

**MATH, ELA**

# A WINNING SMILE

## LESSON TIME

45–60 minutes

## OVERVIEW

If you're a celebrity athlete, does your endorsement and marketing potential depend on winning? In this activity, students will use data to predict how much potential an athlete has to be selected for ads and endorsements. They will then come up with their own scoring system that can be used to predict how likely a number of athletes are to win endorsements and/or become international celebrities.

## GUIDING QUESTION

Does an athlete need to win games or have the highest scores in order to be an effective spokesperson for a company, brand, product, or cause?

## OUTCOMES

Through this lesson, students will...

- **Understand** the process of building a dataset,
- **Analyze** a dataset of celebrity athletes to determine marketability, and
- **Create** a rating scale that can determine an up-and-coming athlete's marketability

## MATERIALS

- Computers with access to the internet and spreadsheet software
- Chalkboard, whiteboard or large-format sticky paper
- Printed copies or digital copies of
  - A Winning Smile capture sheet (one per student)
  - Flashlight on Data (one per group)

## GET CURIOUS

Have you ever wondered . . .  
. . .why athletes do product endorsements?

Cereal, pain remedies, and sneakers have one thing in common -- they've all been endorsed by athletes! Endorsements are very lucrative for athletes. The highest-paid athlete in the world in 2017 was Portuguese soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo. In 2017 alone, Ronaldo earned over \$93 million dollars<sup>1</sup>! Endorsements help to bring athletes onto a global stage and make them a household name. Athletes who promote products often end up being famous. That star power makes them marketable to other companies and even other sports teams. Endorsements are a way for athletes to ensure financial stability and marketability within their sport, even after they may retire from competition.

. . .how companies select athletes to promote their products?

Companies are very deliberate in how they choose their spokespeople. A celebrity or athlete's personality and reputation must be consistent with the tone and values of a brand they endorse. Audiences who see a celebrity endorsement will associate a product and brand with that individual, so athletes have to carefully craft and maintain their public image in order to be desirable product endorsers.

## COLLECT AND ANALYZE

1. Begin by asking students to think of celebrity athletes who endorse products. You may need to clarify that celebrity endorsement is a form of marketing. This person uses their fame and influence to promote a product, service, or raise awareness about a social issue. Prompt students to consider celebrity athletes that they see on commercials, in print ads, and on social media. As they call out athletes and the products they endorse, write them on the board. It may be helpful to share a couple examples of commercials and/or print endorsements.
2. Once you have a range of athletes and products, encourage students to identify commonalities among the list. For example:
  - a. Are most of the athletes involved in a certain sport?
  - b. What types of products are represented?
  - c. Who are the target audiences for these products?
  - d. What are some characteristics of the athletes listed in terms of gender, age, and other social demographics?
3. When some commonalities have been identified, explain that the goal of this activity is to use data as a flashlight. In the case of this exercise, students will work in groups to shine their flashlight on a specific research question. Distribute the **A Winning Smile** capture sheet.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/athletes/list/>

4. Divide students into groups of 3–4. Provide groups with 2–3 minutes to develop a hypothesis on the following research question: **Does a celebrity athlete have to win to be a successful product spokesperson?** Instruct groups to record their hypothesis on the **A Winning Smile** capture sheet.
5. Provide students with the following scenario: A shoe company has developed a new line of designs. They include cleats, riding boots, basketball shoes, hiking boots, cross trainers, running shoes, and tennis shoes. The shoe company is looking to have an up-and-coming personality or celebrity to help endorse each shoe type. The line of products also has a target audience of consumers ages 13–19. How can you use data to help select an effective spokesperson?
6. Inform students that they are going to look at this question by considering two athletes. First, ask students to select the type of shoe they are interested in match to an endorser. Then, invite students to list athletes they are familiar with that could use that shoe. You may want to help prompt them with considering a variety of sports (i.e. basketball, Olympic events, track and field, soccer, football, tennis, wrestling, cheerleading, climbing, and baseball/softball). Remind students that shoe company wants to target consumers ages 13–19. Does that influence their list?
7. Guide students to narrow their list down to two athletes and list them on the **A Winning Smile** capture sheet. Ask students to use their hypothesis to predict which athlete would be a better celebrity spokesperson.
8. Distribute the **Flashlight on Data** materials and provide access to laptops to groups, if available. Instruct groups to read through the data by using a mark the text strategy.
  - Circle the “X factors”
  - Underline data that supports your hypothesis
  - Box data that refutes your hypothesis
  - “?” Questions that you still have
9. Instruct students to go on a “data scavenger hunt” by identifying the statistics that they would use to determine which of the two up-and-coming celebrities would make the better spokesperson. These are called “X Factors” on the **A Winning Smile** capture sheet. Allow 20 minutes for groups to investigate.
10. When groups have concluded their investigation, give them a minute to review and consolidate their X Factors into a list. Now, groups will take 10 minutes to find data on their selected athletes that align to the identified X Factors. Once this is completed, ask groups to make a decision—based on the data, which athlete would be a more successful celebrity athlete spokesperson?

# TELL A STORY WITH DATA

When each group has made their selection, curate a conversation with the following critical questions:

- Who did your group select as the athlete with the best X Factor and why?
- How did data lead you to your conclusion?
- What aspects of the athletes' identities and careers emerged as the most compelling factors?
- What story does data tell about celebrity athlete endorsements?

Extend the Learning With These Additional Resources

- [N-Score](#)
- [Multimedia Sponsorship Exposure](#)

## STANDARDS

### **CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.ID.A.1**

Represent data with plots on the real number line (dot plots, histograms, and box plots).

### **CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.ID.A.2**

Use statistics appropriate to the shape of the data distribution to compare center (median, mean) and spread (interquartile range, standard deviation) of two or more different data sets.

### **CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSS.ID.A.3**

Interpret differences in shape, center, and spread in the context of the data sets, accounting for possible effects of extreme data points (outliers).

### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.3**

Follow precisely a complex multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks; analyze the specific results based on explanations in the text.

### **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.7**

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., quantitative data, video, multimedia) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

## GLOSSARY

**Brand:** product made by a specific company

**Endorsement:** public approval or support to someone or something

**Marketable:** in demand

**Spokesperson:** person who makes statements on behalf of a group or individual

**X-Factor:** special talent

All definitions retrieved from Merriam-Webster.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Official Sites of Major League Sports

<https://gouldguides.carleton.edu/econ395-sports/data>

**STUDENT HANDOUT**

# A WINNING SMILE

## CAPTURE SHEET

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Use data to tell a story. Begin the story by constructing a hypothesis:

**Does an athlete need to win games, or have the highest scores, to be an effective spokesperson for a company, brand, product, or cause?**

*Why or why not?*

A shoe company has developed a new line of designs. They include cleats, riding boots, basketball shoes, hiking boots, cross trainers, running shoes, and tennis shoes. The shoe company is looking to have an up-and-coming personality or celebrity to help endorse each shoe type. The line of products also has a target audience of consumers ages 13–19. How can you use data to help select an effective spokesperson?

List the athletes you selected: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify the celebrity athlete “X Factors” that make for a successful endorsement:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Based on the X Factors you’ve identified, who would make the better celebrity athlete endorser?

Revisit your hypothesis. Have your thoughts changed?

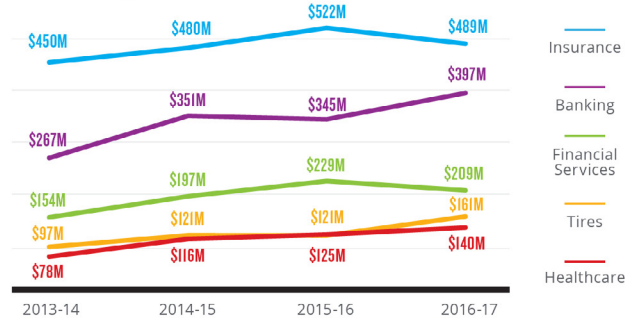
**STUDENT HANDOUT**

# FLASHLIGHT ON DATA

## THE OPPORTUNITY SET EXPANDS AROUND SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship across the “Big Four” leagues, PGA Tour, NASCAR and INDYCAR accounted for \$7.35 billion in Q1 Media Value in 2017, a \$54 million increase over the last year. Banking, financial services and healthcare collectively averaged 8% growth per year over the last three years. The shifts in brand exposure across categories speak to the ongoing richness of the sports sponsorship environment and its ability to facilitate new brand opportunities in 2018.

**2013-2017 Q1 MEDIA VALUE ACROSS SELECT CATEGORIES**



## SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE COMPLEMENTS IN-STADIUM ENGAGEMENT

Brands that **activate sponsored content** with teams using hashtags or logo graphics can see

**↑ 50% SOCIAL MEDIA VALUE UPLIFT**

in addition to TV exposure value. This comes from full season tracking of brand partners through team-owned and -operated social media handles.

Brands **included in social media imagery** from in-venue sponsorship typically generate

**↑ 5-10% MEDIA VALUE UPLIFT**

Sponsors captured in ambient imagery on social media from in-venue signage typically earn 5-10%... on top of TV exposure value from team-owned and -operated social media handles.

Alongside the evolution of sponsorship categories comes new sponsorship mediums. Social media offers brands a direct connection to sports fans of specific clubs and teams. Sports fans turn to social media for exclusive content and highlights at their fingertips that are not always shown on linear TV. Rights holders (teams and leagues) are able to quantify the exposure value their sponsors receive through social media, incremental to linear TV, allowing a holistic valuation of the partnership. Brands are able to understand the incremental value their sponsorships are receiving through social media, helping justify sponsorship decisions with specific rights holders.

## TOP 100 RATED TELECASTS (LIVE+SD)\*\*



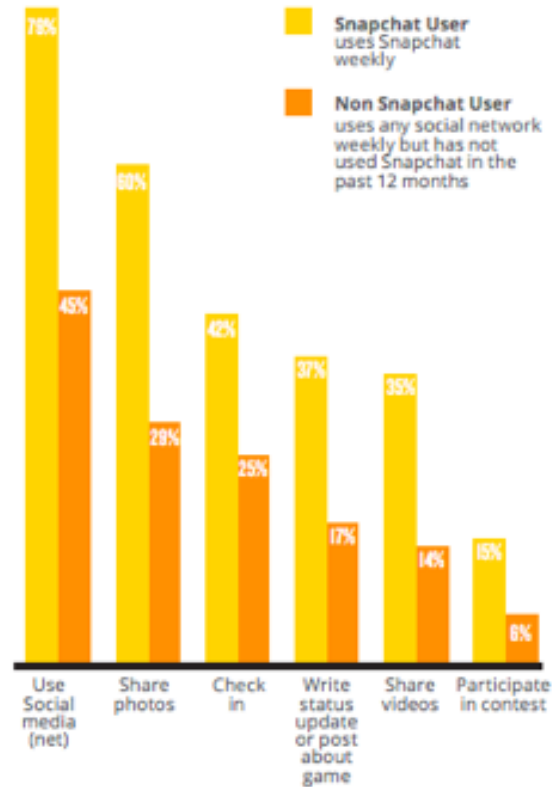
Source: The Nielsen Year in Sports Media Report, 2017

**STUDENT HANDOUT**

# THE MODERN FAN



## FANS' IN-GAME SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS



Source: The Nielsen Year in Sports Media Report, 2017