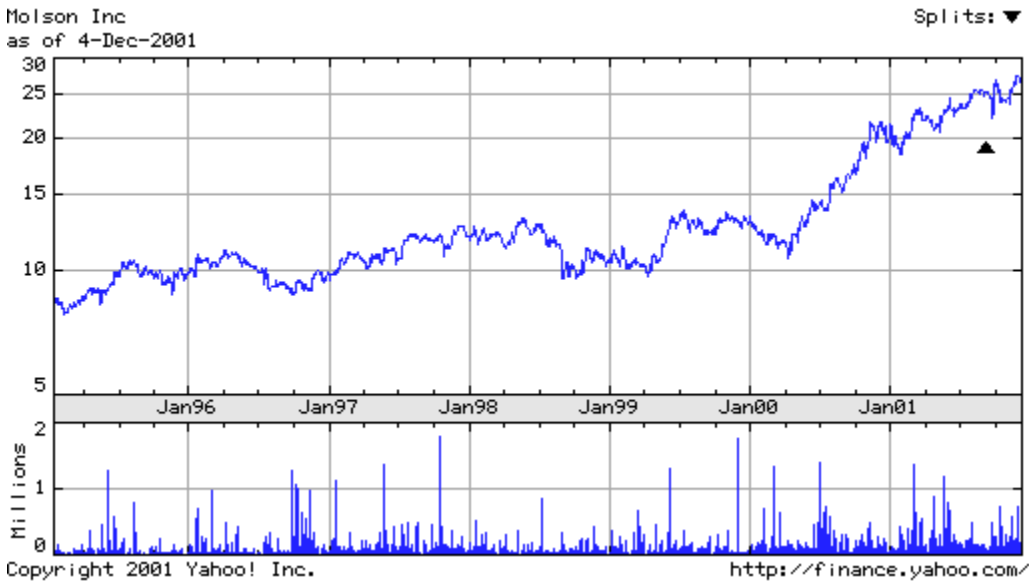
Moores

Moores sponsored “Coaches Corner”, airing between the first and second periods, with Don Cherry. For this sponsorship, Moores received two mentions (“Well made, well dressed. Moores”), and followed Coaches Corner with a commercial. In addition, Moores purchased one other commercial during the telecast.

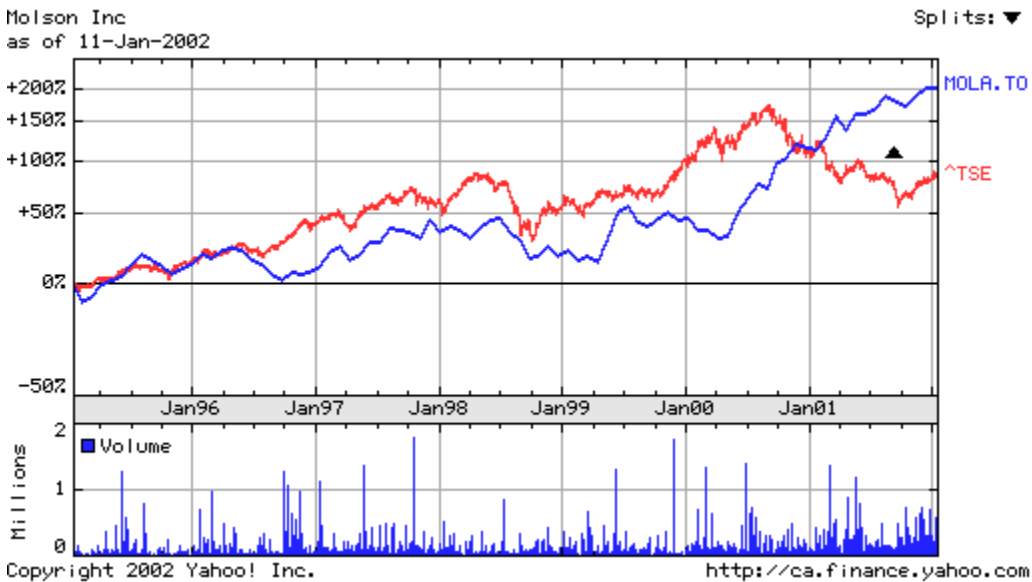
Beer commercials

The only beer commercials aired during this telecast were from Budweiser. In total, Budweiser purchased a total of five commercials during this telecast. Interestingly, Labatt’s brews Budweiser under license in Canada.

Appendix 5a – Molson share prices



Appendix 5b – Molson share prices relative to the TSE 500



Regrettably, similar data is not available for Labatt's.

Appendix 6 – Discussion Guide for In-depth Interviews

Hockey:

- Are they a hockey fan?
- Do they watch Hockey Night in Canada? How often?
- IF YES – Where do they usually watch HNIC? (Prompt: At home, with friends, at bar?)

Beer and Hockey:

- When they think of beer and watching televised hockey on Saturday night, what beer comes to mind?
- PROMPT: What beer comes to mind?
- PROMPT: What comes to mind for hockey?
- Who sponsors HNIC?

Beer:

- Do they drink / enjoy beer? (If No, terminate interview)
- What is their preferred beer?
- Do they try different beers, or usually purchase / enjoy the same brand?

Appendix 7 – Participant Profile

Region where they live:

Ontario	Alberta	British Columbia
2	12	6

Gender:

Male	Female
18	2

Age:

Less than 24 years	25 – 54 years	Older than 55 years
6	11	3

Appendix 7b – Participant responses

Frequency of watching HNIC:

Usually (weekly)	Occasionally (at least once / month)	Rarely or Seldom (less than once a month)
6	12	2

If (usually or occasionally), typical location of watching HNIC:

Home (without guests)	Home (with guests)	At friends home	Bar	Other
8	4	2	2	2

Note: Only sums to 18

Sponsor of HNIC:

Labatt's	Molson	Don't know	Other
14	4	2	0

When they think of beer and watching televised hockey on Saturday night, what beer comes to mind?:

Labatt's	Molson	Don't know	Other
4	11	4	1

Appendix 8 – Molson’s sponsorship of the March 30, 2002 game at the Molson Centre

This section provides a review of the sponsorship for a single game (Pittsburgh Penguins visiting the Montreal Canadiens at the Molson Centre) on March 30th, 2002, at 5pm Mountain Time (7pm Eastern), broadcast on the French CBC.

In this example, Molson is both a sponsor of the telecast (enjoying on screen placement of the Molson Export logo), and a major advertiser. Advertising was purchased in rink (including naming rights for the building, Molson Export logo placed at centre ice, Molson Export rinkside advertising, and signage behind the penalty boxes). Additionally, Molson aired several commercials throughout the broadcast.

	Mentions of Molson by the broadcaster	Time appearance of Logo	Paid commercials
Pre-game	-	75 seconds	1
First period	-	233 seconds	2
First intermission (between 1 st and 2 nd periods)	-	15 seconds	1
Second period	-	116 seconds	2
Second intermission (between 2 nd and 3 rd periods)	-	25 seconds	-
Third period	-	289 seconds	1
Overtime	-	112 seconds	-
Post game	-	12 seconds	-
Total	-	877 seconds (14 min, 37 sec)	7

A stop-watch was used to record the total time appearance of any Molson sponsorship. Time was recorded only when there was a clear and unobstructed view of either the words “Molson”, “Molson Export”, or the Molson Export logo. While the Molson name would have likely been mentioned during the broadcast, due to language difficulties, this was not counted for fear of missing an occurrence.

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About the author

Tim Glowa is President of North Country Research Inc., (www.ncResearch.com) a Calgary based strategic marketing science company. He can be reached via email at Tim@Glowa.ca