

# Why big business needs to consider gaming partnerships

 By [Barry Louzada](#)

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Any big brands who are not partnering with e-sports and gaming companies for marketing and exposure may want to reconsider. One of the biggest things that Covid-19 has done in the gaming community is open the door for non-endemic brands - or brands traditionally or organically not associated with gaming - to capitalise on gaming platforms for exposure.



Source: [www.unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

Although, non-endemic is perhaps a term that is too loosely used in a sense. Any brand could, in theory, be considered endemic to gaming. Just like any other audience around the world, gamers consume everyday products. They eat, drink, use household detergent, drive cars and live their everyday lives, just as everyone else does.

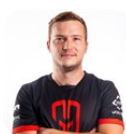
Contrary to what some may believe, gamers are not troglodytes that live in caves and speak to no one. In fact, gamers are probably the most engaged and communicative audiences on the planet. Nobody lives in a vacuum - and even though the pandemic shut the world down, gamers carried on as normal.

Gamers have spent years communicating online, using the internet as a tool to master new skill sets, improve themselves, connect, stream and live their lives in the online world. You might say that gamers have actually spent their entire lives training for our current circumstances.

## An untapped potential

The e-sports community has proved to brands during the pandemic that the world is capable of continuing uninterrupted, but many brands missed the boat. Brand managers, in a few cases, have overlooked the traditional sports element that is present in gaming from a spectator point of view. Popular sports like cricket, rugby and soccer are very much akin to esports in spectator value – and the number of esports spectators is growing by the day.

For brands to take advantage of connecting with people in the gaming space, they need to understand that the game is on for them to get in on the ground floor – particularly in Africa. E-sports, like any other popular sporting platform, has a dedicated fan base that is passionate about the content they choose to view. There are media spaces that brands can take ownership of, just as they would at a Kaiser Chiefs and Orlando Pirates derby match.



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There is space for banners, sponsorship, publishing rights and more. It's as simple as having a conversation with gaming content experts and aligning the brand with the right content and audience. The key is to talk to people who know the gaming landscape and who have immersed themselves in the business of gaming completely.

The South African gaming market is growing rapidly. As a continent, Africa is still catching up in terms of drawing big gaming audiences, but in many ways, it's an audience that is untapped. The scope for growth in Africa is immense. Looking at titles like Apex Legends, League of Legends and Call of Duty in mobile gaming, the momentum they are gaining on the continent is massive in the professional gaming space.

## Mobile gaming

Mobile gaming is becoming a major catalyst for the inclusion of more players, wider audiences and undeniable marketing opportunities. The stakes are getting higher: prize money is increasing and popularity is on a rapid rise. In tournaments like the League of Legends Mid-Season Invitational overseas, big sponsors like Verizon are stepping up. In Africa, there is space for similar partnerships to come – and no better time to get started than now. The iron is scalding hot.

As technology and mobile devices improve, opportunities to connect with gamers are increasing. As we move forward, it's only a matter of time before Africa becomes another gaming epicentre. On the Mettlestate website, for example, over 90% of the traffic we see is from mobile phones and we are already seeing some big brands stand up to notice.

Because gaming is so flexible, there is nothing stopping brands from leveraging the captive audiences it attracts across the board. The numbers are huge and viewership is completely engaged. There is also space for brands to own their own tournaments, creating an exclusive home for themselves online. Content creation is the gift that keeps on giving, particularly if the content is relevant.



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The common misconception in Africa seems to be the cost factor, but we are not in a space yet where prize pools are in the millions. Brands can come on board for comparatively economical investments at this stage. Exorbitant amounts of money are not on the table in African gaming just yet. Connecting with gaming audiences can be more affordable – and more impactful – than buying a billboard or using more traditional advertising platforms.

## Don't miss the opportunity

Ultimately, big brands are missing out on opportunities on a massive scale. As a statistical benchmark, the simple reality is that 80% of gamers on the Mettlestade platform alone are not consuming traditional media like newspapers, TV, billboards or radio. This is an audience that exclusively engages online.

There is a world of marketing opportunity that big brands are, by and large, overlooking in a sports arena that is growing by the minute. It is only a matter of time before the scales tip and someone dominates the space, endearing their brand to the audience for the foreseeable future. A word of advice: Don't miss the boat!

### ABOUT BARRY LOUZADA

Living and breathing e-sports for the last 20 years Barry "Anthrax" Louzada has one goal and that is to see e-sports get the true recognition it deserves. Whether it is leading teams to international dominance or shout casting games to panel host. Now heading up the Mettlestade brand there is nothing regarding e-sports that he doesn't know .

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