

Registered Trademark

Halifax embraces minor-league basketball

A careful cultivation of the local marketplace earns the community's respect and draws the attention of national sponsors.

ANDRE LEVINGSTON, PROPRIETOR and public face of the Halifax Rainmen, admits that the history of minor-league basketball in North America is far from pretty. Indeed his own Rainmen, now set to embark on only their third season, have already quit one league and joined another.

Despite this, and largely as a credit to Levingston, the Halifax Rainmen have attracted league-leading crowds and a good mix of some 14 sponsors, several of them national brands and all of them on multi-year contracts. The most notable signing: Rogers Wireless as premier sponsor.

"Our first year was challenging because nobody knew who we were," says Levingston. Halifax is one of the hottest small markets for basketball on the

continent, but Levingston is a CFA, a "come-from-away" in Atlantic Canada idiom, a Detroit native who landed in Halifax by way of Toronto. "Business in Halifax is relationship-driven," he says. He had to earn the locals' trust.

The team stumbled through its first year, but gained its stride in its second, switching to the Premier Basketball League and boosting attendance by 63% in Halifax's Metro Centre. The keys to last year's success, says Levingston, are creating an unrivalled and very affordable experience for fans and families, and involving the team in community events focussed on youth.

"You can go to a Rainmen game with a family of four cheaper than you can go to the movies," says Levingston, and the in-venue experience mimics what the NBA pioneered – wall-to-wall non-stop entertainment, complete with a dance

squad (the Weather Girls) and an athletic mascot. "Everything is scripted," says Levingston, with the obvious exception of the game itself. "There's something going on all the time."

For minor league basketball, as often as not staged in thinly populated high school gymnasias, this is unprecedented. So are crowds of 6,000 screaming fans. That's what the Rainmen experience offers, and that's what drew in Rogers, a brand already very familiar with the NBA experience through its partnership with the Toronto Raptors.

"Rainmen take the sponsor's brand into the community with us"

"We pride ourselves on innovation, and we think that the Halifax Rainmen are definitely bringing an innovative approach to professional basketball in Halifax," says Susan Gordon, Vice President, National/

Regional Marketing, Rogers Wireless.

Rogers looks for properties that align with its values in each of the regions where it does business, says Gordon. But when it comes to major properties, in Atlantic Canada the pickings are rather slim. There's simply not much out there. Rainmen basketball is a big deal. Rogers Wireless will use it primarily to reach the Nova Scotia market, though Gordon will try leverage it in New Brunswick as well.

According to 2008 figures from the CRTC, Rogers Wireless is a distant second to the Bell group in subscriber market share in Nova Scotia. Bell accounts for 57% of subscribers, Rogers, 24%.

Levingston, a former high school teacher with a lifelong commitment to youth, has worked hard to shed his CFA image by making Halifax his home and making the Rainmen a visible presence at youth-oriented community events year-

round.

The effort has won over the local media. Rainmen basketball holds its own against hockey for editorial coverage in local sports pages and broadcasts. Fans and sponsors have followed.

One of the things Rainmen can do "is take [the sponsor's] brand into the community with us," says Levingston. Sponsorship benefits extend well beyond the in-venue experience. That's an important element for Rogers, which leverages all of its sports sponsorships to generate community engagement.

"We really like the fact that the Rainmen are heavily involved in the community," says Gordon. "Rainmen players do a lot of work with local youth. We're very dominant in the youth market space and we believe we have a responsibility to communicate good messages in that space."

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

OLYMPICS

Consumers help direct Cheerios' support

Grocery store shelves across the country now feature Gold Box **Cheerios** courtesy of **General Mills**, an official supplier to the **2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games**. The visually distinctive packaging features a gold embossed Cheerios logo and a call-out for a special five dollar donation from General Mills. Consumers are invited to enter a PIN code, printed inside the box, at General Mills' **Aspiring Olympians** website. Consumers may select among 28 aspiring Olympians, and General Mills will donate \$5 to that athlete on their behalf.

There were 16 athletes initially selected for General Mills' Aspiring Olympians program. General Mills has recently added another 12 to the list. The website gives a biography of the athlete, contact information (e.g. website or Facebook page) and keeps a running tally of donations.

General Mills promises a minimum of \$5,000 for each athlete. The maximum per athlete is \$25,000.

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OLYMPICS

Coke says, "once again, with feeling"

Coke seems poised once again to try to teach the world to sing.

The "**Open Happiness**" campaign, which launched in the US in January, has come to Canada. Open Happiness is the new global campaign that embraces a spirit of optimism and "invites consumers to embrace the little moments of pleasure in life." It comes with its own song, re-recorded for the Canadian market by **Kardinal Offishall**, **Jay Malinowski** of Bedouin Soundclash and **Coeur de pirate** and now available for download at www.icoke.ca. And yes, it is a catchy tune!

The song will be used for TV commercials, ringtones and integrated into the **Olympic Torch Relay** and live site activities at the Vancouver **2010 Olympic Winter Games**.

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OLYMPICS

IOC rides to the rescue, sort of

The **International Olympic Committee** has not undertaken to cover any budgetary shortfall suffered by **VANOC** following the 2010 Olympic Games, but it has agreed to "assist financially" should such a situation present itself, and that is an important concession.

The issue of a potential budgetary shortfall has been a sore point between VANOC and the IOC for some time now. On the sponsorship side of the ledger, VANOC has met its projected revenue from domestic sources. However, the expected contribution from the IOC has not fully materialized, as the IOC has lost and not replaced three of its TOP sponsors: **Manulife**, **Johnson & Johnson** and **Kodak**. A portion of that revenue would have flowed into VANOC's coffers.

In tandem with the IOC's commitment, VANOC "clarified" that "the IOC has fulfilled all of its obligations in respect to the TOP sponsorship program."

OLYMPICS

Celebrations allowed – with appropriate permit

The **City of Vancouver** has passed a lengthy Olympics bylaw that attempts to curb ambushers while allowing residents and visitors to sing and shout, hoist banners and raise signs.

The bylaw includes strict prohibitions against all manner of commercial activity on city property unless licensed to do so. The prohibition covers everything from hoisting a megaphone to sampling. There are similar prohibitions against all forms of advertising. Previously approved commercial signage in place prior to the bylaw's enactment is exempt, but the same can't be said of sandwich boards, vehicle advertising or street performances.

The bylaw includes special provisions for "celebratory signs," which "must include information that celebrates the **2010 Winter Games**, or creates or enhances a festive environment and atmosphere for the 2010 Winter Games," and which must not "include any third party advertising." They'll require a permit, too.

Though the restriction may be onerous to potential ambushers, the penalties are rather modest. Scofflaws will face fine of only \$2,000 for each offence. For every day that the offence continues, the incremental penalty is only an additional \$50.

The Coke bottle as a work of art

HAS THE ICONIC COKE BOTTLE evolved into a work of art? That's arguable, but less contentious, it appears, is the concept of the Coke bottle as an artist's canvas.

The idea of Coke-bottle-as-canvas began with the 1996 Atlanta Summer Olympic Games. Coke invited folk artists from 54 countries to use an oversized Coke bottle as a canvas in a program called the Coca-Cola Salute to Folk Art.

The program has survived and evolved, and will make its appearance in Canada with the Aboriginal Art Bottle program. Last May, VANOC put out a call to First Nations, Inuit and Metis artists to submit proposals, and more than 100 responded with expressions of interest. Artists were encouraged to propose works that supported Coke's new "Open Happiness" marketing theme. Submissions were evaluated by Coke, the Four Host First Nations and an independent jury, and the final selection will be unveiled at selected stops on the Coke-sponsored Olympic torch relay. The pieces will remain on display at various locations in Vancouver and Whistler during the Games.

Coke will be all over the 2010 Olympics. It's safe to expect an extensive and very-well integrated activation program. But the Aboriginal Art Bottle program is distinctive. It's the kind of program where one might reasonably expect pushback from the artistic community, with cries about the commercial exploitation of traditional artforms. There has been none.

"The shape is so iconic, and it's such a different project," says Kirsten Mihailides, Manager Public Affairs and Communications for Coca-Cola's 2010 Olympic Project Team. She says she understands why some, removed from the project, might expect pushback. But the response has been the exact opposite. It's the same response Coke received when it ran the program in 2008 in China.

A good part of the support may stem from the opportunity it will provide to elevate aboriginal artforms – not just painting, but carving, beadwork, weaving and more – onto a global stage. There's also an important fundraising component. Following the Games, the pieces will be sold at auction, and proceeds will go to the Vancouver 2010 Aboriginal Youth Legacy Fund. Artists are reimbursed their costs of production.

Reality show puts positive spin on kicking consumer debt

Clean Slate positions itself for upbeat sponsor integration

THERE ARE CORNERS OF network television devoted to highlighting the struggles of people so hopelessly mired in debt that watching them writhe in front of the camera can impart actual pain to the viewer.

A new reality TV show, Clean Slate, is turning that model on its ear by featuring three couples who compete in real-world financial challenges that actually help them kick debt in the ass in a quest for a \$10,000 prize. The program was tested in August as a two-week pilot on the CanWest Global TV network, with debt management company DebtMonkey.ca helping to underwrite the cost of the media buy and presenting the program's top prize. Viewers can also visit a DebtMonkey-sponsored site to view unaired footage.

"The media buy was designed to test the concept and to see what sort of reaction they might get from both viewers and potential sponsors," says Ron Baker, president of Mississauga-based funding and sponsorship agency AVP Event Marketing, the company responsible for bringing additional sponsors to the table.

"It's a happier approach to dealing with debt than what we've seen on television before by showing people engaging in proactive activities to actually reduce debt," he says.

Program co-creator and co-executive producer Michael Wendland says he and partner Scott Peckford designed the program to avoid negativity.

"We didn't want the type of show where someone goes to a person's house to tell them how terrible their money situation is and they just nod their heads as they get the bad news," he says. "That's not an uplifting experience for viewers or potential sponsors."

Baker says that he's seen the most initial interest from companies in the financial service sector who wanted to see how the program managed its subject matter.

Baker is no stranger to TV sponsor integration. He handles those chores on DealFlow, a Canadian program that runs on CNBC World, an international network devoted to business programming.

A typical recent episode of DealFlow saw the hosts, partners in an investment banking firm, investigating energy storage

technology that might make wind farms more economically viable. Playing an active role in that episode was sponsor Avalon Rare Metals Inc., a company that happens to mine the heavy rare earth elements that can be used to manufacture state-of-the-art storage batteries. Both DealFlow and Clean Slate are produced by Toronto-based Re:Source Media Inc.

Wendland says the program was designed to take advantage of similar sponsorship integration. "If we're going to have contestants look for the best deal on a car in one segment, then we can feature an actual car dealership offered by a sponsor," he says. "If we're looking at a way to negotiate the best mortgage deal, then a real financial institution can

sponsor and become involved in that segment."

Similarly, contestants in the pilot episode sought part-time jobs to help bring in extra household income, offering opportunities for sponsor/employers to show their corporate stuff.

In a symbolic segment dubbed "Mountain of Debt," contestants carry heavy loads up a literal mountain, doffing their loads in dribs and drabs by successfully answering debt-related quiz questions and using cell phones to communicate. "We're looking at involving cell phone companies or carriers as sponsor in that segment," says Wendland. "But for a Canadian audience this type of integration has to be handled in a smart and entertaining way. Canadians are really leery of 'sales dumps' passing themselves off as sponsor integration on television."

Clean Slate is scheduled to go into full production in early 2010.

Retail at the Rogers Cup

THIS IS A TOUGH YEAR FOR sports sponsorship in Canada. But tell that to Tennis Canada, and you might find them disagreeing with you.

With the Rogers Cup men's event selling out in Montreal, and the women's event pulling in their second-largest ever crowd in Toronto, there was plenty for sponsors to feel good about. Admittedly Tennis Canada has lost 14 sponsors this year, but still reached to within 5% of its record \$17 million revenue of 2008. They also signed new Canadian partners including Rolex and Audi.

The market generally is also seeing more sports sponsorship activity at the grassroots and participation level. Spending on corporate and VIP entertainment is being cut back considerably.

The Rogers Cup women's tournament, played at the Rexall Centre at York University campus August 15 to 23, attracted all top 25 world ranked women players and a roster of 32 WTA Tour, tournament and broadcast partners.

This helps explain the 91 advertising signs to be seen around centre court. The Platinum sponsors rightly get the prime back wall positions that receive continuous TV exposure as players serve and play baseline rallies. Acura, Desjardins, Every Day, Emirates, IRIS, and Lowe's are great supporters of baseline

tennis!

There was plenty of promotional activity at and around the tournament, but the most noteworthy element onsite was the retail village. The village has overgrown its bounds; the main tented area played host to 14 retailers, while other spilled out onto other areas of the tournament grounds.

Title sponsor Rogers anchored the village, with a full working store and a staff of 30.

The village was constantly abuzz with the whirring of cash registers and the purring of credit card readers. Retail activation is always at its most popular in a soft economy.

"In many cases sponsors only pay lip service to promotional activities at an event; but as you can see our retail village has evolved to what it is now," says Greg Wood, Vice President of Corporate Sponsorships Tennis Canada. "With our encouragement our sponsors are becoming more sophisticated."

He was right. A few examples noted by *TSR* one afternoon included the following: The Merchant of Tennis, sharing their store with Wilson, displayed a huge range of tennis related footwear, clothing and racquets, and enjoyed promotional visits from Serena Williams and Monica Seles. Adidas with 15 staff, displayed a huge

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P&G gets stars ready for their close-up

THE BRIGHTEST STARS DESCEND on the Toronto International Film Festival with their own posse of handlers and groomers to ensure that every lash is perfectly curled, that every hair is expertly placed. For festival guests who inhabit the lower reaches of the firmament (including the aforementioned handlers and groomers), Procter & Gamble is riding to the rescue. The first-year Beauty and Grooming Brands Partner will open the Festival Portrait Studio at the Sutton Place Hotel, offering “head-to-toe beauty and grooming” to celebs and guests before they take a leggy stride into the floodlights.

TIFF sponsorship gives P&G a position in two of the country’s most glamorous events in its two largest cities. P&G Beauty is a long-time sponsor of Montreal Fashion Week

P&G will focus its sponsorship on four brands: Cover Girl, Olay, Pantene and Gillette. Gillette’s presence at the Portrait Studio means that the men can get equal treatment and can meet the press unwhiskered and properly gelled.

P&G will be looking for media exposure at this year’s festival. “It further credentials our leadership role,” says Pam Baillie, PR Manager for P&G Beauty and Grooming. The Portrait Studio is located adjacent to the press studio at Sutton Place. Celebrities will pass through it just before they meet the media.

The beauty and grooming category was pitched to P&G late in the festival’s sales season. Baillie says work on the program began only in late May or early June. Putting together this year’s activation program has been a bit of a last-minute scramble. P&G will use 2009 to get a better sense of how to work with the festival. Expect a more thorough program in 2010, which is the last year of the current contract.

Still, with little lead time P&G is managing the cover the basics, and then some. Details are still sketchy, mind you, as logistics and permissions were still being worked out only two weeks before the opening gala.

With the portrait studio as the centrepiece, P&G plans to run a consumer contest offering TIFF makeovers as prizes. Plans are for the makeover to be recorded and shared, says Baillie.

Drew Barrymore, a P&G cover girl, is among the confirmed festival guests, and Baillie hopes P&G can gain a great deal of

media mileage out of her presence. Again, details are being worked out. Barrymore will be premiering her directorial debut film, *Whip It*, which includes Cover Girl brand integration.

One would expect sampling to be part of P&G’s program, and Baillie confirms that it will be . . . maybe. It’s something she wants. Filmgoers can feel ragged and shabby queuing up outdoors as Toronto’s

weather leans from summer into fall. They’re receptive and largely captive audience. Talks were still underway with TIFF as this issue went to press.

P&G’s objectives this year are modest for a brand that historically relies heavily on hard metrics. Those metrics will still be examined, says Baillie, but the key objective is simply building a strong relationship with festival organizers and figuring out how best to activate the property. “We’re learning lots,” says Baillie.

SKYY brings “accessible glamour” to TIFF

LET’S BE HONEST. ONLY THE most discerning palate can tell one premium vodka from another. When it comes to vodka marketing, it’s about style, not substance, and Rob Malloch, Chief Marketing Officer at PMA Canada, marketing and sales agency in Canada for SKYY vodka, gets full marks for admitting as much. That’s why he’s investing so heavily in this year’s Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

“Preference for vodka has to do with an element of cachet or a feeling of being in the know,” says Malloch. The beauty of TIFF is that it attracts a long list of the glitterati, but it also remains true to this day to its roots as a filmgoer’s festival. It is not just about those who inhabit cinema’s firmament. It’s about mere mortals as well, and that’s the community that SKYY has to reach.

This is SKYY’s second year at TIFF. Last year, it focussed mainly inside the velvet ropes where it promoted its official vodka status through a selection of unique cocktails. SKYY vodka and supporting staff were fixtures at the countless parties that film patrons hear about but seldom get to experience. It will repeat those efforts this year, of course, but it will also be more visible among filmgoers, hoping to offer “accessible glamour” to everyday film lovers.

The premium vodka market has not been hit nearly as hard as other categories by the recession, says Malloch. His strategy has been to use any marketing pullback by competitors as an opportunity to gain market share. His marketing budget hasn’t grown for this year, but neither has it been cut.

The major initiative this year is the SKYY Vodka Award for Best Canadian First Feature Film. The asset was formerly titled by City-TV. SKYY was already planning a consumer fundraising

promotion in conjunction with the festival, and the Canadian first feature award offered an asset it could own. The award adds a layer of authenticity to SKYY’s presence at the festival in the minds of filmgoers, says Malloch. Observant TIFF-goers may even hear echoes of SKYY’s promotional partnership with New Line Cinema’s 2008 launch of the film version of *Sex and the City*. If they do, it will reinforce the perception of SKYY as a genuine supporter of film, not an opportunistic sponsor of TIFF. The sponsorship certainly filled a gap on TIFF’s sales sheet, but it also filled a gap in SKYY’s activation program. SKYY will contribute \$10,000 toward the \$15,000 award, with the funds raised as a portion of proceeds of sales. Neck tags promoting the award are in market now.

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Rogers Cup

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amount of product reduced in price. Rexall offered free 10 minute massages, and had a splendid display of a complete set of all its brands. Rexall also ran a wellness day for women mid-week. Yoplait gave out 4,000 free samples of their yogurt every day. IRIS allowed you to collect the business cards of six optometrists for an eye check-up while promoting their nine stores in Ontario. Abiding by LCBO rules you could sample Pimms, Bailey’s, and Californian wines. Every day was Activity Day for kids, including a Trivial Pursuit game.

“We and the sponsors have worked really hard to enhance the experience for the visiting tennis fan,” said Tennis Canada’s Regional Vice President, Lauren Ziv. It showed.

Sponsorship metrics grow up

CONVENTIONAL SPONSORSHIP metrics do two things well, according to Simon Cazalais, Director at the Montreal agency bleublancrouge. They tell you where you were. They tell you where you are. What they don't necessarily tell you, however, is how you got there. The assumption built into the metrics model is that the sponsorship program got you from point A to point B. But did it? And if it did, did all parts of the activation program contribute equally, or did some carry more water than others?

Those are the questions Cazalais attempts to answer in a new evaluation model he outlined at last spring's SMCC conference (see *TSR*, June 2009, page 6). *TSR* recently had an opportunity to speak with Cazalais at greater length about the proprietary Sponsorship Insight Model and new directions in sponsorship evaluation.

Cazalais says metrics over the past decade have concentrated on "testing the temperature of our projects," while paying little attention to the specific actions that rendered them warm or cool.

Dan Hunter, Partner with IMI International in Toronto, agrees. The metrics most commonly used in sponsorship are metrics of convenience, says Hunter. Sponsors rely on their ongoing brand tracking programs, try to find a "clean" period during an activation program, and use that to gauge the effectiveness of a program. It's just not that simple. In addition to the many tactics executed within a sponsorship program, each of which will have varying degrees of impact on brand performance, there are factors external to the sponsorship, such as economic health or activities by competitors, that have to be taken into account.

Any program that promotes the isolation of sponsorship tactics and attempts to link them to results is something to be applauded, he says.

That's what the Sponsorship Insight Model attempts to do, says Cazalais. Reduced to its basic elements, it is straightforward. A brand must create a short list under four headings:

Objectives – what the program is meant to achieve;

Indicators – "needles" that will indicate success or failure in reaching the objectives;

Chain of Value – factors that move the appropriate needles; and

Organizational Foundations – internal

processes that allow the information to be gathered, understood and acted upon.

Applied properly, says Cazalais, this approach allows a sponsor to align properties and activation programs to support fully the brand's marketing objectives. There is no wasted investment.

Meeting objectives is important, but if your marketing program has a standard of continuous improvement – constantly raising the bar – then program performance must be compared against an external benchmark as well.

Cazalais urges sponsors to build an inventory of similar metrics for successful programs. That, he says, will give them

benchmarks against which to compare their current programs. Sponsors can then determine not only if the program met objectives, but if it performed as well as previous efforts.

Hunter relies on a proprietary database of best-in-class sponsorship performance. It gives sponsors the ability to measure their success against comparable programs executed elsewhere.

A key benefit of reducing sponsorship evaluation to the level of tactics rather than programs is that it allows a cost-benefit analysis of each of the major elements of a sponsorship program., says Hunter. That information puts you on the road to continuous, cost-effective improvement.

MTS Allstream makes the most of Cindy Klassen partnership

STAN KURTAS, VP Marketing, Consumer Markets Division at Winnipeg's MTS Allstream, and a self-described "big data guy," says this about MTS Allstream's partnership with speed skater Cindy Klassen: every promotion in which she's been involved has performed at least as well, or better, than the best of comparable promotions without her.

And she's been involved in plenty. The Manitoba native was signed by MTS Allstream after she returned from the Torino Olympics as the country's most decorate Olympian ever. Since then, she's been a fixture on MTS collateral, a frequent special guest at MTS Allstream events and an ambassador for the brand at various public events and functions. She figures prominently on the home page of MTS Allstream's website, and MTS recently revamped Klassen's website to further reinforce the links between the two.

Media activity involving Klassen has leveraged the speed metaphor inherent in her sport, mostly supporting MTS Allstream's wireless or high-speed Internet business lines.

"If you look around the province of Manitoba, you'll find her on billboards, on the side of buses. We have a huge banner on the side of our building right now that says we support Cindy," says Kurtas. She's on all print campaigns and has appeared in at least two television commercials. This summer, she has made several personal appearances at fairs and festivals on behalf

of MTS Allstream. A documentary on Klassen is in production for airing on MTS Allstream's Local Expression local content channel.

Klassen is used almost exclusively in Manitoba in support of MTS Allstream's consumer business lines. MTS Allstream does have an enterprise division with its own marketing budget, but that budget is dwarfed by Kurtas'.

With the winter Games drawing near, her attention will be more narrowly focussed on training, but Kurtas is doing what he can to adjust MTS Allstream's marketing schedule to take full advantage of those moments when his star attraction is available. That will include Cindy Klassen appearances this October at the public launch of MTS Allstream's Whole Home PVR, the first of its kind in Canada, says Kurtas.

The unique application allows consumers to view recorded programs on multiple screens, different recorded programs on different screens, and even pause programming on one screen and resume it on another. It's an exciting service that is better demonstrated than explained, says Kurtas, and Klassen will be the draw at two events at Winnipeg's two largest malls where the new service will be premiered and demonstrated. Klassen will be heavily into training and competition come October, and MTS Allstream will schedule these events around her availability, a testament to her importance to the launch.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

CAUSES

Another reason to smile

Future Shop customers who traded in their digital cameras for a newer model had their own reasons to smile when they called out, "say cheese." All working digital cameras surrendered between July 24 and August 6 were donated to Future Shop's charitable partners, the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada** and **RMJQ** in Quebec.

The offer included a discount of \$30 to \$100 on the purchase of a new camera from one of six participating brands.

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EVENTS

Toyota works the land

Toyota is back for its third turn as Official Vehicle Supplier to **Canada's Outdoor Farm Show** and **Canadian Energy Expo**, September 15-17 in Woodstock, Ontario. Toyota assembles its RAV4 SUVs in the new automobile plant in Woodstock, which opened in 2006.

The show will feature Toyota trucks, a Toyota forklift, the 2010 Prius and other Toyota hybrid technology before an audience of approximately 40,000.

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show gives Toyota an opportunity to put prospects behind the wheel in real-world conditions. Toyota will operate an off-road test track allowing visitors to test-drive the 2010 Tundra, Tacoma and FJ Cruiser. The Woodstock-built RAV4 will also be on display.

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EVENTS

Environmentalists' loss may be sponsors' gain

Metro Vancouver will not be purchasing two water wagons to supply drinking water to festivals and events on public property. A proposal to purchase the water wagons was put before the board of the **Greater Vancouver Water District** on July 31, but was defeated. Water would have been supplied free of charge, but would also have removed a popular category of sponsorship from the inventory or many public events.

Metro Vancouver has a new water filtration plant coming on stream this fall. It is also in the midst of an aggressive waste reduction campaign, and bottled water is a targeted product. The city has issued a "tap water challenge" to residents, with the goal of increasing the use of tap water for drinking purposes and reducing sales of bottled water by 20% by 2010.

SPORTS

Taking tennis to the streets, Toronto style

Toronto's **Rogers Cup** scored a media coup on August 17, though in the process they may not have endeared themselves greatly to downtown commuters.

Organizers secured permission to shut down Yonge Street at Dundas – perhaps the city's busiest intersection – for 30 minutes between 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. in order to stage a game of street tennis between Caroline Wozniacki and Ana Ivanovic. Within 15 minutes organizers had a full court marked and nets set up, complete with **Sony Ericsson** and **Rogers** branding. The top-ranked women played a 10-minute match before a swelling crowd and invited media. Clips made the evening newscasts and a production for YouTube had received, at last count, 13,679 views.

The stunt replicated a celebrated Nike television commercial from the mid-1990s featuring Andre Aggasi and Pete Sampras playing tennis on the streets of New York.

SPORTS

Wendy's gives it another kick

Wendy's has announced October 23's **Wendy's Friday Night Football** as the date of the fifth **Wendy's Kick for a Million** promotion. The enormously popular promotion, which is in-market now, gives consumers a chance to kick a field goal from 20, 30, 40 and 50 yards during the half-time show and win valuable prizes. A successful kick from 50 yards (it happened in the contest's first year) earns the contestant a million dollars.

Every year, Wendy's and **TSN** tweak the promotion to add even more excitement. This year, the finalist will be decided on the basis of total points accumulated in the quarter-finals and semi-finals. Organizers have also abandoned the "all or nothing" format for the final 50-yard kick. The finalist will be awarded \$1,000 for every yard the ball travels in the air, even though it falls short of the uprights.

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Tim's spills the coffee

Brand advocates ride to the rescue

TO UNDERSTAND THE EXTENT to which the corporate communications function has changed in just a few short years, one need only examine last month's one-day communications crisis involving Tim Hortons.

The details were extensively and accurately reported in other media. In a nutshell, it went something like this: A US regional office of Tim Hortons agreed to sponsor (i.e., provide coffee and doughnuts) a fundraiser in Rhode Island for the National Organization for Marriage. Midday August 9, a US blog revealed that the organization opposed gay marriage and asked why a proud, inclusive, iconic Canadian brand like Tim's would engage in such a sponsorship. Nothing happened until 18 hours or so later, when two Canadian blogs picked up the story. It quickly went viral on social networks and on Twitter. A boycott petition was circulated and amassed some 1600 signatures before Tim Hortons, early in the afternoon, issued a release announcing the cancellation of the sponsorship as it violated company guidelines prohibiting sponsorship of organizations that "represent religious groups, political affiliates or lobby groups."

It took Tim Hortons less than 24 hours to respond to some negative messaging, fewer than six hours if you only account for the time it actually became a "story." Not long ago, we'd be celebrating that as a lightning-quick response. But in today's environment, it's considered glacial.

Organizations need web-crawling tools that give them real-time feedback about the chatter around their brand, says Kerry Harris, President of Weber Shandwick's Canadian Operations. In addition, the person monitoring that chatter has to have the authority to respond immediately to any threat to the brand, even if the response is something as benign as "that's odd, I'll look into it and get right back to you."

That can require a significant shift in the communications culture, particularly in a large and sometimes unwieldy organization that places a premium on message control. In a crisis, by the time the

Continued on page 8

Exclusivity takes on a different meaning at Olympic Broadcast Consortium

THE OLYMPIC BROADCAST CONSORTIUM is ahead of budget on sales, but that doesn't mean that the inventory is being snapped up by Olympic partners. In this still soft economy, that would be surprising, and it's not the case. Instead, it appears that the considerable inventory in the hands of the broadcast consortium is leaving the door open to non-Olympic partners, and to advertisers with a relatively modest budget to spend. Brands that might previously have been excluded from the Olympic marketing juggernaut are finding that for 2010, the door is open.

Olympic partners have stepped up to the advertising buffet in a very big way. But it's a very big buffet. The consortium announced last month that deals had been completed with 17 official Olympic Games partners and five other media sponsors. The consortium has sold twice the revenue of any previous Canadian broadcaster at this point in the sales cycle. It's the advantage you get when your country is the host, says Keith Pelley, President, Canada's Olympic Broadcast Media Consortium. "It isn't a coincidence that Calgary remains the highest rated Games in Canadian history," he says. It's a record that Vancouver will certainly beat.

Olympic partners have a first right of negotiation on advertising opportunities in the hands of the consortium, and they can ask for category exclusivity across all media – if they're willing to pay for it. Unlike previous media offerings, the Olympic broadcast consortium can offer "multiple platforms and integrated packages," says Pelley. That's because despite what its name suggests, the consortium goes far beyond broadcast, and encompasses print and digital assets as well.

"I don't look at us as a television company," says Pelley. "I look at us as an integrated media company with non-traditional assets." Demographically, the consortium is confident it can reach any age group, any income bracket, any ethnic group an advertiser chooses. With that flexibility, it can offer a multi-platform solution that is finely targeted, Pelley promises.

In that environment, the term "exclusivity" has taken on a completely different meaning.

"If a partner in the past wanted to buy exclusivity, they're really purchasing

CBC, SRC, and a little commitment to the website," says Pelley. "If you want exclusivity with the consortium, you have to buy 11 television networks, two dedicated URLs, mobile, The Globe and Mail, radio. As a result, there are a lot of advertisers who have chosen not to be purely exclusive." Some are choosing

Nissan ups investment in CFL, franchises

Strong dealer buy-in is the key to success of this partnership

THE WEAK LINK IN automotive category sponsorships is often dealer involvement. Dealers are independent operators, entrepreneurs with a great deal of local market knowledge and resources stretched to the brink. They often don't take kindly to "opportunities" extended their way from a distant head office.

That hasn't been a problem with Nissan and its sponsorship of the CFL and now five of its eight franchises. Nissan recently announced a two-year extension of its CFL contract, a similar extension of its contract with the Toronto Argonauts, and new two-year deals with the franchises in Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan and Winnipeg.

Through the league partnership, Nissan gains national media exposure. The partnership with the Argonauts earns it leveraging opportunities in the country's largest market. With the four Western franchises, Nissan gains assets that are close to religion in the sporting world. On the Prairies in the summer, the CFL is the only sport that matters.

Last year, Nissan augmented its league assets by purchasing a jersey patch for the post-season. In terms of media exposure, it was a good investment, says Harry Jodoin, Senior Manager, Marketing Operations. Whether Nissan will make a similar purchase this year remains to be seen, but the brand has taken a similar leap with the Argonauts, who now sport a Nissan shoulder patch.

With the franchises, the big benefit is in the joint promotional opportunities and the ability to involve players and coaches both internally and externally. CFL players are without question the most approachable of professional athletes, and dealers (particularly on the Prairies) are already making use of player appearance

exclusivity on selected media, or in selected time zones, or even in selected sports. The result is that the consortium has been freed to offer advertising opportunities to non-Olympic partners who in previous years would very likely have been shut out. The consortium can also offer modestly-priced packages – Pelley says under \$100,000 – to advertisers with limited budgets.

"It's one of the intangible benefits that we never even thought about when we started this process," he says.

opportunities. Nissan is also playing a big role in tailgate parties.

The Nissan Cube is getting most of the exposure, largely because it is the one new vehicle launch this year, "but that doesn't mean that going forward it will always be the vehicle," says Jodoin.

The Cube was launched at this year's Toronto Auto Show with Argonaut support. One of the messages Nissan wanted to communicate was the interior roominess of the boxy vehicle. At the show, five beefy Argos fit quite comfortably into the vehicle, a message the automotive media readily picked up.

This year, largely out of discussions with the franchises, Nissan has forged a link between the Cube and team cheerleaders. Each of Nissan's sponsored teams has been supplied with a Nissan Cube, and the vehicles are being used to ferry the cheerleaders to their various public engagements. Nissan hoped it could encourage the cheerleaders to blog and Tweet about their experiences – social media have played a big part in the Cube's launch in Canada – but that's still a work in progress. Some teams are way ahead of the others in their use of social media, says Jodoin, and it's not the type of thing that you can force on an organization.

"Some teams take it and run with it," says Jodoin. "Some teams take it and walk with it."

Nissan has several high-profile promotions with the league and franchises. It is a partner in the Wendy's Kick for a Million promotion, this year offering a 2010 Nissan 370Z Roadster for a successful kick from the 30-yard line. It will also sponsor the Toronto Argonauts' Nissan Day, where one lucky fan will drive away in a Nissan Cube. But the real

Continued on page 8

Rainmen

Continued from page 1

Rogers Wireless was a Rainmen sponsor last year, but that was through a local dealer. It was the local dealer who brought the opportunity to Gordon's attention. This year's contract will be the first executed through Rogers' national marketing office, and Gordon promises it will be heavily activated, but won't yet reveal how.

Tim Hortons

Continued from page 6

appropriate response has been approved, even if it only takes a few hours, the brand can suffer serious damage.

"Think of how fast information can be disseminated. It is literally at the drop of a hat. You can create a riot using Twitter in the space of 10 minutes," says Harris.

As remarkable as was the explosion of anti-Tim blogging and Twittering over the few hours of the crisis, so was the calm that settled over the marketplace once Tim Hortons issued its statement. The conventional wisdom surrounding online communications is that it is a river, and once a message passes you by, it cannot be brought back. That's not what happened here, and that stands as eloquent testimony to the strength of the Tim Hortons brand.

Harris says there was almost an audible sigh of relief when Tim Hortons announced its error and withdrew the sponsorship. Tim Hortons is a brand with a fiercely loyal following and a vast army of brand advocates. Harris says they were waiting for a signal from Tim Hortons that would allow them to resume loving the brand.

When that signal finally arrived, they wiped the nervous perspiration from their brow, turned to the counter and ordered themselves a double-double.

SKYY

Continued from page 4

SKYY will also run a sampling program at select LCBO locations leading up to the festival. These will be elegant affairs as befits a major film festival sponsorship, with a red carpet underfoot and SKYY Girls in attendance. Samplers will get to taste the cocktails SKYY mixologists have created exclusively for TIFF party-goers.

SKYY is offering tickets to the opening and closing night galas through a simple enter-to-win contest at www.skyy.ca. The contest entry makes no attempt to engage consumers with the brand, and does not collect any consumer information, the intention being to reinforce the genuine nature of the connection between the brand and the festival.

As a premium brand with modest market share, evaluation of a sponsorship of this magnitude is relatively easy, says Malloch. It's been a good year, with sales up 15% year to date, but he knows he will see a further lift following this year's execution

Nissan

Continued from page 7

opportunity to connect with customers will be realized through relationships between the dealers and the franchises, and that's something that only just beginning. "That's the future of this partnership," says Jodoin.

Head office is facilitating communications, holding monthly conference calls with dealers and franchises to make certain the relationships are strong and to discuss new promotional possibilities. Beyond that, says Jodoin, it's up to the teams and the dealers to decide how best to leverage each other's strengths. So far, so good, says Jodoin. Participation among dealers on the Prairies is 100%.

The Agenda is full (and better than ever)

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THE Sponsorship REPORT

The Sponsorship Report is published for corporate sponsors, sponsored groups and intermediaries in sports, arts and entertainment, and causes.

Published monthly by
Database Publishing,
P.O. Box 378,
Campbellford, Ontario Canada
K0L 1L0
Tel: 705-653-1112
Fax: 705-653-1113
www.sponsorship.ca
E-Mail: tsr@sponsorship.ca

Publisher/Editor: Mark Sabourin
Assistant Editor: Carol Robbins
Contributing Editors: Glyne Jenkins,
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Scott Williams
Editorial Advisor: Judith Barker
Founding Publisher: Kenneth Scott

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
One year: \$240 + GST
payable in Canadian funds to
Database Publishing
Registered charities: \$205 + GST
US and overseas addresses: US \$210
ISSN 1201-5326
GST # 89857 7416

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Activation

DAY 1 TUESDAY OCTOBER 20

9:00	Welcome	
9:10-10:40	SELLING THE HONDA INDY TORONTO: THE "ANDRETTI-GREEN ECOSYSTEM" APPROACH	John Lopes, Chief Marketing Officer and Vice President, Andretti-G
10:40-11:00	Refreshment Break	
11:00-12:00	KEYNOTE A Properties, Brands & Agencies: Maximize Your Sponsorship ROI in 2010 IMI International, Toronto, ON Presenter TBA	KEYNOTE B TBA. See www.sponsorship.ca/summit.html for details Baron Manett, Senior Vice President, Strategy, Ariad Custom Communications
12:00-1:15	Luncheon	
1:20-2:05	Session 1A The Horizontal Approach to Sponsorship Sales Stephane Cherpit, Vice-President, Strategic Alliances. Just for Laughs, Montreal QC	Session 1B Brand-Message Integration: Becel and the Heart Truth Margaret McKellar, Becel Brand Manager, Unilever Canada, Toronto, ON
2:10-2:55	Session 2A Making the Retail Connection Larry Futers, Vice President, Partner, InField Marketing Group, Toronto ON	Session 2B Activated Carbon: Sponsorship in a Carbon-Conscious Marketplace Nelson Switzer, Director, Corporate Responsibility Direct Energy, Toronto, ON
2:55-3:15	Refreshment Break	
3:15-4:00	Session 3A Brand + Community Engagement = Success Rob Drynan, Executive Director, Camp Oochigeas, Toronto, ON	Session 3B Private Sponsorship, Public Assets: Leveraging Infrastructure Investment Doug Blakely, Advertising and Sponsorship Manager, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, Whitby, ON
4:10-5:10	DON'T DO THIS! WHAT MAKES THE TELUS WORLD SKI & SNOWBOARD FESTIVAL AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SPONSORSHIP ACTIVATION?	Sue Eckersley
5:10-7:15	Networking Reception	

DAY 2 WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21

9:00	Welcome	
9:10-10:40	A PASSION FOR FASHION: STRATEGIES FOR 24/7 BRAND-BUILDING USING NEW MEDIA TOOLS	Mitch Grossbach, Chief Revenue Officer, Modelinia, New York
10:40-11:00	Refreshment Break	
11:00-12:00	KEYNOTE A The Sky is not Falling: Sponsorship Opportunities in a Challenging Marketplace Benoît Séguin, Associate Professor, School of Human Kinetics, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON	KEYNOTE B Once Upon a Time: Sponsorship and Storytelling Baron Manett, Senior Vice President, Strategy, Ariad Custom Communications
12:00-1:15	Luncheon	
1:20-2:05	Session 4A Sponsorship Contract Essentials Sharon E. Groom, Partner, McMillan LLP, Toronto, ON	Session 4B Repurposing Inventory to Maximize Value: BMO and the Power of Blue BMO Financial Group Presenter TBA
2:10-2:55	Session 5A Pimp My Deck! A Makeover Session for Your Collateral or Website Neil Woodley, Creative Director, CIM, Toronto, ON	Session 5B Into the Jaws of a Lion: Commercial Rights Management and the 2010 Olympic Games Bill Cooper, Director, Commercial Rights Management, Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, Vancouver, BC
2:55-3:15	Refreshment Break	
3:15-4:15	JOIN THE CONVERSATION: A FREEWHEELING DISCUSSION OF SPONSORSHIP IN THE MOMENT (NOT THE AGE) OF SOCIAL MEDIA Collin Douma, Vice President of Social Media, Proximity Canada; Hessie Jones, Vice President of Social Media and Word of Mouth Marketing, Isobar Digital, North Baron Manett, Senior Vice President, Strategy, Ariad Custom Communications; Natasha Koifman, President, NKPR	
4:20	Adjourn	

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Media and Public Relations

Green Racing, Indianapolis, Indiana

KEYNOTE C

TBA. See www.sponsorship.ca/summit.html for details
Natasha Koifman, President, NKPR

Session 1C

**The Internal Public - Shifting an Organizational Culture
Toward Sponsorship Marketing** Lee Rennick, President, and Peter Hoppe, CEO,
Rennick Marketing Solutions/Rennick Hoppe & Associates, Toronto, ON

Session 2C

**Giving with a Purpose:
Merging Sponsorship Strategy with Philanthropic Giving**
Cindy Mielke, Director, Marketing, West 49, Burlington, ON

Session 3C

**Lessons from the Sports Field:
Building Compelling Media Stories for Causes and their Sponsors**
Anthony Alfred, Director, Communications, ABC Canada Literacy Foundation, Toronto, ON
y, President, Watermark Communications Inc., Whistler, BC

City, New York

KEYNOTE C

**For a Good Cause:
Public Relations and the Power of Cause Marketing**
Natasha Koifman, President, NKPR

Session 4C

Changing the Story: Using Sponsorship to Rehabilitate a Public Image
CN Presenter TBA

Session 5C

**When Bad Things Happen to Good People:
Crisis Communications for Sponsored Properties**
Kerry Harris, President, Canadian Operations,
Weber Shandwick, Toronto, ON

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