

s.16(2)

s.19(1)

Stephanie Duquette <stephanie.duquette@radio-canada.ca>

TANDEM Initiative TANDEM1 message

Catherine J. Tait

8 octobre 2020 à 16:00

À : Guillaume Anioté ·

Rob Jeffery

, Suzanne Guèvremont

René Légère ·

Sandra Mason

Jennifer Rattray

"François R. Roy, Mr."

Sandra Singh

Marie Wilson

Cc : "Goldbloom

Michael"

Cci : stephanie.duquette@radio-canada.ca

Good afternoon,

Please find attached a letter submitted to the Board of Directors by a group of CBC Journalists expressing their concerns relating to an initiative launched by Media Solutions called TANDEM as well as Michael Goldbloom's response to the letter.

I thought it might be useful to share with you the information about the project.

Over the past decade, branded content or 'native advertising' has become a more broadly accepted advertising format. Most media companies including reputable ones like the BBC, The New York Times, The Guardian and others accept such sponsored content on their platforms. At CBC/Radio-Canada this approach is not a new initiative, as we have been doing branded content for several years. With TANDEM we have organized our offering to be able to better meet the needs of the advertising market.

Thank you,
Catherine

Bonjour,

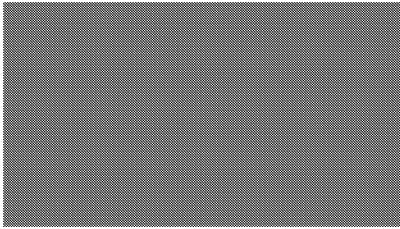
Vous trouverez ci-joint une lettre envoyée au conseil d'administration par un groupe de journalistes de CBC pour exprimer leurs préoccupations concernant le projet TANDEM, lancé par Solutions Média, ainsi que la réponse de Michael Goldbloom à cette lettre.

J'ai pensé qu'il serait utile de vous transmettre de l'information à propos du projet.

Au cours de la dernière décennie, le contenu de marque, ou « publicité intégrée », est devenu un format publicitaire plus largement accepté. La majorité des entreprises médiatiques, y compris des médias réputés comme la BBC, The New York Times, The Guardian et d'autres, ont ce type de contenu commandité sur leurs plateformes. À CBC/Radio-Canada, cette approche n'est pas nouvelle, car nous créons du contenu de marque depuis plusieurs années. TANDEM vise à organiser notre offre pour mieux répondre aux besoins du marché publicitaire.

Merci,
Catherine

Catherine Tait
President and CEO
Présidente-directrice générale



2 pièces jointes



Letter from CBC Journalists to Board (Oct. 5-20).pdf
5691K



Reply to CBC Journalists Group (Oct. 8-20).pdf
92K

October 5, 2020

CBC Board of Directors

Cc: Catherine Tait, CBC President
Barbara Williams, CBC VP
Diane Girard, CBC Values & Ethics Commissioner
Jack Nagler, CBC Ombudsman
Paul Hambleton, CBC Director Journalistic Standards and Practices

Members of the CBC Board:

As CBC journalists deeply concerned about the future of our public broadcaster, we're contacting you with this urgent request to review CBC's new venture "Tandem," a commercial enterprise producing paid-content on behalf of corporate advertisers published on CBC editorial platforms.

We respectfully ask you to intervene and put a stop to this.

We understand CBC/Radio-Canada is under extreme financial pressure, in a rapidly changing media landscape, with advertising models collapsing, amidst a global pandemic. These pressures are real, longstanding and we do not believe that they can or should be taken lightly.

However, we are alarmed that this new venture is short-sighted and threatens the very core of CBC's mission: integrity and public trust. This paid-content is contrary to our mandate, political fodder for our critics, and is bound to sabotage our reputation as a trusted journalistic organization.

This form of paid-content is emphatically *not* traditional advertising. This is pretend news -- ads that purposely and deceptively masquerade as editorial content. It is dangerous and confusing to audiences, particularly at a time when media credibility is strained in this era of "fake news."

In announcing the new venture, chief revenue officer Donald Lizotte described Tandem as follows:

"Clients wanted an integrated, turnkey solution to create quality content and leverage the credibility of our network. I am so pleased that we now offer this."

The CBC is a public broadcaster, not a commercial enterprise. We serve the public as a whole, not individual clients.

Even more outrageous is the endorsement that we will “leverage the credibility of our network.” The credibility that generations of journalists have given so much of themselves to build -- in some cases, with their lives -- is not anything to be leveraged. It will be compromised beyond repair if measures aren't taken to forestall this plan.

Most of us were blindsided this month to learn of CBC Tandem and its “sponsored” and “branded content.” There was no internal communication, no consultation with journalists, nor the CBC’s Ethics Commissioner, nor CBC’s Director of Journalism Standards and Practices.

Instead, we learned from [a news article](#) that CBC is now producing pseudo-news stories and podcasts as “sponsored content” to offer advertisers access to:

“... our country’s most trusted media brand to create content experiences that resonate with Canadians on a deeper level,” said Barbara Williams, Executive Vice-President, CBC, in a release. “Tandem will help Canada’s strongest brands shape and share inspiring stories across our platforms and across the country.

This venture is not what Canadians expect from a publicly-funded CBC/Radio-Canada.

CBC’s mandate does not include the use of the public broadcaster to produce corporate “advertorials.”

Tandem threatens to knock the pillars of CBC journalism down (our Journalistic Standards and Practices, or JSP). It's unthinkable that in an age of fake news and a decline in public trust that CBC would actively seek to "leverage the credibility of our network".

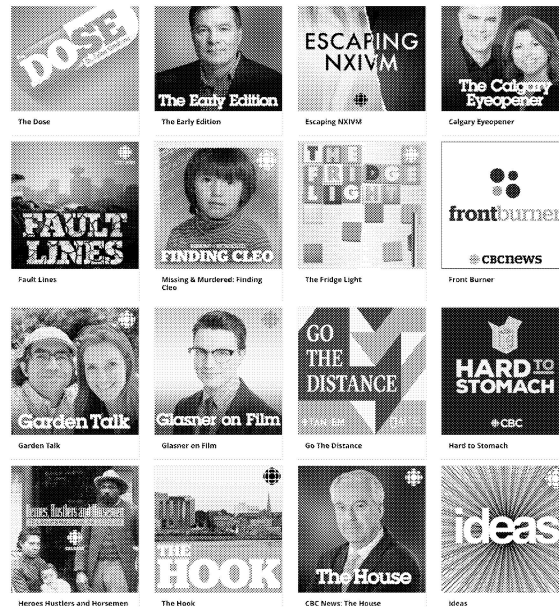
Barb Williams recently tried to assure staff that Tandem is exclusively a sales team effort, that no CBC journalists will be involved, and that there remains a “church and state” separation between advertising and editorial at CBC.

But this doesn’t appear to be the case.

Here are two examples that demonstrate how the CBC’s agreement with Tandem violates the “church and state” division.

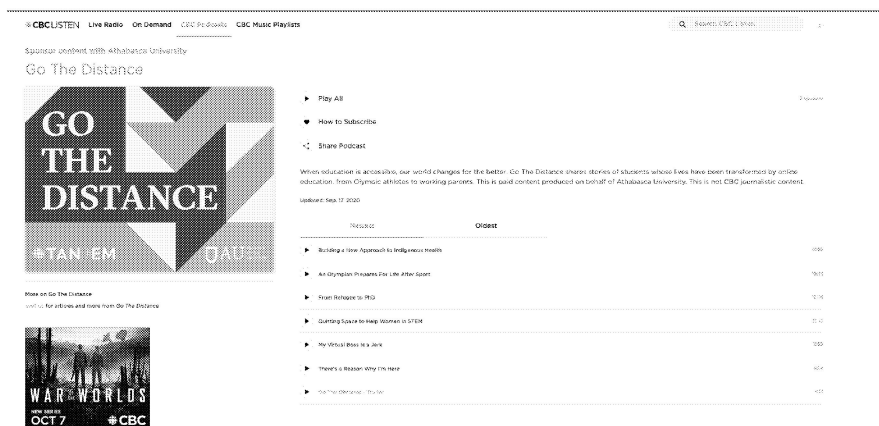
The first concerns “Go The Distance”, a new sponsored podcast created by CBC Tandem on behalf of Athabasca University.

It appears on our podcast page just like any other CBC podcast: there is absolutely no indication it is a paid-for product:

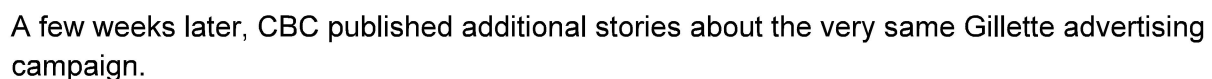


In addition, "Go the Distance" is hosted by a CBC journalist. The podcast emulates all the facets of CBC journalism.

But the fact that it is sponsored content is revealed only in the small print -- which few people read. The impact, intentional or not, both undermines the CBC's relationship with listeners and damages the integrity of our work.

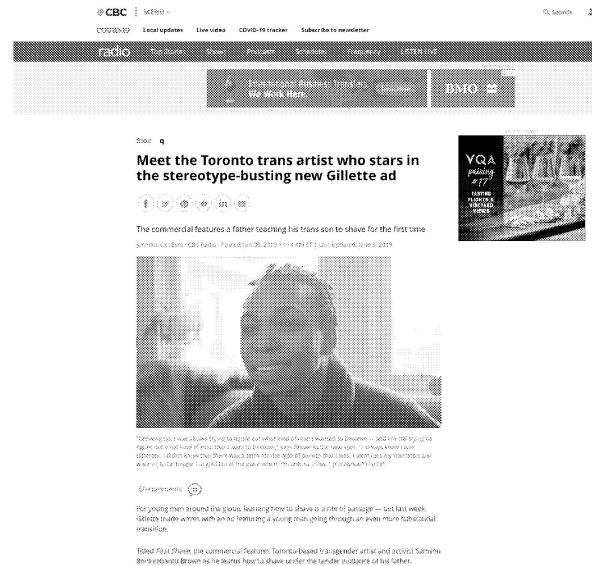


The article was labelled as “sponsor content” but had every appearance of being regular CBC journalism. It was also written by a regular CBC contributor who authors both journalism and “sponsored content”.



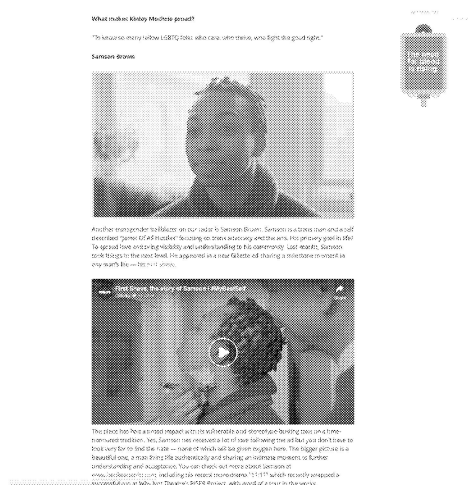
But these stories were not labelled as “sponsored content,” and gave no indication that the company paid for CBC coverage.

“Meet the Toronto trans artist who stars in the stereotype-busting new Gillette ad”



Blurring the lines further, the CBC writer of the original Gillette “sponsored” story wrote a second follow-up story, but this time the article is not labelled as advertising yet republishes much of the same paid-for content:

“Inspiring LGBTQ Canadians and allies tell us what they're proud of this year”



What all this points to is the clear absence of any “church and state” separation between editorial content and paid-advertising.

CBC points to the BBC as a public media company selling sponsored/paid programming; yet BBC employs strict definitions and standards and targets international audiences while blocking paid content from BBC’s domestic audiences.



CBC Tandem appears intent on selling these ads domestically to Canadians in a form that masks the advertising as journalism.

As a trusted public media organization, we have a higher obligation.

In January 2019, CBC/Radio-Canada made submissions to the government of Canada’s review panel studying the Broadcasting Act, submitting that CBC has a unique obligation to Canadians:

We are living in a world where there is an over-abundance of news and information content. Some is good. Much of it is unreliable and even deliberately misleading. In this world, CBC/Radio-Canada’s journalism and standards stand firm; Canadians’ most trusted brand.

We, the undersigned, more than 250 current journalists and many former employees, agree that CBC’s journalism and standards must stand firm, because we are the country’s most trusted source of news and current affairs.

We also believe that CBC Tandem and any paid-content that pretends to be CBC journalism sabotages these standards, purposely confuses our audience, risks political repercussions from our critics, and undercuts our hard won “most trusted brand.”

If the CBC's financial picture is so desperate that it must resort to diluting and cannibalizing the very journalism that has made CBC/Radio-Canada so trusted, then we implore you to request of government a new mandate and funding model before we damage ourselves beyond repair.

Sincerely,

National Reporter	Winnipeg	
Radio Producer Syndication	Calgary	
	Calgary	
Senior Reporter		Ottawa
National Reporter	Calgary	
Host/Correspondent	Vancouver	
	St. John's	
Host	Toronto	
Senior Reporter	Edmonton	
Producer	Vancouver	
Investigative Journalist	Toronto	
Associate Producer	Edmonton	
Assoc. Producer,	Toronto	
Net Talk Producer	Vancouver	
Host, CBC	St. John's, NL	
Producer,	Toronto	
Senior Reporter, National Radio	Toronto	
National Reporter	Winnipeg	
Senior Reporter	Thunder Bay	
Senior Producer	St. John's	
Radio Host	Vancouver	
	Calgary	
Senior Reporter/Editor	Edmonton	
	Toronto	
Senior Reporter	Calgary	
Executive Producer,	Toronto	
Executive Producer, Radio	Toronto	
Producer,	Toronto	
Senior Reporter		
Senior Producer	Toronto	
Producer,	Toronto	
Associate Producer	Vancouver	
Producer	Toronto	
Reporter	Ottawa	
Associate Producer, Radio	Ottawa	

Senior Reporter	Ottawa
Executive Producer,	Toronto
Reporter/Editor	Ottawa
Network Producer Radio, BC	Vancouver
Host,	Toronto
Producer	Calgary
National Reporter	Montreal
Journalist Host	St. John's
Producer	Calgary
Producer-	Toronto
	Toronto
Producer	Fredericton
Senior Producer,	Toronto
Host	Calgary
Reporter	Halifax
Producer/Host	Vancouver
Documentary producer	Montreal
Producer,	Toronto
Reporter,	Calgary
Producer,	Toronto
	Regina
Producer	Victoria, B.C.
Senior Reporter	Toronto
Network Video Producer	
Associate Producer/Technician	Toronto
Reporter	Ottawa
Producer	Vancouver
Executive Producer	Toronto
Producer, Radio	Vancouver, B.C.
Host/Producer	Toronto
News editor/presenter	Thunder Bay
Host	Fredericton
Host/Reporter	Fredericton
Senior Writer,	
Senior Writer,	Toronto
Video Journalist	St. John's
Senior Reporter/Podcast Host	Halifax
Researcher/ on air - Montreal	Ottawa
Assignment Producer	Montreal
	St. John's

Senior Prod.,	Ottawa	
Associate Producer	Toronto	
Senior Producer,	Toronto	
Producer,	Toronto	s.19(1)
Associate Producer	Calgary	
Producer	Toronto	
Temp/ Regular Contributor	Toronto	
Host -	Ottawa	
Producer, CBC	Halifax	
	Toronto	
Associate Producer	Toronto	
Host	Kelowna	
Co-host,	Toronto	
Producer	Toronto	
Senior Reporter	Toronto	
Senior Producer, CBC Radio	Toronto	
Senior Producer	Toronto	
Host, CBC	Calgary	
Investigative Journalist	Winnipeg	
Associate Producer	Ottawa	
Producer	Vancouver	
	Toronto	
CBC journalist	Montreal	
Associate Producer,	Toronto	
Producer	London, UK	
Producer,	Toronto	
Former journalist/producer	Montreal	
Senior Reporter	Toronto	
Former CBC Journalist,	Toronto	
Network social team	Toronto	
Journalist	Vancouver	
National Senior Business Reporter	Toronto	
Arts reporter, host	Montréal	
	Toronto	
Digital senior producer	Winnipeg, MB	
Senior Producer	Calgary	
Producer	Dundas	
Executive Producer,	Calgary	
Radio News Editor/Presenter	Halifax	

News producer	Toronto
Senior Reporter	Ottawa
	BC
Producer,	Winnipeg
Producer, CBC Radio	Toronto
Senior Investigative Reporter	Vancouver
Host,	
Senior Prod.,	Ottawa
Host	CBC
News Host	Ottawa
Reporter	Sudbury
Host,	Calgary
	Ottawa
Producer,	Ottawa
Reporter	
Reporter/Host	Vancouver
Producer -	Toronto
Producer	Toronto
Digital Producer	Toronto
Writer	Toronto
TV Producer	Yellowknife
Reporter	St. John's
Reporter	Edmonton
Reporter	Vancouver
Reporter	Vancouver
	St. John's
	Montreal
Associate Producer	Winnipeg
Associate Producer	Toronto
Web Producer	Toronto
Reporter	Saskatoon
Reporter	Sudbury
National Reporter	Vancouver
	Toronto
Reporter / Editor	Calgary
Reporter	Winnipeg
Associate Producer, Radio	Halifax
Host,	Toronto
Senior Reporter,	Ottawa
Announcer/Operator	Yellowknife
Senior Producer	Toronto

	Producer	Calgary	
Reporter		Winnipeg	s.19(1)
Investigative Reporter		Edmonton	
Reporter / Editor		3.C.	
Reporter			
Investigative reporter		Halifax	
Reporter/Editor		Calgary	
Reporter		Winnipeg	
Producer		Toronto	
Journalist/Host			
Host/Producer			
Executive Producer		Calgary	
Producer /		Toronto	
		Vancouver	
Senior producer,		Vancouver	
Producer		London, UK	
TV Lineup Editor		Montreal	
		Montreal	
Producer		Toronto	
		Toronto	
Producer		Toronto	
		Vancouver	
Host		Dartmouth	
Journalist			
Associate Producer		Toronto	
Reporter		Calgary	
Producer			
Executive Producer		Toronto	
Lineup/Anchor		Montreal	
Producer		Vancouver	
Senior Reporter		Ottawa	
Director Radio		Wpg/Hfx	
Executive Producer		Toronto	
National Reporter/Producer		Toronto	
National Reporter		QC/MTL/STJ/HFX	
Reporter		Vancouver	
Producer		Toronto	
Assignment Producer		Montreal	
		Toronto	
National Reporter			
Host		Sudbury	
Associate Producer		Regina	
Reporter		Halifax	
Reporter		Montreal	

Producer	Toronto	s.19(1)
Producer	Halifax	
	Toronto	
Copy Editor	Halifax	
Producer	Toronto	
Associate Producer	Toronto	
Producter	Toronto	
Anchor	Montreal	
	Toronto	
Journalist	St. John's	
Producer	Toronto	
Producer	Toronto	
Digital Producer	Toronto	
Producer	Thunder Bay	
News Presenter	Ottawa	
Reporter/Producer/Host	Thunder Bay	
Producer	Toronto	
Senior Producer	Toronto	
Associate Producer	Yellowknife	
	Toronto	
Assignment Editor	Winnipeg	
Retired	Toronto	
Senior Reporter		
Senior Prod. "	Winnipeg	
Host		
Ret'd Producer	Toronto	
Reporter	Calgary	
Producer	Montreal	
AP-	Calgary	
AP	Toronto	
Reporter	Winnipeg	
Reporter	Ottawa	
	Winnipeg	
Producer	Vancouver	
Reporter	Sudbury	

National Reporter

Montreal

Halifax

News Producer

Ottawa

National Reporter

Vancovuer



October 8, 2020

BY EMAIL: cbcjournalistsgroup@gmail.com

CBC Journalists' Group

Dear CBC Journalists:

Thank you for your letter to the Board of Directors concerning CBC/Radio-Canada's Tandem initiative and the place of paid content on our editorial platforms.

Catherine Tait has briefed me about this initiative and your concerns. I understand that some of you have met with Barb Williams to discuss these issues and that Barb has announced a pause on any new paid content campaigns in order to consider how best to establish clear requirements for such advertising so that there will be no confusion in the minds of our listeners, readers and viewers of what is journalism and what is sponsored content.

Although I have not yet had an opportunity to discuss this issue with the Board, I know that we are committed to preserving the integrity of our journalism and that we have full confidence in Management's leadership in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Goldbloom".

Michael Goldbloom, C.M.
Chairman
CBC/Radio-Canada Board of Directors