

Using sponsorship to drive value

By [Struan Campbell](#), issued by [Levergy](#)

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Last year New Balance was appointed the official technical partner of Cricket SA (CSA) and the Proteas. Levergy was subsequently appointed as its sponsorship agency on the cricket account in August 2015. Our brief: to assist New Balance to derive meaningful value from its investment.

Digital and PR was the immediate focus and we used the Proteas and their ambassadors as assets to drive awareness and demand. The “Always in Beta” campaign, for instance, was launched in July 2015. The campaign featured players individually endorsed by New Balance – cricketers who included Dale Steyn, David Miller, Morne Morkel, Chris Morris, Kyle Abbott and Eddie Leie. The social media strategy has been so successful, particularly from a content point of view, that the SA team has led the way internationally for the other New Balance markets.



During this summer's cricket season, SA content published from the New Balance international cricket handle achieved the most reach and impressions by any country worldwide. In addition, it topped the charts across all engagement metrics on Twitter.

The content worked so well not only because it was clever and aspirational, but also because it resonated with cricket fans, providing real-time reaction to big moments and milestones. Furthermore, it made use of CSA and its associated influencers to amplify the best content through their social platforms.

A second campaign involved getting cricket fans in SA to get their replica kit. 5FM, 702, Good Hope, East Coast Radio and Jacaranda featured interviews with the players on their breakfast shows, and five Sportsman's Warehouse stores across SA hosted activations. There were geo-targeted social media posts for each region in the two weeks leading to the activations and Proteas players were used as social influencers to drive people to listen on radio and get to Sportsman's Warehouse stores.

The radio station takeover resulted in New Balance receiving 28 minutes of unpaid radio time across five of SA's most popular and relevant stations, resulting in a radio audience of 6,524,000 with a live airtime value of R693,374. Additionally, an insert was created and supplied to local broadcasters that generated R4.4m worth of TV coverage – with no advertising spend.

Live social media amplified the activations to add an additional 576,651 impressions, with 28,482 engagements achieved

and a media value of R144,162 generated. New Balance sold 49 replica Proteas shirts in one hour in stores, and went on to attain a record-breaking season of replica sales for CSA.

Overall, the marketing approach has propelled New Balance to the forefront of SA cricket from both a perception and a sales perspective. The sponsorship has brought a return on investment of 2:1 on sales alone – excluding media value generated – showing how the investment has provided New Balance with instant returns.

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