



SMCC March Breakfast Forum - Getting Festive: The Why and the ROI on Festivals

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

James O'Connor, Vice President, Partnerships, Arts & Communications

James' highly successful career in sponsorship and development only came after many years as one of the National Ballet of Canada's stars on stage. James has graced us with his talent as a soloist in such performances as Four Temperaments, Swan Lake and The Taming of the Shrew. He received his training from the Alabama School of Fine Arts, the San Francisco Ballet School, the Pacific Northwest Ballet School, and the School of American Ballet – New York City Ballet.

As a professional dancer, James performed with the Boston Ballet from 1986-1990, and then moved to Toronto to perform with the National Ballet of Canada from 1990-2000. Before joining A&C's sponsorship team, James acquired his skill by working with some of Toronto's most influential not-for-profit organizations.

His passion and commitment to the National Ballet of Canada led to his role as Artistic Liaison for the company in 2000. He then took on the role of Manager of Corporate Sponsorship with ACT, and lent his expertise to the International Aids Conference for AIDS 2006, Toronto. In 2006, James joined the Sponsorship Sales Development Department at the Harbourfront Centre, where he facilitated many successful sponsorship and development campaigns.

In a voluntary capacity, James is a current member and past President of the Board, for the Art of Time Ensemble, under the Artistic Direction of Andrew Burashko. Currently James can be found on most weekends teaching ballet at Canada's National Ballet School, riding his bicycle and playing tennis. And, he has traded in his tights for the rigours of hot yoga.

Jennifer Frees, Associate Director, Sponsorships, TIFF

Jennifer is an innovative professional with diverse fundraising, marketing, communications and event experience in both non-profit and agency sectors. For the last 3 years, she has worked with TIFF to increase sponsorship participation in both TIFF Bell Lightbox and Festival properties, and ensure maximum retention and satisfaction of existing corporate partners. Jennifer possesses an advanced knowledge of client and consumer value drivers, alongside proven high-volume partner acquisition skills

Howard Lichtman, President, The Lightning Group

The Lightning Group finds "Paths To New Revenue" and provides Virtual Chief Marketing Officer services and strategic guidance to a host of blue chip clients, ranging from the Ottawa Senators to the Royal Conservatory of Music, from Holland Bloorview Rehabilitation Hospital to Express Scripts (Fortune 25), and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. Howard is also responsible for all of the marketing and programming for the Taste of the Danforth. He recently launched a sister agency, EthniCity, a multicultural marketing insights, strategy, creative and execution firm dedicated to helping companies drive growth by engaging ethnic communities across Canada and the United States.

In addition to his corporate successes, Howard's educational background includes an MBA from Schulich Business School, and a law degree (Osgoode Hall). He is a graduate of The Wexner Heritage Program and he teaches a course in "How to Launch an E-Business" at Ryerson University. Howard is Chairman of the Board for a Rotman Business School course ("Integrative Management Challenge") and a member of the Devil's Advocate Panel for Schulich's Global Management Program

Brad Warren, Marketing Manager, GoodLife Fitness

Brad works for the largest Fitness club provider in Canada and 4th largest in the world. GoodLife Fitness, is a great place to work, he truly enjoys working for a company that wants to give every Canadian the opportunity to Live a Fit and Healthy Good Life. His experience in the industry is very diverse with many roles in Sales, Marketing, Sponsorships, Management, and Social Media. Brad is also a certified personal trainer and loves to help people get started with exercise. He really enjoys meeting great people, organizations and spreading the Good Life gospel. He has been in the Fitness Industry for 16 years and has cherished every moment. Brad handles all sponsorships for GoodLife fitness in Ontario. GoodLife attends over 300 events per year, with 2 objectives: getting Canadians into their clubs and promoting the brand. He am also responsible for strategic cross promotional partnerships nationally.