# Formula 1 experiences unprecedented growth through innovative marketing strategies



Last year, Formula 1 experienced unprecedented growth as a new generation of fans engaged with the sport, largely due to the success of Netflix’s docuseries, ‘Drive to Survive’. The series provided viewers with an in-depth look into the dramatic events surrounding the races, leading to record attendance of 6.5 million at F1 events and igniting significant corporate interest. Major brands such as McDonald’s, Nestlé, Lego, and Mattel's Hot Wheels entered sponsorship agreements, while luxury group LVMH, which encompasses brands like Moët & Chandon and Louis Vuitton, committed $1 billion to a historic 10-year partnership with the racing series.

In response to this surge in popularity, Sky Sports has reported a significant increase in viewership, particularly among its under-35 audience. Dave Stratton, Sky's director of marketing, highlighted to The Drum that the sport's appeal is growing stronger, buoyed by its engaging narrative. “Last year, the F1 season broke viewing records on Sky Sports. We’re very happy with how it’s performing,” Stratton noted. The impact of ‘Drive to Survive’ has also been evident in the heightened engagement on social media, with Stratton stating, “We’re seeing really large engagement on our social platforms for Sky Sports and Sky Sports F1. We know that this audience loves F1, and that fandom is really growing.”

This shift in audience engagement has prompted Sky to innovate its marketing strategies for the upcoming F1 season. Stratton mentioned a targeted approach to convert online fans into paying subscribers. “There’s a real opportunity there for us now to say, ‘hey, you might be looking in through social media, but what you’re missing out on is the live action of where these drivers really come alive,” he explained.

Sky’s marketing initiative, branded ‘Welcome to the Show’, diverges from traditional car-focused ads, opting instead to feature prominent F1 drivers such as Max Verstappen, Lando Norris, Charles Leclerc, George Russell, and Yuki Tsunoda. This campaign comprises seven distinct advertisements that highlight the drivers’ dynamic personalities on and off the track, as noted by Robin Garton, executive creative director at Sky Creative. “The idea is that we need to be relevant to different groups of consumers and make them understand that sport is entertainment, it’s not just for the traditional die-hard sports fan,” Garton stated.

In addition to the traditional marketing channels, Sky Creative will leverage social media by having the F1 stars share campaign assets on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, capitalising on the drivers’ visibility to attract viewers. With subscription sign-ups peaking on race days, Stratton emphasised the importance of aligning promotional efforts during these key events. “We’ll also be working with the F1 teams on race days, pushing it out heavily through them and on the Sky Sports social media channels,” he said.

Sky's campaign strategy for this season marks a departure from its previous approach; it will maintain visibility for a more extended period, reflecting the global nature of F1 racing. “Normally, we have a large spike at the start of the season, and then we go dark for a while; this season, it’s going to be a more elongated approach,” Stratton explained. With races planned in various international locations, including the season opener in Australia, the campaign will remain active throughout the first half of the season.

The team at Sky has taken extensive measures to secure support from its senior stakeholders for this fresh, socially-focused marketing approach. Stratton mentioned that the new strategy has been validated through robust testing, yielding impressive results in the US among younger demographics, generating confidence in its effectiveness moving forward.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://f1destinations.com/ranked-the-top-attended-formula-1-races-in-2023/> - This article provides details on the record attendance of Formula 1 races in 2023, which supports the claim of increased popularity and engagement with the sport. However, it does not mention the exact figure of 6.5 million attendees.
* <https://www.autoracing1.com/pl/416700/f1-news-event-statistics-2023-attendance-exceeds-6-million/> - This source confirms that the total attendance for Formula 1 in 2023 exceeded 6 million, aligning with the article's mention of record attendance. However, it does not specify 6.5 million.
* <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2023/03/07/sky-sports-f1-marketing-strategy> - This article discusses Sky Sports' marketing strategies for Formula 1, including targeting younger audiences and leveraging social media, which aligns with the article's description of Sky's approach.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2023/jan/26/formula-one-sky-sports-drive-to-survive-netflix> - This article highlights the impact of Netflix's 'Drive to Survive' on Formula 1's popularity, which is consistent with the article's mention of the series' influence on F1's growth.
* <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-01-26/formula-one-teams-secure-major-sponsorship-deals> - This article discusses major sponsorship deals in Formula 1, which supports the claim of increased corporate interest in the sport.