

AGENTS & AGENCIES

DO YOU NEED AN AGENT YET? AN HONEST TEST

Agents from Connections, Wasserman and 660 Marketing, plus Blue C's Eric Morley and BFGoodrich's Nate Hunt, explain when representation pays off and what to do until it does.

By Alex Striler · 5 min read · Read online at sponsorshiptactics.com/library/do-you-need-an-agent-yet

Most racers who ask me about agents are hoping for a shortcut: hand the sponsor hunt to a professional and get back to driving. Sometimes that's exactly the right move. Often it's too early, and an agent can't sell what isn't there yet. I've asked the question on several Sponsorship Summit panels, and the agents and agency people who answered gave consistent advice. Here is their test, roughly in the order they'd apply it.

IS RACING A HOBBY OR YOUR FULL-TIME JOB?

Eric Morley, founder of the Blue C agency, uses one dividing line. "When you become serious about it and you take it from being a hobby to being a full-time initiative, that's where you need an agent," Morley said at the Motorsports Sponsorship Summit. "When it becomes a hobby, it needs to come out of your pocket, and you have to build your brand from that."

He describes the early years as the time to build. If you have no wins and no presence yet, "you need some time to build your clarity and you need some time to build your brand. Once you build your clarity and your brand and you're all in, that's when you need to really jump to an agent." At that stage your time goes into racing and preparing to race, "and then what your agent does is they package you and they present you."

► [WATCH ERIC MORLEY ON THIS](#)

AN AGENT BUYS YOU TIME. THEY DON'T CREATE YOUR VALUE.

Luis Martinez, president of 660 Marketing, represents drivers, and he described his typical client the same way. Representation is an advantage, he said, "when the team or a driver is an established team or driver. They usually have a big following and they're doing really well. They just don't have the time to do it themselves, and they have the means to hire an agency like mine to find sponsorships for them."

He also told racers to think about what sponsors will actually ask of them. He described an activation for a national auto parts chain where the property had to visit each store to drive traffic, which can mean taking a week or two off for that work and still making the races on the weekend. "Those are the type of questions you got to ask yourself," Martinez said. "Do I have the time?" ► [WATCH LUIS MARTINEZ EXPLAIN THIS](#)

Nate Hunt, who handles BFGoodrich's motorsports program at the Jackson agency, sees the difference from the brand side. "When somebody gets to a level where they can hire an agent to do their work, everything just becomes cleaner, crisper, easier for us to work with, for me to work with, because they

know what a big corporation is looking for and what they need," Hunt said. He was just as direct about the hardest part for grassroots racers: "probably the hardest thing for a racer to know inside their own head is what they're really worth to a company." [▶ SEE NATE HUNT'S ANSWER](#)

BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT THERE IS TO SELL

Travis Clarke, executive vice president of action sports and Olympics at Wasserman, was asked at the Off-Road Sponsorship Summit whether a new team should hire representation or reach some milestones first. He answered with questions.

"Every team has to be honest with themselves and understand what's their value prop. Are you going to go win the Baja 1000 or King of the Hammers? If you are, well, then there's value there," Clarke said. "What do you have to offer? Do you have a huge social following? Do you have a large YouTube channel?" If you can answer yes, "then yeah, there's something to sell. But we can't sell what we don't have." [▶ WATCH TRAVIS CLARKE ON THIS](#)

If the honest answer is no, his advice was blunt: work, earn the money, and fund it yourself until you've built something a partner would pay for.

WHAT A GOOD AGENT'S NETWORK IS WORTH

None of this means you need a huge following before anyone will talk to you. Bob Walker of Connexions Sports & Entertainment, agent to the Deegan family, said at another summit that representation can help a newcomer too, because of who the agent can call.

"If I call Eric or Todd, because they know me, we've had long-standing relationships... I have somebody of significance that could be of interest to them," Walker said, naming two agency executives on the panel. "They're going to take my call and listen to it, but they're not going to talk to that driver, athlete. They don't know who the heck they are."

His bar isn't fame. "Don't feel like you have to have 500,000 followers and be winning races and doing this to have representation. But if you're marketable and you have a program and you got the right people around you, representation can help move the needle quickly for you." [▶ WATCH BOB WALKER EXPLAIN THIS](#)

The catch is that good agents fill up. Walker's firm is full. He has said he deliberately keeps a small group of clients so each one gets the service it needs. Look for an agent who has time for you, not just a famous one.

NOT READY? FIND A SOUNDING BOARD

Jimmy Button, a vice president for action sports, motorsports and Olympics at Wasserman, told a motocross summit about a father who asked him to represent his young daughter. There wasn't enough there yet to justify full representation, so he offered something else. "What I told the dad was, 'Listen, I like you guys. Why don't we just become friendly with each other? Anytime you have a question, you have my number, you have my email, holler at me. I will help give you some guidance,'" Button said.

Years later they work together formally. "A long time ago it wasn't really necessary for her to have an agent," he said, "but it was necessary for her and her family to have guidance and have education." He became the family's sounding board. [▶ WATCH JIMMY BUTTON TELL THE STORY](#)

That's the realistic path for most amateur racers: a relationship with someone experienced who answers the occasional call, long before there's a contract to sign.

THE TAKEAWAY

Answer these honestly before you go looking for an agent:

- **Is this a full-time pursuit?** If racing is still a hobby you fund yourself, build your brand first.
- **What would an agent sell?** Results, an audience, a YouTube channel, a business that could fund partnerships. If the list is empty, fill it before you pay anyone.
- **Do you have time to deliver?** Store visits, appearances and content take days, not minutes. An agent finds the deal. You still have to do the work.
- **Is the agent's network the right one?** You're paying for whose calls get answered. Ask who they know at the brands you want.
- **If you're not ready, ask for advice instead.** A few minutes of guidance every month or two from a pro can lead to representation later.

VOICES IN THIS ARTICLE: Eric Morley — Founder, Blue C · Luis Martinez — President, 660 Marketing · Nate Hunt — BFGoodrich Program Director, Jackson Motorsports · Travis Clarke — Executive Vice President of Action Sports & Olympics, Wasserman · Bob Walker — President, Connexions Sports & Entertainment · Jimmy Button — VP of Action Sports, Motorsports & Olympics, Wasserman

Alex Striler runs [SponsorshipTactics.com](#), a video library of motorsports sponsorship sessions with the brands that write the checks. Quotes come from recorded Sponsorship Summit sessions and interviews, lightly edited for clarity and length. Click any "Watch" link to see the speaker say it.

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