

Mengniu shines in Olympics ranking

BEIJING Dairy giant Mengniu, has become the first non-sponsor of the 2008 Beijing Olympics to force its way into the top five of R3's Olympic Performance index, which ranks brands in terms of their awareness and purchase intent leading up to the 2008 Games.

Official sponsor Coca-Cola emerged to head the list, remaining far ahead of China Mobile and Yili in second and third place respectively, with Mengniu — the only non-sponsor in the group — surging into fourth spot and adidas rounding out the five.

Among the top five fastest movers, non-sponsors Pepsi, China Unicom, Nike and



Mengniu... first non-sponsor to break into R3's Olympic top five

Mengniu dominated. Budweiser in third spot representing the only sponsor brand in the lead group.

According to R3 principal Greg Paull, the results show

that sponsor brands are facing increasing pressure from non-sponsors, as they up the stakes in the brand battle through ambush marketing.

"I won't say they'll break

the rules, but they'll certainly go close. There is an increase in intensity, people are able to name more sponsors and more promotions than they were able to three months ago, and the public interest is really ramping up," he said.

Yili, Paull noted, was facing a particularly tough battle in the months ahead, with Mengniu's focused approach clearly beginning to pay dividends in addition to a popular national programme 'Around the cities', a multi-city skills contest.

"I would think Yili is probably not worried, but its main challenge seems to be focus," he said. "Yili has done a number of campaigns in the last

few months, whereas Mengniu has had a very focused approach with a huge emphasis on sport."

According to Paull, KFC's 'I love Beijing' campaign, which taps local celebrities and asks consumers to vote for the neighbourhood that best captures the spirit of 2008 without actually mentioning the Games, is one of the best examples of ambush marketing which does not cross the line.

The Olympic Performance index, in partnership with CSM, canvassed the opinions of more than 1,500 consumers across 10 cities, with the April survey being the third wave in the ongoing study.

UPS, GP big winners

DOWN/Owned Play... the

SS
du
SIN
has
cou
Car
SS
Dur
and
El
Red
velc
ing :
paig
Za
tinu
fort
"V
our
here
cont
part
Ces:
for \$
"V
gle
dail
SSL
Qui