

Dietz Trott Helps You Get in the Game

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Mike Dietz, President of Dietz Trott Sports & Entertainment Management

When you mix in a seasoned business development professional with a sports background, a legal background, tremendous enthusiasm for building relationships, you have the recipe needed for a successful sports entertainment company. That's also what you get when you introduce Mike Dietz, the president and founder of Dietz Trott Sports & Entertainment Management.

A disciple of the Mike and Marian Ilitch brain trust, having spent 17 years as marketing executive for several privately held businesses under the umbrella of Ilitch Holdings, Inc., namely the Detroit Tigers, Detroit Red Wings, Fox Theatre Little Caesars Pizza

and Olympia Entertainment, Dietz branched out to fulfill his dream of owning a sports entertainment company in 2003.

“The more I worked with sponsors, the more I knew that they needed help understanding how to maximize the return on their investment and how to seek out great opportunities,” Dietz said. “I also knew that a lot of athletes needed help with their endorsements, and a lot of venues needed help selling sponsorships. There were enough clients out there; we just needed to get started.”

With nine years now in the books, and armed with an impressive list of clients and a “Who’s Who” catalog of celebrities and athletes that they’ve worked with in the past few years, Dietz Trott’s presence in sports and entertainment makes it a powerful player in the industry with a local, regional and national perspective. With tremendous value placed on relationships, their ability to help companies use the vitality and emotion of arena and stage to make new and exciting connections for clients is at the heart of what they do.



Dietz Trott Sports & Entertainment Management is a full-functioning management company for sports and entertainment enterprises, aiding clients in six main areas:

1. **Sponsorship evaluation and activation:** finding and evaluating attractive opportunities for clients, negotiating the best possible deal and activating the sponsorship for maximum benefit.
2. **Event and hospitality management:** strong relationships with professional and collegiate sports teams allow them to handle all the details for special events, such as the guest list and menu, planning the agenda and securing media coverage.
3. **Sponsorship sales:** finding appropriate corporate partners for events and venues of all sizes to increase sponsorship revenue for clients.

4. **Marketing and advertising:** handle all aspects of creative development, such as graphic design, media materials and creative concepts to maximize exposure and broadcast the desired message.
5. **Athlete, coach and celebrity representation:** work with current and former athletes to facilitate business opportunities by working with venues and other professional partners to negotiate contract deals, coordinate scheduling and manage communications.
6. **College athletics strategic planning and media rights properties:** provide expertise in negotiating media rights agreements, marketing rights agreements and strategic event planning for NCAA conferences and member institutions as well as bowl games, post-season tournaments and facilities.

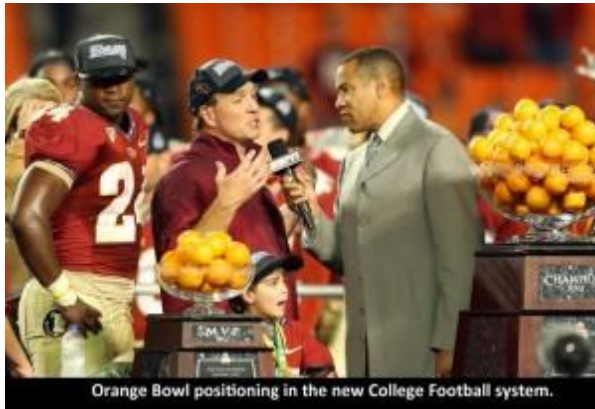


Specific examples of client-oriented operations that Dietz Trott handles include hosting golf outings, securing in-arena signage (on scoreboard of Comerica Park or on walls of Michigan International Speedway, among others), producing game program advertisements and stadium seating brochures, and providing hospitality

for major sports championship events (Super Bowl, Final Four, Frozen Four Ryder Cup, All-Star games, etc.).

Dietz always had the dream of running his own sports entertainment company, but the route to get there didn't pan out exactly as it was originally drawn up in the Dietz sibling playbook. Along with his sister, Diane Dietz, a former All-American basketball player at the University of Michigan, the Dietz duo originally intended to tag-team their career progression. The plan was for Mike and Diane to attend law school together, then work together at IMG (the global icon in the sports and media business, with a presence in more than 30 countries), after which they would return to Detroit to start a company together. Both actually took different paths, with Diane finding her own high level of success in the law and cable television industries, currently a prominent figure with the

Big 10 Conference, and Mike jumping straight from law school to working for Mike and Marian Ilitch.



As noted, Mike Dietz was a graduate of the Thomas M. Cooley Law School in 1987, following the completion of his undergraduate degree at Western Michigan University, where he was a four-year member of the Broncos basketball team.

Seventeen years into his career as executive with Ilitch Holdings, Inc., a business opportunity presented itself and Dietz decided that it was the right time to make the jump towards his career dream.

“David Trott was running his company and needed some help with the business development side of his law firm and title company,” Dietz said. “So we hatched a plan where I’d help him with that and he’d be my partner in starting a sports entertainment company.”

Dietz has lofty aspirations for the continued growth of Dietz Trott Sports & Entertainment Management and, in turn, the city of Detroit.

“We’d like it to become the IMG of Detroit,” said Dietz. “We know how great this city is. We know that when it all works together, how great it can be. That doesn’t mean we won’t work with people in the Midwest and throughout the country, but we want the headquarters to be here in Detroit and we want it to make a big impact in the sports entertainment world.”

While he admittedly gets the occasional itch to hop back into a managerial role with local professional sports franchises to help out and offer words of wisdom, it is clear that Dietz absolutely loves his current gig.

“I love working with college teams like Michigan and Michigan State,” said Dietz. “A typical week might involve working day-to-day with people like [Michigan State University head basketball coach] Tom Izzo and [former Red Wings player] Chris

Chelios, as well as taking a trip to visit with the University of Detroit-Mercy men's basketball program or the Horizon League. I like the variety of interactions and different venues that this job makes possible, as opposed to working exclusively with one team."

As appealing as that sounds, there has to be a downside to the business though, right? It is work, after all...

Says Dietz, "It's fun every day, it really is. There is always something different. We go out and get clients, provide excellent services and, in exchange, they pay us a fee. It's been a lot of fun and I think it's going to continue to be a lot of fun. I don't really have many bad days. It's a great business."

Sports and entertainment is certainly a bona fide high-dollar business with a lot at stake and plenty of importance placed on business development and customer relationship management. Whether it involves traveling to meet with his clients or inviting them to headquarters, Dietz is eager for opportunities to continue building relationships in the industry. As he mentions his responsibilities of taking business on the road, it's easy to sense his blissful love for the job.

"I like to get out a lot [to visit clients and colleagues]," Dietz began. "I try to visit with folks from the different professional teams quarterly. I'm going down to the Tigers' spring training in Florida to see some people, and have recently met with some Red Wings people. I like to attend as many games as I can in November, December and January, and then baseball games in the summer time when my kids are out of school.

"But we also like to bring people here to show off our place – we're proud of the people and the facilities we have here."

It is easy to see why he's proud to show off his pad to clients and prospects, as the Dietz Trott facility includes amenities such as a full-court gymnasium with six basketball hoops and a YMCA-esque weight room fit with cross-training equipment, a running track, golf practice area and a racquetball court, in addition to a cardio and strength studio with fitness trainers and an on-site day care center.



Atlanta Falcons Head Coach Mike Smith with Falcons cheerleaders at CMD Atlanta Grand Opening.

As if the idea of working in the sports and entertainment industry and having constant interaction with popular celebrities, athletes and corporate brands wasn't enough to recruit professionals to the industry, Dietz Trott adds in the element of a truly impressive headquarters.

For those people who aspire to have a career in sports and entertainment management, or are considering a career change to join the industry, Dietz provides some words of wisdom for getting your foot in the door.

"Get some experience, that's the most important thing," he said. Whether it's in high school, college or professional athletics, and even if it's a volunteer situation. Go and try to help sell tickets or work in the community relations department and gain an understanding what makes a fan want to reach into his or her pocket and actually buy something. Eventually, you'll have to learn to sell or bring in revenue somehow to make the organization work because it's all about bringing in the revenue.

"A suggestion would be to get out there during half-time of a high school basketball game and do a 50/50 raffle and raise some money for the athletic program. Go see how hard it is to actually sell those tickets and get a decent pot. Another idea is to organize a half-court shot and see if a local pizza company will throw in some money to sponsor a the shot at each game, where if someone makes it, they win a pizza per week for a year or something like that. Go put on a promotion and learn those different things."

The sports and entertainment industry is very appealing, and while it is fun to be involved with, it is also a demanding and time-intensive line of work, just like any other business. If you have a passion for building relationships, showing some hustle and really providing some solid assists to clients, you can definitely slam dunk in this industry.

Traits like that demonstrate why Dietz has been able to successfully accomplish his dream of running his own business, and why Dietz Trott Sports & Entertainment will continue to prosper and make a big impact in sports entertainment.

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