

SMA 2025 CASE SUBMISSION: AGENCY OF THE YEAR



A – OVERVIEW

AGENCY DESIGNATION: AGENCY

PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR ORGANIZATION.

T1 is a full-stack sponsorship and experiences agency, driven by purpose and powered by community. Canadian-born, fiercely independent, and proudly Black-founded and women-led, we've spent over 31 years building bold, unforgettable partnerships that connect brands with people where it counts.

From nonprofits to national icons, grassroots to global stages, our work spans industries but our promise stays the same: strategy that inspires, creativity that moves, and partnerships that leave a mark. We lead with rigour and heart, grounded in deep roots across sport, social purpose, and community storytelling. Our Theory of Change is simple: real return starts with real people through community. To us, it's the connective tissue that binds purpose, culture, and impact.

We don't just build campaigns. We build belonging. We build legacy. We build what matters.

WHAT MAKES YOUR ORGANIZATION UNIQUE?

T1 exists to support brands that want to make a meaningful impact. Our purpose is to be sponsors of impactful brands, and our mission is uniting brands with people through communities. That mission shapes everything we do from how we think to how we plan, create, and measure partnerships.

What sets us apart is our ability to combine strategic rigour with cultural fluency, and our deep commitment to purpose-driven work rooted in community. We are relentlessly outcome-focused and client-obsessed, delivering results with soul. And our team reflects that belief. We are proudly independent and shaped by diverse lived experiences, entrepreneurial drive, and a shared commitment to doing things better. That shows up in how we collaborate, how we lead, and how we grow with our clients.

In 2024, we reactivated **T180**, our proprietary strategy framework, and embedded it across the agency as our way of working. Originally developed over a decade ago, it has been retooled to guide every step of our approach—from insight and planning to evaluation and optimization. With community as our lens and performance as our benchmark, we also expanded capabilities in valuation, pricing, talent strategy, and nonprofit partnerships.

That's why clients choose T1—not just for what we do, but for how we do it.

PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2024 THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION IS PARTICULARLY PROUD OF.

1. New Sectors: In 2024, we expanded into two key sectors that reflect both client ambition and category opportunity.

- T1 Futbol was developed to lead soccer-led engagement ahead of the 2026 World Cup and beyond. From amateur leagues to pro teams, we're helping brands and properties navigate one of Canada's fastest-growing sports communities.
- T1 Nonprofit was created in direct response to the financial pressures facing purpose-led organizations. Built with nonprofit experts, this vertical offers accessible, turnkey sponsorship solutions designed to unlock unrestricted revenue and impact.

Together, these new verticals deepen our expertise, and reinforce our belief that community is a strategic advantage.

2. T180: This year, we reactivated and embedded T180, our proprietary strategy framework, across the agency. Originally developed over a decade ago, T180 was retooled in 2024 to deliver greater strategic clarity, purpose alignment, and measurable outcomes. More than just a tool, T180 became a shared way of working. It helped drive a 40% increase in consulting revenue and reinforced our role as a strategic partner.

3. Data & Insights: We significantly expanded our sponsorship strategy capabilities in 2024, raising the bar for what clients can expect across measurement, pricing, and talent alignment. We launched proprietary tools and platforms that enhanced how we evaluate partnerships, optimize performance, and advise clients at every stage of the sponsorship lifecycle.

4. High-Performance Culture: We made deliberate investments in our people, centred on collaboration, growth, and wellbeing. In 2024, we launched a new high-performance culture model grounded in four dimensions of wellbeing: Functional, Esteem, Social, and Transformative. Our semi-annual employee survey showed improvements across all areas, with team members citing belonging, recognition, and development as key drivers.

- To support this shift, we issued a People & Culture RFP and partnered with Bloom to evolve our internal practices.
- We introduced pay transparency, publishing salary bands aligned with industry benchmarks, and co-created a new hybrid office with input from employees across the country.
- We retained our COVID-era mental health time policy, offering three paid hours weekly for wellbeing, whether that means walking the dog, taking a yoga class, or pausing for rest.
- Our learning infrastructure also saw major growth. T1 Academy, our internal university-style training series, ran twice monthly and covered topics including sponsorship strategy, creative development, negotiation, business acumen, and measurement tools.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"We are grateful for the work T1 does for our organizations. They work hard to ensure that our vision is met, often going above and beyond. Their creativity, strategic thinking, and commitment to excellence are unmatched. From the initial brainstorming sessions to the execution of our events, they demonstrate a deep understanding of our brand values and goals."

OUTLINE ANY ADVANCEMENTS THAT EXPAND POTENTIAL LONG-TERM IMPACT.

At T1, we design for the long game. Every advancement in 2024 was built to expand what's possible for our clients, our people, and the industry at large.

- We welcomed 23 new clients across CPG, finance, retail, sport, and nonprofit sectors deepening our portfolio and strengthening our position as a strategic partner across industries. New relationships included Scotiabank, Carlsberg, Lululemon, National Bank, Alberta Milk, Wonderbrands, Pet Valu and Thorne, among others.



- We also formed new collaborations with Cineplex Media, TalkShop, and others to deliver more integrated, full-stack solutions. These partnerships allow us to connect strategy with media, PR, and content to drive stronger results at every touchpoint.
- To future-proof our value to clients, we launched proprietary tools and platforms with long-term application:
 - The T1 Valuation Model and AEV (Advertising Equivalent Value) tool, used in projects with Thorne and the UFC, Oreo and the Toronto Maple Leafs, Mobil, CFL, OSEG, TiCats, and more, now guides smarter sponsorship investments and ROI measurement.
 - Our Naming Rights Valuation Platform delivers high-accuracy property valuations in minutes and has already been adopted by UFC's Performance Institute, Tim Hortons Field, and TD Place.
 - We developed our Talent Assessment Methodology, which integrates social data, demographics, and performance metrics to match brands with the right talent. It has powered standout campaigns with William Nylander, Grady Dick, and Haley Wickenheiser.
- To support equitable access and relationship-building, we introduced Partnership Chats, a platform where properties can pitch directly to T1 brand clients, increasing visibility and reducing friction in the deal-making process.
- Finally, we launched T1+, our elastic talent model that allows us to scale specialist teams quickly without compromising creative or strategic quality. It ensures we're ready to flex with our clients' needs while maintaining craft and consistency.

These weren't short-term wins. They were values-driven choices—designed to create meaningful, measurable, and lasting impact.

CLIENT LIST

In 2024, we welcomed 23 new clients, further expanded into the US, and launched two new divisions, T1 Futbol and T1 Nonprofit. Across sectors, our clients trust us to help them show up where it matters most and leave a mark that lasts.

- **CPG & Food & Beverage:** Mondelez (Oreo, Ritz, Sour Patch Kids, Crispers, Chips Ahoy!, Cadbury, Clif), Wonderbrands, Bimbo, Lactalis, GoGo squeeZ, Quesada, Maple Leaf Foods (Schneiders, Fantino & Mondello, Mina, Greenfield), Dairy Farmers of Canada (including Alberta Milk, BC Dairy, and Dairy Farmers of Manitoba), Carlsberg

- **Finance & Insurance:** Scotiabank, National Bank, Manulife, Visa, Allstate
- **Retail:** Lululemon, Pet Valu, Thorne, Canadian Tire, Esso, Nissan
- **Sport & Entertainment:** NFL Canada, NFL, CHL, Hamilton Tiger-Cats, Forge FC, Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (Ottawa Redblacks, Ottawa 67's, TD Place, Atletico Ottawa), Albany FireWolves, PlayOJO, Responsible Gaming Council, TELUS Spark
- **Nonprofit & Public Sector:** Heart & Stroke, Kids Help Phone, Parkinson Canada, BGC Canada, Canadian Tire Jumpstart Foundation, Black Opportunity Fund, Mount Royal University, Canadian Women in Sport, NPower, Black Talent Initiative

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

"T1 is a game changer for the world of partnerships. They are themselves a true partner—and an extension of your team. Their passion and commitment to the project is clear every step of the way—even when the going gets tough. And they are 100% focused on delivering partnerships that work for the brand, and your desired metrics."

EXPLAIN THE IMPACT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRY AT LARGE.

T1 is more than a participant in this industry; we're an engine for its evolution.

- We founded and continue to produce **SponsorshipX**, Canada's leading sponsorship conference and a cornerstone for connection, creativity, and community in the industry. In 2024, we delivered four standout editions: Toronto, in partnership with the NHL during All-Star Weekend; Halifax, in partnership with the JUNOS; Whistler, alongside Crankworks; and Paris, with the Canadian Olympic Committee.
- We also author the **Canadian Sponsorship Landscape Study (CSLS)**, now in its 19th edition. CSLS is the most robust and respected sponsorship research in the country, used by marketers, rights holders, and academics alike. In 2024, we reimagined the study: launching a new digital platform, expanding it to include data on women's sport and nonprofit sectors, and making the insights more accessible across the industry. CSLS by the numbers:

7K+

Organizations have contributed to the study

25K+

Downloads since inception

400+

Attendees at the SMCC Breakfast Forum in 2024 alone

- Our voice also shapes public and academic discourse. From numerous public speaking engagements to published work in Sport Business Journal, co-authoring books such as Canadian Sport Marketing and The Rise of Major League Soccer—we're helping define what sponsorship means now and where it's headed.



B – CASE STUDIES

1 MONDELEZ: FULL-STACK STRATEGY MEETS CULTURAL RELEVANCE

With a portfolio of iconic snack brands, Mondelez needed more than siloed sponsorships. They needed a unifying strategy rooted in insight, built for agility, and proven through ROI. T1 delivered a full-stack program that included strategy, valuation, creative, and execution.

We started by establishing a portfolio-wide framework to guide investment decisions across Oreo, Ritz, Sour Patch Kids, Cadbury, and Chips Ahoy!. Our proprietary T1 Valuation Model became the foundation for smarter spend and deal negotiation. We executed this strategy across bold, culturally fluent activations, including:

- **Snack to the Beat** connected with Gen Z via music and mental health advocacy. With Johnny Orlando as talent, the program delivered 17.7M social interactions, raised \$50K for CAMH, and drove a 7.4% sales lift across participating retailers.
- At the **Paris Olympics**, the “Taste Glory Together” platform united Oreo, Ritz, and Cadbury across retail, digital, and in-person touchpoints. Over 75.9M digital interactions and 13,000+ visitors at Canada Olympic House contributed to an 11.6% YoY sales lift.
- We also helped Oreo secure the largest helmet deal in NHL history with the **Toronto Maple Leafs**. Positioned as a natural pairing to Milk (the team’s jersey sponsor), the partnership activated under the “Hockey For All” platform. Featuring NHLPA talent like Nylander, Suzuki, and Hyman, and PWHL stars Sarah Nurse and Marie-Philip Poulin, the campaign brought retail storytelling to life on shelves and screens nationwide.

Across every touchpoint, the work demonstrated how a unified strategy can transform sponsorship into business-driving, brand-building impact.

2 CANADIAN TIRE: EQUITY IN ACTION THROUGH SPORT AND COMMUNITY

In 2023, Canadian Tire pledged that 50% of its sponsorship dollars would support women’s professional sport by 2026. In 2024, they needed to activate that commitment visibly and credibly. T1 led a suite of high-impact initiatives that turned promise into participation:

- At the **PWHL**, we launched My Team. My Sign.—a fan-first activation that let over 3,000 fans create custom signs to support their teams. Originally intended as a one-day initiative, the program expanded to every PWHL game in Canada and has since been adapted for soccer through the **National Soccer League**, powered by T1 Futbol.
- At **Union Station**, we designed a takeover called #IMAPRO celebrating women in sport and inviting young fans to envision themselves as pros.
- At the **“It’s Time” summit** (with Canadian Women in Sport and BCG), we led storytelling efforts that positioned equity as a business case, not just a moral one.

In parallel, Canadian Tire continued broader sponsorship activations across NHL, NBA, and community events. Through **Jumpstart’s Game Day**, we helped deliver 150+ local events with over 2,000 attendees and strong sentiment metrics nationwide.

Together, these initiatives moved equity from the sidelines into the spotlight, proving that bold policy needs bold activation to drive real change.

C – OTHER

WHY T1 SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS AWARD

We believe T1 should be considered for this award not just for the quality of our work, but for the impact we continue to have on the industry and the communities we serve.

T1 isn’t just keeping pace with the sponsorship industry; we’re helping lead it somewhere better. In 2024, we expanded and modernized the Canadian Sponsorship Landscape Study, launched new verticals including T1 Futbol and T1 Nonprofit to meet emerging audience needs, and strengthened the strategic infrastructure that supports our clients and our team. We embedded a retooled version of T180, our proprietary strategy framework, and launched new valuation, pricing, and talent alignment tools that are already shaping smarter investments and stronger outcomes.

We’ve built a company that reflects what modern marketing can be: entrepreneurial, equity-focused, and deeply community-minded. We invest in tools, training, and talent not just to grow our business, but to grow the field equitably. We mentor emerging professionals, collaborate closely with clients, and bring a strategic point of view that challenges convention.

Our values also guide how we give. We help cover the core operating costs of Black Talent Initiative and Park Street Education directly from our bottom line, making a tangible investment in the next generation of talent and leadership.

Whether we’re working in stadiums or classrooms, with global brands or grassroots partners, we show up with intention and deliver with impact. That’s what T1 brings to this industry, every day.

