



Sports Advertising Report 2024

How marketing executives
plan to reach fans
in an epic year of sport

Introduction



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As the world of sport continues to captivate audiences across the globe, brands are faced with both unprecedented opportunities and unique challenges in their quest to connect with these passionate fans. Our latest proprietary research delves into the innovative tactics that will define sports marketing success in 2024 and beyond.

In this report, we explore the key trends shaping the industry, from the pressing need for personalization and the shift towards first-party data in a cookieless world to the growing importance of omnichannel strategies. We also look at the sporting events that will dominate the 2024 calendar, providing brands with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make their mark.

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, we've gathered exclusive insights from marketing executives at 100 leading brands across North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

As you explore the findings of our report, you'll gain a deeper understanding of the evolving sports marketing landscape and discover new insights to help your brand develop a championship-caliber strategy for engaging sports audiences in 2024 and beyond.



Exclusive insights from marketing leaders at 100 brands

This report reveals the winning strategies enabling the world's biggest brands to engage sports fans and overcome the key challenges facing marketers in 2024.

Brands surveyed include:

NIKE

The
WALT DISNEY
Company

Google

PEPSICO

SONY

FANDUEL

McDonald's

TikTok

VISA

amazon

Thomson
Reuters™

J.P.Morgan

Volkswagen

NBCUniversal

verizon✓

STARBUCKS

Red Bull
MEDIA
HOUSE

AT&T

Marriott

Nestlé

SAMSUNG

McLaren

MARS

TARGET



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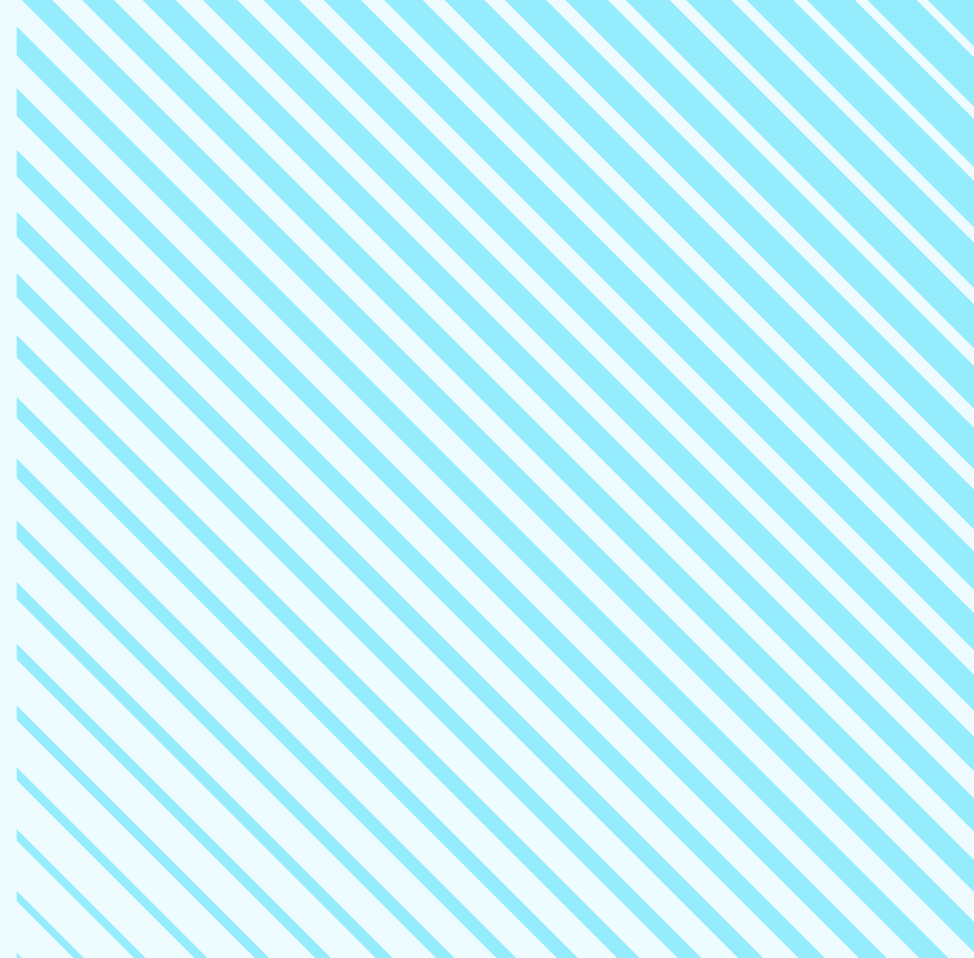
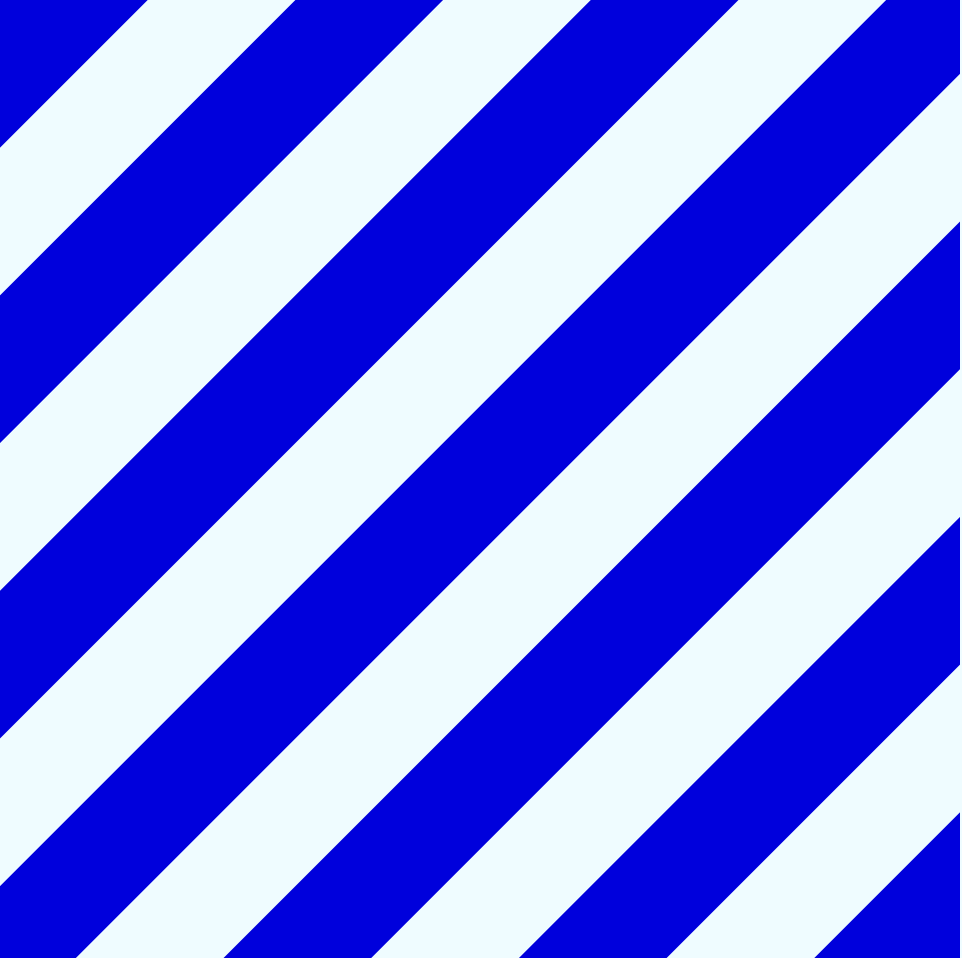


Brands and sports fans: Common challenges

What are your most common challenges when targeting sports fans?

Respondents chose three answers



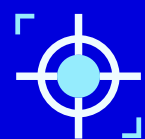


Make it personal: Targeting the right audience

Sports audiences hold untold value, but only if brands target them correctly

Brands have often looked to sporting events to find engaged audiences. For brands who have never sponsored or advertised against live games, there's never been a better time to incorporate a sports strategy.

Here's why:



Diverse demographics

The diversity of sports fans allows brands to target specific audience segments. By tailoring messaging to resonate with different demographics, brands can maximize effectiveness.



Brand advocacy

Fans are more likely to recommend brands to others if they feel a connection. This word-of-mouth marketing is invaluable, carrying authenticity that traditional advertising may lack.

43%

said more targeted advertising based on fan behavior would enhance their campaigns.

30%

said personalizing messaging is the biggest challenge they face when targeting sports fans.

53%

of brands said targeting the right audience was the biggest challenge when running campaigns.



MAKE IT PERSONAL: TARGETING THE RIGHT AUDIENCE


Wondering where brands are spending their increased marketing budgets in 2024?

Here's what some of our respondents said:

“Personalized first-party campaigns and grassroots promotions to target sports fans locally.”

“Improving our targeted media around sports events.”

“Better audience-targeting capabilities.”



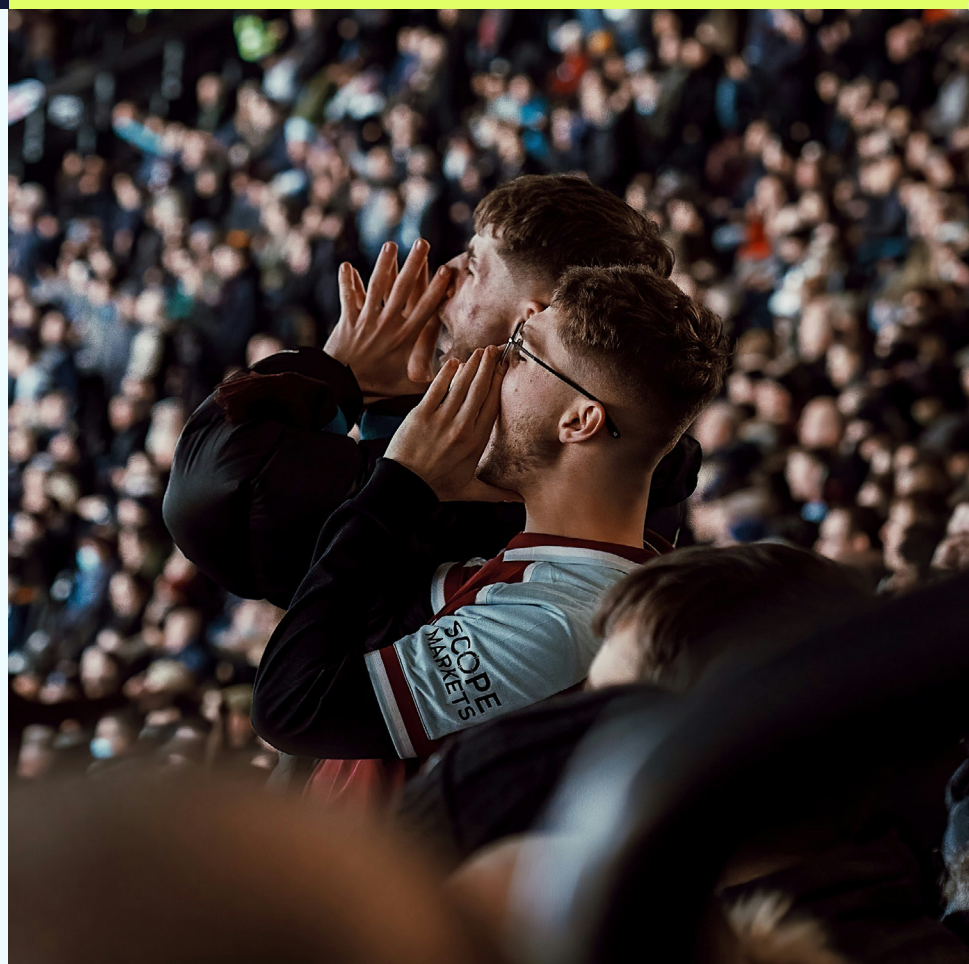
Loyalty

Sports fans are passionate, loyal and highly engaged. This fervor translates into a captive audience that brands can target to increase visibility and build lasting relationships.



Sense of community

Sports fans are used to being part of a community. The shared experience of sports creates a deeper connection than other types of campaigns and audiences can provide.



Cookieless advertising: The need for first-party data

The cookie phase-out gives brands the opportunity to get creative with their data acquisition

Google has long-warned about Chrome's depreciation of third-party cookies, but some brands still feel like they're playing catch-up.

With an effective audience data strategy, brands can build meaningful, bi-directional relationships with sports fans.

78%

of brands do not yet have a first-party data strategy for sports audiences.

42%

of brands say that it's a priority to build owned sports audiences for the cookieless world.

21%

of brands say that sports audience data would most enhance their sports advertising campaigns.

Building out your audience doesn't have to be overwhelming



Prioritizing data

As third-party cookies are phased out, brands will need to focus on building direct relationships with their audience, leveraging first-party data to create personal experiences.



Focus on owned channels

Developing owned channels, like a mobile app or gamified contest, encourages users to share behaviors voluntarily. This first-party data enables segmented audiences and targeted messaging across touchpoints.



Contextual advertising

Leveraging advanced contextual targeting technologies, brands can move beyond keyword matching to align ads with sports content and target audiences based on factors such as emotion and intent.



Sports partnerships

A spirit of collaboration will be even more important in a post-cookie world. Partnerships with specialist sports data-driven organizations are essential for effective audience targeting.



Data transparency

By being upfront about how fan data is collected and used, and by providing clear opt-in and opt-out mechanisms, brands can build trust with their audience and foster long-term relationships.



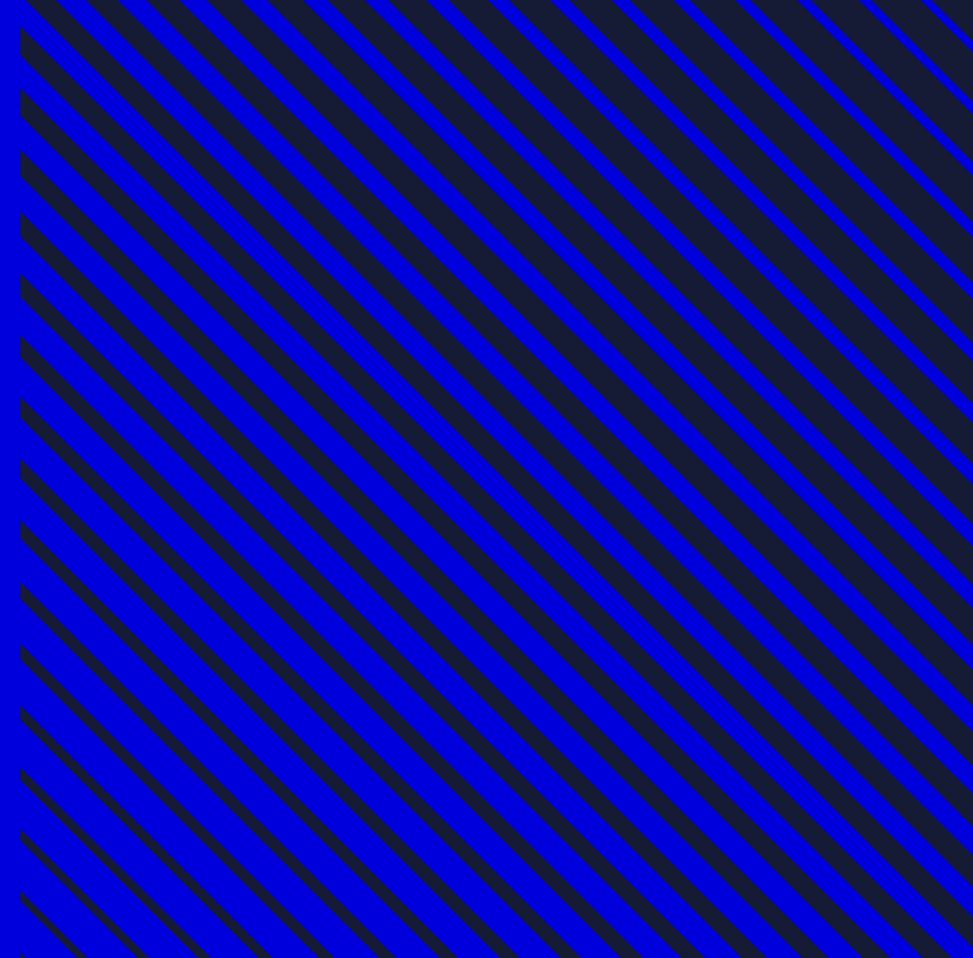
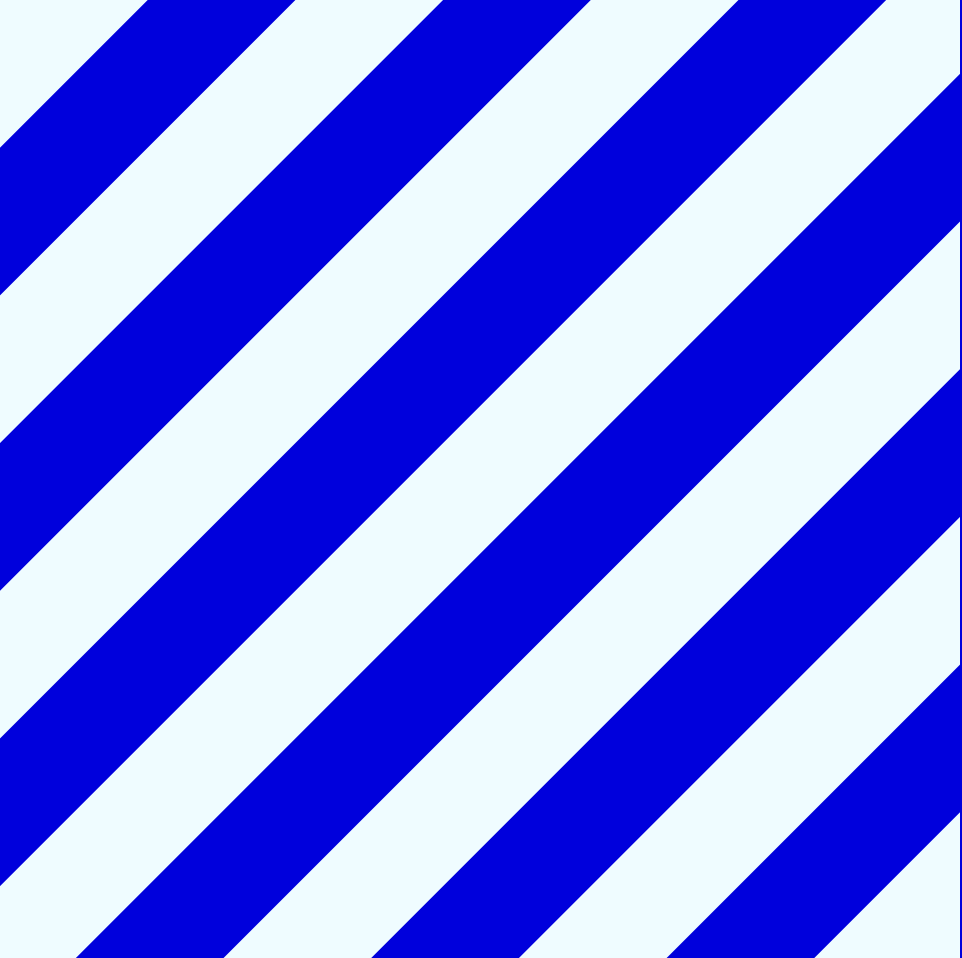
Brands are taking first-party data strategies seriously – but often don't know where to start

Here's what some of our respondents said:

“ We currently have no strategy for the post-cookie world. This is something we need to rectify.

“ We own a few properties targeting the sports audience and use this information to inform decisions we make.

“ We need to redesign our post-cookie strategy.



The omnichannel strategy: Meeting fans on their own turf

When it comes to sports fans, brands should adopt a multi-channel approach to reinforce social media efforts

33%

said TV and streaming were the channels into which they allocate the most budget.

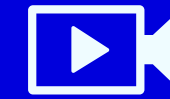
52%

say that social media engagement is a key measurement of success for event sponsorships.

82%

say that brand awareness is a primary objective when targeting sports fans.

For maximum effectiveness, a well-rounded sports campaign targets fans using a broad range of channels



CTV

Streaming and CTV provides an opportunity to reach sports fans in a highly engaged environment. Targeted ads during live sports-related programming will reinforce messaging and drive conversions.



Programmatic display and video

Programmatic leverages data and automation to target fans with precision. Using audience and contextual information, programmatic channels let you reach the right fans wherever they're engaging on digital.



Extended social ads

Social ads can also be repurposed to be used programmatically to increase engagement outside of walled gardens.



Power of personalized creative

Dynamically updating ads based on scores and users' preferences will forge positive brand connections. Increased relevance can lead to higher click-through rates, conversions, and overall performance.

There are more channels for brands to make use of than ever before

Here's how some of our respondents intend to use them:

“We're mostly moving towards a social-first approach.”

“Experimental activations linking to a full omnichannel digital campaign.”

“Social amplification marketing will be key for us this year.”

“We're going to focus on paid media buys across digital and social, influencer partnerships, sponsored social content.”



2024: A sporting year
like no other

This year promises to offer record-smashing opportunities to connect with fans across the world, due to some key trends:

LIVE

Live sport is king

All over the world, sports attendance has been on the rise. Women's sport continues to break attendance records and is expected to become a billion dollar industry in 2024.



Deeper live engagement

Fantasy games, sports betting, and other interactive channels have changed how fans interact with live sports. They're no longer passive watchers, presenting new channels to reach them.



Rise of streaming

Sports streaming and the rise of CTV has set new records giving brands more channels and addressability than ever. It's expected to reach new heights this year.



Events with global reach

The 2024 Olympics has a globally engaged audience, while the NFL continues to grow in popularity, expanding to new host countries this season, including Brazil this fall.



Event-based strategy

Regardless of budget size, brands can take advantage of unprecedented interest to run relevant campaigns and find engaged fans across digital channels.

What are increasing marketing budgets being spent on in 2024?

49% of marketers surveyed said their marketing budgets increased in 2024.

Here's where those budget increases are being spent:

31%
Specific campaigns

17%
Sponsorships

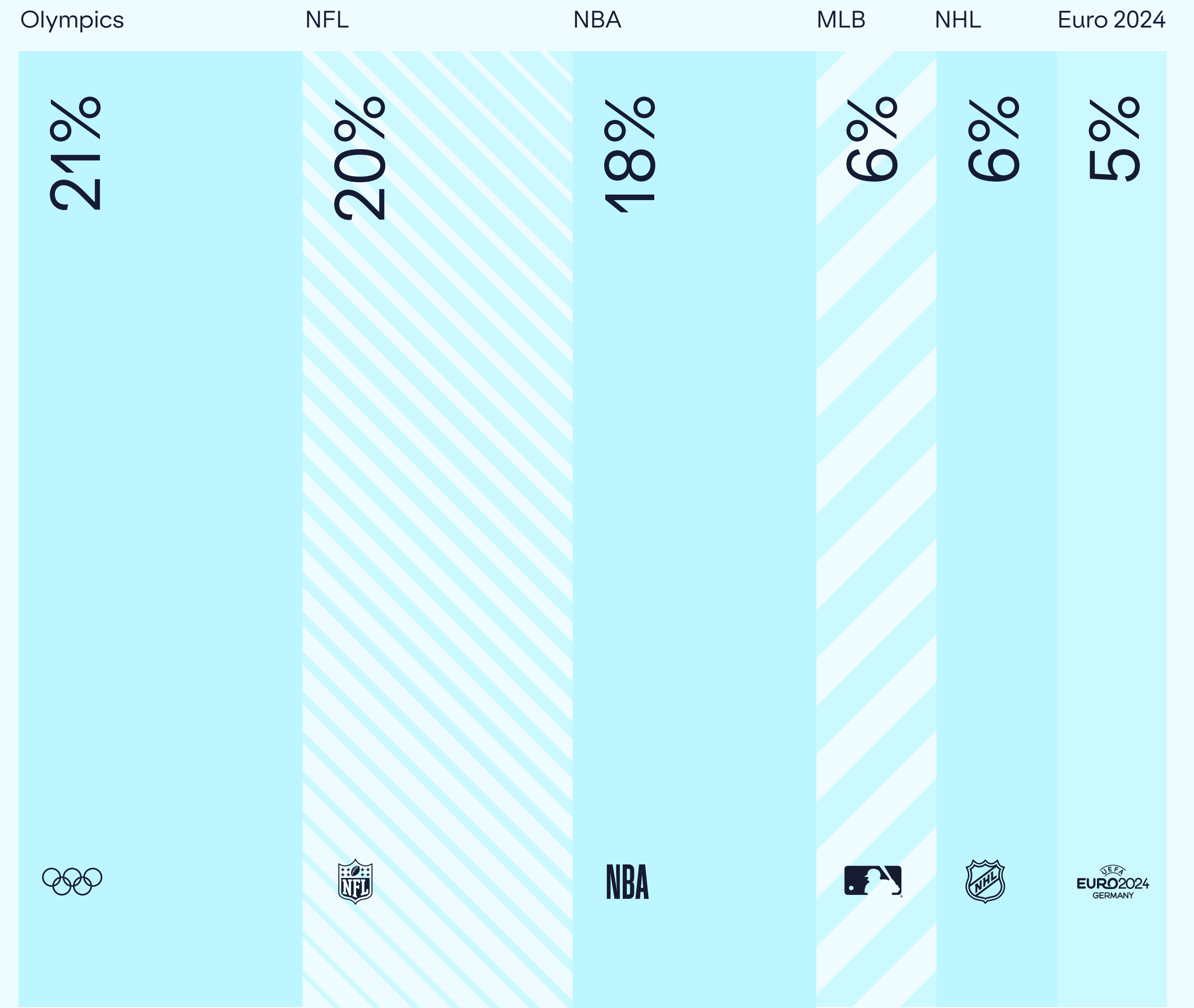
11%
Branding

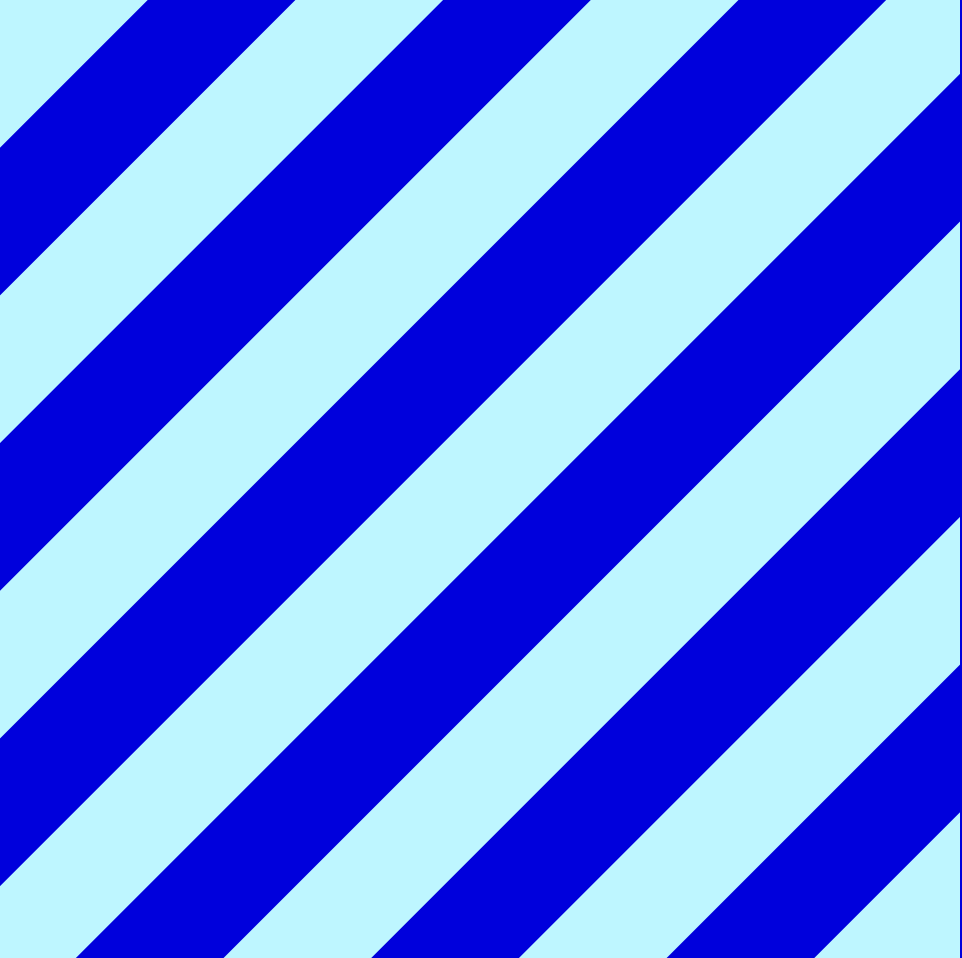
10%
Event activations

What sporting events will your U.S. sponsorship efforts revolve around in 2024?

The Paris 2024 Olympics presents a unique global opportunity, while the NFL Super Bowl continues to set new TV viewing records.

Unsurprisingly, North American brands consider these two events to be the most important of 2024.





About Genius Sports

ABOUT GENIUS SPORTS

Genius Sports is the world's leading sports data technology company.



We help over 800 sports leagues, teams, broadcasters, brands and sponsors around the world to deliver immersive fan experiences and activate sports audiences.

Our fan-centric advertising platform powers real-time, data-driven digital sports activations including targeted sports programmatic media buying, dynamic omnichannel creative, digital content, gamification, personalized CRM and much more.

Advertisers and sponsors we've helped grow:



Official data partner to:





Check out our latest work

CLICK TO EXPLORE



Ready to engage fans?

LEARN MORE

The Fan Engagement Podcast

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