

Taking the Driver's Seat When You Aren't Behind the Wheel

Some wheelmen get to just show up in their suit and drive, but unless you have a race team like Kyle Larson, most drivers don't have that luxury. For the average race car driver, winning takes a lot more foot work than just on the pedals.

Any group of yahoos can get together and drive in circles, but as anyone in the industry will tell you, to put on a race it takes skilled drivers, track promoters, days of track prep, late nights in the garage, a devoted family and pit crew, a willingness to hit the road, and money, lots of money. That's where fans and sponsors come in. While sponsors may get the cars on the track, the fans keep the track lights on.

When the passion for racing extends beyond the track, when race fans become sponsors wanting in on the action, this is when you put on a race worth watching. But finding passionate fans and great sponsors isn't always easy.

Besides the number of checkered flags collected, their number of fans says a lot about a driver. At the end of the day, sponsors are your biggest fans willing to put their money on the line for their favorite race teams.



So, it seems like a no brainer, the more fans you have, the more likely you are to gain sponsors, and the more you promote yourself, the more likely your fans will promote you too.

It isn't easy for most drivers to switch gears from wheelman to promoter/businessman, and it takes some work, even in the off-season and unfortunately, many drivers don't understand the importance of constantly seeking new fans, but drivers will have nothing to drive for unless their beloved sport thrives, and the heart and soul of the industry depends on fans, and fans cheer on drivers.

Social media is of course one way to easily reach a large audience, but unless you are sharing quality content, your page might get lost in the scroll. Some tips for making your page more relevant? Stay active and post often, the more active your page, the more likely others will see it, interact, and share it for others to see as well. Share content relevant to your industry while promoting local tracks and shows to keep your fans current. If you are comfortable behind the camera or keyboard?

Podcasts, blogs, and videos are being shared more than ever. Another way to reach your fans is to get personal. No, this doesn't mean you overshare by crying to your fans about your relationships, but they do want to feel like they know you. Share some of your obstacles, dreams, fears, journal your progress on and off season, fans want to know you, let them see your passion for the sport.



Photo Credit: Monte Goode of Noah Speicher I-76 Speedway Fort Morgan, CO 2021

Then? Take that passion off social media and hit the streets. Local schools, after-school programs, and youth charities are a great place to start in gaining new fans. Kids love race cars and most look at drivers as superheroes, so? Be a hero for the kids in your local community. Contact these organizations and arrange a chance to go talk to the kids, show them your car, your suit, talk about the importance of safety, come invite first timers to feel the excitement of dirt track America. Give out some merchandise (another great source of sponsorship, but we'll talk about that later), contact your local track promoters to arrange for some free or discounted bulk tickets to give to an entire class actively bringing new fans to the stands. Sign autographs. Take pictures.

Senior, veteran and military groups, and of course any auto related organization are also great sources for new or returning fans.

The bottom line is that if drivers want to stay racing, and race bigger shows for more money, the industry needs fans, and fans need drivers. If you really don't know how to start promoting yourself as a brand, reach out to your local promoters, the experts in the business to help you get in the driver's seat to win big on and off the track.