

# FRANCHISING WORLD®

DECEMBER 2018



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# Seeking the Right Fit to Endorse Your Brand

How franchises can pair with well-known people to tap into local markets.

*By Doug Zarkin*



**D**eciding on a celebrity to partner with can be a difficult choice. Most importantly, franchise brands need to determine a cost-effective way to have a positive, lasting effect on customers through a dynamic partnership. Likewise, franchise brands carry an additional consideration when choosing a celebrity partner, as the person needs to have a strong impact across multiple geographic markets.

In a recent campaign that Pearle Vision created titled "Olivia," Billie Jean King was selected to be part of the ad campaign, which features a timid, young girl named Olivia going to the eye doctor. During her visit, the optometrist

gives Olivia a photo of none other than Billie Jean King – inspiring Olivia to then add the photo to her "Women Who Made History" wall and feel more confident about wearing glasses. The message of Pearle Vision's genuine care for its patients resonates through the celebrity partnership.

For those thinking about adding a celebrity partner to the mix of marketing elements within a franchise, here are three things to consider:

## **REGIONAL RELEVANCY**

The celebrity that a franchise brand signs on should be someone that audiences connect with,

regardless of location. The question that is the most important to ask yourself is: "When an ad featuring a celebrity connects with consumers, does it form an emotional bond?" A celebrity that doesn't have a strong alignment with customers will only connect at surface level. However, one that makes sense with the brand and creates this emotional connection will resonate at a much deeper level to make the brand much more memorable for audiences across regions.

In the "Olivia" campaign, King is chosen because of how relatable her story is to any audience. King is known for the "Battle of the Sexes" professional tennis match against Bobby Riggs, who challenged

her while also criticizing women's tennis (to which King accepted his challenge and won). This same sense of empowerment that King made people feel in 1973, at the time of the match, and now, has transcended decades – feelings with which anyone in any geographic market can relate.

Additionally, King is not only included in this brand campaign because of her ability to empower, but she also has been an iconic glasses-wearer throughout her career and during the historical match. This ties directly into the Pearle Vision brand.

## CUSTOMER PERCEPTION

Including a celebrity in a franchise brand's ad campaign can amplify consumers' perception. Therefore, utilizing a celebrity that has a solid reputation and strong enough connection to both the brand and consumers is important and can allow your customers to see the brand in a new light.

In fact, according to a study done by a researcher at the University of Arkansas in conjunction with a colleague at the Manchester Business School, "consumers take an active role in using celebrities to help them build their own identities and self-images, rather than passively receiving meanings and messages from celebrities and incorporating them into their lives."

Furthermore, in Pearle Vision's "Olivia," King's role is to change the perception of having bad vision from a negative experience and turn it around to make it a positive one where needing glasses isn't the end of the world. Since King has a reputation in sports as a true competitor and champion in her field, it shows that you don't have

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to choose between wearing glasses and winning – you can do both.

## REFLECTION ON BRAND

Hopefully your brand already has credibility that you've earned over the years, but it never hurts to solidify this even further as trust is something that continually needs to be nurtured, especially when expanding into new markets.

Your customers will judge your brand based on who it aligns itself with, and if this person is someone with admirable qualities, then these characteristics can reflect well on your brand.

Additionally, when these characteristics do reflect your brand, then this can help franchisees in each market feel good about the message that they are conveying to customers in their territories, and further grow the franchisees' trust in the brand.

The use of King was purposeful because she has earned trust as a role model whose message has not faded over the years. Moreover, King

simultaneously values corrective eyewear, and the fact that she is involved in the campaign speaks volumes to viewers on her stance of the importance of eye care and support of the brand. 🌐



*Doug Zarkin, Head of Marketing, joined Pearle Vision in 2012 and is responsible for strategic marketing, visual merchandising and product promotion. Learn more about Pearle Vision at [franchise.org/pearle-vision-franchise](http://franchise.org/pearle-vision-franchise).*

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