



# TEAM MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

## HIGH PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE

Warsaw 2019

## WHY DOES ATHLETICS NEED THE MEDIA?

In the modern, on demand digital world where audiences have access to unlimited entertainment options at the touch of a button, they decide what they watch, when they watch it, where they go, what they choose to participate in, and why.

Modern day athletes and sports teams need to understand the consumer (the viewers, the listeners, the gamblers, the fans, the participant) and give them what they want and how they want it, whilst staying true to sport's core values.

The problem of **increasing participation and capturing a new generation of fans is an issue all sports are having to address.**

Sports and teams that adapt, innovate and embrace the media to give the consumer what they want are those that will prosper.

**Greater media exposure will lead to greater participation numbers, greater attendances, and greater broadcast audiences, across a wider sector of society, all of which will lead to greater commercial opportunities for teams and athletes.**

# NETFLIX





# INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Coaches and Performance Directors spend so much time communicating with athletes about individual performance, they can neglect to communicate what's going on internally with the team or NGB.

This can leave athletes feeling alienated. After all, if they don't know what an organisation's strategy is for the future or the goals it wishes to achieve, then how can they possibly contribute to the best of their abilities?

A long jumper doesn't need to know about the NGB's long-term commercial strategy in order to win a medal, but we live in a digital era when most athletes are on social media and constantly sharing information.

This means every athlete effectively acts as a spokesperson for their team or NGB – they can share details of team successes, or they may express themselves in ways that directly conflict with an NGB's publicised strategy around selection policies.

Athletes do not need to stick to the team line every time they talk about their sport, but teams should keep their athletes informed of what is happening in the wider organisation and inspire them to share their passion for the sport with the world.



# CREATE HEROES

Sport at the elite level is aspirational, athletics must create characters and heroes that can be embraced by the current fanbase, whilst also appealing to a new, younger and more diverse demographic.

Role models matter. We need to see successful people like “us,” whatever that looks like, to believe we can succeed, too. **In order to be it, you need to see it.**

As a sport, our aim should be to **create heroes that inspire loyalty beyond reason.**

The superstars of world sport are people that **fans get emotional and passionate about.** Humans are powered by emotion, not by reason. **Emotion is how we connect with sports teams and sport stars.**

We can create heroes that inspire a deep and long lasting emotional connection of amazement, respect and awe.





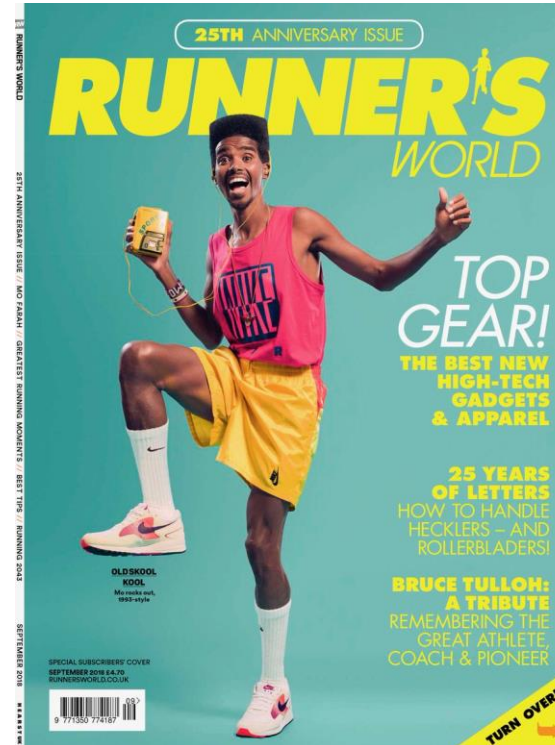
## FUN / ENTERTAINING / RELATABLE

Whilst fans want their sporting heroes to be aspirational and “other-worldly” on the field-of-play. Paradoxically, at all other times – sporting ability excepted – **they want their heroes to be just like them.**

A new and younger audience, wants a different level of insight and engagement.

They want to know more about their heroes than just what they see in the Diamond League on a Saturday afternoon. **They want to be able to connect with what’s behind the superstar.**

By helping to develop **fun, entertaining and relatable athletes**, and providing a good level of **media access** teams and coaches can help **create a genuine bond between fan and athlete** and allow genuine insight into the person behind the superstar.



# CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Fans, sponsors, broadcasters and media outlets all want to be associated with success and winners.

Success (and defeat) builds emotional and passionate connections between fans and the teams/players.

It provides **bragging rights** and **makes adversaries envious**, creates **rivalries** and **stokes competition**.

It is not enough to let the action on the track or in the field speak for itself. Winners must be celebrated and lauded in the media.

Teams and coaches must have a **strategic plan** in place each year to maximise on Championship opportunities and heavily activate around the medallists or those who significantly achieve.

Designed to **emotionally engage with fans through the feeling of celebration**, the consumer will associate the team and athlete with this emotion, which in turn will prompt **broadcast and commercial partners to look at athletics when looking to invest in sports teams and athletes which are able to consistently deliver these magical moments**.





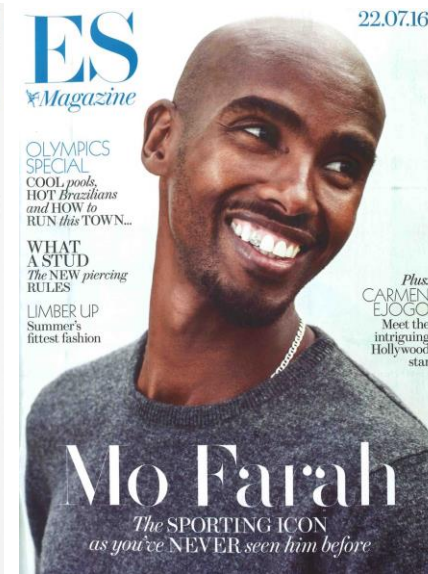
# BURST THE BUBBLE

For athletes to truly become household names, we need to create a media interest outside of the sports bubble.

With a greater ambition to grow awareness and generate continued media exposure in the sports sections, the next step is for athletics teams to **promote figures that garner attention from more than just the sports pages.**

Sports sections will only delve so far into an athletes personal life, but consumer titles will go much deeper, discussing **issues and topics of interest outside of sport.**

With athletes appearing in titles that reach a wider sector of society, so to will come **greater awareness of the sport, greater participation levels and greater commercial opportunities for its teams.**





# CRISIS MANAGEMENT

"For every action, there is an **equal and opposite reaction**."

With a greater awareness and continued media exposure, so to comes a greater risk for a crisis.

**Developing a strong team culture is the best way to minimise risk**, but it will never entirely disappear.

In a digital age news goes viral almost instantly, teams and NGBs need to **be prepared to respond to any PR crisis quickly and efficiently**, using all available platforms.

1. **Take responsibility and get ahead of the story**
2. **Understand the situation and avoid knee-jerk reactions**
3. **Listen to your Comms team and athletes first**
4. **Be transparent, accountable and empathetic**
5. **If needed, publicly apologise, then take action**
6. **Don't fan the flames**
7. **Monitor, adapt and continue to communicate**





## CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DISCUSSION

1. An athlete has failed to update their whereabouts upon arrival at an official team training camp and as a consequence has a missed test applied to their record. They have taken to social media and blamed the team for the missed test, as they believe administrators told them they had done this on their behalf. How would you handle this situation?
2. After qualifying fastest in the heats for the European Championships 4x100 final, the relay coach replaces one of the qualifying team with another athlete. The team finish fourth and below their qualifying time. In the mixed zone the teammates turn on the new member and publicly blame them for the result and say they don't understand why the changes were made. The press now seek comment from coaching staff, how would you respond?
3. Two of your athletes engaged in a social media spat with each other that got out of hand. Neither is prepared to publicly apologise or back down. The press are now reporting the incident and seeking comment. How would you handle this situation?