

DEEP DIVE:

HOW BROADCAST PARTNERSHIPS LET DAVID PLAY LIKE GOLIATH



Expert perspectives from
Stu Carr, Director of
Customer Insights at Adgile

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP FROM



INTRODUCTION

Fresh analysis by Adgile's Stu Carr underlines that Goliath brands no longer own the big screen.

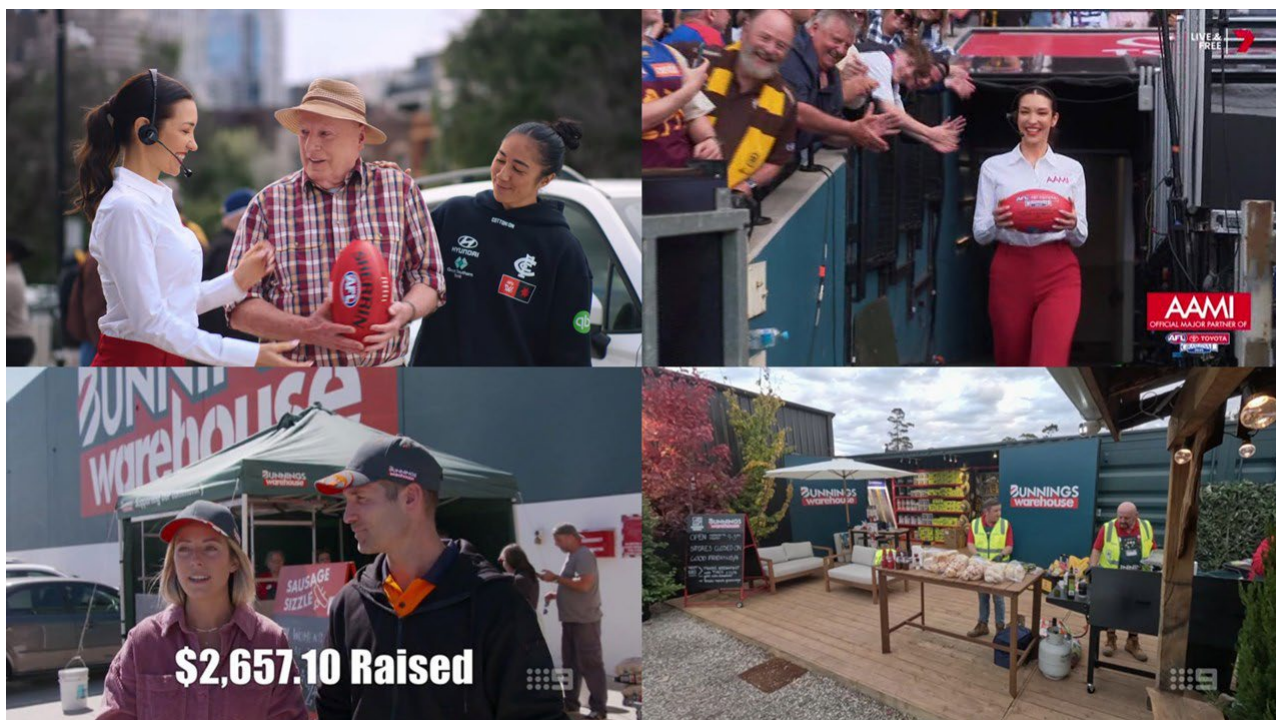
Sponsorships deliver not just long-term brand growth, but sharp, short-term business results for brands of all sizes – and he's packing the data to prove it.

The message is clear: it's time for Davids to think like Goliaths – and play big within their means. Broadcast sponsorships aren't a luxury; they're the smartest lever for ambitious brands seeking scale.



THE SEASON THAT REMINDS US WHY THE BIG SCREEN MATTERS

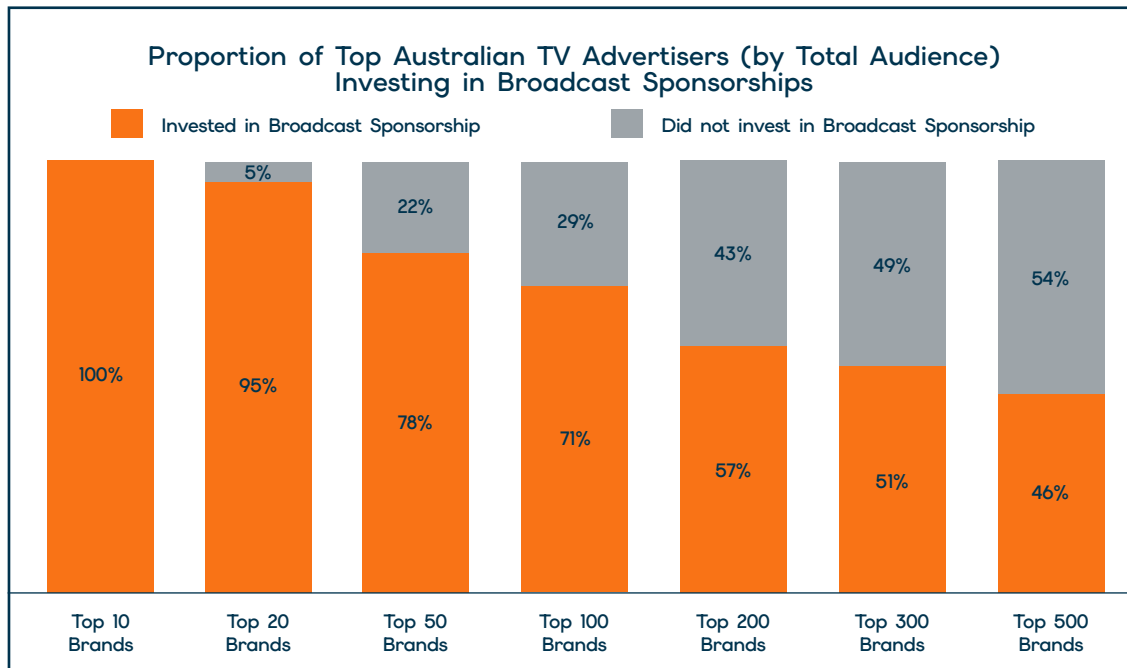
Before the AFL Grand Final siren sounded and the game ball famously went missing, AAMI once again saved the day with humour and cultural timing every marketer envies. That same week, Bunnings didn't just badge The Block; it folded its iconic sausage sizzle into the storyline itself.



These were sponsorships at their best: brand storytelling meeting cultural participation. But amid the glory and auction drama, Adgile data revealed something striking:



Half of Australia's top 300 TV advertisers did not invest in a single broadcast sponsorship in the past 12 months.



Source: Adgile, November 2024 to October 2025

That gap was led by long-time TV advertisers of modest scale – the very Davids who stand to gain most from the scale and emotional resonance broadcast can deliver.

Talk to any marketer running a smaller brand and familiar worries surface:

“It’s not targeted enough.”

“We’d be a small fish in a big pond.”

“Sponsorship’s too expensive.”

Each has a grain of truth, but together they point to the same problem:



Smaller brands often optimise for today’s buyers, forgetting the arena where tomorrow’s are won.

That’s how a growth ceiling is built, stone by stone.

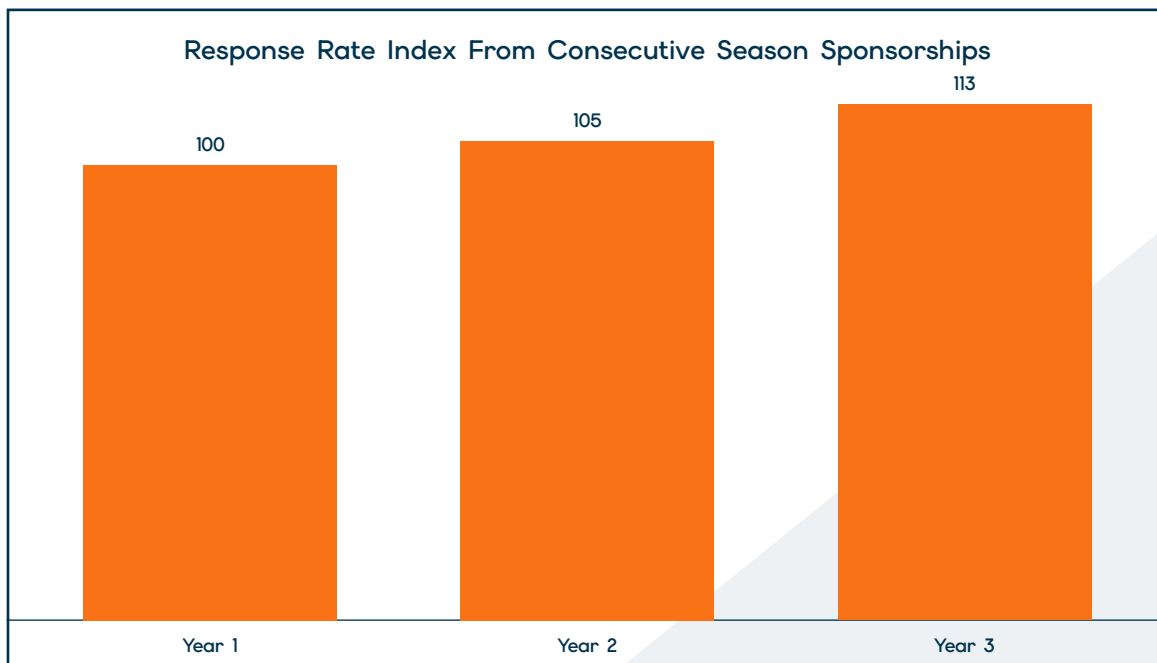
WHY SMALLER BRANDS NEED THE BIG STAGE – AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY TAKE IT

Smaller brands often see sponsorship as a luxury for giants. But the evidence says otherwise.

Ehrenberg-Bass research shows most category buyers purchase infrequently and spend most of their time out of market. When they return, the brands most top-of-mind usually win. Marketing only aimed at “ready-to-buy” consumers will always miss the majority who aren’t yet shopping.

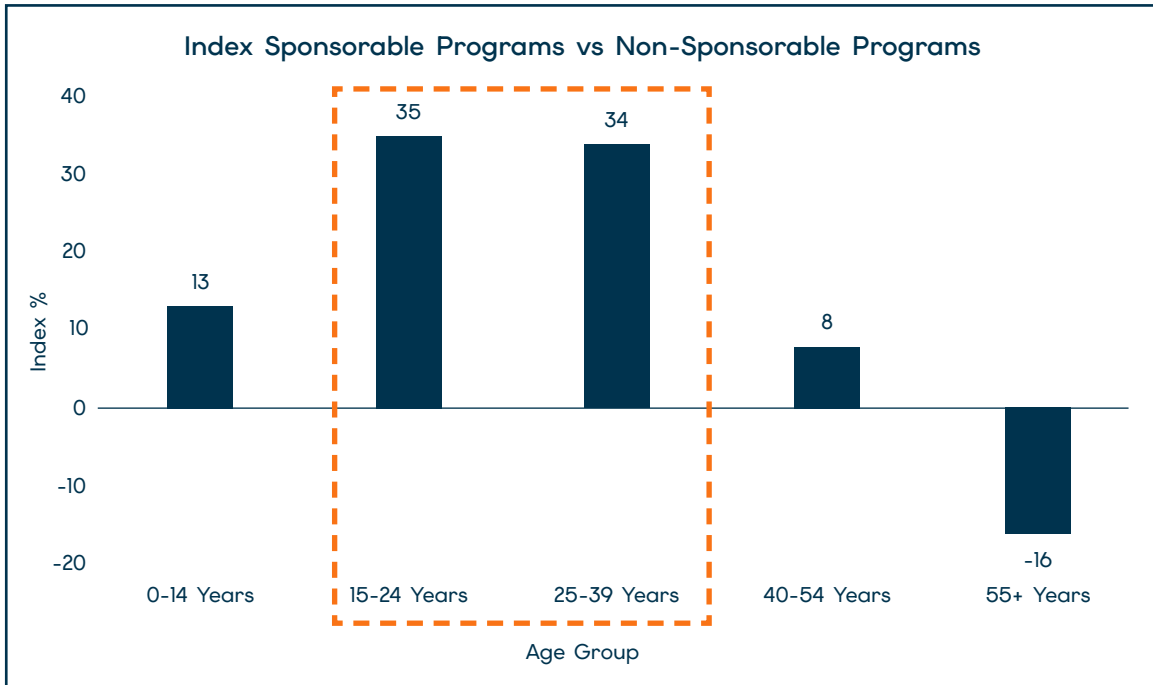
Broadcast sponsorships are David’s slingshot. They place brands inside, not around, the cultural moments people remember – making them easier to notice, recall and choose when buying moments return.

And sustained sponsorship multiplies results. Adgile’s longitudinal analysis shows continued investment in the same program drives higher engagement season after season:



Source: Adgile, November 2024 to October 2025

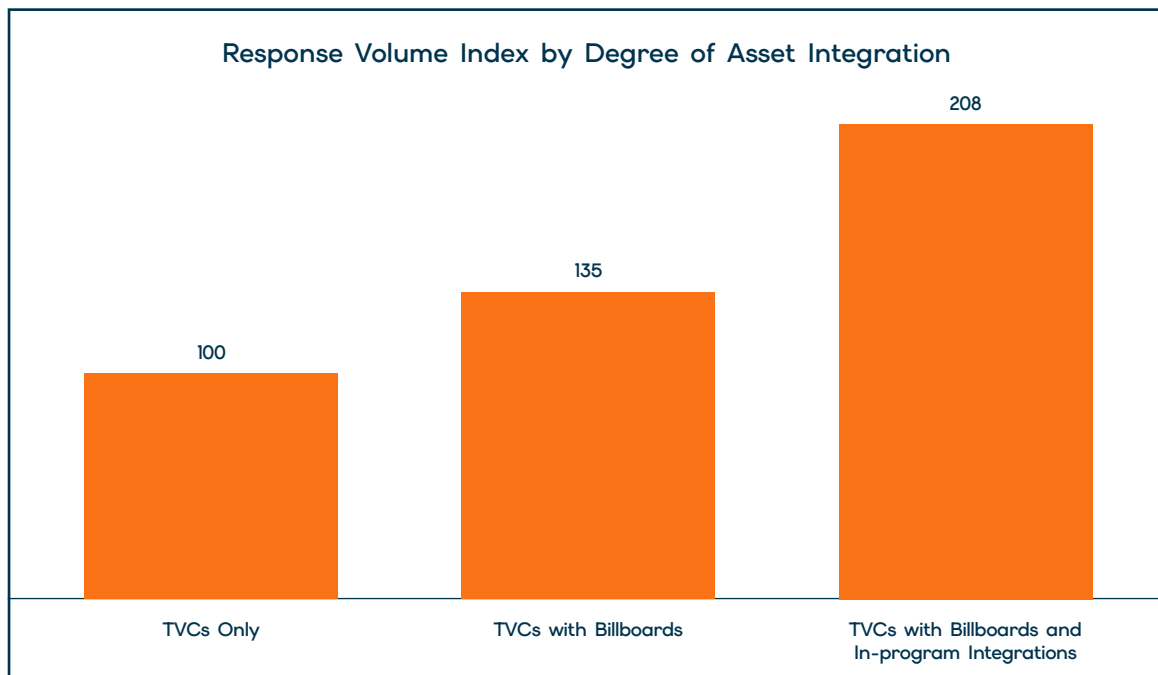
Compared with non-sponsorable programs, sponsorable programs skew more strongly toward the 15-39 age demographic. This means sponsorable programs play a valuable role in connecting with this audience to refresh memory structures, helping to both drive future demand and capture current demand.



Source: Adgile Databank comparing sponsorable programs vs non sponsorable programs by demographic across 2024-2025

But not only does sponsorship recruit future buyers, it drives outcomes today. According to Adgile performance data:

- 1. Sponsorships *find* more audiences than spot buys:** “Brought to you by” billboards and integrations deliver on average 70 per cent more audience volume than TVCs alone, equating to a 50 per cent boost in Share of Voice.
- 2. Sponsorships *convert* more audiences than spot buys:** viewers are 19 per cent more responsive, driving 108 per cent more conversion volume:



Source: Adgile, November 2024 to October 2025

Sponsorship fuels tomorrow’s demand while delivering measurable results today. It builds mental availability and drives performance. Few channels do both so effectively.

For smaller brands, the real question isn’t *whether* sponsorship works, it’s *how* to deploy it with intent. When clarity of buying moment meets cultural scale, David stops chasing Goliath and starts playing his own game.



Sponsorship isn’t a luxury for small brands; it’s the most efficient path to scale when wielded with purpose.

START WITH THE MOMENT: IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT CATEGORY ENTRY POINT

The industry long assumed a good sponsorship simply required a *natural alignment* – a show that felt like the brand. That logic isn't wrong, but it misses why great sponsorships really work. The best ones connect the programme to the buying situation a brand wants to be remembered for, cueing a Category Entry Point (CEP): the context in which the brand should come to mind.

Shift the brief from matching theme to matching moment and smaller brands gain an edge. The question changes from “*Does this show feel like us?*” to “*Does this show evoke the moment we want to win?*”

Coles on MasterChef is the textbook example. The surface fit is obvious, but its true power lies in repeatedly cueing the moment “*What should I cook tonight?*” or “*I need ingredients now.*”



Ten's MasterChef 2023 contestant, Rue Mupedzi, visits a Coles store to buy ingredients needed to compete in the Mei Jing Chinese Dine In Service Challenge.

There are two ways to activate CEPs within sponsorships, depending on a brand's scale:

- 1. Leverage:** Smaller brands often begin by leveraging CEPs the show already evokes. Musashi does this brilliantly. Under its *Game Day* platform, it aligns with AFL and NRL coverage to reinforce “*When I want to perform at my best.*” The match environment already cues strength and intensity; Musashi simply shows up at that moment, consistently.



- 2. Inject:** Larger brands with deeper equity can inject the CEP into the narrative itself. NRMA Insurance did this masterfully through its partnership with Men's Test Cricket – an ideal national platform to support the brand's market expansion. NRMA wove the CEP “*Help when things go wrong*” naturally into the broadcast, from weather interruptions to momentum swings, turning the nation's longest summer format into a living expression of its “*Help*” promise.



Rachel Khawaja presents Glen McGrath with an NRMA-branded cheque for the McGrath Foundation during Day 2 of the 2025 NRMA Pink Test at the SCG.

Both approaches work. One leverages the moment; the other creates it. The craft lies in knowing which fits your position on the battlefield.



When brands match the right buying moment to the right cultural moment, sponsorship stops being decoration and becomes strategy.

AIM FOR IMPACT, NOT SIZE: BUILDING A SPONSORSHIP WITHIN REACH

Once you know the moment, the challenge is entering sponsorship without a giant budget. There are plenty of smart paths in:

- **Sponsor a portion of a major property.** A few rounds of the NRL season or specific match-day slots give access to emotional peaks at a fraction of full-season cost.
- **Explore emerging local streaming formats.** Global streaming platforms have already started integrating brands across shores. Impending local-content quotas on Netflix, Prime and Disney+ will open new sponsorship inventory – less crowded and more affordable for early movers.



Gatorade in the US stokes anticipation for the fifth and final season of “Stranger Things”.

- **Back women's sport.** According to Adgile data, women's leagues deliver double the viewer responsiveness of men's, yet in sports with broadcast professional codes for both men and women they attract only 15 per cent of associated ad volume. Lower cost, higher cut-through and cultural momentum make them ideal for smaller brands.
- **Choose lower-demand channels and times.** Secondary TV channels or off-peak editions of high-intent formats offer cheaper access and less clutter.
- **Start billboard-only.** Appear at the precise moment the programme evokes the CEP – clean, repeatable, measurable.
- **Start regionally, not nationally.** Regional sponsorships often cost less and face lighter competition, which is ideal for evenly distributed CEPs like insurance renewal or home improvement.

The principle is simple:



Victory comes from right-sizing the stage, not chasing the biggest one.

MAKE EVERY SHOT COUNT: SUPERCHARGING YOUR CREATIVE

Once on screen, creative focus becomes the advantage. Smaller brands don't need dozens of executions, they need discipline. Adgile data shows sponsorships perform best when the creative is simple, repeatable and tied to one idea. The billboard acts as a retrieval cue linking the programme's moment to the buying moment.

Executorial Sponsorship Components Eliciting Higher Viewer Response Rates by Brand Size:

Dimension	Smaller Brands	Bigger Brands
Creative Role	60% Sales Activation, 40% Brand Building	60% Brand Building, 40% Sales Activation
Brand Assets	Fewer, More Focused	Multiple, Diverse
Creative Formats	TVC-grounded, Billboard-supported	Integration-grounded, TVC-supported
# Executions	Fewer, More Focused	Multiple, Diverse
TVC Duration	Focus on 30" TVCs	Mix of 30" and 15" TVCs

Source: Adgile, November 2024 to October 2025

This is where restraint becomes a strength. A distinctive pack shape. A single line that links the show's moment to the CEP. HiPages' Lever on The Block captures the "When I can't do this myself" moment perfectly – one visual, one message, repeated until it sticks.



Nine's The Block 2025 contestant, Taz Etto, pulls the HiPages Lever in desperate need of a hardscaper during a Backyard Challenge.

When those cues repeat over a season, association forms. And when association forms, responsiveness compounds.

Consistency builds memory; memory builds growth. Smaller brands don't need to shout louder – they need to show up the same way, every time.



***Creative simplicity and consistency
are David's unfair advantage.***

HOLD YOUR NERVE: FOCUS BEATS COVERAGE

Once committed, many smaller brands try to act like Goliaths – spreading investment across every moment. But for Davids, too much dispersion isn’t scale; it’s dilution.

Adgile data from the 2025 AFL and NRL season illustrates the point. Two challenger auto brands both achieved near-identical total audience volumes on Foxtel’s

Share of Audience (000s) on Fox Footy Channel During 2025 AFL Season:

Challenger Auto Brand 1								Challenger Auto Brand 2							
Daypart/DOW	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Daypart/DOW	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Midnight Till Dawn								Midnight Till Dawn							
Morning								Morning							
Daytime								Daytime							
Fringe								Fringe							
Early Peak								Early Peak							
Late Peak								Late Peak							
Late Night								Late Night							
Herfindahl-Hirschman Index	0.035 = Very Spread Out – Investment is Distributed Across Many Day-of-week x Daypart Combinations							Herfindahl-Hirschman Index	0.238 = Highly Concentrated – Investment is Focused in a Small Number of High-conviction Slots						

Source: Adgile, March to October 2025

Brand 1 spread its budget thin across multiple games and shows, chasing reach but achieving little memory.

Brand 2 concentrated on live Sunday afternoon footy – fewer moments, higher emotional charge. Its investment showed stronger concentration and lower variance, a signature of clarity, not caution.

Both were Davids. Only one behaved like one.

Brand 1’s spread created noise. Brand 2’s focus created memory.

For smaller brands, the goal isn’t to look big; it’s to become unforgettable in the moments that matter.



***The game isn’t to cover the battlefield.
It’s to choose the hill you can win –
and keep firing.***

WIN LIKE DAVID: YOUR BROADCAST SPONSORSHIP PLAYBOOK

In short:

- 1. Spot your moment:** Identify the buying situations – Category Entry Points – where your brand can make the biggest impact.
- 2. Choose battles you can win:** Select sponsorships that evoke those moments in an affordable way. Don't chase the biggest property; back the right one.
- 3. Make every shot count:** Anchor your creative to a single, distinctive idea and repeat it relentlessly.
- 4. Hold your position:** Consistency beats coverage – master your chosen moment, season after season.
- 5. Scale smart, not fast:** Start with what you can afford, prove your impact, then double down as results build.



Sponsorship isn't about looking like Goliath. It's about thinking like David – and acting with conviction.

THE BIG SCREEN BELONGS TO WHOEVER'S BOLD ENOUGH TO USE IT

Broadcast sponsorships aren't the privilege of Goliaths. They're the opportunity for Davids willing to think bigger and act bolder.

In a marketing world obsessed with precision targeting, smaller brands can rediscover scale intelligently through programmes that evoke the buying moments they want to win. Sponsorships uniquely combine reach, relevance and measurable performance. They work for today and tomorrow.

As we enter Australia's summer of sport and peak retail period, smaller brands shouldn't ask, "*Can we afford sponsorship?*"

The real question is: "*Can we afford not to?*"



***Because in this new era,
Davids don't just play – they win.***

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