

HORSE RACING ALBERTA MARKETING CAMPAIGN

2018





INDUSTRIES MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Horse Racing Alberta (HRA) created a very successful marketing campaign. Beginning with a clear focus of broadening its customer base by talking to a much less traditional audience. The consistent market presence and the industries' commitment to "re-branding" the race experience to attract "newbies" have been the real drivers of marketing success. Research, careful evaluation, planning execution and learning from successes year over year have all contributed to the campaigns continued success.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Since 2003, the industries' marketing objectives were to:

1. Develop a consistent brand for live horse racing in Alberta under "*The Horses*"
2. Position live horse racing as entertainment
3. Grow attendance and develop a new consumer base
4. To be recognized internationally for premier horse racing, breeding and entertainment
5. Increase live handle by 3%

RESULTS

There are many ways to measure the objective of repositioning live horse racing relative to competitors in the entertainment sports and gaming sectors within the Alberta market against 18 to 34 year olds:

- *Awareness - THE HORSES* brand is resonating with consumers.
 - o Ipsos-ASI was contracted from 2003 to 2005 to measure the effectiveness of the campaign. Results showed that the advertising had good breakthrough and was shifting image and increasing awareness of and interest in horse racing in the province. The campaign continues to do its primary job of increasing awareness and changing perceptions of horse racing among the young adult target.
 - o *Brand results* - the tag line "*There's a horse for everyone*" gained increased awareness among the Albertan population, rising from 21 per cent prompted recall pre-campaign to 35 per cent in 2005.
 - o According to Ipsos ASI, as of June 2004, 92% of respondents were aware of live horse racing in Alberta. Awareness is also significantly higher among younger adults aged 18 to 34 (53%).
 - o *Attitudes towards horse racing* - Albertans' attitudes towards "horse racing is a good form of entertainment" went from 54% in June 2003 to 69% in May 2005.
- *Attendance* increased.
 - o Measuring attendance from January to June 2003 compared to January to June 2004, attendance increased by 34%. Each year after, attendance increased by approximately 10%.
 - o Many people have attributed the advertising to seeing more "young faces" at the track.
- *Total handle* increased year over year. In 2008, the total "handle" is up 6.9%.
 - o \$112,723,517 (*August 3, 2008*) compared to \$105,474,057 (*August 3, 2007*)
 - o From 1991 to 2000, Alberta experienced a handle decline of approximately \$95 million. It is important to note that this campaign was developed to first stop a multi-year decline in handle, and that this type of campaign and tourism advertising approach was the first of its kind among to the racing industry in North America. A variety of natural disasters or diseases such as West Nile Virus, BSE and SARS had an adverse affect to our provincial handle in 2003. The handle was down 0.7% compared to 2002, but we were able to hold our own as Canada saw an overall decline of 2.9%. By July 31, 2004 total handle increased by 4.69% compared to year over year (which is \$4 million over the same time last year).



OTHER ACCOLADES:

- 2004 ALTO Marketing Excellence Award recognizing a creative and original campaign that encourages travel to and within Alberta, and who by their actions inspire others and demonstrate what can be achieved by working together.
- 2005 Marketing Gold Award for Outdoor – National advertising award managed by Marketing Magazine which honours effective advertising that is simple, memorable and relevant – real advertising for real products and services.
- The direct mail piece introduced and distributed in August 2005 resulted thus far in proving to be successful. Northlands Park has experienced a minimum of 400 people redeeming vouchers each week (an above average redemption of over 3%).
- Best of Show at the 2005 Ad Rodeo Anvil Awards (Creative and industry awards).
- Best Television and Outdoor at the 2005 Ad Rodeo Anvil Awards (Creative and industry awards).
- Best of Show at the 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007 National Canadian Agricultural Marketing Awards.
- Selected by the Jockey Club of Canada, the industry has been a Sovereign Award finalist in the outstanding film/video/broadcast category for five straight years and has won three out of these five for the television broadcast of the Canadian Derby.
- Gold Award in the Small Market (broadcast shows with 2 million or less viewers) category of the Broadcast Design Association (BDA) Awards.
- 2005 World Trotting Conference Best Local Broadcast.
- International recognition from racetracks in Canada and the United States as an innovative way of advertising horse racing - five racing jurisdictions in North America, including Florida and New Jersey, are using elements of the campaign.
- 2006 Steel Dust Award Multimedia.
- 2007 National Thoroughbred Racing Associations (NTRA) Eclipse Award Winner Best Local Television Broadcast.



HISTORY

In June 2003, Horse Racing Alberta took a bold new step to reverse its dwindling attendance numbers. After years of promoting the sporting and gaming aspects of live horse racing, industry stakeholders agreed to try a new approach.

Extensive market research led to the conclusion that the best way to attract a new audience was to position horse racing as entertainment. The resulting “There’s a Horse for Everyone” campaign generated very positive growth. A conscious attempt was made to celebrate the bond between horse and fan, while using unique horse names to narrate the scene.

In 2004, the campaign was adjusted to address the findings from the 2003 research. Horse Racing Alberta used sharper images, a stronger call-to-action, improved logo placement, increased frequency and outdoor billboards as a new medium. In conjunction with the racetracks, Horse Racing Alberta developed tourism packages (Horsin’ Around in Grande Prairie, Sport of Kings package through Northlands Park and the Stampede Park Summer Package) with regional tourism representatives to promote live horse racing.

In addition to research, Horse Racing Alberta needed to establish a benchmark for attendance in 2003 at the five provincial racetracks. Electronic monitors were installed at all tracks with Stampede Park in late 2003.

The campaign was launched at various times throughout the summer racing season in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie and Millarville. A multi-media campaign was produced and ran over a 24-week period.

The challenge was engaging our target market at a point when they were making decisions regarding their social activities and influencing them to change their behaviours and try something new. To achieve this, the campaign personalized the live horse racing experience by using everyday activities and situations the consumer can relate to and associated them with the excitement of horse racing.

TELEVISION

In order to both stay true to the directive of positioning horse racing as entertainment and attract our target market, an effort was made to create television spots that weren’t just a montage of race footage. A conscious attempt was made to celebrate the human moment that takes place at the track, while using unique horse names to narrate the scene.

PEP TALK, *FALSELY ACCUSED* and *COLD SHOULDER* became memorable names in households. Because of this recall, the 30: second spots are the most important medium for the campaign. With television as the most effective vehicle for consumer reach and message frequency, it is important we continue to run the television creative throughout the live horseracing season to maintain top-of-mind awareness.

LIVE TELEVISION SHOW

In addition to the advertising, a prerequisite for increasing the awareness and tourism popularity of horse racing was to have prominent and broader television exposure. It has been clearly stated that when there is a live TV show that; handle goes up, more HPI (internet wagering, downloads of racing pages, etc.) accounts are opened, and days after new young people come to the track. In 2003, four live television shows were produced and in 2004 seven shows were produced. The shows were broadcast across Alberta and into parts of British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Today 10 shows are produced in one year.



LIVE TELEVISION SHOW CONTINUED

The shows ultimately helped extend the brand, encourage enrolment on HPI, and were used as an educational tool on horse racing (how to read a program). The live shows also complimented the advertising by encouraging consumers that horse racing is a place where “people like them” hang out by showing visuals of the crowds and more specifically, a younger demographic who attend.

Past Learning

- *The variability in recall and breakthrough of individual ads suggest that focusing on a smaller pool of the strongest ads might help maximize impact of campaigns going forward.*
- *Ipsos-ASI has stated that 5 ads spread over approximately 1,500 GRPs, is giving each ad relatively low weight (several received less than 300 GRPs).*
- *Ipsos-ASI lessons learned from mining their database that ads have maximum impact if they start at 150-200 weekly GRPs and can be sustained at lower weights of 75-90 weekly GRPs after 600-700 GRPs.*

RADIO

Competition for horse racing comes not only from other entertainment options, but from any activity that takes up free time. The goal of radio was to find a lighthearted way to position a day at the track against specific targets including movies, golfing, girls' night out and weekend chores.

Past Learning

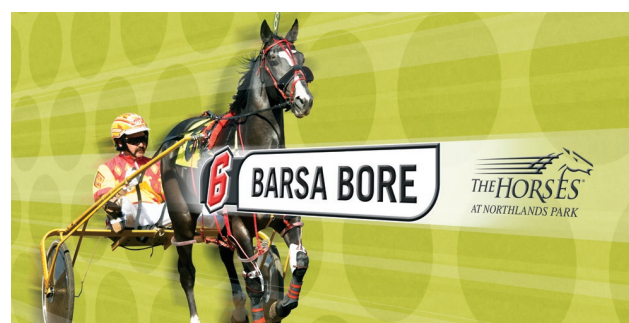
- *The creative rotation should not be both brand ads and event spots as this created confusion for consumers with too many executions in the market at one time.*

OUTDOOR

High impact outdoor mediums of billboards and transit lure people to the track through unconventional and rather suggestive horse names. Paired with portrait-style shots of horses in action, the result is a clean, simple and light-hearted request to consider the track as a social destination.

Past Learning

- *Outdoor works well as a secondary media, as it is working well and contributes to higher recall.*
- *The research also found that secondary media mainly increases frequency of exposure and provides additional reach.*
- *Outdoor companies have challenges with managing creative execution. We now use different companies in different markets to avoid the chance of error in any markets.*
- *Outdoor companies often bonus HRA with extended coverage. CBS and Pattison have both been asked year-over-year to not give extra bonusing during a transition time from Standardbred to Thoroughbred.*
- *Media coverage should be extended over a longer period of time when possible.*



Outdoor creative improved over the years with more dynamic photography, colour imaging and an enhanced look of speed. As well, each year new horse names were created to keep the campaign fresh.




LIVE THOROUGHBRED RACING
THIS WEEKEND
POST TIMES: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:00 P.M.

Racing Information: 261-0214
 Clubhouse Reservations: 261-0120

It's fast. It's free. It's a new show every 15 minutes.

THE HORSES
 AT STAMPEDE PARK

PRINT

When you're trying to reach people at the time and place where they make their entertainment decisions, where better to be than in the movie listings? For this unique placement, movie parody ads were designed to capture the cinema-style drama of the track. In addition to the mock-movie ads, from 2003 to 2005 full-page ads were purchased in the summer vacation guide published by Travel Alberta.

Past Learning

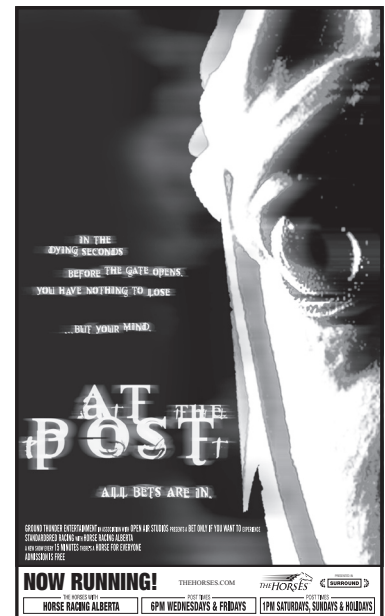
- *Print works well with loyal fans and sports enthusiasts.*
- *Creative banners remind patrons of dates, times and details of the special events and promotions.*

ON-TRACK PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Several track collateral pieces were created to help the first-time track attendee navigate through the horse racing learning curve. Coasters, banners, posters and table cards reinforce the brand message and help communicate the simplicity of wagering and following a race.

Past Learning

- *This really benefited new customers to make them more comfortable.*
- *The brand experience should be carried through at all levels – from the advertising to the physical space of the track environment.*





TOURISM PACKAGES

In 2004, tourism packages were introduced for the first time in the marketing mix by Horse Racing Alberta. In conjunction with Travel Alberta's TDR's, the three tourism packages were developed for the first time. "Horsin' Around in Grande Prairie" was developed for Evergreen Park, which was marketed in Fort Nelson, Dawson Creek, Peace River and Grande Cache. In Calgary, the "Stampede Park Summer Package" was implemented and in Edmonton, a tourism package promoting the 75th Canadian Derby developed. All three packages promote travel within the province, with advertising also extended into northern British Columbia for Grande Prairie.

Evergreen Park's target of a total of 50 room nights at the Stanford Inn and 200 additional guests for the horse races were surpassed expeditiously—a total of 99 room nights packages were booked and more people attended the races than in 2003.

At Stampede Park, a target of 200 new room nights for the Best Western Calgary Centre Inn and 400 new out-of-town customers to the racetrack and casino was identified. Northlands Park target was to sell 20 packages, and they exceeded this goal.

WEBSITE thehorses.com

At the request of racing fans and the general public, the industries website was overhauled in 2008 with the fan in mind. Consumers asked for more information on horse racing on a daily basis. The website provides constant updates on the industry, major races and daily participants (human and equine). In August 2008, the industries website experienced close to one million hits in the month, more importantly the research indicated the visitors average length of visit to the site was 14 minutes and 29 seconds.

The website continues to change and future goals include podcasts and video.



THE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

In 2006, *the Horses* moved into a maturing and defining year for the campaign. It was important to carry forward the positioning as an entertaining night out, and move past the first stage of direct comparisons previously used (alternative to movies, a club, or a usual social activity). Horse Racing evolved into a destination that is one as entertaining on its own, versus as a comparison to its competitors. In 2007, the campaign continued to run the same television properties with new outdoor names. *LOOSE BOLTS*, *DIRTY THOUGHTS*, *BOB'S GIRLFRIEND*, and *INCREDIBLE ITCH* continued to resonate with younger audiences.

In 2008, Horse Racing added four new television properties. Learning from past success and research *GOLD DIGGER*, *BIG BREAKUP*, *GOOD NEWS* and *PARTY'S OVER* were produced. It is recommended to continue airing the commercials produced in 2008 during 2009 in Edmonton, Lethbridge and Grande Prairie.