

capacity to occur, which will contribute to the success of the partnership. These skills include communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, identification of innate expertise and understanding of member diversity. Other critical factors which have been identified in the literature include interpersonal understanding, team work, trust building, negotiation, cooperation and team leadership.^{4,6}

And so, in light of the discussions and debates which occurred during the conference earlier this year, we must challenge current practice for future development. We must recognise the need to drill down further from existing health promotion competency frameworks to articulate the particular skills set appropriate to guide practitioners to achieve collaborative advantage. In particular, an interpersonal skill set needs to be incorporated alongside the technical skills and knowledge required to create an effective understanding about collaboration. Once this is achieved, these skills must be integrated into the development of health promotion training for workforce development and meaningfully included into university curricula. Practitioners can then mobilise these acquired skills within the workforce to propel the outcomes of their partnerships forward.

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Time to get tough on unhealthy sponsorships

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Health is everybody's business, and the Bangkok Charter¹ placed health promotion firmly in a global context, calling for an integrated policy approach where health is central to global development and a key requirement for good corporate practice. The Charter recognised the potential harms associated with marketing strategies¹ and there is a growing recognition that advertising and marketing of unhealthy food and drinks, including alcohol, have a negative impact on children's knowledge, attitudes, preferences and consumption.² A recent New Zealand study also found links between alcohol industry sponsorship and higher levels of alcohol consumption among sport participants.³ In Australia, the National Preventative Health Taskforce placed advertising and marketing of unhealthy products firmly on the national health agenda and concluded that the weight of evidence is now sufficiently compelling to recommend action to control what remains an overwhelmingly self-regulated industry.⁴

Sponsorship is a key component in the overall marketing mix, indeed since the 1980s, sponsorship has outperformed other promotional tools in terms of growth.⁵ This decade marked an escalation in sports marketing and launched the commercialisation of the Olympic Games, with Coca-Cola and McDonalds in particular investing heavily in sponsoring the Los Angeles Games.⁵ Since that time, children and young people have acquired considerably more spending power and the Internet has opened up a vast opportunity for commercial sponsors to develop ever more creative ways to leverage their brands.

Today, sponsorship employs increasingly sophisticated methods and activation strategies combined with breathtaking expenditures to associate unhealthy foods and drinks with sport and entertainment. In 2008, sponsorship spending on alcohol alone was estimated to be about \$300 million a year in Australia, in addition to another estimated \$119 million in other forms of paid advertising, excluding sponsorship.⁴

The argument that sponsorship and advertising do not influence behaviour ignores all the evidence to the contrary. The food and alcohol industries in Australia are strongly resisting regulation and make laughable claims about the effectiveness of the voluntary codes. It is hard to take these claims seriously when a recent content analysis of three major Australian cricket games on television found that the main sponsor's logo (either KFC or XXXX Gold) was identifiable

for between 44% and 75% of the game time, enabling these brands to saturate family viewing time in the absence of effective controls.⁶

Healthway (The WA Health Promotion Foundation) is nearly 20 years old and has invested more than \$150 million in sponsoring sport, arts and racing activities in Western Australia with specific objectives to promote health promotion campaign messages, create healthy environments and increase participation in healthy activities.

Health promotion sponsorship takes a similar approach to commercial sponsorship, by providing funds to sponsored groups in exchange for a range of agreed benefits, including promotion of a health message through signage, logo placement, announcements at the event and merchandise, as well as policies to create smoke-free environments, healthy food choices, safe alcohol service and other structural reforms.⁷

The presence of alcohol, soft drink and fast food sponsors (co-sponsors) at Healthway-sponsored events can compromise health messages and potentially undermines health promotion objectives. Healthway introduced a new co-sponsorship policy in 2010, stating that it will no longer enter into health message promotion sponsorships with organisations that have relationships with commercial organisations when these result in the promotion of unhealthy brands or messages.

The extent to which individual co-sponsorships are likely to undermine health promotion objectives is determined through a risk management approach. This takes into consideration factors such as the profile and marketing strategies of the co-sponsor's brand, the profile of the sponsored organisation and the nutrient profile of the brand or product. Where a co-sponsor is considered to pose a high risk, Healthway sponsorship may be conditional on strategies to mitigate or reduce the risk, for example confining an alcohol sponsor's involvement to pourage rights or point-of-sale signage. This approach acknowledges that not all associations with so-called 'unhealthy' co-sponsors are necessarily problematic, but the overt or aggressive promotion of unhealthy products and brands is significantly reduced in association with Healthway-sponsored activities.

A number of sports in WA have welcomed Healthway's new approach and recognise their responsibility to reduce children's exposure to unhealthy brands in the community. One of the first organisations to show its support was WA Netball and Healthway is now the major sponsor of the elite WA netball team, the West Coast Fever, which competes in the ANZ Championship and agreed to phase out all 'unhealthy' co-sponsors during the first year of its relationship with Healthway.

There are those who protest that Healthway's position threatens to destroy sport as we know it in Western Australia, just as their predecessors did back in the days when the ban on tobacco sponsorship was first floated.⁸ However, sport did survive and, in fact, has thrived without tobacco sponsorship, as organisations such as Healthway initially provided an alternative source of sponsorship and other sponsors soon stepped in to fill the gaps. It is now time to get tough on other unhealthy sponsorships in sport and there is no reason why doing so should be detrimental to sport in the longer term.

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