



Community Sponsorship



Branding



Promotions



Networking



Client Growth

Race to the Finish!

Local Sponsorship Success

By John P. Ribner

Want your business to “cross the finish line” with your community?

Try sponsoring a race car driver or local athlete to get your name out there and make connections!

Ryan Stedem opened

Eclipse Tanning around the same time his friend started competing as a Micro-Sprint race car driver. Knowing that racing can be an expensive hobby, Ryan offered to sponsor his friend's car. Looking back, he considers this one of the best business decisions he ever made. Promoting his business in this way has been effective in attracting new tanners to Eclipse Tanning, as well as a way for Ryan to network within his community. Given his successes, he recommends every salon owner try something similar.

Having your salon's logo on a race car is one of the biggest incentives for sponsoring a driver. “I was fortunate to have the opportunity to become Brian Lundsford's first sponsor,” Ryan explained, “so the Eclipse Tan logo is the largest advertisement on his car. It takes up almost the entire right side of the vehicle, and this is the side that faces the stands when he's racing.” Ryan says seeing the logo week after week has made many local race fans aware of his salon, and many of them have been added to Eclipse Tanning's growing client base as a result.

Ryan and his wife, Becky, have been attending the local races for the past five years, and their involvement has provided

many opportunities to promote their salon in a positive light. “We had some trophies made, and we award one to a kid at the races each week,” he said. “The track announcer draws a ticket and reads its numbers over the loudspeaker, and the child with the winning ticket gets the ‘Fan of the Week’ award. We post the winners' pics on our Facebook page and it's a big hit with the parents; many of them become clients.”

Hanging out at the races on the weekends provides Ryan with additional promotional opportunities back at his salon during the week. “If Brian finishes in the first five places,” he said, “we'll offer 30 percent off lotions, BOGO tanning sessions and other specials. This always brings in many of the folks who attend the races. Other existing and new clients like to take advantage of these specials, too.” Ryan also encouraged his friend to drive his race car in the Missouri Valley College homecoming parade, creating another unique promotional opportunity.

While sponsoring a local race car driver has worked out well for Ryan, he knows that this sport isn't suited for every salon's demographic. He recommends that salon owners wishing to increase their community presence should consider sponsoring a softball or bowling team, or any competitive activity that regularly draws large groups of people. “It's all about getting your name out there,” he said, “and the best way to do that is by getting involved.” ■



Brian Lundsford's Micro-Sprint racecar with the Eclipse Tanning logo prominently displayed!

Quick Tips

- Show it off! Make sure your salon's logo is prominently displayed.
- Get Involved. Find additional opportunities such as contests and drawings to get more people involved with your sponsorship. This attracts additional clients.
- Get Online. To increase community awareness, make sure to promote your sponsorship on your social media network.
- Get Out There. Since sponsoring local athletes is all about promotions, tie your sponsorship into special events in your community.
- Get Going! Attend the events you help sponsor. This offers many networking and promotional opportunities.