

CASE STUDY

Speeding Past the Competition in Car Racing Sponsorships

Sponsorships play a critical role in professional car racing.

The transportation logistics involved getting to races spanning the continent are complex. The cars are technically sophisticated and require ongoing maintenance by a specialized mechanical crew. The barrier to entry is high and it's an exceptionally expensive sport.

Pro racing's exclusivity, high stakes and the demographics of its fans make it attractive to sponsors. Even so, a company's logo plastered on a speeding car, subject to variable television broadcast coverage, makes the visibility of team sponsorship somewhat of a gamble. As with every other sponsorship opportunity, getting full marketing value from it depends on how well the company can use it creatively to build relationships and amplify its visibility.

One way to leverage race sponsorship is through a relatively new platform in the racing world---reality-based television programming. This genre offers audiences an up-close behind-the-scenes look at the trials and tribulations of teams vying for the series podium. Unlike sports coverage, a reality series puts sponsoring brands front and centre week after week as the drama of life on the track unfolds. Viewers get to know the race team, develop favourite drivers and crew, and are far more likely to become aware of the supporting sponsors.



THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF PRO RACING

Advertisers seeking race team sponsorship are attracted to the sport's lucrative demographics. Although audience profiles might differ depending on the series, generally, the sport's fans comprise the following:

- Affluent (above average household income, +\$75,000)
- 18-44-year-olds
- Majority are homeowners
- Skews to college-educated and business sector
- High percentage develop brand loyalty to sponsors
- Growing diverse audience (female, multi-cultural)

Another demographic component is the vast number of amateur and professional race drivers in North America alone, which exceeds 100,000.

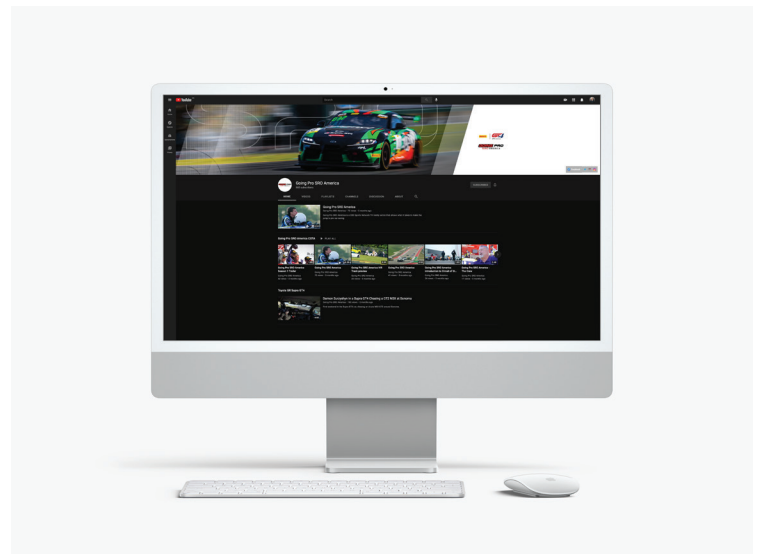
REALITY-BASED RACE DRIVING PROGRAMMING

As a forerunner of the race driving reality series format, Damon Sursyshyn of Nomad Digital married his side hustle as a competitive amateur race driver with his day job as a commercial video producer and created the show Grassroots Racing. The lifestyle show took viewers behind the scenes of amateur ice and road racing. The show aired nationally in the U.S. and Canada.

Sursyshyn's follow-up series, Going Pro SRO America, tracked his journey from amateur to professional racing as part of the Subaru Motorsport USA team competing on North America's world class race tracks in SRO TC America. This series, now in its 3rd season, airs on CBS Sports Network.

The Going Pro series has gained a loyal fan base that continues to grow. Going Pro SRO America is in an advantageous time slot, airing weekend afternoons on CBS SN and reaching more than 76 million households. The show's social media exposure is also strong, reaching 200,000+ monthly viewers.

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CBS SN weekend
afternoon time slot.





THE SPONSORSHIP ADVANTAGE: ZIGNYL

Zignyl is a software company that provides comprehensive workforce and task management tools for franchise operators, primarily in the quick service restaurant (QSR) sector. Matt Forbush, the company's founder, also races professionally with his team Forbush Performance.

When Forbush moved to make Zignyl the team's SRO GT4 America sponsor, he wanted to get the maximum brand exposure for the company's marketing investment. Participating in Sursyshyn's Going Pro season 3 offered the kind of intimate exposure that Zignyl could not have achieved via team sponsorship on its own. Not only would the brand get recognition in SRO race coverage, but it would also have guaranteed visibility with weekly exposure via Going Pro SRO America.

WHAT GOING PRO SPONSORSHIP OFFERED

Zignyl's Going Pro SRO America sponsorship provided the company with the following benefits:

- The regular appearance of the Zignyl brand in each episode.
- Prominent exposure of the Zignyl brand on Going Pro SRO America social media platforms.
- Going Pro SRO America video content made available to Zignyl for its use for sponsored content, social media posts, and other online platforms.
- Featured interview with Zignyl's founder Matt Forbush during an episode of the show.
- Zignyl's guests at the SRO America Hospitality tent got access to a behind-the-scenes look at the production of a reality TV series in addition to watching the race.

There was a unique aspect to this sponsorship. As the face of Zignyl and as a member of the race team, Forbush has demonstrated his exceptional leadership and management skills by being part of the show. "In a way, it's allowed me to demonstrate what our company values, how we treat people, and our high-energy approach to business," he says, "That's an opportunity we wouldn't have had with a traditional team sponsorship."

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– Matt Forbush



OUTCOMES

Leveraging the Forbush Performance team's exposure on Going Pro SRO America, it was able to attract a six-figure sponsorship, which secured the team's financial future and created a sustainable business model for the team.

Zignyl's sponsorship realized other positive outcomes as well:

- CBS SN advertising value equivalent of \$953,000.00/episode upon first airing (does not include future distribution of the show).
- Increased brand awareness.
- Exposure via Going Pro SRO America media releases picked up by dozens of outlets, including by Yahoo Finance.
- Created an exciting dynamic for Zignyl staff and clients.

THE FUTURE OF DOCUSERIES SPONSORSHIP IN CAR RACING

As advertising markets become increasingly congested, brands continue to search for unique and emerging platforms that will reach their customers.

Sponsorship vehicles such as the GowingPro SRO America reality series are proving to have an impact. By sponsoring a race team featured in a show, brands get a two-for-one value for their advertising dollars. A company's logo gains general visibility from network race coverage while making a deeper, more organic impact from its exposure as part of the narrative on the reality show.

Zignyl and Forbush Performance found their Going Pro SRO America sponsorship fruitful for raising brand awareness and generating opportunities. The possibilities and outcomes would be even more significant for brands more closely aligned with racing and race-related products.

Sports tech and data-driven companies are a natural fit with car racing, which relies heavily on data analysis, software and hardware components. Companies such as AWS and CrowdStrike are already taking advantage of this relationship in their race sponsorships.

Automotive products and services ranging from auto manufacturers to performance suspension and exhaust systems would seamlessly integrate into the docuseries platform. Opportunities to build products into the storyline authentically offer brand-building traditional advertising and sponsorship could never achieve.

Of course, given that Going Pro SRO America taps into an affluent market with an appetite for luxury purchases, there are opportunities for these brands as well. Items such as boats, RVs, motorcycles, high-end audio, timepieces, investment, and financial products could also reach their customers through this type of sponsorship.

The sports sponsorship landscape is changing, and reality series are part of that change. Getting in early on this platform will strategically advantage progressive brands.

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