



**Healthway Health Sponsorship:
An introduction to promoting health through sport,
arts and racing events.**

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Healthway Health Sponsorship

An Introduction

What are we trying to achieve?

Under Tobacco Products Control Act 2006 (originally the Tobacco Control Act 1990), organisations can apply to Healthway for sponsorship funds for arts, sport and racing events which encourage healthy lifestyles and advance health promotion programs.

Healthway health sponsorship is the link between the sponsored arts, sport, racing organisation and a health agency in WA to enable sponsored groups to promote health within their event.

The health messages promoted are those associated with identified health priority areas in this State, and are usually linked with an existing health campaign associated with that message within a health agency. Health sponsorship extends the campaign at a grass roots level with community organisations and community events.

Healthway seeks the following sponsorship strategies within each health sponsorship project:

① Promotional – promotion of the health message at the event. e.g. signage, logos on uniforms, banners, programs, PA announcements, and naming rights. This helps raise awareness and salience (“top of mind”) of the health message.



② Educational – promotion of the message by educational means. e.g. brochures, written information, coaches instructing young players on the health message, and competitions. This helps to increase knowledge about the health issue.

③ Structural – bringing about of “permanent” structural change to the sponsored organisation or event venue. e.g. smoke free areas, provision of shade, healthy food choices, safe alcohol service. This helps to change “norms” associated with the health behaviour, and makes choosing a healthy behaviour easier. This is about providing a supportive healthy environment. Organisations that receive \$20,000 and above in Healthway sponsorship are required to develop their own written health policies within their organisation.



Figure 1: below illustrates the strategies used in health sponsorship. Promotional strategies often require more financial resources, while structural strategies have the potential for greater permanence and are less costly to implement. Health sponsorship is one strategy within a comprehensive health program which may also include strategies such as mass media, legislation, advocacy, policy development.

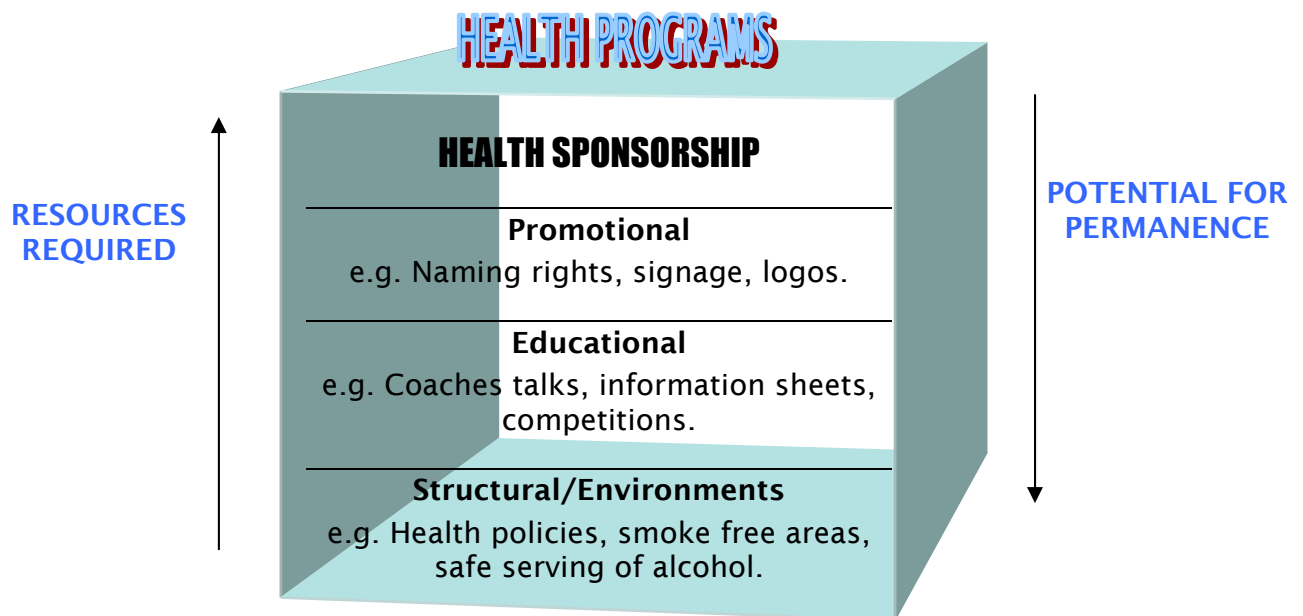


Figure 1: Strategies Used in Health Sponsorship

None of these strategies in **isolation** can claim to **change** health behaviours. Sponsorship, in association with an existing health program and its associated range of strategies, **can** bring about behaviour change. At the very least sponsorship can raise awareness of a health message, change knowledge and assist in bringing about healthier environments.

Effectiveness of Various Strategies

Studies conducted on sponsorship strategies suggest the following as the most effective strategies within health sponsorship:

- signage and promotional clothing worn by role models for sponsorships aimed at children;
- a combination of signage and other promotional strategies for adolescents; and
- signage and MC announcements for adult audiences.

What are our priority messages?

- Tobacco smoking prevention and control *
- Safe alcohol consumption
- Good nutrition promotion *
- Promotion of physical activity

- Sun protection
- Mental Health Promotion *



These priority messages are based on state health priorities and Healthway's Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011.

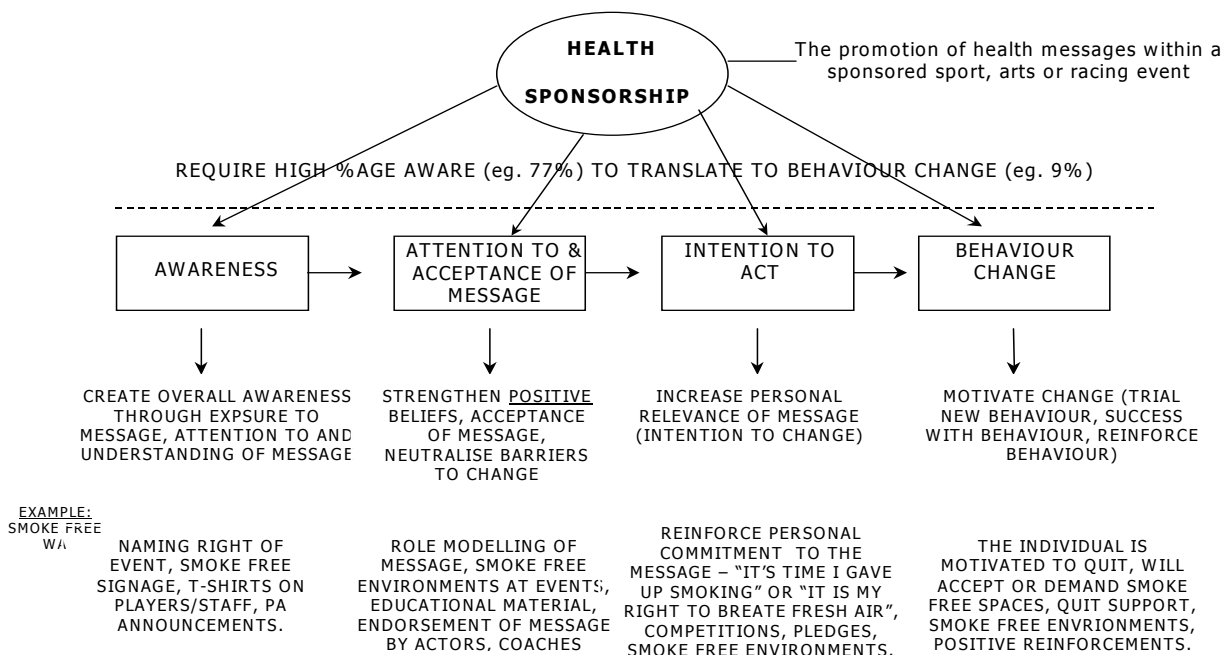
* High priority health issues for Healthway.

Our priority target groups are:

- Children and young people
- Groups in whom health inequalities exist
- Indigenous people

How does health sponsorship work?

Sponsorships primarily achieve awareness of a message. Awareness of health messages at Healthway events was 67% in 1994 and this increased to 72% in 2006/2007. Also in 2006/2007, nearly 65% of people attending Healthway-sponsored events correctly understood the health messages and nearly 60% agreed with the messages being promoted. Sponsorships keep the messages salient, i.e. top of the mind for those attending events.



NB. In health sponsorship, as well as encouraging and developing healthy environments and structures, changes to 'personal' beliefs and behaviours are sought. Be realistic. This takes time and is slower to change than say beliefs and buying habits related to a commercial product eg washing powder. Thus realistic targets need to be set, both in %ages of change and timeframes required.

Figure 2: Behaviour Change Hierarchy

The aim is to move people through the **Behaviour Change Hierarchy** into success (Figure 2 and Table 1) i.e. trying and being successful with a new behaviour change such as quitting smoking or practising sun smart behaviours. Healthway is continually exploring and evaluating ways to increase awareness of the health message at events, thus increasing the percentages of people at each stage through the Behaviour Change Hierarchy.

Our sponsorship evaluation conducted by HPEU (the Health Promotion Evaluation Unit based at Edith Cowan University) at major Healthway sponsored events provides percentage data at each of these stages.

Table 1: Behaviour Change Hierarchy

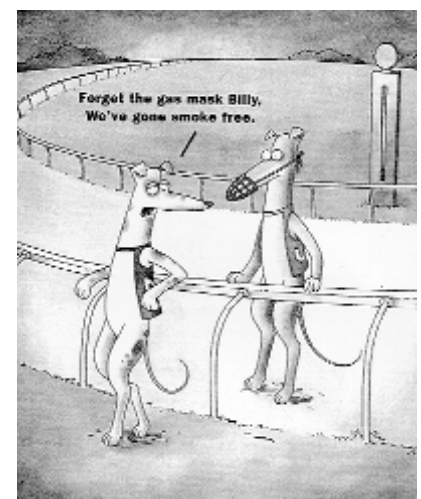
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE HIERARCHY	EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES USED IN HEALTH SPONSORSHIP FOR EACH OF THESE STAGES
Exposure to message	Signage, t-shirts, billboards, logos on advert
Attention to message	Naming rights, PA announcements, use of role models, moving messages
Understanding of message	Educational activities, endorsement and explanation by role models and coaches
Acceptance of message	Sitting in smoke free areas, using shade, tasting healthy food choices
Intention to act	Quitting competitions, recipe cards, purchase of sun protection equipment or low alcohol beverages
Trialing new behaviour	Pledges, food tastings and purchases, quitting
Success with new behaviour	Policies to reinforce positive behaviours, making it easy to choose the healthy behaviour every time

A high awareness of the message of around 77% has the potential to translate in the hierarchy to a relevant action of up to 9% or more. In the commercial sponsorship arena, a buying change of 9% would be considered highly successful!

The value of sport, arts and racing settings

As well as enabling access to large numbers of people, sport, arts and racing settings provide access to target groups where risk behaviours for poor health are high. For example, in 2006, people attending Healthway sponsored events were more likely to consume alcohol at unsafe levels than non-attenders. Sponsorships can therefore provide an opportunity to reach important target audiences for particular health messages. In Western Australia in 2006 more than one third of the population belonged to a sport, racing or recreation club and around one in two people had attended a professional sport or racing event as a spectator and a similar proportion had attended an arts event in the previous 12 months.

The average West Australian has attended a Healthway sponsored event on approximately four occasions per year.



In the early years of Healthway, the average spectator at a sport or racing event was more likely than other sections of the community to possess multiple risk behaviours for poor health, namely cigarette smoking, unsafe levels of alcohol consumption, low intake of fruit and vegetables and poor sun protection. In recent years, some progress has been made in relation to smoking, but there remains room for improvement in relation to other health behaviours, particularly alcohol consumption and sun protection.

Healthway versus commercial sponsorship

While numbers vary each year, Healthway is involved in more than 740 health sponsorships annually (some of these are ongoing multi-year projects). The value of these projects is nearly \$10 million which is allocated direct to sport, arts and racing groups while another \$1.09 million is used to promote the health message at these sponsorships.

As a comparison, corporate sponsors tend to have a smaller number of annual sponsorships and it is not unusual for them to match the sponsorship, dollar for dollar, with support sponsorship amounts for the promotion of their “product” at the event.

Unlike some commercial sponsors, Healthway has undertaken considerable research into health sponsorship to develop an understanding of issues such as:

- ◆ Awareness of the message
- ◆ Acceptance of the message
- ◆ Health habits of attendees at events
- ◆ Intention to act to change behaviour
- ◆ Structural change or creating healthier environments at events
- ◆ Readiness of audiences to accept structural change, eg. smoke free areas
- ◆ Comparisons of kits versus health agency sponsorship effectiveness
- ◆ Strategies likely to improve awareness and to bring about behaviour change – this research is ongoing.

It is important to note that Healthway’s objectives are different to those of commercial sponsors in that we are not only seeking awareness leading to behaviour change, we are also seeking structural change. Commercial sponsorships aim to raise the profile of a product, seek to ‘brand’ the product, and look for sole supply status within an event.

Healthway has had considerable measurable success with many of our health sponsorships. Some major achievements in this area are:

- ◆ Before the advent of Healthway’s sponsorship program (1990) only 46% of sport, arts and racing venues had smoke free policies in indoor areas. Following Healthway and by 2005 this had increased to 93% and nearly 58% of sponsored organisations had introduced smoke-free areas at outdoor events.
- ◆ Today, many major outdoor and indoor events and venues are totally smoke free e.g. Subiaco Oval, Opera in the Park, Fly By Night Musicians Club.
- ◆ Between 1990 and 2005, the percentage of organisations with safe alcohol service increased from 35% to 71%, with sun protection measures from 39% to 78% and with healthy food choices from 17% to 56%.
- ◆ The adoption of written health policies within all organisations receiving Healthway sponsorship of \$20,000 or more since January 2003.

- ◆ The introduction of smoke-free outdoor seated and audience areas by all organisations receiving Healthway sponsorship of \$20,000 or more since the end of 2006.
- ◆ A survey conducted on behalf of Healthway in 2000 found that 93% of people in WA felt that it was important that sports and arts activities for children are used to promote healthy lifestyles.

Some sponsorships are less successful, often for a variety of reasons. Where both parties fail to have common goals in relation to the promotion of the health message, this presents real difficulties for the sponsorship. Sponsored groups need to be committed to healthy change, and both groups need to understand each others needs and take time to develop a relationship.



Conclusion

Healthway has made considerable progress in our understanding of health sponsorship and our refinement of strategies to increase awareness, knowledge, and structural changes to bring about behaviour change. Because we are seeking promotional and educational opportunities as well as structural change, there may not always be a huge promotional presence at events. With limited health sponsorship budgets, health agencies will sometimes choose to emphasise structural change (e.g. healthy food choices) and the permanent adoption of health policies by sponsored organisations, rather than promotional opportunities. Healthway is continuing to ensure the best use is made of limited health sponsorship dollars within our health sponsorships, as well as exploring a greater use of role models and other strategies to promote health. Our ongoing evaluation helps us determine what is the best use of our sponsorship dollar.

The 1996 NH&MRC report on Health Promoting Sport, Arts and Racing Settings emphasises the great opportunities for health promotion in these settings particularly with regard to the influence of environmental factors on health and their ability to reach large numbers of people. Healthway's evaluation of sponsorship in 2006/2007 provided evidence on the effectiveness of sponsorship as a strategy to achieve high prompted awareness, comprehension and acceptance of a health message at sports, arts and racing events. Health sponsorship is a proven and viable strategy in a comprehensive approach to the promotion of good health.

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