

IRELAND CALLS ON SPONSORS TO CONTINUE SUPPORT

PRESS RELEASE: 20th April, 2020

As the number of reported sponsorship deals dropped 14% in Q1 2020 versus the same quarter last year, 1 in 2 consumers in Ireland are calling on brands to continue to support their favorite sport, music, arts or cultural events through sponsorship, according to research by sponsorship experts ONSIDE.

The latest **ONSIDE Sponsorship Market Monitor** has revealed that 1 in 2 Irish adults would expect to see sponsors maintaining or increasing their support for their favorite sports, arts and cultural teams and events, while 1 in 4 felt companies in Ireland should decrease their spend in these areas this year.

According to John Trainor, Founder and CEO of ONSIDE: “The Irish public’s deep affinity toward sponsors is evidenced in the finer detail of our latest research when we compare the levels of public preference to see companies continue to support the sport and entertainment sector in Ireland versus the UK market. While the largest support in Ireland was for a ‘maintain’ or ‘increase’ approach by businesses, our survey found more calling for sponsorship spend to decrease in the UK, where 4 in 10 favor a drop in sport sponsorship investment”.

Just 7% of Irish adults disapproved of the way sport’s governing bodies in Ireland have acted during the Covid-19 crisis, compared with 18% in the UK, while of encouragement for organizations in the cause and non-profit space, 7 in 10 of the Irish and UK public are united in their call-out to brands to continue to maintain or increase their sponsorship support of these key bodies.

The important role that Ireland’s high-profile personalities can play in the current crisis is highlighted by the fact that 77% of Irish adults feel it is important that popular sports and entertainment personalities do what they can to support the battle against Covid-19. And one trend that both Trainor and ONSIDE consultant and Galway Hurling star Joe Canning see persisting is a fresh, more creative use of athlete talent.

According to Trainor: “Global and local stars have been increasing their connection and creativity, with and without their sponsors, to social platforms as a means of staying public during their inactivity. Many have come together for greater effect, including internationally the NBA’s Stephen Curry interviewing key US infectious diseases advisor Dr Anthony Fauci, and locally the ‘unite by staying apart’ initiative supported by many of Ireland’s top sports stars. And Canning notes: “Athletes are open to working with brands as much as brands want to work with athletes through these challenging times, as long as together new ways are found to keep it interesting for people. This is the time to think outside the box and make things interesting and different”.

Looking ahead, Trainor noted that “the Irish public’s return back to sports and entertainment stadia and arenas once a ban is lifted will be a cautious one, with 29% of Irish adults planning to attend live sports

and entertainment events as soon as possible once the 'stay at home' requirement is lifted, compared to 43% holding off for now on planning this way. The alternative scenario of sports going ahead behind closed doors without spectators / crowds is also splitting public sentiment, with 28% for this strategy and 44% against. This shows the complexity of the decisions to be made by rights holders and sponsors in planning how they play out the months ahead to deliver in the right way for their loyal customers and fans.”

‘You can contact ONSIDE for a copy of the key findings or to answer any question you might have.’

- ENDS -

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About the ‘ONSIDE Sponsorship Market Monitor’

In the consumer research cited in this release, ONSIDE used a nationally representative survey of 1,000 adults aged 18+ across the Republic of Ireland and 2,000 in the UK. Fieldwork was conducted 9th-13th April 2020.

ONSIDE is a leading specialist in marketing and sponsorship consulting and research services – With a proven track record and strong industry experience in a cross section of sectors, ONSIDE is currently feeding into the marketing and sponsorship decision making of circa €50m+ of Irish spend – working on many of Ireland’s premier sponsorships – on sporting, music, cause-related, broadcast and other platforms.