

Garnett signing may be marketing coup

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Boston Herald Business Reporter

Tuesday, July 31, 2007 - Updated: 07:29 AM EST

They call Kevin Garnett the “Big Ticket.”

And the star, 6-foot-11 forward may be just the big ticket the long-suffering Boston [Celtics](#) [\[team stats\]](#) need.

The franchise may also need to sell plenty of tickets to justify the salaries of not just one, but three star players, should it complete a blockbuster deal to bring Garnett to Boston from the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Observers say Garnett would provide the Celtics with a major marketing coup, teaming an NBA superstar with [Paul Pierce](#) [\[stats\]](#) and the newly acquired Ray Allen. That combination would no doubt put the team back on the local sports radar and could produce a surge in ticket sales.

“Even if they’re an average team, I think ticket sales will increase,” said Jon Hickey, senior vice president of sports marketing at ad agency Mullen and the former vice president of marketing for the Celtics. “If they’re a good or great team, I think ticket sales will soar.”

It’s not clear how quickly Garnett’s star power would result in a revenue boost for the team. Paying his salary will likely result in the Celtics having to pay a luxury tax for going over a league salary cap.

And an increase in sponsorship dollars would probably take a couple of seasons - a long time given that Garnett, Pierce and Allen are not exactly league youngsters.

“There’s some risk for sure, but it’s (part of an) equation,” said Chip Tuttle, a partner at marketing firm Conover Tuttle Pace. “This ownership has done an extraordinary job marketing what has admittedly not been the best product in recent years.” The Celtics have held onto corporate sponsors and season ticket renewals have been high.

But to keep loyal fans, the Celtics “needed to make noise,” said [Peter Stern, president of New York City sports marketing firm, STRATEGIC.](#)

Experts were mixed as to whether Garnett’s arrival would lead to ticket price increases. At the very least, it will be easier to lure casual fans - and even fans to premium seats - without as much aggressive discounting, they said

