

# WHITE PAPER

Presented by  
Partnership Group – Sponsorship Specialists™

## **Maintaining Ethics** Brent Barootes

What does your organization stand for? I sometimes question the integrity and ethics of both sponsors and selling properties in the sport and sponsorship marketing world. Last week, I was in Victoria at the CPRS (Canadian Public Relations Conference) and it was amazing. Great speakers like Anna Marie Tremonti of CBC Radio's *The Current*; Wayne Parrish, COO of Postmedia; Rachel Douglas of Kellogg's; Lindsay Gordon, president and CEO of HSBC Bank of Canada dominated the lineup. I learned a great deal and came away thinking more about the question I opened with-What does your organization stand for?

As a selling property or brand buying sponsorship, we need to maintain our core values and objectives. Too often, I see a brand getting sucked into a sponsorship based solely on emotion or all the "value adds" that are provided such as conference registrations, seats to an event, shirts, access to celebrities, and such. Sure, those are all part of the sponsorship equation, but when the sale is based solely on this and not on delivering the objectives of the sponsor, it is wrong. When the property's goal is "to bring in the money" and it fails to see the true equation of a win-win partnership, it is unethical in my book.

It goes for the other side as well. I see brands take advantage of properties. They dangle the carrot of money in front of the property and have the property alter its mission or goal to acquire the money. Too often, the property has to do things outside the scope of its mandate to get the money... and since the money is critical, the property does the wrong thing and takes the money instead of staying true to its mission. In my mind, this is wrong as well. It is wrong for the brand to lead the property down that path, but equally wrong for the property to abandon its stakeholders and shift its mission "just to get the money."

I have been a Rotarian for over 20 years. Rotary has an ethical standards barometer called "The Four-Way Test". I try to live by it in everything I say and do. I was really proud when our company Partnership Group - Sponsorship Specialists™ adopted this Rotary Four-Way Test as our value proposition and philosophy last February at our corporate retreat in Banff. I know I have referenced it before in the Tuesday Morning Commentary, but I don't think it hurts to look at it again. I do so every day.

***In all we say and do;***

***Is it the TRUTH?***

***Is it FAIR to all concerned?***

***Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?***

***Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?***

If your organization can live by these standards, I believe you will be extremely successful. If you base your personal life and that of the organization you work for on standards like these, then integrity, ethics, and positive outcomes are inevitable.