

**The Economic Times**

**Title : Kohli Scores Another 100, This Time in Crores**

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## **IN FORM Cricketer has already crossed ` . 100-cr mark in ad money; with the good show at World Cup his brand value will rise further**

After scoring a half century at the recent T-20 World Cup match against Pa kistan in Kol kata's packed Eden Gardens, when Virat Koh li bowed to his idol Sachin Ten dulkar, the who le ground erup ted with eupho ria. While cemen ting the win for the Men in Blue, he also showed his temperament and why he is the next most valuable cricketer, a darling of advertisers and a leader for Team India. According to sports marketers, Kohli, 27, has already joined the ` . 100 crore club this year ` with 13 brands under his belt and is on his way to be the biggest sports celebrity.

“Virat has, for a while, been darling of the advertisers. Now I think he is just driving the point home. Today, he is very much on par, if not higher, with Mahendra Singh Dhoni,” Bunty Sajdeh, founder and CEO of Cornerstone Sport and Entertainment, the firm which manages Kohli since before he joined the Indian cricket team, told ET.

According to ESP Properties -SportzPower Report 2015, it was in 2014 when Kohli first set the endorsements world abuzz with the ` . 10 crore per annum deal with German sports goods giant Adidas, a brand, which his idol Tendulkar also used to endorse.

Kohli's second big strike was the ` . 6.5 crore per year deal with MRF. He also endorses Pepsi, Audi, Vicks, Boost, USL, TVS, Smaash, **Nitesh Estate**, Tissot, Herbalife, and Colgate.

“He is physically and mentally very strong and comes across as fearless. He ticks out the top five boxes that any advertiser will look for while engaging with a celebrity. I don't think we had such complete athlete in the past. He is filling the gap and giving the advertisers to look outside Bollywood, which is a very cluttered space. That is why he is so successful at such a young age,” Sajdeh further added.

Vinit Karnik, business head at ESP Properties, a Group M company, feels that Kohli will even surpass Dhoni this year in terms of his per capita. “In terms of absolute No. of brands, he may take a bit longer, but it will be soon. His latest innings against Pakistan, has clearly established his temperament. Team India will accept him as the leader without any resistance. He is a youth icon, talented, aggressive and comes across as a person, who will do everything possible to win.”

Karnik adds that unlike Tendulkar -“the greatest Indian cricketer” -who is also unfortunately very shy, Kohli loves the attention.

“He has confidence, persona and personality to face the world. He is not shy of taking positions. In a way, he has qualities of Young India, so all the brands that would want to target young Indians, would definitely want to get him on board,” he added.

Kohli has now also started taking equity stakes in six ventures including a clothing line, a gym franchise and sporting teams.



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