

1. Welcome/Introduction/Roll Call – Jason Settlemoir (chairman)

Chairman Jason Settlemoir called the Marketing and Communications Committee to order at 4 p.m. with welcome and roll call.

Present were directors – J. Settlemoir (chairman); K. Decker (vice chairman); I. Axelrod; D. Bittle; R. Brandt; S. Cahill; J. Frasure; D. Hoovler; B. Kenney; M. Kimmelman; P. Koch; M. Loewe; C. McErlean; J. Miller; F. Nichols; S. O’Toole; S. Peine; Dr. T. Powers; D. Spriggs

2. 2017 Advertising Recap – Dan Leary

Total advertising revenue for 2017 was \$751,432, down 12.2% (\$104,870) vs. budget (\$856,302)

<u>MEDIA</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
Hoof Beats	\$355,681	\$421,302	-\$65,621
Web ads	\$301,739	\$340,000	-\$38,261
STARS	\$94,012	\$95,000	-\$988 (1 stallion)
TOTAL	\$751,432	\$856,302	-\$104,870

- Several major advertisers did not renew their contracts in 2017 or significantly decreased their ad spending with us.
- Farms, breeders, sale companies & tracks have shifted spending money elsewhere (social media, race & event sponsorships), which the USTA doesn’t offer.
 - Budget cuts
 - Advertisers lost to HRU

Advertiser Decreases:

- Farms: (\$51,000) -- Brittany Farms - \$24,000; Walnut Hall - \$15,000, Diamond Creek Farm - \$12,000
- Tracks: (\$14,500) -- Meadowlands/Tioga & Vernon Downs - \$6,000; Mohegan Sun - \$4,500, Woodbine - \$4,000
- Products & Services: (\$40,300 from 6 major advertisers)

SOLUTIONS:

- Increased digital offerings
 - Mobile Site - \$7,500 (through Feb. 2018) (available since Fall 2017)
 - HRFZ – starting in Feb. 2018, some initial sales for June & July
- Increasing integrated media buy offers – combining digital and print
- Video sponsorships (major events - Hambo, LBJ, yearling sales, Futurity, BCrown)

- E-newsletter sponsorships
- USTA video content for sale to our breeders (stallions)
- Exploring social media sponsorships and ads
- Hoof Beats redesign -- March 2018 issue
 - Increase in equine health and nutrition stories -- Ability to pitch health/nutrition advertisers

3. USTA Advanced Marketing Concept – Russell Williams, Dan Leary

Russell Williams led a discussion of the concept of the USTA establishing an Advanced Marketing service.

Topics were:

- Exploring the landscape of marketing money available for marketing harness racing
- Consideration of whether USTA's ability to create high-quality content provides a reasonable chance to attract marketing business.
- Is this a revenue generating project that the USTA should pursue?
 - Must consider additional burden on current staffing
- Consideration of this as a stand-alone division of the USTA, perhaps in a year or two

Pennsylvania Marketing Initiative

R. Williams explained the current statewide marketing initiative in Pennsylvania.

Dan Leary discussed the USTA's proposal to the Standardbred Breeders Association of Pennsylvania. The proposal was a campaign to promote breeding in PA and included: an awareness campaign, advertising - traditional and digital (with creative from USTA); SBAP website redesign; Stallion Fee Rebate program; and Breeding farm open houses

R. Williams concluded with the Advanced Marketing concept ideas including:

- USTA could serve as Harness Racing's premier provider of marketing analytics, which is currently done by multiple PR/Ad firms
- Provide state authorities with comprehensive, accurate assessment of their marketing efforts and provide comparisons with other states
- USTA would acquire valuable data to utilize in other ways
- USTA Advance Marketing could possibly be a future project, in a year or two, as a stand-alone

4. Youth Delegates Committee and Initiative – Gabe Wand, Marilyn Breuer-Bertera

Gabe Wand and Marilyn Breuer-Bertera discussed the formation of USTA Youth Delegates to:

- Generate innovative ideas
- Development of the next generation of USTA members through involvement in this program
- Create future leaders for our sport

The purpose of the program is to develop harness racing industry leaders by:

- Encouraging youth to become involved with the USTA by assisting in marketing and promotional efforts as well as participating in the decision-making process
- Capturing the passion of youth involved in harness racing and using it to generate new ideas and renewed enthusiasm.

Delegates

- One youth delegate from each USTA district, who is between ages 16-20, is a USTA (Youth) member to serve a two-year term

Selection Process

- Application due by May 1, 2018 with parental consent; selection complete by May 15, 2018
 - Requires recommendation from industry participant

Program includes:

- Redesign of USTA Youth Corner web page
- Welcome packet, monthly communication, resource development and coordination with horsemen at local events

Other projects

- Social media projects and marketing assistance at local racetracks
- Develop electronic newsletter
- Contribute *Youth Beats* content
- Attend USTA District Meetings

Project Supervision

- USTA (A. Conte, J. Turner); USTA Board (G. Wand) and HHFY (E. Taylor)

USTA Benefits

- Strengthen youth perspective in individual districts
- Marketing and social media assistance
- Increase youth membership

Delegate Benefits

- Academic credits, opportunity to publish and working in a collaborative environment in our industry

Funding

2018

- Utilize existing USTA social media budget
- Include in district meeting budgets for attendance at those meetings

2019

- Present progress report at Nov. 2018 Executive Committee
- Annual meeting attendance funding to be considered for 2019 USTA budget
- Projected expense -- \$1,100 to \$1,900 per delegate
 - Includes: district meeting, local event and annual meeting attendance

All USTA directors are asked to encourage energetic and enthusiastic youths in their district to apply

5. Crisis Communications – CANCELLED

6. USTA Website Newsroom Coverage and Social Media – Dan Leary

Staffing and Hours – (7 days per week)

- Day Editor – 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Night Editor – 4:30 – 10 p.m. (Fri & Sat – midnight/ 1 a.m.)

Submissions

- Send stories and announcements - news@ustrotting.com and ustrottingnews@gmail.com
- Assist us in mining good local, feature stories

Other Suggestions

- Need more focus on pre-race and pre-event news and announcements
 - Helps us to help you amplify that news to increase your audience/attendance
- Special wagers, carryovers – especially USTA Strategic Wagers
 - Applies to a wide audience of bettors who can wager online
- Non-racing, On-Track Promotions – apply to a much smaller audience – local only
 - Very small viewership - more views if included in a racing story

Travel Crew – Photos and Videos

- USTA has only one crew – Mark, Rich, Allison and sometimes TJ
- Limits the number of places we can be
 - Request USTA attendance in advance

Timeliness

- With social media – deadlines are immediate
 - Race Recaps – same night or early the next morning (8 – 10 a.m.)
 - Events, functions, contests - by the next day

Social Media – (prepared by Allison Conte for 2017)

Posting to Social Media

- Photo and Video content is the most popular
 - Average organic reach between 5,000-6,500
- Analytics show the most effective posts are: pre-event promotion and behind-the-scenes or experiential videos.

- Harness Racing has unique ability to showcase behind-the-scenes and present a different perspective
 - Utilize technology -- GoPro and 360 cameras (drone)

Most popular videos:

- Little Brown Jug “Experience” video (Behind-the-Scenes)
 - More than 27,000 organic views FB and YouTube --- 186 shares
- International Trot 360 video (Behind-the-Scenes)
 - More than 60,000 organic views and nearly 200,000 reached -- 512 shares
- Horse of the Year contender videos (Pre-event promotion for Dan Patch Awards)
 - Contender 2017 highlight’s
 - Top 4 – More than 20,000 views and nearly 50,000 reach
 - Released daily and views increased each day

7. Adjourn

There were no other matters to come before the committee and the meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.