

## Being the face of a brand

Basking in the reflected glory of Team GB after the London Olympics may seem like an easy marketing option for sponsors such as Adidas, but what happens when our heroes fail to live up to expectation? This is exactly the scenario that sports drinks manufacturer Instant Energy was forced to confront.

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A few weeks after the London Games one of the communications team at Instant Energy\* noticed an increase in the number of conversations on Twitter about Dan Green\*, the recently-crowned men's 110m hurdles champion, and the 'face' of Instant Energy. As they monitored the internet traffic the communications team was alarmed to see that conversations were spreading rapidly across other social media channels, all alleging that Dan Green had tested positive for banned substances after the Olympic final.

The main concern was the effect that these allegations would have on Instant Energy. The company had worked hard over the years to build

the brand into the biggest sports drinks supplier in the UK and any link to doping would undoubtedly damage not only this reputation, but sales as well.

It wasn't long before both the IOC and Dan Green's agent were forced to make a public announcement and it emerged that the allegations were in fact true. Dan had failed a routine drug test and would now be stripped of his Olympic gold medal. This was an obvious breach of the endorsement contract that Dan had with Instant Energy and there was an almost immediate effect on sales as people stayed away from products tarnished by the negative association.

Electronic point of sale equipment was used to monitor sales volume over time, clearly showing a reduction in profitability which was indemnified by Tokio Marine Kiln. Tokio Marine Kiln also covered the cost of the external crisis communications team and additional PR support that was needed to manage the situation.

Tokio Marine Kiln's reputational harm cover helped to preserve the brand throughout the crisis.

\*Names are hypothetical, and this case study is based on our experience of a number of similar clients

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