

Ellison brand also a big winner in America's Cup

Bruce Horowitz and Jon Swartz, USA TODAY 7:13 p.m. EDT September 26, 2013

Oracle CEO sails away as a winning brand after stunning comeback victory in yachting race.



(Photo: Josh Edelson, AFP/Getty Images)

SHARE

82

CONNECT

TWEET

72

([https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http://usat.ly/1frCbeN&text=Ellison%20brand%20also%](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http://usat.ly/1frCbeN&text=Ellison%20brand%20also%20)

The America's Cup win is great for America and terrific for sponsor Oracle, but the biggest winner may be the billionaire owner whose personal brand just got the largest lift of all: Larry Ellison.

"Oracle is really code for Ellison," says Rob Prazmark, CEO of 21 Marketing, which specializes in sports marketing. "Ellison uses sailing and his America's Cup victories to further Oracle's business relationships."

Only a handful of CEOs are as big as their brands. When a brand reaches new heights, as Oracle has with Wednesday's comeback-of-a-lifetime America's Cup win, so rises the reputation of Ellison, the boyish

billionaire behind the boat.

The Oracle brand didn't do so bad, either. "Winning this, and its effect on the brand name, is priceless," Oracle Chief Marketing Officer Judith Sim told USA TODAY. "There is no measurement I can put on this."

Others, however, offered some degree of measurement. Oracle was the No. 1 trending story on Twitter on Wednesday. Data analyzed by market researcher Kontera shows content consumption around Oracle resulted in a significant amount of "free advertising."

"What we saw (during the past two weeks), was people were seeing Oracle everywhere – search, Twitter, publications — 16 times more than usual," says Ammiel Kamon, Kontera's vice president of marketing. "It's like getting a year's worth of marketing in one month."

What should Ellison — and the Oracle brand — do next? Sports marketing gurus offer these suggestions:

- **Timing is everything.** The big tech fest, Oracle OpenWorld 2013, concluded Thursday in San Francisco. What a way to end the show, with the America's Cup champs appearing at the conference keynote address. Oracle enticed folks to attend with commemorative T-shirts that were promised to the first 1,000 attendees. It also gave them the chance to have their photos taken alongside the Cup. "If they had lost, it could have been a very bad story; but now, it is an incredible story," says Prazmark.

- **Brag a little.** Perhaps Oracle should consider some tablet advertisements, reminding Americans that the leader in corporate software is still the leader in yachting, says Chris Raih, founder of the sports marketing agency Zambezi. Raih suggests this headline: "Oracle: maintaining our lead in the software industry and the high seas."



- **Bring the thrill to clients.** Oracle should create some sort of America's Cup "daily experience" that brings the thrill of the victory to top clients and vendors, suggests David Schwab, senior vice president at Octagon, a sports and entertainment marketing agency.

This is particularly important in markets with water access, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Miami, he says.

- **Personal brand.** Not all of the personal branding need be Ellison's. The Australian native Oracle skipper, Jimmy Spithill, an Australia native who also led the team to victory in the last cup, is already a hot marketing item in his native country, Australia, and should now be increasingly marketable in the U.S. market, says Raih.

- **Create an image.** Unlike New Zealand, which cautiously sat on its seemingly insurmountable 8-1 lead in the race, the Oracle brand should now emphasize, "It's not complacent in the marketplace and pushes the outer limits of creativity and innovation," says Darcy Bouzeos, president of DLB, a sports and entertainment marketing firm.

- **Focus on the rich.** Even after this win, the America's Cup remains a "very niche" sport that's laser-focused on the "über-wealthy" says Prazmark. Ellison and Oracle still need to remember that, whenever and wherever they flaunt this big victory.

SHARE

82

CONNECT

TWEET

72

([https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http://usat.ly/1frCbeN&text=Ellison%20brand%20also%20a%20big%20winner%20in%](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=http://usat.ly/1frCbeN&text=Ellison%20brand%20also%20a%20big%20winner%20in%20)