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# Beyond The Finish Line: the new era of Formula 1

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## Introduction

Everybody has heard of Formula 1 once before. Fast cars, impressive drivers and global races are the images that come to mind when referring to the world's most famous motorsport. In fact, the idea of racing is very simple in itself. A speed competition, that requires traveling a certain distance or getting to a specific goal, is a concept that anyone can easily understand. Throughout history, there are many sports activities that consisted of being faster than others, from the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece to the chariot races organized by the Romans. Continuous self-improvement and the desire to be the first to reach the finish line have contributed to the constant innovation of ever more advanced competitions, thus leading to the modern races we know today.

Yet, motor racing has not always been a popular sport. Until a few years ago, Formula 1 was far from being the most watched sporting league in the world, falling behind football and basketball organizations among others. Considered highly inaccessible, the brand failed to engage with younger audiences.

The turning point was the acquisition of Formula 1 by the Liberty Media Group. Within its arrival, the new owners decided to start from the bottom. Adopting a much more marketing-oriented approach, the American company's intention was clear: to transform Formula 1 into an entertaining brand. Thanks to the different measures applied, the competition has experienced a strong success in recent years. The queen category is nowadays one of the most followed sports competitions and has more than a billion fans all over the globe.

Since the contrast between the before and after of Liberty Media's entrance is more than remarkable, the review is centered around the following research question: how has Formula 1 positioned itself as an entertaining brand?

In order to answer it, the study will focus on the strategies adopted by Formula 1 in terms of sports marketing. The report intends to methodically examine the brand's digital presence, evaluating its social media content over recent years. Moreover, the goal is to emphasize on different initiatives aimed at expanding the brand's awareness and therefore increase engagement within the customers. Additional in-depth analysis will be made on specific case

studies, particularly focusing on the marketing dynamics of Formula 1 events, such as the Miami and Las Vegas Grand Prix.

The aim of the study is to emphasize the importance of sports marketing's quality, by proving that management decisions in this regard can push a company's success beyond its limits and therefore showing how to make those decisions. As such, it may be relevant for young management graduates, as they could derive value from the results of the research. This report is also directed to anyone interested in learning more about the Formula 1 brand, offering a broad analysis of the different mechanisms used to renovate its image. Other sports organizations as well as companies in different industries can benefit from the insights provided and eventually reshape their approach towards the consumer.

Moreover, it can serve as an academic purpose, as it provides theoretical concepts that could then be applied to future projects.

# 1. Marketing as a vision

## 1.1 About Formula 1

Although founded in 1946, Formula 1 finds its origins from the late 19th century, where the very first motor race was held in France. The contest organized by Pierre Giffard saw twenty-five cars compete from Paris to Rouen and marked the beginning of what we know today as motorsport. A few years later, the term Grand Prix is originally used for the Le Mans race, a designation now synonymous with Formula 1. In the early 20th century, the competition at the time assigned a particular color for each country, to make sure that viewers could distinguish and especially recognize the drivers and racing teams, making it perhaps one of the very first marketing strategies in the sport. This decision turned out to be crucial, as even today most of the racing teams still apply said color for their liveries. In the case of Ferrari, the now famous *rosso corsa* has become an integral part of the brand's identity. The first Drivers Championship, originally planned in the 1930s but later postponed due to the outbreak of World War II, took place in 1950. The competition that consisted of six races made its debut in Silverstone for the British Grand Prix, starting the modern era of international automobile racing. Another event that revolutionized the sport was the appearance of sponsorships in 1968. After realizing the potential of advertising, racing teams reached important agreements with non-related sports brands, whose desire was to be associated with the new global phenomenon.

From that point on, Formula 1 has continued to expand around the world and has grown more and more in all aspects, thus becoming the emblem of motorsport. Nowadays, the calendar includes 24 Grand Prix located in 21 different countries on five continents as of 2024, making it the busiest year until today.

## 1.2 A different approach

However, numbers were not always so favorable for Formula 1. Motorsport's top tier experienced indeed a significant decline of popularity at the beginning of the last decade.

Its social media presence was then far behind other global sports competitions. As reported by the authors Shields and Reavis, the commercial side of the brand failed to keep up with sports evolution in the digital age. Formula 1 was then perceived as an “old man’s club”. The Chief Executive at the time, Bernie Ecclestone, claimed that it was unnecessary to chase the younger audiences, as they didn’t have “any money to spend”. This vision changed with the arrival of Liberty Media. In 2016, the American media company acquired Formula 1 for \$4.4 billion. The newly appointed Chief Executive Officer Carey Chase declared that Formula 1 had “a huge potential with multiple untapped opportunities” and that the goal was to “enhance the racing experience and add new dimensions to the sport”. One of the initial steps towards this direction was to introduce the first professional marketing division at the company, which didn’t exist under the previous management. The position of Marketing Chief Officer was also established in the senior management ranks. Numerous marketing dynamics have followed to make, what was previously seen as a simple sports competition, a full-fledged entertainment brand. Thus, leveraging Liberty Media expertise in the industry, the set of strategies adopted by the American company allowed Formula 1 to become the fastest growing sport organisation between 2019 and 2021. The number of fans has nearly doubled since the acquisition, as well as the value of the brand.

### 1.3 Sports Marketing

In order to clarify the topic of this study, it is important to define the concept of sports marketing. According to the authors Mullin, Hardy and Sutton, sports marketing is defined as a rational, coherent system that helps link sport consumers with sport products. It is considered a branch of general marketing, which in turn is divided into two major categories. On one hand, the “marketing of sports” focuses on the promotion of sports, including sporting events, associations, competitions, teams and so on. It also includes the set of strategies and techniques used to attract and engage fans, create customer relationship and build brand awareness. On the other hand, the use of sporting equipment, teams or individual athletes to promote non-sports related products is referred as “marketing through sports”.

Even though, in Formula 1 history, sponsorships and advertisements of goods and services unrelated to motorsports had a significant importance, this study will mainly focus on the first category, where the sport is in fact the product and not a tool used to promote others.

In this case, the aim is to popularize a motorsport category among sport fans, younger generations and new markets around the world. Similar examples would be the promotion of a global sporting event like the FIFA World Cup in 2022 by the Qatar government or the Super Bowl by the National Football Association. Sports marketing's strategies adopted by Formula 1 allow the competition to display over twenty annual Grand Prix as well as racing teams and drivers to a worldwide audience.

Furthermore, sports marketing faces some differences due to the specific characteristics of the sports market. In fact, traditional customers aren't just simple consumers, but fans more than anything. With sport being a social phenomenon, brands involved are perceived differently. There is a special bond to the team for the fan. Several components come then into play, such as loyalty and brand identity, which make customers more inclined to consume the product, reject offers from competitors and recommend the brand. This affects the strategies adopted by marketers in the industry, having to establish a connection with an emotionally invested audience. Moreover, another factor to consider is the unpredictability around sports, where the outcome of a given event or the success of a particular team is not guaranteed. For this reason, when it comes to marketing, the brands' communication is different than in other areas.

## **2. Brand Positioning**

The term "positioning" was originally introduced by Jack Trout more than fifty years ago. He defined the concept as what is done, not to a product, but to the mind of the prospect. This theory is based on certain essential principles, called the 'abouts', reiterated several times by the author himself. As explained before, positioning is first and foremost about perception. Moreover, marketing strategy is about differentiation and competition. The product has to offer a distinctive benefit for the consumer, focusing on the weaknesses of the competitors. Strategic planning is also about singularity, providing a specific message to the audience. According to Harvard Business School, positioning is the art of fitting a product to one or more segments of the broad market, setting apart from competitors and optimizing opportunities for greater sales and profits.

The goal is to influence the customer's perception and to establish the mental space which that product is to occupy.

In an industry as competitive as the sports one, it is essential to develop an efficient positioning strategy. Also known as STP, which stands for segmentation, targeting and positioning, it consists of three basic steps. The first one is to define market segments, categorizing customers according to certain criteria. This analysis could be based on geography, demographics, psychographics or purchasing behavior, among other attributes. Segmentation is therefore an in-depth study of a particular market that focuses on its trends and potential growth, as well as the customers' needs and the benefits valued by them. After defining said segments, some are selected as targets. It involves analyzing one's brand image and strengths, along with those of competitors, from which originate the possibilities of differentiation. The company also decides the focus of the strategy, whether to concentrate on different markets or services. Lastly, the development of marketing activities such as communicating a unique value proposition and creating bespoke messaging are part of the positioning of the brand.

The following paragraphs will show the study of how Formula 1 applied these marketing principles through an effective positioning strategy.

## 2.1 A new target market

As explained in the first chapter, Formula 1's audience was considerably decreasing during the years leading to 2016. The vast majority of fans noticed a lack of connection with the brand, which failed to reach their expectations. The feeling of dissatisfaction among them grew more and more, as they did not have as much access to the sport as others. A study showed that most viewers categorized the sport as boring and distant.

Right after its arrival, Liberty Media planned and defined a marketing strategy. The American company spent the first three months into an in-depth study of the sport's own fanbase. Said strategy was centered around big data. The approach was simple yet very demanding: collect huge amounts of information. In order to achieve that, Formula 1 management focused then on conducting marketing research. At the beginning of the 2017 season, the



first Global Fan Survey was launched, with the clear objective to have a better understanding of the fans' needs and demands.

Due to the wide range and reach of the brand as well as the variety of the fanbase, Formula 1 managed to receive more feedback than ever before. Reports showed that almost 150,000 supporters from 194 different countries took part to the study.

The results of the research allowed the organization not only to gain significant information about the market and therefore about potential customers, but to realize what viewers wanted: get closer to the sport. Global leader in studying consumer behavior Nielsen Sports facilitated data collection and analysis. Nigel Gleach, senior vice president of the company's motorsport department, opened up the possibility to expand the target market. In fact, "one very interesting group of fans are the casual buyer, the social buyer". According to him, the goal of these surveys is not only to learn more about fans, but especially about non-fans, and to figure out how to trigger their interest in the sport. Formula's 1 mission should therefore focus on this market's segment by offering a value-added product through a specific aimed communication strategy. Understanding how sport is consumed could lead to a new audience, entirely overlooked until then, for which one must make it worthwhile to follow the competition.

At that point, Formula 1 turned towards a much more casual public, but still appealed by the sports' ecosystem and show business: the younger generations. This vision is completely opposed to that adopted by Bernie Ecclestone, according to whom the ideal target consumer was described as the "70-year-old guy with plenty of cash".

Another way to identify the potential customers' demands is through external partnerships. In 2019 Formula 1 started a collaboration that is still maintained in the present day with world leading firm The Family Insight. With nearly two and half million families surveyed over the world and three billion total data points collected, the company claims a remarkable expertise in the markets research industry. Its global reach and reputation allow it to provide comprehensive intelligence on kids, teens, parents and families.

The qualitative reports and real time data enabled Formula 1 to target a broader audience through efficient distribution channels. The study showed that more than 40% of kids under the age of 18 engage with eSports, a number that facilitated the development of different strategies around the Formula 1 video game. It has been demonstrated that the latter raises interest in the competition among younger generations, especially boys, giving them the chance to experience the racing tracks from their favorite drivers' point of view.

Moreover, research underlined the rise of social media usage by teenagers. Between the age of 10 and 18, the most popular platform is Instagram with almost 50% of global usage, followed by TikTok with 27%. Thanks to this data driven approach, Formula 1 has been able to face the challenges in the digital era and became a modern sports competition.

## 2.2 Digital rebranding

Once potential customers and target markets have been identified, it is necessary to communicate the brand value by sending a unique and innovative message to the audience. Liberty media started a process of total rebranding of Formula 1. In marketing, rebranding is the initiative in which the corporate image of an organisation is changed. The idea behind the strategy is to create a new brand's identity, usually to distance itself from negative connotations or to alter consumer's perception.

The new owners used the most direct and immediate way to change a brand's image. At the end of 2017, a new logo was introduced. After more than 23 years, the old version was completely redesigned.

The figure presents the usual abbreviation of the brand "F1" leaning forward, as if it was progressing into the future. In contrast to the previous version, the new logo is entirely red. This may seem at first glance a simple color change, but the reason behind is much more relevant. In marketing there is indeed an entire study devoted to the psychology effect of colors, as they have a particular emotional appeal. Warm colors incentivize spontaneous behavior and therefore impulsive buying, usually most suitable for low involvement purchase decisions. Red is associated with strong emotions such as passion, excitement, fearlessness and power, and also provides a sense of urgency. In short, it represents everything that comes to mind when thinking about Formula 1. When the value of the company matches with the sport's values, it creates brand awareness and recognition. Not only the color, but also the shape of the logo is a marketing choice. The new symbol was designed to be better suited for any kind of usage, especially from a merchandising and digital content perspective.

The rounded lines and sleek silhouette, evoking the speed and energy of racing events, contrast with the stiffness of the old emblem. Even its proportions were designed in order to make it fit any space or surface, from billboards around the circuit to champagne bottles on the podium.

As observed, Formula 1 managed to create a simple yet contemporary logo that appeal to a younger and wider audience. The aim, in addition to forge a globally recognizable and hopefully memorable symbol, was to align the image of Formula 1 with that of modern sports. In a world where we receive tens of thousands of visual inputs every day, a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing logo that draws attention and refers to a concrete image or event is critical for a business growth. To quote the well-known American graphic designer Saul Bass, “logos are a graphic extension of the internal realities of a company”, representing its vision and the value it upholds.

Despite mixed responses to the logo change, a later survey established that two thirds of Formula 1 fans did not really have a strong opinion on it, one way or another.



2.2.1 Formula 1's old logo (left) and new logo (right)

Liberty Media did not only change Formula 1's image, but reinvented completely the way we see the product. According to the organization, an entire season attracts more than a billion and a half viewers each year, which is an average of over 70 million per race. In order to achieve these numbers, Formula 1 turned watching a race into a unique experience. Over the years, Formula 1 has been at the forefront of sports broadcasting, introducing innovative technologies such as on board and helicopter cameras. For each event, nearly a hundred high-definition cameras are deployed, as well as over 140 microphones, recording as much

as 450 hours of live TV per season. After their appearance, the new owners focused on improving and refining viewers' experience. The broadcast center, a huge transportable facility set in the paddock, is responsible for selecting which images are being transmitted and assembling the International Feed, distributed to over 50 countries.

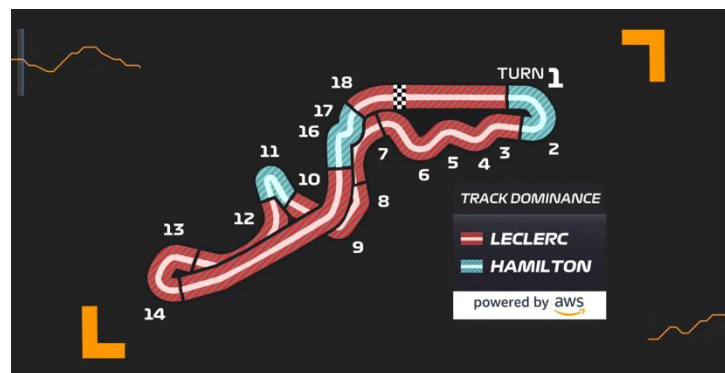
Unlike other sports, Formula 1 manages all broadcast logistics internally and subsequently provides a worldwide feed to its partners, who then pay a substantial fee for broadcasting rights. Real time images are synchronized and displayed on a large monitor, showing multiple shooting angles. The cameras are placed all around the circuit but are also present on board, in the pit stops and embedded in the track itself. The constant switching from one image to another depending on the moment of the race is what makes the sport dynamic and energetic, where the impression is that anything can happen at any time. The link between broadcasting and viewers' emotions is strong. As a matter of fact, cameras are the eyes of millions of viewers; it is important that the race is captured in the best way possible. As reported by Formula 1 head of the commercial department Sean Bratches, the idea was to "revitalize the way F1 is produced". Amplifying the customer's involvement means to boost his excitement, and therefore his perception of the event. To reflect the actual speed of racing cars, the brand repositioned the cameras and adjusted the visual angles, "the lower the camera the higher the realism of the speed is". Several spotters were also deployed around the track, communicating with race control and so being able to anticipate eventual overtakes. Bratches emphasized that the collaboration between Liberty Media and television companies aimed to guarantee an appealing product for die-hard as well as for casual fans.

This strategy also focused on customer retention, trying to captivate first time viewers. By customer retention is meant the ability of an organization to maintain its customers over time. Formula 1's marketing requires then to turn simple consumers into repeat buyers, the latter being the foundation of a brand's success.

Another measure to maintain a high involved audience during an event was to improve general layout and graphics' value. As seen before, data can be used to define a specific audience to target but can also serve to communicate with viewers through an innovative strategy. Liberty Media Group initiated a long-term partnership with Amazon Web Services in 2018. The collaboration, which was extended four years later, aims to revolutionize the fan experience in motorsport. The idea is for Formula 1 to use the technology giant's cloud computing services for a wide range of data processing. Through F1 Insights, the most

accurate predictions and precise distances are provided to the audience. During each race, several graphics showing any type of statistics and details appear regularly on the screen. This information, gathered in real time from over 300 sensors on each car, allows the viewer to better understand some of the decisions made by drivers and teams.

Using track history and the projected car pace, AWS technology helps predicting and displaying the striking distance before an overtake, the best possible strategy or the optimal number of pit stops. The audience is thus much closer to the race, having a broad view of what is happening via the data that is constantly provided to them. Innovative insights along with dynamic footage of the race greatly increase fan involvement and make Formula 1 more entertaining than ever before.



2.2.2 F1 Insights graphic displayed during Japan Grand Prix

After revolutionizing the visual aspect of the sport, the queen category of motor racing made sure to add another dimension to the fan's experience. Even without being directly present at the physical event it is possible to perceive certain sensations through a screen. In fact, marketing services is also about stimulating different senses that allow the consumer's involvement to be unique and exclusive. To this end, Liberty Media specifically repositioned on board microphones and those around the circuit to make sure that TV spectators experienced the authentic sound of the cars' engines. The audio department did everything possible for viewers to properly hear one of the most characteristic elements of motorsport. Therefore, the audience is stimulated not only visually but also audibly, making it more enjoyable as they can feel closer to the race.

Speaking of sound, total rebranding also comes through music. In 2018, Formula 1 released a new official theme song. Played at the start of every Grand Prix, it received excellent

feedback from the fans, who immediately associated it with an exciting racing weekend. A compelling intro that fills you with adrenaline as soon as you hear it, exactly what Liberty Media was looking for. At the end of the day, an official theme is nothing more than another form of logo since it instantly refers back to the brand.

“I wanted to capture the dramatic and emotional aspects of the sport, [as well as everything] that sounded like the spirit of what Formula 1 is” has said soundtrack’s composer Brian Tyler. The highs and lows, the suspense and intensity of the sport’s season are thus reflected on the theme.

### 2.3 Social media strategy

Much of Formula 1’s success is due to the brand’s excellent use of social media. It is undeniable that the growth of sports has experienced a significant advancement through the emergence of new communication channels. However, the company had to reinvent itself, since this long-term vision has not always been so present. Once again, another Bernie Ecclestone’s quote comes to mind. Back in 2014, he expressed himself on what was at the time the new social media phenomenon. The manager revealed that he was “not interested in tweeting, Facebook or whatever this nonsense is”, as he “didn’t see any value in it”. This shared thinking within the firm resulted in a misguided approach, distancing the public from the brand. Formula 1’s content was very limited, consisting mainly of races and press conferences, and behind the scenes’ access was highly restricted as well, causing an overall disappointment and dissatisfaction among consumers. Aware of this circumstance, the new owners aimed instead at the opposite direction, placing social media at the heart of the marketing strategy. Liberty Media quickly realized that an increased digital presence was required to stimulate fan’s passion for the sport.

A first step was to soften the restrictions on drivers and teams’ usage of social media, giving them more freedom than ever on their own platform’s coverage. An approach centered on fan entertainment was then adopted. Racing teams as well as the proper organization focused on sharing exclusive content. Out of all of them, McLaren Racing Team has arguably been most successful in building a digital brand that connects with their fanbase. The British company managed to create entertaining content through different initiative. *Driven to Deliver*, a commercial staging that aired before the American Grand Prix in Texas, showed how even via advertising it is possible to generate appealing insights for a wide

audience. In this short skit, Lando Norris and his former teammate Carlos Sainz delivered Amazon and Coca Cola products around the city of Austin.

Due to the originality as well as the much-loved chemistry between the two drivers, the short video was well received by McLaren fans, who had the opportunity to see their favorite team's drivers under a different light. Another plan to attract the audience was the launch of video series *Unboxed*. The Youtube sensation follows the team during race weekends and shows the characters as they are without any kind of filtering. With hundreds of thousands views per episode, it is shown that the authentic side is appreciated by the public.

Formula 1 managed to create additional points of interactions with its fanbase, as they felt integrated into the racing world. By taking advantage of social media expansion, the brand reached a high engagement from their customers. As a result, fans interaction was no longer restricted to the two-hour race on Sunday but became an ongoing exchange that goes beyond a specific time frame. An audience that for years has been kept out of the inner circle of Formula 1 now sees itself flooded with huge amounts of content all over social networks, from podcasts and interviews to memes and fans opinions. Moreover, a brand's influence also lies in its ability to exploit its own strengths. As demonstrated by recent studies, new generations are more invested in the individual athlete rather than teams or leagues. Several teams have therefore focused their digital content strategy on the drivers.

It is the case with Ferrari, the most prestigious brand in the sport. Their driver's duo, a fan favorite, embodies the youthful spirit and professionalism of motor racing. Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz feature in a video series where they oppose each other on different topics selected by the community. *C<sup>2</sup> Challenge* allows the audience to get closer to their sport idols thanks to a more genuine and authentic form of content creation. On top of that, after every race, both drivers send a direct video message to the *tifosi*, where they give an overall analysis on the race and comment its key moments, thus increasing the level of communication between the "prancing horse" and its followers.

Another platform where brands are constantly posting exclusive original content is Tik Tok. Teams like Mercedes AMG Petronas have become experts on picking up on new trends and exploiting them in their favor. As a result, the team's community manager turned out to be a beloved figure among fans, well known for his irony touch. The German manufacturer

perfectly understood Tik Tok's value in capturing new breed of fans, which resulted in a significant growth of Mercedes' official page, becoming the most followed team with 6.1 million subscribers.



2.3 Ferrari's C<sup>2</sup> Challenge thumbnail

Fan engagement on social media has allowed Formula 1 to take advantage of another important phenomenon: user generated content. This type of content encompasses a wide variety of coverage created by consumers and freely shared all over online platforms. Characterized by high creativity and originality, it is one of the most authentic marketing forms as it comes from the user itself. Numerous Youtube channels talking about the upcoming Grand Prix, Instagram fan pages updating on race's episodes or Twitter debates around a driver signing with a new team are all perfect examples of this mechanism. Fans become then an essential resource for content creation, thus fueling its continued sharing and generating brand awareness around Formula 1.

Furthermore, there is one group in particular who has benefited from social media's exponential growth during the last decade: drivers. Sports stars have gone from being high level athletes to full-fledged celebrities. Since there are only twenty on the grid, the attention of millions of people around the world is focused on them. Their success is not only a personal achievement, but more importantly a step forward for motor racing. In fact, back in the day, it was Formula 1 that gave to know the best drivers in the world, now it is the drivers themselves that attract millions of fans into watching the sport. To start with, social media allows drivers to establish closer connections with their fans, as they can now follow their sports idols off the track on a regular basis. Over the past decade, the driver that stands out



of the rest is undoubtedly Lewis Hamilton, a name that even those who do not follow the racing competition have already heard once.

Considered as the face of the sport, the seven times world champion is one of the most influential personalities in the entertainment industry. The British driver has over 36 million followers on Instagram, almost three times as much as the second driver on the list, and more than any other team. Through his page, Hamilton shows his genuine personality, removing any kind of filter between him and the audience. By revealing his unique fashion style, which deliberately goes against motorsport athletes' stereotypes, he provokes thousands of reactions online from fans and media. Each of its content encounters high involvement from fans with an engagement rate of 3%. The star's latest Instagram non-sport related post, announcing his final season as a Mercedes driver and signing with Ferrari, received 3,7 million likes and over 40 thousand comments. Hamilton has revolutionized what it means to be a Formula 1 driver and played a central role in shaping a more inclusive legacy for the sport.

In addition to giving teams and drivers space on social media, Formula 1 also focused on its own accounts across different platforms. As far as for Youtube, the brand made huge strides. The online networking giant that counts over 2 billion users is known for attracting a wide audience, particularly young people, who consume daily content published there. In order to conquer new generations, Formula 1 adopted a well-defined strategy. One important aspect are races highlights, introduced under the new management. These few minutes clips that summarize the event by concentrating the most memorable moments are uploaded shortly after the checkered flag and regularly generate millions of views per video. Such features are the result of society's behavior nowadays, in which spectator's attention is constantly decreasing over time. According to research lead in the United States in 2020, the number of kids and teenagers belonging to "generation Z" that consider important to follow a sporting event in real time is less than a quarter. In other words, for a significant amount of people, highlights replace the race itself, allowing them to stay up to date and lose no interest in the competition. Viewers' perception of the event totally changes in this way, making it much more spectacular and less monotonous.

However, highlights are not the necessarily most popular content among fans. In fact, among the videos with over 10 million views, 14 out of 24 are compilations of episodes that occurred during a race or a season. The most watched video of the Youtube channel, with

more than 30 million views, is the top 10 of most dramatic moments in pit lanes, a saga that by far has been most successful, leaving behind compilations of biggest crashes, funny press conferences and collusions between teammates. These recordings, well combined by the brand in order to draw the public's attention, emphasize once again the importance that singular moments can have over an entire race's outcome for viewers and underline their global reach. Formula 1 also targets the most hardcore fans. With the introduction of F1 Classics, sport lovers can relive iconic moments by reviewing highlights of races that marked the history of motor racing. Besides, podcasts are regularly published for the most curious fans, where experts analyze team strategies and technical aspects of the cars on the grid. Because of the variety of the content as well as the frequency in publishing it, Formula 1's Youtube channel has quintupled the number of subscribers since the Liberty Media acquisition, from under 2 million at the start of 2019 to almost 10 million as of 2024.

### **3. More than a race**

The sports and entertainment industries are two powerful domains that often intersect, creating an immersive and captivating experience for a wide variety of audiences. With the constant evolution of consumer preferences and technological progress, traditional sports have increasingly embraced an entertaining approach in order to stay attractive and engaging. The reason behind this process is obviously business related. In fact, while sports have long been the focus of public attention, worldwide entertainment field has experienced significant growth over the past decade. According to market analysis leading companies Statista and The Business Research, the sports industry market was valued at nearly \$500 billion in 2023. It takes into consideration not only sporting events' revenue, advertising and sponsorships, but also broadcasting rights, as well as sports' equipment and merchandise. Meanwhile, the global entertainment industry market's estimated value was between \$2,4 and \$2,5 trillion for the same year, almost five times as much as the sports one. Driven by streaming platforms, digital content and immersive experiences, the industry is forecasted to reach the \$3 trillion dollar valuation by 2030, with an average annual growth of over 6%. It is therefore no surprise to see that several companies are shifting towards a modern era-based strategy, positioning themselves as entertainment brands. In such a broad and expansive market, the possibilities of attracting new customers are countless. The complex industry is in fact divided into several sub sectors, including music, movies, television,

internet content and gaming. In this chapter it will be analyzed how Formula 1 embraced the world of entertainment by focusing on some of these aspects.

### 3.1 Drive To Survive: the storytelling tool

As mentioned, the strategy adopted by Liberty Media Group was essentially based on consumers' interest and amusement. For years the American company tried to make the sport more spectacular, turning it into a proper show. To that end, Formula 1 announced in 2018 the launch of an original documentary series produced by Netflix, starting a partnership that revolutionized the sport's world. The season long collaboration offers fans a unique behind-the-scenes look into the world of moto racing, transforming how the sport is portrayed. Breathtaking footage as well as electric transitions around the track allow viewers to experience the adrenaline-fueled universe of Formula 1. The documentary also emphasizes the drama and rivalries among the world's best drivers, following their season on and off the track. By sharing the personal stories behind the sport, Drive to Survive has attracted a global audience, contributing to Formula 1's expanding reach and enhancing its image as a dynamic and thrilling sporting spectacle. Due to Netflix crew's total freedom across the paddock, the audience has access to unreleased interviews to drivers, team managers and owners. Through a genuine and authentic approach, the ten episodes series has been able to reveal a side of the sport that has never been showed before. Appealing for both die-hard fans and newcomers, the show series aims to arouse the passion of even those who do not follow the races every weekend.

Through this partnership, Formula 1 managed to communicate an innovative product and change its brand image. A key part for the docu-series' success has been its captivating storytelling. The latter refers to the communication of a unique message by a brand, using cohesive narratives that evoke feelings and create an emotional appeal among potential consumers. Such messages are present throughout Netflix documentary. By building a narrative around certain elements that characterize the sport, an emotional connection is created with the audience. Several studies show that emotional engaging programs influences positively the attitude of customers towards the brand, hence the approach of the series. Besides, focusing on storytelling allows the brand to get closer to fans and helps build trust and therefore loyalty, one of the company goals. *Drive To Survive*, in addition to providing a visual spectacle, unfolds the story of an entire Formula 1 season.

British journalist Will Buxton act as the documentary narrator, frequently appearing during each episode and providing context and background information on the events covered for the viewers. Speaking directly to the audience as he does makes it more authentic and keeps the public engaged behind the screen.

An essential part of storytelling consists of the sporting rivalries. In racing's world, the fierce competition between teams and drivers is what makes Formula 1 as exciting as it is. Each era has its own rivalry, some of which are never forgotten. Without a doubt, recent years have been characterized by the one between Mercedes and Red Bull. The 2021 title fight for both drivers and constructors' championship will forever remain in the history of the sport. The fourth season of *Drive To Survive* emphasizes it through different perspectives.

On one hand, Netflix documentary showcases how the two fastest drivers on earth Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen face each other on the track to become world champions. Every weekend, hundreds of cameras around the circuit were pending on both athletes before, after and during the race, ready to capture any type of confrontation. Several episodes are exclusively focused on the two of them. The British and Italian Grand Prix are turning points in the season and therefore for the series, where both drivers were involved in tough collisions during the races. Through slow motion footage and dramatic music, Netflix immerses viewers in an adrenaline-fueled action, as if they were reliving the moment. The incidents' reactions of pit crews and team managers are also shown, offering unreleased content to the audience. Season's compelling narrative went on until the last lap, in one of motorsport's most iconic races. In order to make the audience feel the tension of the moment, the series puts the spotlight on the driver's radio messages and communications with their teams as well as the commentator's voices, making it much more spectacular.

On the other hand, team managers Toto Wolff and Christian Horner also star in the show. The fight for the title also happens off the track, as both characters feature in different episodes. In support of the races' images, numerous clips of the managers are inserted in the middle of the action to give spectators their point of view. Also, the heated discussions between the two enhance the drama behind the scenes. Exclusive exchanges about the controversial and chaotic decisions were revealed, thus ending a legendary season that contributed to audience's entertainment during the race and through *Drive To Survive*.

Furthermore, beloved characters in the show emerge as fan favorites through their genuine personalities and captivating stories. One such example is Gunter Steiner, whose straightforward style and funny language make him a standout character in the series. The Haas team manager's vibrant interactions with his drivers and other teams provide both comic and dramatic moments. Understanding the viewers demands, Haas based much of its social media content around Steiner's figure, growing to 2,8 million followers on Instagram. The manager has indeed become a prominent figure of the sport, to the point that the announcing of his departure from Formula 1 at the end of 2023 has completely upset fans of the competition, who now cannot think of a Netflix season without the Italian manager.

Another leading character in the series is undoubtedly Daniel Ricciardo. His charismatic side and contagious smile reflect the image that Formula 1 wants to project on the public. According to the producer of the documentary Paul Martin, the original idea was to make a series centered around the Red Bull racing team, with its former driver taking the spotlight. In an interview with The Post, he stated that "without Daniel there wouldn't be a show". The approach used with Ricciardo is the very essence of Drive To Survive. On one hand, the series focuses on what happens behind the scenes. The Netflix crew was invited by the driver to his home in Australia, showing the life of a professional athlete when he's away from the cameras. On the other hand, it allows fans to experience Daniel Ricciardo's greatest triumphs and setbacks on the track from other angles. The 2018 Monaco Grand Prix, arguably the pinnacle of the driver's career, is the perfect example. In one of the most appreciated episodes, insights from his dramatic win and afterwards celebrations are captured, where an iconic moment from recent years in Formula 1 is immortalized in a picture that has gone viral around the globe. As a result, Daniel Ricciardo has not only become a global celebrity but also serves as an inspiration for many individuals who relate to his natural personality shown in the series, thus bringing them closer to the sport.

Timing was also a strategic decision made by the Formula 1's commercial department. Coming out at the beginning of each year, the documentary not only allows fans to remember the crucial moments of the previous season, but also to build excitement ahead of the next one. With an average of nearly 40 minutes per episode, the spectator has time to watch every scene and to stay updated before the opening race weekend.

The show is generally aired a few weeks before the start of the season, reducing then the waiting time for fans who are thus entertained with exciting content. It is well known that the offseason is the most difficult period for true supporters, where for months they do not see their favorite team or driver attending events, a gap that is partially filled by the documentary.



3.1 Drive To Survive official teaser featuring Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen

### 3.2 The Netflix effect

Netflix documentary was an extraordinary success, especially among younger audiences. In the first semester of 2023, the fifth season ranked at 115th position among all Netflix shows during this period. With an astonishing 90,2 million total hours viewed, it emerges as the most watched docuseries within its category. In the previous year, a study conducted in the United Kingdom by YouGov Sports among nearly 20 thousand individuals revealed interesting insights on *Drive To Survive*. The research revealed that consumers from 18 to 29 years old represent almost a third of the audience, significantly more than the estimated 20% of Formula 1 fans in the same age group. In other words, the amount of younger people watching the show is remarkably higher than the number of persons who actually follow the sport. Moreover, the viewership distribution is more balanced in terms of gender than it is for the motor racing consumption, with 46% being female. These elements illustrate that, with the launch of the series, Formula 1 has been able to reach a much wider audience, including individuals with no particular interest in the sport. The brand has therefore positioned itself as an entertainment trademark, perceived as such by different markets around the world.

Moreover, *Drive to Survive* allowed Formula 1 to conquer an unconcerned market until then: the American one. The partnership with Netflix was indeed a strategic decision made by Liberty Media. The streaming giant owns 7.2 percent of the United States consumer's screen time, who account for much of its \$33 billion in revenue, based on Statistica's data. Out of the 260 million global subscribers, the platform reports that over 80 million of them are located across the United States and Canada. The launch of the series thus aimed to captivate as many people as possible and raise curiosity towards the sport. French star Pierre Gasly pointed out the effect that the show had on general public. In an interview with *The Athletic*, he remembered that time when a someone mistook him for a NASCAR driver at the United States Grand Prix in Austin, while he still was a Red Bull reserve. The landscape of Formula 1 in the country looks now very different, as the audience is much more familiar with the competition.

In fact, according to a survey conducted by Morning Consult in 2022, Netflix effect on American population is truly shocking. Among a representative sample of over 6.500 United States adults, almost 2000 of them stated to be Formula 1. Out of these, more than a half declared that the series contributed in their sport's interest, and 30% described it as a major reason. Between the younger crowd, under the age of 45, nearly three quarters attributed a significant importance to *Drive to Survive* in their increasing passion for motor racing. Another interesting fact obtained from the poll was the number of fans who started following the sport since 2017, being as high as 57%. Another study by Nielsen affirms that the show contributed to a 10% growth of Formula 1 fanbase in America.

Furthermore, Netflix sensation has played a significant role in boosting fan involvement in the United States. Since the release of the first season, the Austin Grand Prix has seen a 15% increase in ticket sales. The Circuit of the Americas hosted 440 thousand spectators over the weekend in 2022 and 432 thousand one year later in 2023, making it respectively the fifth and fourth highest attendances on race weekend ever. The American participation in the sport also skyrocketed from a television perspective. Since 2019, the audience for ESPN's Formula 1 coverage has nearly doubled and reached up to 1,5 million views per event, forcing the media network to sign a three-year extension in 2022 for broadcasting rights and additional open-wheel racing content. Stefano Domenicali, CEO of the motorsport's top tier category, commented positively on the agreement reached, adding that "Formula 1 has seen incredible growth in the United States with sold out events and record television audiences".

Besides, the addition of two home races scheduled in Miami and Las Vegas, which ticket prices are comparable to those of the Super Bowl, further underscores the growing popularity of Formula 1 in the country. This strong enthusiasm in the US has led to an increase in sponsorships from stateside companies in recent years. As a matter of fact, several racing teams have collaborated with important firms such as Google, Oracle or Coca Cola, as well as American giants Salesforce and MSC Cruises, who pay up to \$30 millions for being Formula 1 official partners. Other brands have even taken one step further, as Visa and Cashapp have recently acquired naming rights of one of the ten teams. Although negotiations with Formula 1 are still ongoing, the US based racing force Andretti submitted not long ago a bid in collaboration with Cadillac to enter the competition in the next years. In case an agreement is reached, it would be second American team on the paddock, alongside Haas, present in the sport since 2016. Drive to Survive has ensured a huge success for Formula 1, especially in the United States, raising the interest of a market that never closely followed the competition. Nowadays, it represents an important part of global audience, with fans more involved than ever before, entire cities preparing to host exciting Grand Prix and multinational corporation doing everything to be associated with the Formula 1 brand.

*Drive To Survive* has become itself an important content generator, as it picks up certain controversial episodes and dramatic moments throughout the season. This provokes all kind of reactions among fans, who share their opinions and impressions on social media, thus generating strong engagement across all digital platforms. In the first weeks following the release of a new ten episodes season, all the content published online is precisely dedicated to the series, thereby increasing the interaction between viewers.

### 3.3 eSports awakening

In the process of transformation to an increasingly modern and entertaining brand, Formula 1 has set its sights on another important sector of the industry. The gaming market, though less considered especially in the years leading to the arrival of Liberty Media in the sport universe, is nowadays one of the most effective ways to reach new generations. Besides, the global pandemic has greatly accelerated the industry's growth, which is projected to hit the \$600 billion value mark by 2030. The interrelation between sport and gaming is certainly not a new concept. Sporting associations and video games companies have been collaborating for over 20 years now. Even Formula 1, which saw its first fully licensed official



game being released back in 1996. Since then, the F1 series has experienced a well-known success and is now one of many sport organizations' official video games. Among them, some have also played an important role in the sport's growth in the world. For example, research claims that the popular FIFA saga has greatly participated in the rise of football's popularity in the United States. A famous quote from Electronic Art's former executive Peter Moore underlines the importance that videos games had for other sports organizations such as National Football League, as the "the greatest tool to consistently make young football fans [is] Madden", the latter being their official video game.

In these circumstances, Liberty Media decided to focus part of its marketing strategy towards the gaming market. The idea was to exploit a competitive advantage that Formula 1 has over other leagues, namely that the only way to for most of the public to experience the sport is precisely through video games. Since there was already a Formula 1 electronic game, the queen category launched in 2017 its own eSports competition. In order to engage with younger people, the Formula 1 eSports Series immediately raised a strong interest among fans all over the world. The partnership with Codemasters, established video game developer, and Gfinity, global organizer of eSports events, enabled the competition to be functionally operational right from the start. As in real Formula 1, the competition lasts all year round, with the only difference being that virtual drivers must go through a qualifying system and then eventually enter the semifinals and finals. In 2018, all ten teams joined the programme and established their own eSports teams to compete for the championship. According to head of marketing in Formula 1 Ellie Norman, numerous individuals have tried to enter the competition, submitting their laps and showing their ability. As she stated, "the level of professionalism replicates what our actual Formula 1 drivers already do", referring to the intensive training to which virtual racers went through, including mental coaching, simulators handling and reactions test.

Formula 1 gaming reached the next level two years later. With the global pandemic that brought the whole world to a standstill, the company took advantage of the lockdown situation to promote its video game competition. As the 2020 Championship started in July, due to the continuous cancellation of several Grand Prix, Formula 1 decided to launch the first Virtual Grand Prix. The video game contest featured many celebrities, including actual drivers such as Charles Leclerc, George Russell and Alex Albon. Consisting of a short selection of Grand Prix circuits, the series turned out to be an excellent decision by the brand, entertaining millions of fans in the absence of race weekends.

In addition, several drivers started streaming during the pandemic, which brought them extremely closer to supporters. By interacting with them via chat, racers established a direct connection with their communities. Among them all, Lando Norris has clearly been most successful in this regard, reaching 1,5 million followers on Twitch. According to Formula 1, the eSports series generated 23 million views across digital platforms throughout 2021, more than twice as much as the previous year. The success of the competition is substantially due to the younger generation of drivers. Those who might have been seen as inaccessible celebrities before have now become references for young audiences over the world, who daily consume their content. Virtual racers have also made a name for themselves. Mercedes eSports team driver and two times world champion Jarno Opmeer counts with 1 million followers across social media, allowing the competition to gain significant visibility and Formula 1 to break engagement records. As a result, the number of copies sold of the F1 video game saga notably increased since the launch of the series, reaching 1,2 and 1,1 million sales in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

### 3.4 Mobile gaming

Liberty Media, besides focusing on console gaming, has also implemented new measures regarding mobile games. According to Statista, the latter represents indeed a market almost twice as large as the one seen previously, with most of its revenue generated in the Asia-Pacific and North American regions. In fact, cell phones are not only a primary tool in our society to stay connected and up to date, but also one of easiest and most accessible ways of entertainment. After the launch of the Formula 1 mobile application, an interactive platform offering detailed statistics and new insights, the brand took the next step. The first F1 Fantasy was introduced in 2018, inspired by a product already present and established in other global sports such as football or basketball. The game enables users to create a team consisting of a given number of drivers that are chosen based on their expected future performances, while respecting a fixed budget. According to their race results, each driver is rewarded with a certain amount of points which combined add up to the team's final score over the weekend. Points are awarded based on various criteria, such as the position at the end of the race, the number of overtakes or the fastest laps. In other words, the better the choice of drivers, the better the result. Virtual team managers can compete with millions of fans around the globe by entering public leagues divided into different geographical areas or create their own championship and play against friends and family members.

A true community has formed around the game, where fans share their teams and exchange strategies they can use in order to maximize points during each race weekend. Some websites have even created softwares and trackers that provide players with detailed statistics and eventual data driven tactics, helping them outperform other virtual managers. This high competitiveness is nothing but a clear example of the fans' involvement regarding the Fantasy game, creating a dynamic and rivalrous environment just like in Formula. Moreover, since it follows the actual open wheeled category, the game is played weekly by hundreds of thousands of fans throughout the whole season. As it constantly requires their attention, the product enabled fans to interact with the sport in a more engaging and long-lasting way. Due to the increasing demand for content and diversion from the audience, Formula 1 has subsequently released other brand related mobile games such as F1 Manager or F1 Play.

### 3.5 The next project

Furthermore, the company's recent project intends to expand its presence in the industry. With the announcement of F1 Arcades, Formula 1 revolutionizes marketing's approach towards the public. The idea is to gather fans of the world's most prestigious motorsport in specially designed hubs. These locations establish contact points with the audience and are equipped with state-of-the-art simulators and reaction tests, among other playful activities. Taking advantage of the strong rise in popularity, the brand wants to bring together supporters even during races by creating a friendly and energetic environment over weekend's events. The inauguration of London's F1 arcade in 2022 is only the first of many, with the aim of opening another 30 locations in the next 5 years. The initiative has been more successful than expected, with thousands of customers involved every week. Formula 1 has therefore been able to reinvent itself through the years and provided its fanbase with different ways to experience and interact with the sport, thus generating new forms of entertainment.

## 4. Case Study: Miami and Las Vegas Grand Prix

As seen so far, Formula 1 is no longer a simple car race. The brand has extraordinarily expanded both geographically and from a services standpoint, offering a wide variety of services to now a billion fans all over the world. Through a well-defined positioning strategy, the organization converted its competition into an exciting spectacle and has completely changed the way it is perceived by the public. Since its arrival in 2017, Liberty Media has been keen on introducing new events on the calendar, adding therefore several Grand Prix weekends. Out of all of them, the last two arrivals are the ones that raised most interest among enthusiasts. Both in the United States, the Miami Grand Prix and Las Vegas Grand Prix have respectively made their first appearance in the motorsport's world in 2022 and 2023. The two events perfectly represent the essence of what Formula 1 has become: a thrilling exhibition for casual fans and true sport lovers. For years, the American company has wanted to renovate the concept of a traditional Formula 1 weekend, making it more suitable for the modern era. Liberty Media focused then on the consumer experience, thus making the Grand Prix not just a two-hour race, but more widely a multi-day celebration that takes over an entire city.

### 4.1 A show before anything else

First and foremost, the intention was to create a memorable show. Formula 1 secured 6,2 kilometers of road in Las Vegas, including the famous strip, which is already iconic by itself. Passing by the various hotels and casinos, the track is in heart of the city, making it instantly recognizable. Moreover, what made the Las Vegas Grand Prix largely spectacular was the opening ceremony. By taking the notorious Super Bowl half time show as an inspiration, Formula 1 was able to reach the American public. In front of the grandstands installed around the track, a series of world-famous artists performed on an all racing-themed stage. Countless colorful lights and a high-volume speakers show assisted the likes of John Legend, Steve Aoki and J Balvin in what happened to be a tremendous exhibition. The later addition of fireworks and an eye-catching drone show made the ceremony even more entertaining. After an almost half-hour performance, teams on the grid were presented as well as the drivers, showcased on elevating platforms and cheered by the public. As summarized by the current world champion Max Verstappen, "Las Vegas is 99% show and 1% sport".

Although from his words there seems to be a dig at the organization, the reality is that the new Grand Prix has been an extremely entertaining event for fans, with nearly 315 thousand attendances over the weekend. In terms of online engagement, on the other hand, race highlights' official video has now 7,8 million views on Youtube, while the opening ceremony's one has as many as 1,7 million.

As for Miami, the track was designed around the notorious Hard Rock Stadium, with the paddock being located within it. Following a typical Vice City stereotype, the organization even recreated a Yacht Club within the circuit and added a fake turquoise water pattern and palms around it, which makes it easier for spectators to identify the track and linking it to the city. The special feature of the event has undoubtedly been the race inauguration. In a thematic environment that captures the city's culture, the drivers arrived at the track as real stars. To make it even more unique, each racer was presented to the audience with bespoke introductions.

#### 4.2 The celebrity's factor

Furthermore, another important factor to consider with a purpose of increasing fans engagement is the reputation of the brand. Formula 1's prestige is by no means a new trend, however, is it essential to understand how to exploit it. With the desire for celebrities' validation, the new property was indeed able to attract several of them and therefore their audience. In turn, wanting to show the competition's glamour, famous personalities raise their followers' interest in the competition by posting related content on social media. A strategic decision was to directly involve said celebrities in the show.

For example, when it came to present the trophy for the 2023 Miami Grand Prix and awarding the race winner on the podium, NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal made an appearance, arriving in a heavily customized Cadillac, embracing the American culture. The former basketball player was also announced as the headliner for the official Miami Grand Prix Pool Party, an event aimed at young fans sponsored by Formula 1. During the same weekend, Formula 1 also linked up with racing centered movies saga Fast and Furious. In a video released on Youtube, driver Lando Norris took out actress Michelle Rodriguez on a Pirelli Hot Lap, a fan favorite series.

The Miami Grand Prix also delivered a now iconic picture featuring sport legends Lewis Hamilton, Tom Brady, David Beckham and Michael Jordan. The image immediately went viral and drew the attention from all sport fans towards the race. Before the lights going out, famous rapper Will.i.am acted as conductor during drivers' presentations. On the other hand, the city of Las Vegas hosted several A-list characters as well. Besides famous artist Justin Bieber waiving the chequered flag at the end of the race, Brad Pitt also attended the highly anticipated event. Amid his production on a racing movie where he plays a veteran Formula 1 driver, Hollywood's actor attendance adds to the event's appeal.

### 4.3 One event after another

Last but not least, numerous events have been organized to make the race week a unique experience for fans. For instance, the well appreciated Williams Fan Zone opened in Las Vegas. Especially directed to supporters who want to get closer to the world of racing, the area presented different sport related activities, such as reactions tests or eSports simulators that perfectly replicate the street track and the driver experience during the race. Live encounters with the drivers and team managers were also scheduled, thus intriguing true enthusiasts. Since it is Las Vegas, consumer focused on different concerts and parties offered that the city had to offer. Some of them were sponsored by Formula 1 teams, as the Red Bull Watch Party, providing an immersive experience for fans "with electrifying energy and an exciting outdoor environment" while watching the race, according to the CEO of the hotel that hosted the event.

However, the Las Vegas experience was not exclusively focused on motorsport. In the opening week, Netflix held a golf tournament to which fans could attend. Formula 1's official partner live streamed the short competition between a mix of drivers and professional golfers. Also serving to promote the race, the Netflix Cup represents an alternative way to create a connection between the fans, the drivers and the city.

As to be expected, the Miami Grand Prix has not been outdone in terms of customers' involvement. In 2022, the official Opening Party featured several musical performances by internationally renowned in front of a live crowd. Special guests' appearances, as well as Formula 1 drivers, notably contributed to what has been a worthwhile participation for the fans, engaging them right from the start in a spectacular inauguration.

The year after, the Racing Fan Fest was established. The 4-day event presented multiple entertaining options for visitors, from live stage concerts to virtual reality installations. In addition, several activities were centered around the recent released Fast and Furious movie, offering racing enthusiasts a chance to get closer to the sport by getting inside high-speed cars. The Fan Fest grew into largest off-track fan attraction, reaching 120 thousand attendees over the weekend. Moreover, starting in 2024, Formula 1 introduces the Grand Tour. The company revolutionize the sporting events by providing fans with dynamic seating choices. A completely new way to enjoy the race will allow fans to switch between several grandstands and experience the Miami Grand Prix from different points of view, thus improving customer's perception of the service.



4.3 Miami Grand Prix Opening party official poster

## Conclusions

In recent years, Formula 1 has undergone a substantial transformation, from gradually losing in viewership and popularity among younger generations to becoming a global brand that entertains hundreds of millions of fans around the world. Liberty Media Group managed to reshape the essence of the company, which is nowadays one of the most watched and fastest-growing sporting competitions. The result of the study shows that Formula 1 has adopted a sports marketing-oriented strategy, focusing first and foremost on an efficient positioning that led to a complete digital rebranding. With a new approach towards social media, Formula 1 has been able to connect the audience with the sport and build a relationship with its fanbase. The company also expanded into new markets through different aimed initiatives, embracing the streaming and gaming industries, which resulted in a strong customer engagement. The in-depth analysis of specific cases evidenced the importance of the event's dynamics as well in terms of marketing, where the constant interaction with consumers demonstrates how the brand positioned itself has an entertainment brand, therefore answering the initial research question. However, this report only provides limited insights on the reason behind Formula 1's success. Although the result of the study establishes an excellent foundation, further research is therefore required in order to answer a more general question.

As the landscape of entertainment continues to evolve, there remain numerous opportunities for further expansion in terms of sports marketing initiatives. With a new generation consuming more and more content and struggling to keep focused on a several-hour event, the brand needs to stand out from others, by creating a unique identity to which fans can relate to. A company's success is now more than ever determined by its ability to keep the consumer connected to the product and to maintain a constant engagement among customers.

In addition to the video game and streaming market, the appearance of artificial intelligence opens up a new world to sports and more specifically Formula 1, which they will have to exploit in order to maintain a competitive advantage over other organizations. The brand must continue to do what it does best, which is to keep fans entertained, even beyond the finish line. To quote the former Formula 1 world champion Mario Andretti, "if everything seems under control, you're not going fast enough".



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