

## Smokefreerockquest – a New Zealand Institution

### The value of sponsorship as a marketing tool

HSC occasionally uses sponsorships as part of its marketing and communications strategies. Why? Because events can be an exciting and invaluable vehicle for delivering HSC's health messages. Let's look at the Smokefreerockquest as an example of what can be achieved.

#### Smokefreerockquest

Smokefreerockquest is a nationwide contemporary music competition for secondary school students, held annually since 1989.

Each year, up to 800 bands and 75% of secondary schools participate in the more than 25 events from Kaitaia to Invercargill. In 2010, around one in 10 Year 10 Māori and Pacific students attended or participated in Smokefreerockquest. Many famous New Zealand musicians, including Ladyhawke, Kimbra, Bret McKenzie (from Flight of the Conchords), and Opshop, started their careers as band members in Smokefreerockquest and previous entrants often come back to be involved as mentors or judges and offer to be part of Smoking Not *Our Future*. The longer Smokefree is involved the longer the Smokefree message is associated with legends of New Zealand music.



#### Smokefreerockquest ticks all the boxes

HSC supports Smokefreerockquest because it creates a positive association between Smokefree, New Zealand music, and popular youth culture. It enables HSC to interact with young people in a setting of their choice, providing a mechanism for delivering Smokefree messages directly to this key audience.

Smokefreerockquest nurtures connectedness with schools and communities (known to help protect teenagers from taking up smoking) in a couple of ways. All band members must be current high school students and Smokefreerockquest encourages young people to engage with their music teachers, peers, families and communities in the creative process of writing, practising and performing original music.



#### Reaping the benefits

To get the most out of sponsorship, a consistent and integrated approach is needed. For Smokefreerockquest this includes Smokefree and Smoking Not *Our Future* branding being highly visible at all events, using Smoking Not *Our Future* celebrities as judges or MCs, and associating with youth-oriented media partners like The Edge and FOUR.



Taking a longer term, cumulative view is a must. The 20+ year partnership with Smokefreerockquest has resulted in long-term exposure and connection to the Smokefree brand. Traditionally, the music industry has been associated with smoking but 20 years of Smokefree support for Smokefreerockquest has helped change what was once a norm. We know young people look at musicians as role models – if we can change the behaviour of role models we can change the behaviour of young people.

### If you can't measure it, you can't manage it

Before entering any sponsorship agreement you must have the ability to measure an event's success. The success of Smokefreerockquest, from Smokefree's perspective, is assessed by looking at:

- the number of events held and attendance levels
- media coverage of the event, particularly in youth-oriented media
- the amount of promotional material and merchandise carrying branding and/or messages
- marketing activities that help extend the reach of the messages
- awareness and recall of Smokefree messages by young people.

In 2011, Smokefreerockquest's 26 events attracted 3,086 students in 738 bands from 307 secondary schools. In addition to band members an estimated

80,000 students participated in the audience. In a survey of the 2009 Smokefreerockquest, 60% of respondents recalled seeing or hearing messages about smoking, being smokefree, or quitting smoking.

### Future proofing

Smokefreerockquest is about today's, and tomorrow's, music. By definition it is contemporary and aspirational. HSC works closely with the event organisers to ensure it remains relevant and contemporary. HSC uses the web (sfrq.co.nz and YouTube) and social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook as collective spaces for young people to further embed and reinforce the legend of Smokefreerockquest.

In 2011:

- the heavily (Smokefree) branded website had 36,521 visits
- the event was broadcast on FOUR (four half-hour episodes and a one-hour 'grand final' show), with repeat screenings on TV3
- Smokefreerockquest was mentioned in 531 media stories
- Twitter followers numbered 1,443 and there were more than 6,000 Facebook followers
- The Peasants' (winners), YouTube video was viewed 21,767 times in just over a month. The 2010 winners, The Good Fun, have had their YouTube video viewed 134,000 times.

The influence of Smokefreerockquest goes well beyond the annual events. Smokefreerockquest is all about creating legends - legendary musicians, legendary music, legendary memories. And Smokefree is part of all of them.





- Long-term, rather than one-off, sponsorship reaps the most benefit as it fosters stronger brand association. A general rule of thumb is that you need to be involved for at least three years before you really start seeing results.

Visit [www.sfrq.co.nz](http://www.sfrq.co.nz). For more information call Susie Robertson or Laura Vincent on (04) 472 5777 or email [info@hsc.org.nz](mailto:info@hsc.org.nz)

### Tips for event sponsorship success

- Be specific about what you want to achieve. Set criteria to assess the sponsorship against both organisational and brand objectives and values. This includes choosing events that attract your key audience.
- Look for opportunities to promote your message through paid and unpaid media, including new media.
- Use the event as part of a wider marketing campaign – integrate it with other activities through, for example, media and public relations.
- Actively work with event organisers to constantly improve the event and the outcomes for both the organisers and you, the sponsor.



### About the HSC

The Health Sponsorship Council's (HSC's) function is to promote health and encourage healthy lifestyles, with a long-term focus on reducing the social, financial and health costs of a number of health behaviours. To achieve this it delivers a range of initiatives that aim to improve health outcomes by:

- reducing cancers, heart disease, chronic respiratory disease and stroke by reducing the incidence and prevalence of smoking
- reducing skin cancers (including melanoma) and eye disease by increasing sun safe behaviours
- reducing obesity and its associated illnesses (diabetes, heart disease, kidney failure, joint deterioration etc) through better nutrition and physical activity
- reducing emotional, social and financial harms by reducing the incidence and impact of problem gambling

For more information about the HSC visit [www.hsc.org.nz](http://www.hsc.org.nz)

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