2026 Sponsorship Marketing Awards Criteria

The SMCC has developed judging criteria consistent with sponsorship marketing best practices.

Please develop your case submission based on the following template, using the headings as provided.

Since sponsorship marketing is used to achieve a diverse range of objectives, the winning entries will not be judged based on their size/scope, but on the business results achieved. Judges will evaluate submissions against stated objectives, and whether the sponsorship marketing program successfully met or exceeded goals.

Please take into consideration the following parameters:

- The Sponsorship Marketing Awards judging criteria is provided below.
- Please note one (1) case can be submitted into a MAXIMUM of two (2) categories. A fee will apply to each category that a case is submitted into.
- Please note that each section is weighted with a percentage. This identifies the importance of each section to each entry's overall score.
- Please note the maximum length for case submissions is three (3) 8.5 x 11 pages + 5 supportive creative examples including 1 x 2-min video.
- Entries are accepted in English or French (accompanied by an English translation).

A – Overview, Objectives & Sponsorship Selection (25%)

- Provide a brief description of the corporate sponsor, sponsored organization, and sponsorship property.
- Explain the strategic rationale for the sponsorship program and property selection. Where relevant, explain how the sponsorship connects to the organization's broader commitments and the wider impact it was intended to create beyond the program itself.
- List up to three primary objectives and the corresponding measure/control introduced to assess performance. Examples include:
    - Increase brand loyalty
    - Increase awareness/visibility (as part of a broader business goal)
    - Change/reinforce image
    - Drive retail/dealer traffic
    - Showcase community/social responsibility
    - Capture database/generate leads

    - Stimulate sales/trial/usage
    - Exclusive client appreciation/hosting opportunities
    - Access to event/program content that can be leveraged (i.e. product integration, branded content, etc.)
    - Reach a niche target market efficiently
    - Other
- Identify the length of the sponsor partnership; the in-market campaign must take place between April 1, 2025 and July 15, 2026, for all categories, except for the Sustained Success Category.
- Regional entries only: confirm that this is a dedicated regional campaign (Western, Quebec or Eastern Canada) and not part of a national program.
- Total sponsorship marketing program costs **(THIS INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL).**
- Indicate the level of the total budget for the sponsorship marketing program, including the rights fee, in-kind (if applicable) and activation costs:
    - $0 - $250K
    - $250K - $500K
    - $500K - $1M
    - $1M+
- Professional Sport Categories only: Indicate the total activation cost for the sponsorship marketing program (excluding rights fee and in-kind). This figure is used to determine eligibility for the Professional Sports categories.
    - $0 - $500K
    - $501K +
- Indicate the ratio of rights fee to activation costs.
  Example of ratio of rights fee to activation costs: Company A spends $1 Million on a property's sponsorship rights. The same Company A spends another $1.5 Million on activating and amplifying those rights through a combination of mediums such as, but not limited to: Media (Social, Digital, Traditional, etc.), Experiential Events, Merchandising/POS, Premiums, Public Relations, etc. This would provide Company A with a 1.5:1 activation to rights cost ratio.

B – Maximizing the Sponsorship Marketing Investment (35%)

- Provide an overview of the activation program including length, location, branding, consumer experience as well as other core details.
- Detail specific tactics that were deployed to support the execution.
- Highlight any unique or innovative factors within the strategy that enhanced the effectiveness of the program.
- Provide supportive visuals and videos.

C – Results (30%)

- Explain the process for performance assessment, including the sources of key metrics.
- Identify the results as measured against the objectives of the sponsorship marketing program including relevant data. Explain the context and significance of this achievement. For each objective reference the Key Performance Indicators and what the outcome was against this.
- Explain how the program demonstrated its overall return, whether return on investment or return on objectives. Where the program's primary goal was social, cultural or community impact rather than commercial, show the return in those terms.

- Sustained Success entries only: demonstrate the program's year-over-year trajectory across the qualifying period, showing measurable growth and results over three or more consecutive years in programming, diversification or participation.

D – Case Quality (10%)

- A compelling case that is clear, concise, and well presented will score higher overall.