

Virat Kohli scores another 100, this time in crores

ET Bureau | Mar 23, 2016, 10.19 AM IST



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

Kohli's second big strike was a Rs 6.5 crore-per-year deal with MRF. Today, he also endorses Pepsi, Audi, Vicks, Boost, USL, TVS, Smaash, **Nitesh Estates**, 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," Sajdeh told ET.

"He is giving advertisers a reason to look outside Bollywood, which is a very cluttered space. That is why he is so successful at

MUMBAI: Virat Kohli, India's test cricket captain, is on his way to be the biggest sports celebrity in the country having already joined the Rs 100 crore club this year with 13 brands under his belt, say sports marketers. "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," said Bunty Sajdeh, founder and CEO of Cornerstone Sport and Entertainment, which has been managing Kohli since before he joined the Indian cricket team. Kohli, 27, is a darling of the crowd and advertisers.

such a young age," he added.

What sets aside Kohli apart as a cricketer is that he has a mix of Saurav Ganguly's aggression and Tendulkar's class. Vinit Karnik, business head at ESP Properties, a Group M company, said 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 said.

Karnik expects Kohli to surpass Dhoni this year in terms of earnings per brand. "In terms of absolute number 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 a leader without any resistance. He is a youth icon, talented, aggressive and comes across as a person, who will do everything possible to win," he said.

Perhaps taking a cue from Tendulkar, Kohli, who holds second ranking in both ICC's one-day international and T20 batsmen's lists, has started taking equity stakes in ventures. He co-owns Chisel Fitness (gym), Wrogn (clothing line), UAE Royals (Dubai tennis team of International Premier Tennis League), FC Goa (Goa franchise of Indian Super League), Bengaluru Yodhas (JSWowned Pro Wrestling League team), and London-based tech startup SportConvo.

Sajdeh said co-owning business is a very complex and intricate strategy for Kohli as one has to be very sensitive in terms of the products or categories he is engaging with.