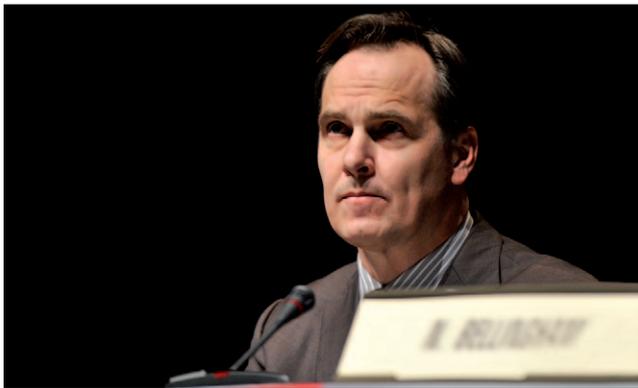




## HOW TO INCREASE THE SIZE OF THE SPORTS AUDIENCE?

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Increasing the size of the sports audience requires an integrated long-term strategy that incorporates the key elements of both traditional media and new media. We need to engage the youth of the world at an early age and continue to involve them with sport throughout their lives. We must recognise that the landscape is constantly changing, consumers are confronted with an ever-increasing array of entertainment options, and digital technology is the catalyst for new forms of communication and interaction on a global basis.

In the traditional media world, the availability of affordable wide-screen televisions, along with high definition programming, has made sport a far more compelling entertainment experience. We need to continue to fully exploit this medium in conjunction with live competitions, but the opportunity for additional programming content is significant. Imagine the stories that could be told about elite athletes in training around the globe, sports that do not receive the media attention they deserve, and heroes in the Olympic Movement who can inspire and engage audiences in the exciting world of sport.

We believe that a properly executed Olympic network, developed with the full support and cooperation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), can greatly benefit athletes, the International Federations (IFs), youth, our corporate sponsors, and the Olympic Movement.

There are, of course, other opportunities in the realm of traditional media, but my expertise and focus today is on digital media. As I stated earlier, digital technology is facilitating new forms of communication, interaction and engagement on a global basis. We need to embrace these new platforms and technologies to deliver the message of sport to a broad demographic that encompasses male and female audiences of all ages and cultures. We need to start young, with children in grade school, by working with educators to create sports-oriented and Olympic-themed programmes for students that can be incorporated into their teaching curriculum.

A customised video feed downloaded daily into the classroom during Olympic competitions will stimulate interest in the Games and inspire young people to get involved. It is a well-known fact that children learn best when they are having fun, and what can be more fun than sport?

Video games can be an excellent way to teach youth the fundamentals of a particular sport, along with scoring mechanisms and the rules of competition. Easy-to-learn casual games, in particular, can lend themselves to online interaction and communication with players around the world, helping to expose young people to different geographies, languages and cultures.

Since we are close to the headquarters of the Lego Company, consider the potential of a Lego Olympics video game that could be enjoyed by everyone in the family. Club Penguin sports sites for kids and leveraging the recent success of Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games are other examples of using computer games to engage the younger generation.

Imagine creating your own digital avatar and going online in a massively multi-player Olympic-themed environment, where you can learn, compete and achieve your goal of winning a virtual Olympic medal. Simple trivia games that test your Olympic knowledge, mini-games tailored around individual sports or a global competition between many nations – all are possible in the online world.

Beyond video games, we should be fully exploiting the full range of social networking platforms, including Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter and Bebo, to spread the message of sport and Olympism. Consumers want to gather online to get news, read posts, chat and access pertinent content. Real-time reporting of sporting events and competitions is an obvious way to leverage the rapidly growing social networks. This is where the 12-to-35-year-old demographic spend a huge percentage of their time, and this is where we should be engaging them. On these digital media platforms, frequency of message and constant updates of information are key. Digital publishing must be done daily in all major territories with locally relevant content, using moderators who post and monitor the forums, while keeping them fresh and alive. The online world is a living organism, where old news is no news.

Athlete blogs can be extremely impactful and should be encouraged. Imagine an aspiring 12-year-old swimmer or sprinter having the opportunity to follow Michael Phelps or Usain Bolt through their daily training regimen, or while they compete at a world championship. Super-hero athletes using Twitter to build interest in their sport or an iPhone application that interfaces directly with the Olympic.org website are other examples of using digital media to connect with our target audience.

In conclusion, the digital world is still in the formative stage. Opportunities abound. If we can successfully combine the power of these compelling technologies with the universal appeal of sport, our goal of growing the global sports audience can and will be achieved.