

Special Olympics Brand Research

Special Olympics is among the most well-known and well-respected brands in the United States, with familiarity and favorability ratings on par or even exceeding the most prolific brands.

While much of the brand research has been conducted in the United States where familiarity with Special Olympics is high, the general public's awareness and understanding of the organization around the world is increasing. For example, in 2015 Special Olympics won a Webby for a media campaign surrounding the Special Olympics European Games 2014. Special Olympics is a recent introduction in many geographic locations, growing from 1.3 million athletes in 2003 to more than 5.3 million athletes and teammates in 2015.¹ For more information, take a look a [Numbers of Special Olympics athletes 2000-2013](#).

“The thing I’ve always admired about Special Olympics is the spirit and message of optimism, acceptance and inclusion that are at the heartbeat of this great organization. What could be nobler than promoting the ideals of living a life to its fullest?”

— Muhtar Kent, Chairman and CEO, The Coca-Cola Company

¹ The Webby Awards Gallery + Archive (The Webby Awards) <http://www.webbyawards.com/winners/2015/>

WHAT YOU CAN TELL POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- Special Olympics is an organization that provides value to partnering organizations.
- **Reaching global and local communities.** A strategic corporate partnership with Special Olympics offers a unique branding opportunity for any organization. By developing an integrated branding and marketing strategy with Special Olympics, corporate partners are able to extend their brand with campaigns to reach diverse local communities while signifying global strength and presence. Special Olympics Programs can highlight local fundraising and event opportunities when connecting with potential partners.
- **Measurements of success.** Special Olympics' community-based programming, initiatives and World Games provide corporate supporters with real and tangible opportunities to show their support makes a difference during a time where "corporate social responsibility" has become an increasingly visible corporate metric.
- **Reach the global community.** For marketers of global businesses and brands interested in building awareness and growth, Special Olympics strategically links them to their target audience worldwide with seven regional offices including — Africa, Asia Pacific, East Asia, Europe/Eurasia, Latin America, Middle East/North Africa and North America. Special Olympics has a global impact, demonstrated by the organization's role as the largest healthcare provider for people with intellectual disabilities in the world and the world's largest sports-and-humanitarian event of the year in 2015.
- **United through employee volunteerism.** Special Olympics offers unique employee volunteerism opportunities worldwide through [local Special Olympics Programs](#). Employees are united through experiences ranging from serving on a board of directors to coaching an athlete or awarding medals.
- **Find the right level of sponsorship.** There are many forms of partnerships including local, regional, national, World Games or global. All partnerships have the potential to reach hundreds of thousands of athletes, their coaches, families, friends, volunteers and spectators from around the world.
- **A loyal and passionate customer base.** By partnering with Special Olympics organizations tap into a wealth of consumers, crossing all racial, ethnic, educational, social and economic lines at more than 94,000 events per year, including the Special Olympics World Games every two years where thousands of athletes compete with the support of volunteers, coaches, officials, family and fans.²

Access and share a related [slideshow online from Special Olympics](#).

² 2016 Reach Report (2016). Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS

- 2011 top nonprofit organization serving people with disabilities.³
- 2013 Community Leadership Award by the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition.
- [New York Times featured Special Olympics’ #PlayUnified campaign](#) in 2014.⁴
- Ranked #8 for brand image in Cone’s Nonprofit Power Brand 100 Index.⁵
- “2016 Brand of the Year” and “2017 Brand of the Year” for non-profit organizations focused on disabilities by the Harris Poll EquiTrend Nonprofit Brands of the Year
- Named one of “America’s Greatest Brands” in 2005.⁶
- Direct Marketing Association Nonprofit Organization of the Year award in 2001.⁷
- Special Olympics is recognized by the International Olympics Committee and is the only other organization permitted by the organization to use the word “Olympics”.

3 Special Olympics (Philanthropedia) <https://www.myphilanthropedia.org/top-nonprofits/national/people-with-disabilities/2011/special-olympics>
4 New Initiative for Special Olympics Aims for More Spontaneity, Less Marketing (The New York Times). By: Elliott, Stuart. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/22/business/media/new-initiative-for-special-olympics-aims-for-more-spontaneity-less-marketing.html?_r=0
5 New Cone Report Values America’s 100 Leading Nonprofit Brands (New Cone Report Values America’s 100 Leading Nonprofit Brands) <http://www.conecomm.com/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/2299>
6 America’s Greatest Brands. American Brand Council (2005 Volume 4). <http://www.americasgreatestbrands.com/volume4/pdf/special-olympics.pdf>
7 Nonprofit Organization of the Year Award (DMA Nonprofit Federation) <http://nonprofitfederation.org/nonprofit-organization-of-the-year-award/>

KEY FINDINGS: SPECIAL OLYMPICS BRAND RESEARCH



Special Olympics has a **95%** favorability rating in the United States.⁹



A strong majority of respondents (85%) also report being **likely to buy a product** or service from a company that supports Special Olympics.¹⁰



A strong majority of respondents (70%) **feel more positively** about companies that support Special Olympics.¹¹



73% of people in the United States ages **55+** and up are familiar with Special Olympics.¹²



Corporations who partner with Special Olympics experience a **range of benefits**, including improved employee morale, increased sales and stronger connections to the communities in which they operate, as evidenced by long-time corporate partners of Special Olympics such as Mattel Inc. and Procter & Gamble.



64% of people in the United States ages 18-34 are familiar with Special Olympics.¹³



Both males (72%) and females (64%) report a **high familiarity** rate with Special Olympics in the United States.¹⁴



While Unified Sports remains a relatively new brand, familiarity with it is increasing, with **one of five** individuals ages 18-34 reporting familiarity in the United States.¹⁵

9 Special Olympics awareness data. Washington, DC: Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, Inc.; 2006.

10 Harris Poll. (2015). “2015 Harris Poll QuickQuery Results.” [Survey report for Special Olympics].