

Marketing Committee – 2011 Minutes

Meetings: Thursday, Aug. 04, 2011 --- 3:00-4:00pm
Friday, Aug. 05, 2011 --- 3:00-4:00pm
Sunday, Aug. 07, 2011 --- 3:00-4:00pm

Room: Holland II

Committee Secretary: Tim Manzi

Chairperson: Geoff Want (Australia)

Committee Members: John Burt (Australia), Ross Cooper (Australia), Dr. Peter Truzla (Austria), John Gallinger (Canada), Darryl Kaplan (Canada), Knud Erik Ravn (Denmark), Mika Lintilä (Finland), Jukka Niskanen (Finland), Gordon Garnett (Great Britain), Francesco Ruffo Scaletta (Italy), Ed Rennell (New Zealand), Atle Larsen (Norway), Tove Paule (Norway), Alla Polzunova (Russia), Dmitry Urnov (Russia), Maria Lejon (Sweden), Jean Pierre Kratzer (Switzerland, UET), Isabelle Decostanzi (UET), Ivan Axelrod (USA), David Carr (USA), Mike Tanner (USA)

Agenda Items:

1. Election of Chairperson

Geoff Want was elected as the chairperson.

2. Review and approval of the 2009 Marketing Committee Report

Nothing was brought up from the 2009 minutes to be discussed.

3. Formulation of additional agenda items

- Growing the fan base
- Media coverage/information (i.e. racing programs)

4. International Harness Racing Industry On-line information exchange

a. International harness racing database

- Will be in English and French
- Content guidelines and control guidelines: work out among ourselves as to what sort of material will be put on there
- Why can we not get an information or database where every single person can access quality harness racing advertisements at a quicker rate than hearing about them every two years for the International Media Awards?
- The database can have things apart from marketing. There can be a section on integrity, prohibitive substances, etc.
- The ideas need to be put into action, the momentum needs to keep going. We are not our best self-publicists. We do not capitalize on the support stemming from this conference. A structure for the ongoing project needs to be established. The vehicle seems to be there but is just not being used.

- First step- creating the platform. Someone needs to take responsibility. Mike Tanner volunteered to spearhead the issue.
- Security behind this website is of paramount importance if discussing private integrity issues.
- An international feature event list for each country
- Notification or alert system if the database is updated. So people are aware about the news. Types and specifications about the files so that everyone uploads the same files. Technical requirements.

5. "What's working, What's not"

a. Ownership promotions/Syndication

- **Australia**- started a syndicate in Western Australia. Sometimes the 20 shares offered to the public had hundreds of owners. 1/20th of a share of a certain horse could have as many as 200 proud owners. Syndication is going to influence more people to be more involved and to get more people connected to the industry again
- **Denmark**- syndicated 500 owners for each horse, and had very good success
- **Italy**- syndication runs into problems with the ministry. The ministry wants to know where the money is coming from, why you are using the money, etc. Other successful syndications have registered the horse as a syndicated horse, with a flat rate for a 12 month period for the owners of the horse, and have met little contention with this method of syndication.
- **New Zealand**- also has syndication.
- **Norway**-will launch syndicated horses for each of the 12 tracks (1 thoroughbred and 11 Standardbred) in September.
- **Sweden**- sold horses with 1000 shares of each horse. 2009 was the first year, and now there are 23 syndicated horses. That means 23,000 new owners. The first syndicate was sold out in 20 minutes. Also looking into horse owner's portal on the internet. Login and get all the information on your horse and the financial matters such as the cost of the trainer and other associated expenditures.

b. Brand advocacy

- Brand advocacy is the most successful advertising method, where "hear say" seems to govern how well your product sells. By increasing the amount of owners and selling an experience/money-making program, the numbers of owners should hopefully increase.
- Problems arise with demographic issues: who is being exposed to the horse racing in the first place? How do we get those that are not exposed to horse racing to come back to the track? Trainers need to be reliable and be in contact with the owners (SMS/text, email, etc.) at least once a week so the owners feel involved.
- **Norway**- promoting with Facebook has been successful.

c. Other concerns

- Shifting the focus to the kids and younger generations
- Service existing owners, not just seek new owners
- We need to try and enhance the ownership experience

6. On track experience

a. How do we improve it?

- Simple solution? Good horses make good racing and attract good crowds. There must also be easy parking and good value food.
- Attract younger crowds through agreements with universities, establishing a circuit just for younger people.

- Perhaps incorporate a more appealing bar area for a younger generation, with free transportation after a few drinks at the track to more nightlife in town.
- Focus marketing towards families. However, families very rarely bet. Attract them with value food and values in general for their kids.
- Have bigger promotions during the times when the racetrack is more appealing (i.e., the summer months).
- We need to conduct exit interviews, have less time in between races, less confusing programs, and more interesting looking product.
- Incorporate the large success of horoscopes (lucky numbers, lucky colors), or pony races seem to draw large crowds in the European countries.
- **Australia** has had “themed” nights at their largest meeting venues.
- Other popular “gimmick” type things, such as a horse psychic.
- **Canada** has had success with “x-treme” events, where the quality of the horse was not that good, but there was a more diverse experience. They have also developed the youth council which is open to college/university age kids. Gives some sort of insight as to what the kids want.
- **Great Britain** has incorporated petting zoos, tug of war, carnival type games, etc all to attract the younger crowds with a variety of acts.
- The product has to be right before you spend money on advertising.
- We are not just in the racing industry anymore. We are in the entertainment industry now.
- People do not want to walk up to the totes. Mobile betting should be more available and accessible.
- No wagering in **Russia**. The tracks attract very large numbers of people under very humble conditions. Offer photographs with horses, drivers, etc. Russian crowds respond positively to younger drivers.
- We tend to keep the “stars” very far away from our fans.
- We need to involve the horses and drivers more with our audiences and put the horse front and center.
- Create celebrities out of the drivers and horses. Shoot “YouTube” videos, commercials, and make more championships.
- **Summary: we need to try to improve the presentation of our product for our patrons, what people can get in terms of the information that is presented on the track and how we can guide them through the event.**

7. Media

- **USA**- seems to be a little slow on the pick-up of social media, but so far is trying to incorporate it more than they already have. The use of “YouTube” seems to have great success here, as well as in **Canada**.
- **Sweden**- the online wagering website has been fortunate enough to have their drivers and “celebrities” involved in racing willing to comply with their promotions.
- However, leading drivers and trainers are not always as cooperative as we would like them to be. Their involvement in marketing is extremely important to the perseverance of their career.
- Viral videos as part of a marketing campaign in **Australia** were extremely successful, but the draws to the tracks may not have been so great.
- **France**- employs an “open email account” for anyone to ask questions, make comments, share concerns, etc.
- **Italy**- almost all the trainers have their own website and Facebook.
- **Great Britain** is working towards a strong social media campaign.
- International competition, such as in the World Driving Championship, can generate major interest among the participating countries if the media is involved.

8. Comments regarding marketing presentations made at this conference
 - Perhaps the marketing committee structure can be changed to an all day marketing event. This will aid in the continuity between the presentations and the ideas brought forth in the actual committee meetings.
 - Presentations from each country about a marketing plan or what has worked for them could be brought to the meetings. However, if the international database is established, this might not be necessary.
 - Very pleased to see all of the marketing presentations made

9. Comments regarding the World Driving Championship, its future and form
 - Championships need to be used more often.
 - The countries that are participating need to promote the entire event first, and focus on their representative driver second to avoid becoming too parochial.
 - We need the top drivers to be involved, however it is very difficult to get these drivers involved.
 - **Russia-** championships are a sort of tool for the advancement of drivers. Drivers interested in advancement are eager to get involved in these championships.
 - Some drivers in Europe are asking to be paid in the championships because they do not want to sacrifice their paychecks.
 - **Overall, we need to be able to classify the horses beings raced a little more effectively, improve media exposure for the event, and host more regional and national championships to keep the momentum going in hopes of attracting the drivers we really want.**

10. International media awards judging
 1. **Best News Article:** Australia- *It's Official: Auckland to Host Inter Dom*
 2. **Best Magazine Article:** USA- *Racing and the Recession*
 3. **Best Action Photograph:** France- *Who's The Winner*
 4. **Best Still Photograph:** USA- *TV Man*
 5. **Best Printed or Web-Based Advertisement:** Australia- *Harness Racing Presents: The Trots*
 6. **Best Video or Film Advertisement:** France- *Le Prix d'Amérique Marionnaud 2011, un condensé démotion*
 7. **Best Television Program or Documentary:** Canada- *A Special Lady*
 8. **Best Poster:** France- *Paris*
 9. **Best Website:** USA- *www.ustrotting.com*

11. Possible modification of the international media awards, categories or process
 - Remove the two different categories for photographs, and replace it with a singular "Best Photograph" category.
 - Perhaps the winners should get recognition by placing their work on the websites.
 - Their awards should be more concrete.
 - Allocate funds towards trophies for the winners.

Recommendations for the 2013 Conference

- Building the fan base

- Changing the structure of the committees to allow for more continuity
- Social media: how is it being incorporated?