

Are brands ready for a cricket situationship?

How marketers can seize fleeting opportunities, craft immersive experiences, and build lasting impact in the fast-paced world of T20 cricket.

by Kiran Desai | 11/03/2026



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Jay Shah's powerplay of a format is a game-breaker that set new viewership records of over 500 million. It also taught brand managers and media new ways to deploy technology and creative content to leverage short-term, high-octane cricketing.

What makes it so compelling? The T20 format provides thrilling experience-scapes riding on content, technology and creative design. As India moves towards an experience-scape economy, musical concerts as well as big-ticket sports are driving revenues of brands and experienced economy players.

Not to mention, these are times of shrinking attention spans and ephemeral relationships. Brands need situationship moments with consumers; an exhilarating experience preceding long-term engagement. The T20 format is specifically designed for those situationships.

Here are three reasons why the format is working:

Micro-moments of escape

The T20 format is the most exciting cricket format, even competitively superior to a three-hour high-action immersive movie experience. The T20 format has become an immersive theatre where viewers, brands and cricket are soaked in a thrilling, hyper-energy immersive scene that allows them to escape from the humdrum, low action of routine life. They return to their routine humdrum life in the fourth hour with pleasant memories of a situationship, wondering how the next match encounter will captivate them. Similarly, T20 offers brands the opportunity to engage the consumer fleetingly with their brand and attempt enticement into more frequent interactions with the brand.

Expanded user base rich with data signals

Sports events such as the IPL were always either large-screen media or in-person stadium experiences. Lately, that medium has split into an ecosystem of Linear TV (LTV) and Connected TV (CTV). The cricketing experience has extended onto the person's mobile, increasing the total number of viewers in the ecosystem.

The data-rich CTV lever within the large-screen ecosystem offers high-impact storytelling formats to drive awareness, consideration, and purchase among the urban and digitally urbane, affluent generation. Hence, the use of large screen ecosystems has enhanced coverage as well as monetisable and measurable communication, especially for tentpole events such as T20 formats.



The India-England semi-final had 619 million views on JioHotstar, making it the most-streamed T20I match in history.

The surge in communication by brands on the large screen ecosystem of T20 format has further enticed eyeballs and vice versa. The T20 format offers the brand an opportunity to deploy large screen ecosystems with 360-degree support from digital video, print, outdoor, radio, and performance ecosystems. The objective of the exercise is to identify cohorts that respond best to the brand's story and value proposition for further engagement.

Cohorts have changed

Gen Z consumers have changed the game. These consumers are ready to speak with their wallets, particularly for immersive experiences with new brands or startups, and they have little deference for legacy. They notice brands that call out to them with creative, interactive, and integrated content.

These consumers represent a major portion of cricketing cohorts. Their emotionally intense cricket-mania responds well to the calls of brands that talk about cricket creatively, engagingly, refreshingly and digitally.

Cricket communication may be cluttered with brands, but there is ample space for a well-delivered creative sixer. Brands that deliver traditional routine communication meet with a no-ball verdict and end up losing their money.

But are brands ready for a situationship?

The T20 format may be popular, but the rules at play are different. Media, agencies and brands need to understand how to thrive in this uber-short opportunity.

The T20 format offers high-intensity bursts of only three hours (compared to the eight-hour full day ODI) to deploy maximum thrilling engagement actions. This limited amount of time calls for maximising micro-moments of media, content, and consumer alignment.

Every micro-moment should use integrated hyperbolic audio-visual immersive tools, such that every sound of bat, ball, shout or chorus to energise brand aura must be deployed. There is no place for minimalist elegance here. The opportunity, as well as imperative, for pivoting, moment-marketing, and experimentation is high. The goal: to move the consumer towards a brand action.

The ICC set the tone with the T20 swinging bat - shaped logo and neon zig-zag set inside a white glowing ball. The official song 'Feel the thrill' by Anirudh Ravichander set the mood for thrilling experience-scapes for the viewers. The mid-match laser shows, the LED wickets enthralled fans and helped energise the experience. Loud in-match music, chants of viewers added to the crescendo of the T20 experience.

Measure every rupee deployed

Situationships demand more mindful deployment of budgets across multiple moments, so that all opportunities are fully measured and monetised. This is vital to avoid cash burn and learning tax for every sub-optimal media-tech execution.

T20 cricket uses UI/UX based live data updates, scorecards, interactive dashboards, and gamification apps, creating a rich digital interface and ambience for audiences.

To maximise returns from sports events, brands must access consumers across multiple touch- points—large screen ecosystems, YouTube/OTT, Meta, Google, programmatic, Print, OOH, Radio, quick commerce—during a match. AI integration apps, AR/VR tools, performance ecosystems, and other media management tools help support full customer journeys and measure customer engagement across stages and platforms.

Agentic AI that supports quick production and adaptation of creative content, especially snackable content to match the T20 vibe, is vital for brand managers wanting to serenade consumers during the T20 extravaganza.