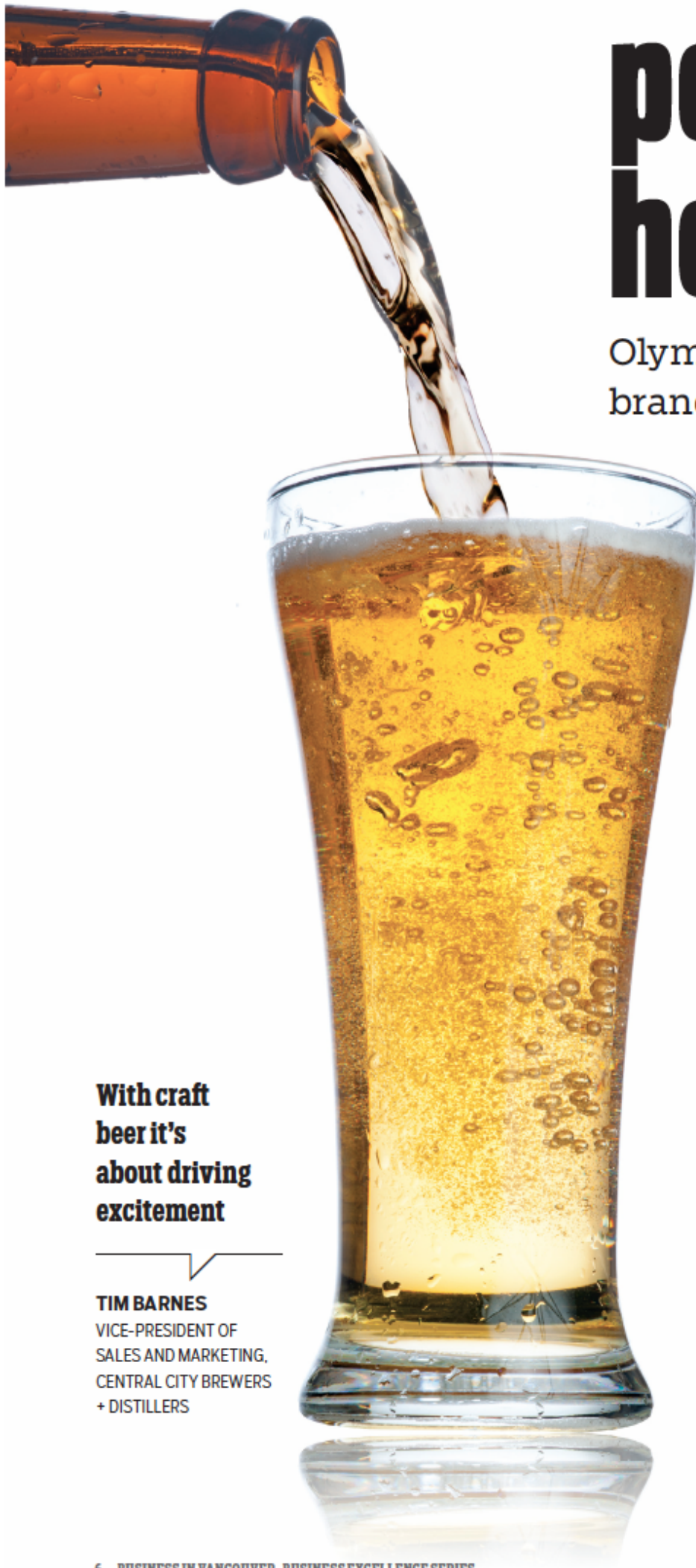


Surrey brewer peddles bike hockey promo

Olympic Red Racer marketing ploy raises brand profile on shoestring budget



With craft beer it's about driving excitement

TIM BARNES
VICE-PRESIDENT OF
SALES AND MARKETING,
CENTRAL CITY BREWERS
+ DISTILLERS

BY BOB MACKIN | BMACKIN@BIV.COM | [TWITTER.COM/BOBMACKIN](https://twitter.com/BOBMACKIN)

While Molson and Budweiser waged a multi-million-dollar battle on television and online during the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, Surrey's Central City Brewers + Distillers came up with a way to grab attention on a shoestring for its Red Racer brand.

They created a viral video for a tongue-in-cheek campaign to add a new sport to the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea: bike hockey.

"We're all about beers and bikes; let's put the two together," said vice-president of sales and marketing Tim Barnes, pointing to the beer's label of a red-haired



Tim Barnes, vice-president of sales and marketing,
Central City Brewers + Distillers: "we're all about beers
and bikes; let's put the two together" | CHUNG CHOW

woman wearing a windswept red skirt aboard a red bike. "During the Olympics, what is more Canadian than hockey?"

The two-minute-two-second viral video, by TheNumber Creative of Victoria, shows a coach giving players a pre-game pep talk before they hit the ice riding mountain bikes and wearing Red Racer jerseys.

The video – which had more than 18,000 views on YouTube by the end of the Olympics – includes a rather awkward line change, complete with bikes lifted over the boards, and a simulated mid-ice fight between two players.

Barnes said the video cost \$2,000 and was intended to be an ad packaged as a parody.



Catherine Osler
President, TEC Canada

TEC Canada is proud to support BIV's Business Excellence Series: Marketing to Increase Sales. How often do you hear people debate the difference between sales and marketing? Why are organizations driven to understand the difference, or focus on one over the other? Drilling down into this topic has never been more important to achieving business excellence. More than ever before consumers are in the driver's seat. Inundated with over 5000 marketing messages a day, it isn't surprising that they proactively seek information versus being sold a product or service.

We can no longer rely on traditional media plans, or interruptive marketing. Consumers are sharing, talking, networking, bookmarking, and scoring via social media, blogs and websites. They are demanding to be informed, engaged and entertained by your brand. Content marketing is paramount to any marketing mix. Consumers want it. Search engines rely on it.

When was the last time you purchased something without first researching it online? Content marketing is the art of communicating to the customer to make them more informed, thereby shortening the sales conversion cycle. Recent studies show that B2B companies with blogs generate 67% more leads per month than non-blogging firms and 70% of consumers prefer getting to know a company via articles rather than ads.

The line between marketing and sales is blurring as consumers actively seek to learn more about your brand. Are you ready to tell your story?

Catherine Osler, President, TEC Canada

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Tim Barnes, vice-president of sales and marketing, Central City Brewers + Distillers: "we put it all on the line and then shotgunned out of the gate, as opposed to growing" | CHUNG CHOW

"It should feel like a parody you'd see on [CBC's] *Rick Mercer [Report]*," he said.

The video, promoted on social media networks, followed the launch of Red Racer India Session Ale, a 4% alcohol by volume (ABV) "little brother" of Central City's 9% ABV Red Racer India Pale Ale. "With craft beer it's about driving excitement. When you launch a product, you've got to create that excitement. That helps your sales in all other beers," Barnes said.

The bike hockey video and a video of brewmaster Gary Lohin sampling the new ale are part of Barnes' strategy to market digitally and affordably as the company grows into its 68,000-square-foot, \$35 million brewhouse opened last fall on Bridgeview Drive in Surrey.

The 2003-opened company produced 7,000 hectolitres (700,000 litres) of suds a year at the brewpub in the Surrey Central complex and has tripled its capacity with the new brewhouse. With the addition of new fermenting tanks, it will eventually do 35,000 hectolitres. The goal is to someday hit 100,000, or 10 million litres.

"We did a quantum leap. If you want to use a poker term, we doubled down," Barnes said. "We put it all on the line and then shotgunned out of the gate, as opposed to growing."

Central City isn't the only brewery to realize the power of viral video this year. Minnesota-based Lakemaid Beer spent \$1,000 to attach a GoPro camera to a mini drone for delivery of a case of beer to ice fishers on a frozen Wisconsin lake.



A YouTube.com screenshot from the Red Racer bike hockey parody video

The January 21-uploaded video gained more than 381,000 YouTube views and coverage by the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and the *Today Show* at a time when Budweiser was ramping up its National Football League sponsorship on the road to the Super Bowl.

The Federal Aviation Administration, which regulates U.S. airspace, told Lakemaid to keep its drone grounded. By then, it didn't matter, as Lakemaid had garnered publicity it could never have afforded to buy. ↴

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