

TDNQA

The Jockey Club and TOBA launched the website [Thoroughbred Ownerview](#) 18 months ago in an attempt to better inform prospective and new Thoroughbred owners about the industry and what to expect from Thoroughbred ownership. The free site provides information on everything from owners, racing syndicates, trainers, veterinarians, to state incentives and licensing. Gary Falter, who runs the OwnerView site, sat down with *TDN's* Justina Severni to discuss the reason behind the website's creation and how it has helped prospective and current owners so far.



Gary Falter
Ownerview.com

TDN: How did OwnerView come about?

GF: Back in 2011, The Jockey Club hired McKinsey & Company to do some research on our industry and they came back with some recommendations on how we can build sustainable growth in our industry.

At the Round Table in 2011, we announced nine initiatives, one of which came from a recommendation from McKinsey, to build some new resources and tools to encourage Thoroughbred ownership. Through their interviews of about a thousand owners during that year, they uncovered an overwhelming response from owners that there just wasn't enough information easily available when they first entered our business. Some even said it was like a board game that came with no instructions that they had to figure out on their own. Without a whole lot of direction as to what to build, McKinsey recommended that we build some new tools and resources. So, it started off with a website--which we have since termed Thoroughbred OwnerView.

TDN: What type of information can be accessed on the OwnerView site?

GF: The website provides information about every trainer in North America, as well as statistics. We have a lot of detailed information about trainers, racing syndicates, various publications, and licensing and we continue to add more content. The more we looked at this, we realized that there are many touch points in our industry for Thoroughbred owners and we wanted this website to almost be like a Yellow Pages where people can go and find all the relevant information about Thoroughbred ownership in one place.

TDN: How many hits has the website had?

GF: It launched in May of 2012 and we've had over 100,000 unique visits and we're getting close to 800,000 page views.

TDN: What is in the "profiles" section of the site?

GF: We added a section called "owner profiles" which allows any licensed owner to register with the site and put up a profile page, which is like a background page about themselves. They can add their bios, information about how they got started in the business, their best horses, the trainers they've used and any advice they may have for newcomers.

We also have a section for trainers where they can register their profiles. They can put up information on how to contact them, a bio about themselves, what their methods and practices are, and what tracks they're stabled at. We have just over 400 trainers registered.

TDN: In October, OwnerView launched a service that allows owners to contact you with various questions about the industry. Why was that created?

GF: There are multiple phases of OwnerView. The first phase was to build the website and continue to enhance the site. The next step was to create a service where prospective or new owners could reach out to us and ask questions, learn about the fundamentals of ownership and be able to talk to a neutral, unbiased resource.

TDN: What are your goals for the site and helpline?

GF: Our whole goal is just to educate them so, when they do decide to make that step forward, they'll have enough basic, fundamental information to know what questions to ask and where to turn.

TDN: Who can call the helpline?

GF: It's not just for new or prospective owners. We've had a few requests from existing owners who had questions and we've tried to answer their questions or steer them in the right direction.

TDN: What do you typically discuss in these calls?

GF: We try to go over the fundamentals of ownership. Do you have a business plan? What are your goals and objectives? Do you really have a timetable for when you want to first get into ownership? Have you thought about where you want to race? Do you have a budget and do you have an idea of the cost of Thoroughbred ownership--either from a sole ownership or a partnership or for investing in a racing syndicate. We don't go into the selection of horses, trainers, or partnerships, rather we focus on the fundamentals. What I've discovered in some of the calls I've had is that a lot of the people don't quite understand the expense, especially of sole ownership. Hopefully, this will give them a little more background information, so that when they do decide to go forward, they'll come in with their eyes wide open knowing that a typical race horse may cost \$20,000 to \$40,000 a year in maintenance alone to keep in training.

I think this will help with owners understanding those costs and coming in with a plan. Many of those I've talked with have not thought about those things.

TDN: What's next for OwnerView?

GF: We're now in the very early planning stages of a national ownership conference to be held in Lexington at Keeneland in October 2014.

TDN: What do you hope to accomplish with a national conference?

GF: It's still in the early planning stages, but right now the hope is to have a conference devoted in its entirety to Thoroughbred owners. So that new owners, existing owners and experienced owners can come to this conference. It will likely be a two-day conference, though we haven't landed exactly on the schedule and the agenda, but to have a wide variety of offerings during the conference that all owners will find beneficial.

TDN: Do you think OwnerView has been successful so far?

GF: We've had a lot of positive feedback from owners. We have over 110 industry organizations promoting OwnerView on their websites or through their social media, so the industry has embraced the whole concept of having a service dedicated to Thoroughbred owners. I think it's very safe to say everybody in our industry is interested in encouraging ownership and making the ownership experience a very positive one.