
The Marketing and Communications Committee was called to order at 5 p.m. by Co-Chair Ashley Tetrick. USTA Director of Marketing and Communications Dan Leary welcomed the committee and visitors and introduced the participants on the dais – Tetrick and USTA staffers Wendy Ross and Kyle Creditt, as well as Photographer Mark Hall, Videographer Rich Johnston, Hoof Beats Editor James Witherite, Creative Director Gena Gallagher and Advertising Director Heather Cason.

Roll call was taken by Dan Leary. Committee Members present were: co-chairperson Ashley Tetrick, Chris Antonacci, Ivan Axelrod, Dan Bittle, Barry Brown, Cathy Dessert, Joe Frasure, Kevin Greenfeld, Edison Hatter, Skip Hoovler, Rick Kane, Chris McErlean, Steve O’Toole, Dr. Tim Powers, Jason Roth, Jason Settlemoir, Dein Spriggs, Cathy Webb, and Shawn Wiles.

The following agenda items were presented at the meeting.

1. **USTA Social Media Recap and Analytics – 2023**

Wendy Ross discussed the eight social media platforms that are run by the social media team – Facebook (ustrotting and HarnessRacingFanzone), Twitter (X) (ustrotting and HRFZ), Instagram (ustrotting and HRFZ), YouTube (ustrotting), and TikTok (ustrotting). Ross discussed several of the social media highlights during the past year as well as the goals and objectives of the social media team.

Kyle Creditt showed videos using GoPro, 360 and drone camera technology. Ross explained the promotion of Jordan Ross in the World Driving Championship and some of the new types of videos done in 2023 – “We Are Harness Racing,” “Man on the Street” and hype videos.

Dan Leary summarized the analytics for the eight social media platforms in 2023 emphasizing that those platforms now have 140,990 total followers and explained some of the plans for 2024

2. **Social Media Advertising Campaigns**

With the \$10,000 funding provide by the committee last year, the team was able to conduct social media advertising campaigns in 2023. Kyle Creditt explained the Why, What, Where and How of those campaigns, the excellent results achieved and gave details of the analytics.

3. **Recipe For Success**

In an educational presentation, Ross and Creditt discussed a plan on why and how to use social media. They discussed planning and execution, scheduling and analyzing results. They explained what works best with the different platforms – Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram and TikTok. Ross and Creditt went into detail on what to post on feeds vs. stories, and where best to post pictures and videos, the need to be consistent, frequency and quality, and how to target different audiences, including new fans.

4. **2024 Broadcast Funding Requests**

Leary discussed the success of the 2023 broadcast funding initiative, which saw the \$125,000 awarded by the Broadcast Committee resulting in assistance to 18 organizations that exposed about 3 million people to live harness racing broadcasts on TV and the internet.

Leary summarized the 2024 requests from 21 organizations, with requests that totaled more than \$400,000 and the recommended distribution of \$125,000 to 19 of those organizations.

5. **Harnessracing.com**

Dan Leary did a presentation of the development of the new harnessracing.com website. The project has been directed by the Electronic Media Committee co-chaired by Mark Loewe and Ashley Tetrick with members Chris Antonacci, Chris McErlean, Jim Miller, Seth Rosenfeld, Jason Settlemoir, Jim Simpson, and Gabe Wand. The committee has participated in a survey and Zoom calls to provide valuable input and feedback over the past year.

After some comments, the meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.