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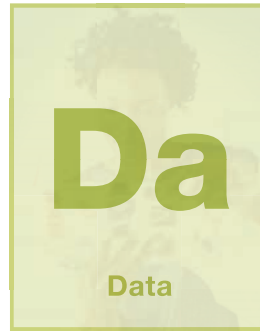
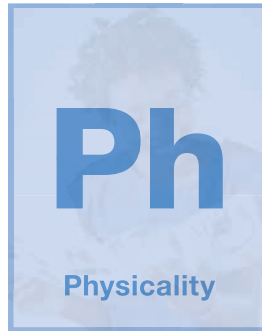
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Smoke's Poutinerie founder Ryan Smolkin is taking his wacky brand to new heights (p. 34).

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ON THE COVER: Desjardins is making quite the splash across the country, which is why it was named one of our Brands of the Year. Already ubiquitous in its home province of Quebec, the financial co launched several new initiatives this year. One of those launches was the Ajusto app, which measures your driving behaviour through your phone, making each user feel like a competitive race-car driver (or so its campaign suggests). Vroom!

The new brand royalty

Each year, the strategy team sits in a boardroom with research notes ranging from sales to campaign results, plus suggestions from industry executives, and we write down the names of companies and people on a white board who we believe are deserving of the Brand of the Year or Marketer of the Year titles (stay tuned for the latter in our December/January issue). We compile a list of dozens of names, and then, one by one, delete them from the board until only a short list remains.

A few years ago, when I looked across the brand and retail landscape, it seemed almost impossible for the little guy to compete. Big brands were increasingly taking over retail space, with giant box stores creeping their way into city centres and smaller shops closing their doors. For a while, it looked like we were headed in a very homogenous direction.

Then the winds slightly shifted. Sure, big box stores were still, well, big. But people started to seek out more unique experiences. Online retailers like Frank & Oak and Etsy (one of our “trending” brands this year, see p. 37) started to take flight, and a big box behemoth from the U.S. couldn’t find its footing here.

It’s no surprise, then, that smaller challenger brands are positioning themselves for growth. Our cover brand Desjardins (p. 31) isn’t exactly small or new in its home province of Quebec, but its growth in the rest of the country really took off this year. It even launched a new banking option – the mobile-only Zag Bank – for a generation that’s looking for an easy alternative to the “Big Five.”

And Smoke’s has evolved beyond poutine to launch Weineries and Burritories this year, and has set its sights on major expansion (p. 34). Will it be long before Smoke’s

is as ubiquitous as McDonald’s or Tim Hortons? In a QSR market that is already crowded with huge players, Smoke’s doesn’t seem fazed by the competition.

Each year when we sit in that boardroom, we consider brands across different categories, including entertainment. Never has our choice felt so niche as with YouTube sensation Epic Meal Time (p. 22), and yet its fan numbers are staggering, and many of the brands it works with are mainstream. Epic Meal Time redefines what it means to be a celebrity brand in the internet age.

With their scrappy attitudes, clever use of small marketing budgets and less bureaucracy to deal with, these challenger brands can no longer be ignored. So if you are a bigger brand from a larger company, you have to adopt that scrappy attitude and stay innovative to compete. That’s exactly what Sport Chek has done (p. 25). For an athletic apparel retailer to embrace technology and dive headfirst into often untested waters the way that it has deserves recognition.

The world is full of clever concepts and you no longer need a million-dollar budget to bring them to life. All you need is a website, or a camera to shoot a video, or a single retail location, and it could take off into something huge.

Epic Meal Time could have been nothing more than a bunch of funny guys cooking meat, but they turned it into a business. After all, anyone can have a brilliant idea, it’s what you do with that idea that counts.

Emily Wexler, editor



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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

STRATEGY IS PUBLISHED EIGHT TIMES PER YEAR BY BRUNICO COMMUNICATIONS LTD.
In Canada: One year CA\$80.00 Two years CA\$144.00
(HST included. Registration #R56051396 RT)
Single copy price in Canada is CA\$6.95. Please allow four weeks for new subscriptions and address changes.

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U.S. Postmaster, send undeliverables and address changes to: Strategy PO BOX 1103 Niagara Falls NY 14304 Printed in Canada. Canada Post Agreement No. 40050265. ISSN: 1187-4309.

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Signs of the sky (not) falling

The industry has been talking for years about how agencies and brands need to evolve their MOs, and how those that don't will be left behind in programmatic and data's dust as the likes of Google and Amazon recast roles and priorities. Despite all that being acknowledged (grudgingly), we are still shocked when legacy agency brands go dark. On an intellectual level, we're not really surprised, but on a gut level, it's a reality check – or blow.

So Q1 has been a sobering news cycle. While digesting the folding of Y&R into Taxi, the closure of Lowe Roche and the absorption of TBWA into Juniper Park (amid headlines about falling stocks), it's hard not to brood over what's next.

But beyond the obvious dark thoughts about careers in drone fleet management, is it also a sign that the industry has tipped towards what the

pundits have been calling for – reinvention?

Over at Juniper Park they've been quietly taking on the world from Toronto, leading work globally due to differentiated abilities in areas like design. The shop was originally set up as an alternative model, staffed with skill sets that at the time were not the typical agency mix, like journalists and a broader swathe of design experts. It worked. Juniper Park\TBWA CEO Jill Nykoliation says the merger was needed because they couldn't grow fast enough organically to meet the demands.

And they're not the only shop that's been successful on the world stage. Leo Burnett Toronto's CEO/CCO Judy John's creative lead

on "#LikeAGirl" is a prominent example of collaboration, and there are a lot more of those stories. The innovation at indies, like PR shop North Strategic's video arm Notch or Zulu Alpha Kilo's content studio Zulubot, is also a sign that reinvention is well underway. Signs of more disruptive reinvention – BETC just launched a record label with Universal's Polydor; Collective Digital Studio was launched by a former talent agent and now Canada's TV nets are in the MCN space, why not agencies?

Taxi CCO Paul Lavoie feels the sky won't fall on the ad business because there are too many smart problem-solvers to let that happen. "Just as Uber and Airbnb have disrupted their industries, expect that to happen in our space as well."

As focus shifts to new disciplines, a less geo-specific and streamlined agency roster, and more collaboration and consolidation, there will be more casualties. So it's important to learn from what works now, and act on it to build the right capabilities and credentials. That's the real reward behind AOY or the CASSIES, and growth area benchmarks like AToMiC and Shopper Innovation Awards.

So congrats to the Brands of the Year and their partners. Today the best creative contribution is a killer strategy – one that not just delivers in Q2, but reinvents a brand for the long haul. Those who invest in that journey, from data and content to VR and whatever sci-fi comes next, will get to the good side of disruption.

Cheers, mm

Mary Maddever, publisher, *strategy*, Media in Canada and stimulant

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OCTOBER 2015 VOLUME 26, ISSUE 8
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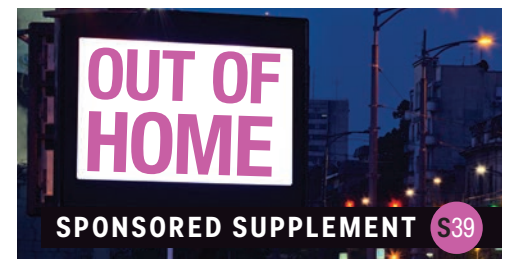


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THE DRONES ARE COMING

By Megan Haynes

There's a race to populate skies with drone delivery vehicles, and a Canadian e-tailer is jumping into the fray. Toronto's Shop.ca, which sells clothing, household and personal items, recently announced its partnership with Drone Delivery Canada to pilot a new way to get goods to customers – assuming regulatory hurdles are met.

Mark Daprato, CMO, Shop.ca, says this is very much a pilot program, and once the tech takes flight, the company will track how many customers use the service and the feasibility of maintaining this type of aerial delivery system. Testing is likely to begin early next year, with full-service delivery starting late 2017/early 2018, once the appropriate licences are received.

"We know these things don't get off the ground – so to speak – overnight," Daprato says. "This isn't a race to [be] first. For us, this is recognizing that what we always try to do as a company is bring the right things forward to the marketplace."

Indeed, there have been rumblings about drone delivery services since 2013 when Amazon first revealed plans to use drones. Since then, the e-tail giant has tested its delivery services in a handful of U.S. cities and in Canada, where unmanned aerial vehicle regulations are much less strict. In 2014, Transport Canada issued more than 1,600 commercial drone licences (and another 945 in 2013), while in the U.S. only a couple dozen have been issued by the FAA. To date, the majority of drone usage has been around surveillance (hunting for forest fires and oil spills, taking measurements, etc.) though the uses for drones have increased over the past few years.

This past March, Amazon tested its delivery drones on an unknown plot of land in B.C., with the Canadian government's full support. Amazon has since broadened its test to U.S. sites, and officially delivered its first drone parcel in Virginia in July, but there is no official word on when e-tailers will roll the service out to all customers. Brands like Domino's have also tested the delivery system, but on a stunt basis, rather than as a long-term system.

CARMILLA SNAGS TOP PROMO! AWARD

By Jennifer Horn and Emily Wexler

It was a night that went to the millennials.

CAPMA's PROMO! Awards, held on Sept. 16 at Berkeley Church in Toronto, seemed to truly celebrate that young, coveted demo. First, the show host Jessi Cruickshank dedicated a few audience-participation games to the younger cohort – namely "Is it a millennial?" in which the audience had to guess whether someone or something was born/created between 1980 and the early 2000s and "Did a millennial say that?" (self-explanatory).

Also, the night's big winner was one that reached young females. Geometry Global took home the coveted Best of Show and two Golds for the branded content program *Carmilla*, which it led for Kimberly-Clark's U by Kotex.

Executive produced by the brand, *Carmilla* is a 36-episode, four-minute, scripted transmedia series that put a modern spin on a cult classic gothic vampire novella. The season finale alone garnered 101,000 views in 24 hours, and spawned



a "#SaveCarmilla" movement where fans showed their love for the series and U by Kotex.

Meanwhile, Leo Burnett got its mitts on 10 PROMO! awards (four Golds, two Silvers and four Bronzes) for a range of clients, including P&G brand Always, Ikea, TD, Bell Media's TSN and Coors Light.

Zulu Alpha Kilo also made multiple trips to the stage, picking up nine prizes (three Golds, one Silver and five Bronzes) for Audi, Interac and Corona.

And Taxi, another trophy marauder, took home seven awards (five Golds, one Silver and one Bronze), across its various offices in Toronto and Vancouver, for Kraft-owned MiO, Tim Hortons and the Canadian Badlands.

There were 45 trophies in total given out that night. Check out photos from the event on p. 44, and to read all the winning cases, visit PromoAwards.StrategyOnline.ca.



PUMPKIN PREDICTIONS

By Harmeet Singh

It's fall, and we all know what that means – our good friend, the pumpkin, is back.

We're way beyond the days of flavoured lattes and beer, with pumpkin spray fragrance from Glade, buttery pumpkin spread and vegan-friendly pumpkin deodorant now in existence.

But pumpkin has proven more than a trend and we think it's here to stay. All brands are going to have to start tapping into the potential of the pumpkin or risk being squashed by the competition (sorry, we had to).

Here are just a few of our top predictions for where the world of pumpkin is headed next.

PIZZA HUT: PUMPKIN-STUFFED CRUST

First came cheese, then came hot dogs. But if anything belongs in a crust, it's a delicious mixture of pumpkin, cinnamon and nutmeg. This limited-time offering will not be exclusive to dessert pizza, but will also pair well with cheese and bacon toppings, sending loyal Pizza Hut fans into a frenzy. The popular offering will inevitably lead to an improved edition of 2012's Pizza Hut perfume, which will evolve from social media giveaway to retail sensation.

IKEA: PUMPKIN POÄNG CHAIR

Coconut furniture has been around for a while, but we predict Ikea will find a way to make our pumpkin design dreams come true. Hopefully, we'll eventually get

to Pumpkin Malm and Pumpkin Pax territory, but the journey will begin with the iconic chair. Ikea will innovate its way to an eco-friendly, biodegradable version made of pumpkin shell. Cushions will still be available in a variety of colours, but orange will be the top seller.

ALWAYS: PUMPKIN SPICE PANTYLINERS

The "Fresh Scent" version is old hat, but the P&G brand will take it to the next level, bringing daily usability to one of our favourite fragrances. Availability will initially be limited, forcing millennial women to take to social media and express their passion for pumpkin. We eagerly await the award-winning #LikeAGourd phenomenon.

HIGH-TECH ELECTION MISHAPS

By Josh Kolm

Prior to this month's federal election, Canada's political parties tested the waters with tech and social media, but it didn't always go according to plan.

While the three main party leaders have active Instagram accounts (and all three parties have used sponsored posts on Facebook and Twitter), the Conservatives became the first to jump on paid Instagram advertising in August. While this may have been an effort to get messages in front of younger voters, it might have miscalculated how that age group reacts to sponsored ads.

Images capturing hundreds of negative comments on the prime minister's first three sponsored posts were shared online, ranging from the typical annoyance of receiving an ad to criticisms of Harper's policies from users who were clearly mis-targeted, or sometimes both ("Omg get this evil corrupt monster off my feed!!!! #stopharper"). But the same people also captured images in the following days when the number of post comments went from hundreds to a few dozen.

Though a party spokesperson said in the media they had the right to remove content that was deemed profane, offensive or spam, many noted that the only comments remaining were those supportive of the Conservatives.

The Liberals also fell victim to the lightning-fast speed of social when over 2,000 posters in Quebec, featuring close-ups of Trudeau and other candidates in the province on a menacing blood-red background, became a fully fledged meme. They were mocked and Photoshopped to instead feature the likenesses of various villains and evil characters from pop culture.

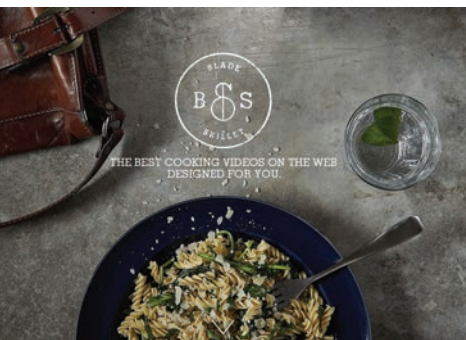
The ads, however, were actually part of a larger augmented reality activation by the party in the province, which was revealed several weeks after they first appeared. Handled by agency Clan Créatif, when scanned with AR app Layar, the posters unlocked a video of the featured politician explaining their platform and why they are a good candidate for Quebec.



PUMPKIN PHOTO BY JACK HEBERT/FLOKOR COMMONS

STIMULANT PRESENTS: PASSION PROJECTS

Creative folk work at creative agencies. No surprise there. What is surprising, though, is the sheer amount of energy they have left at the end of the (sometimes 14-hour) day to toil away at their side projects/hobbies/personal amusements. Every other week, *strategy*'s creative sister site *stimulant* features a "Passion Project" from a person or agency, profiling various creative forces from Etch A Sketch virtuosos to culinary entrepreneurs. Here are some of the more popular projects that have come out of the woodwork over the past few months. Make sure to pop over to StimulantOnline.ca to see more weird and wonderful things keeping creatives busy outside of work (and don't be afraid to share yours by emailing jhorn@brunico.com).



STYLISH STARTUPS

You can scour food porn sites and drool over their perfectly photographed dishes all day long without ever really learning how to replicate the food fantasies in those images. But Blade & Skillet wants to change that and get more people in the kitchen with its library of simple and fast cooking videos.

They take about three minutes to watch, and most of the dishes take the same amount of time to prepare. The man behind the site (and in front of the camera) is Dorian Burns-Coyne, an ex-ad man who once worked at agencies like John St. and Leo Burnett, but left the biz to create simple, stylish video recipes that cost only \$1.95 per month (for full site access).



Meanwhile, from cooking to clothing, Smithery is a online boutique that was launched by John St.-er Mavis Huntley and her partner-in-fashion Rena Rutkauskas earlier this year. Contrary to

some clothing retailers' belief, not every garment falls perfectly on our bodies. We're not all stick-thin, waxed and manicured mannequins. And that's precisely the idea behind the e-boutique, which is a portal that teaches women how to figure out exactly what their shape and size is, and then helps them shop for clothing that fits.

SKETCHY ARTISTS AND MONSTER PAINTINGS

Some see art simply as it is. But that's not Teresa Leung. She sees monsters in paintings, specifically those found in thrift shops and garage sales (and could easily have once lived on the walls of a roadside motel). The senior art director at Calgary's Trigger takes forgotten paintings and draws colourful creatures reminiscent of *Where the Wild*



Things Are on the banks of painted rivers, where they like to feed ducks and take baths. Sadly, she's not selling her creations yet. They're enjoying their home in her apartment, but

maybe one day they'll be up for grabs (if enough people bug her).

Then there's Sharon Yokoyama, a content producer at Taxi Toronto. She's a different type of artist, but also

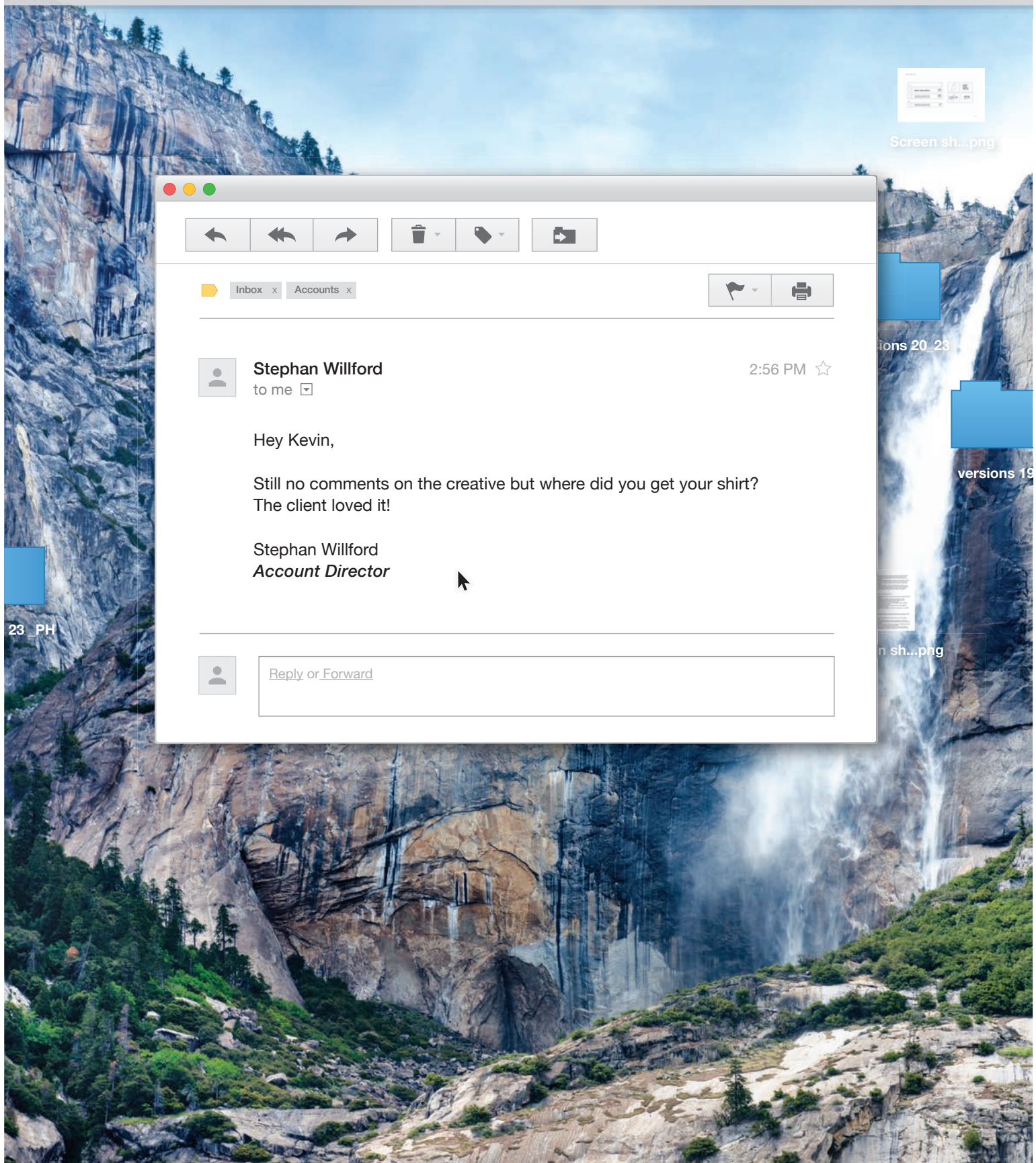
one who brings life back to a forgotten item (in her case, the Etch A Sketch). She creates brilliant illustrations of places like High Park and the cityscape as seen from the Toronto Islands (water ripples included). If you've ever tried your hand at the mechanical drawing toy, you'd know the most difficult thing is to draw curves. But that's all we see in a park portrait of people playing table tennis, hula-hooping and DJing in the park. Now, if she were to add Waldo to the scenes – that would make our day.



ADULT (ONLY) EXPERIENCES

Peter Pan and his posse would do well at Camp Reset. The fantasy of never growing up came to life this past August when the camp

that bills itself as a "digital detox" opened its doors at the Ecology Retreat Centre in Ontario. The adult camp (which runs again in the summer of 2016) bans devices, replacing "Instagram for scavenger hunts, emojis for colouring books, and email for letters to our younger selves." What's more, one of the founders (a group of young Torontonians) is Emma Brooks, a Zulu Alpha Kilo digital strategist. **JH**



EMPLOYEES IN ADS: WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

BY JENNIFER HORN



An RBC spot shows employees cleaning up the environment as part of its Blue Water Project (see opposite page).

Brands have been putting their counter staff and sales clerks in front of cameras (and subsequently, consumers) for some time. Home Hardware, for one, has given store owners (and homeowners) the spotlight for almost seven years. And then there's WestJet, which has spotlighted its employees for years, and showed their goodwill in a 2013 holiday video that has since racked up more than 40 million views, and awards from Canada to Cannes. And now, brands like McDonald's, RBC and Indigo are joining the trend.

It's clear why employee-focused creative is popular among brands: they're the lifeblood of a company (especially in the service industry), so who better to play the role of brand advocate in its marketing? "The consumer of today has a critical

eye on the experience delivered by a brand and this puts demands on [them] to embed emotion in, or humanize, the brand," says Mandeep Malik, assistant professor of marketing at McMaster's DeGroote School of Business. "Employees have always been seen as one of the best advocates [to do this]."

But with reward comes risk, note Brenda Pritchard and Edward Majewski, partners at business law firm Gowlings, where they help brands develop contingency plans for worst case scenarios when casting employees in their marketing. A brand has control of the message broadcast by employees when the cameras roll, but it can be exposed to a legal mess once they stop.

"There's more risk, so you absolutely need to do your due diligence with these things,"

Majewski adds, saying that while companies can create a contractual provision or severance agreement where an employee may be precluded from making disparaging comments or disclosing confidential campaign information if they were let go, he advises this may not work in the brand's favour if it were to go to court. "That type of non-disparaging provision could be perceived as a gag clause, [and] you would probably lose in the court of public opinion [because] there's the perceived David versus Goliath [scenario]."

"Judges are good at protecting against disclosure of particular information, but they're not inclined to protect a large company against off-handed comments from an ex-employee," he adds.

To avoid the heat, Pritchard advises brands to not put all their eggs in one basket. "Most of the campaigns involve multiple employees," so if a competitor poached one (which Majewski says can happen to try to undermine a campaign) or if said employee belittled a brand, or became involved in a scandal, the brand can emerge relatively unscathed.

For example, while not exactly a Subway employee, Jared Fogle was a well-known pitchman in the QSR's ads, and now it's having to clean its tainted brand image as a result of the weight-loss celeb's sexual misconduct. "You probably want to hedge a little bit...[because] the strength of your brand is across your employees," says Majewski.

He adds that brands need to think about additional fair pay for an employee featured in an ad, employee diversity in a campaign, as well as privacy concerns. Also

consider how placing an employee on a public pedestal can affect the interpersonal dynamic between the individual and the company's reporting structure, adds Majewski. "There could be a situation where they become associated with the brand [depending on how successful they are at gaining

attention for the brand] and the person's ego can become inflated."

It's a complex approach requiring a lot of planning around how to protect the brand from potential legal problems, he says, adding that while he hasn't had to put out any legal fires just yet, "we have to be forward-thinking and look at the

potential issues [that could arise]."

Below are three examples of brands making their employees the stars of the show. Read on to find out how McDonald's has gone super specific in talking about (and with) its staff, while Indigo and RBC have taken less risky, broader-stroke approaches.



MCDONALD'S GETS TO KNOW ITS STAFF

It's not easy being a QSR behemoth. It's faced scrutiny about its food, but there's also the issue of what it's really like, as a low-wage employee, to work at the company. The brand wanted to show the real side of its workplace and that it's not what some may think. So it launched the "Welcome to McDonald's" campaign, inviting Canadians to hear personal stories from those behind its counters.

For the first iteration of the campaign (with N/A handling creative, Tribal Worldwide on digital and OMD on media), the brand travelled from coast to coast, meeting up to 400 employees, suppliers and even customers, interviewing them so they could tell the country what the brand means to them in print, online and TV ads.

In August, the brand debuted the second phase with a focus on three of its younger employees: Samuel, Meshach and Ryme. A spot calls out the perception that millennials are unable to handle responsibility or money, but refutes this by saying it provides opportunities for

young workers to manage areas from production to sales, and lets them grow within the company. (In vignettes, Meshach shares how he began in the kitchen and is now shift manager, while Ryme says the brand has taught her the value of money.)

INDIGO SHOWS OFF THE STORE EXPERIENCE

Over the years, customers at Indigo have gotten to know its floor staff really well. Many of them actually know each other by name, says Samantha Taylor, VP marketing at Indigo. The brand did research in cities across Canada, interviewing 500 customers about their experience at its stores, and "the



incredible love for and connection with our staff is what stood out."

Taking its research learnings and embracing the trend behind book clubs, Indigo created the "Staff Picks" online portal where it highlights 16 of its 5,100 staffers and reveals the books they're reading and recommend others do the same. "Paring down

the numbers was a challenge," says Taylor of the 120 employee nominations made by managers across stores and whittled down to a final group of 16 over months of interviews and questionnaires. "Regardless of how far they made it in the process, everyone got a personal letter from me or the CMO, thanking them...The sensitivity around that was important too."

On the "Staff Picks" site, visitors can read employee Q&As and find a new book recommendation weekly. "These are 16 wonderful individuals who we are able to leverage for book reviews and discussions on their favourite reads, but we don't necessarily encourage them to be spokespeople for us," says Taylor of how having them be the face, but not necessarily the voice of the brand safeguards it from potential impropriety. "They're examples of the experience you'll get in our stores...It gives a real human face to the type of individuals you'll find."

RBC DEMONSTRATES COMMUNITY IMPACT

RBC employees, for the past eight years, have been rolling up their sleeves and helping the bank protect local water with its Blue Water Project Makeovers. But the 25,000 or so employees across RBC branches have never really been given the spotlight. This year, the brand decided to make its staffers the stars of a commercial, and show the public how they're involved in

RBC's \$50-million commitment.

"[Putting employees at the centre of the campaign] was an easy way for us to tell a complex environmental story," says Matt McGlynn, director of brand marketing at RBC. "Fresh water isn't top of mind for Canadians, [but] it was an easy way to demonstrate our impact and what our employees can do at the local level."

During the summer, RBC put its employees on camera, filming them



as they donated their free time to help plant thousands of wildflowers and trees near freshwater lakes and rivers, among other things. The events were led by Mosaic and its digital arm AMG, with BBDO on creative and M2 on media, and were shown in a series of videos, which had more than 3.5 million YouTube views and 2.5 million Facebook impressions, says McGlynn.

"When you're a bank, your offering is so vast, and it's tough to have a tie [across the departments]. But one common thread is the employee, what they bring to the table and how they make a difference to the community."

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What's in store for Cadillac Fairview

MARKETER JASON ANDERSON HAS GONE FROM XBOX TO SHOPPING CENTRES, AND PLANS TO MAKE THE MALL PROPERTY OWNER A HOUSEHOLD NAME. BY HARMEET SINGH

The name Cadillac Fairview is probably not all that familiar to many Canadians, aside from its similarity to a certain car brand.

We do know the malls – Toronto Eaton Centre, Chinook Centre, Sherway Gardens, Rideau Centre, just to name a few – but most of us are less familiar with the company that owns them.

But given the country's competitive retail space, where big brands like

Target have failed, and Canadian mid-level retailers like Jacob and Smart Set are closing their doors, it's become time for Cadillac Fairview to make its own brand known.

Enter Jason Anderson, a marketer with over a decade of experience at Microsoft, who has spent the past year-and-a-half forging a new brand for the property management co as its first-ever SVP of marketing.

Since joining the company in January 2014, Anderson has been laying the foundation for a new strategy to position Cadillac Fairview's properties – recently rebranded under a new "CF" parent banner – as the places to go for a premium shopping experience.

"We're a company that actually has quite low brand awareness," Anderson says. "Right now, we are effectively 20 different malls in the mind of the consumer."

Part of creating a centralized brand has meant restructuring from separate shopping centre marketing teams to a consolidated group of about 55 marketers across Canada, with about 25 in the company's downtown Toronto headquarters.

It's also meant shifting from more than 60 agencies to fewer than 10 – mainly Traffik, SapientNitro for digital, North Strategic for PR and social media, Bleublancrouge in the French market and Famous Folks for B2B and client marketing.

"We unified the team in the same way that we're unifying the brand," Anderson says, adding that fewer agencies has allowed the company to spend its marketing dollars more efficiently. (Since he's come on board, marketing spend overall has grown.)

He's been up to the challenge since leaving Microsoft, where he helped take the Xbox brand from



Above: Toronto-area's CF Sherway Gardens held the grand opening of its 210,000-square-foot renovation last month, which includes a flagship Harry Rosen, expanded Sporting Life and Ted Baker London.

the country's number three game console to number one as director of marketing. He also led Xbox One's Canadian launch in 2013, and helped forge Microsoft's retail partnership with Best Buy Canada to help market the Windows brand.

While going from videogames and tech to shopping malls might seem like a stretch, one of Anderson's goals at Xbox was crafting a premium experience against cheaper or free gaming offerings – a

"WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE MORE THAN JUST A LANDLORD TO OUR RETAIL CLIENTS."

similar goal to Cadillac Fairview, which is attempting to position itself as a premium shopping destination.

"When you start with the consumer and figure out the kind of story you want to tell, then it's really easy," he says. "We believe that we have an opportunity to be more than just a landlord to our retail clients."

Currently, Cadillac Fairview operates in an environment where its competitors have been upping their luxury retail game. For instance, Oxford Properties' Yorkdale Shopping Centre has been adding a slew of designer boutique stores, such as Jimmy Choo and Versace, and fellow Greater Toronto Area and Oxford-owned centre Square One will open new La Maison Simons and Holt Renfrew stores. (Yorkdale's renovated Holts opened last year.)

But operating in a challenging space is part of what drew Anderson to Cadillac Fairview to begin with.

"Ultimately, I felt like I wanted the next chapter of my career to be at a Canadian company so that I could be closer to decision-making," he says. While VP of retail sales and marketing at Microsoft, he was five or six levels from the CEO, he notes. Now, he has regular direct contact with Cadillac Fairview's top boss.

"What I wanted was a company that was facing significant challenges but meeting them head on," he says of his move. "The way that this company is approaching the future in light of some of the uncertainty sets them up really well for success."

It's not that Cadillac Fairview's own properties aren't doing well relative to the rest of the Canadian retail landscape. While the average sales per square foot is \$627 among Canadian shopping centres, the CF properties stand at \$829, according to Anderson.

That higher-than-average performance has also occurred while several of the company's

high-traffic properties – such as Toronto-area Sherway Gardens and Ottawa's Rideau Centre – have been under major renovation, he adds.

The new strategy has been to differentiate Cadillac Fairview and get Canadians to think of its properties as the places where they want to spend their time.

Anderson describes Cadillac Fairview as a "quiet giant" in how it's going up against a challenging retail environment, noting its \$650-million purchase of the Hudson's Bay flagship store in downtown Toronto last year, along with its other major redevelopment investments.

"Over the last 15, 20 years, what's really made the company successful is having the best properties in the best locations and the best mix of retail clients," he says.

"The company took the position about 10 years ago that e-commerce wasn't going to kill all shopping centres, it was just going to kill the weak ones," he adds. At that time, it strategically shrunk from 40 shopping centres to 20.

Now, it has \$2.5 billion in retail redevelopments on the go, part of an overall plan that includes luxury retailers like Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue joining its properties.

"It starts with a beautiful building in a great location," he says.

Five of the six Nordstrom locations in Canada will be at CF properties, he notes. The company's Toronto Eaton Centre and Sherway Gardens will also gain Saks Fifth Avenue locations next year. "The entrance of Nordstrom and Saks will be the underpinning to a real renaissance of the luxury market in this country," he says.

Among Cadillac Fairview's changes has been a new look for its logo, which hasn't been updated since 1974, when the Cadillac Development Corp. and Fairview Corp. merged. With the old logo, most consumers couldn't even tell that it was a "C" and an "F," Anderson says.

Working with Toronto agency Traffik, the updated look and feel tested well with 1,000 consumers across the county, in both languages.

The new CF name – less wordy than "Cadillac Fairview" and moving away from the car connotation – and logo were first added to Sherway Gardens in September and are currently rolling out to the

company's malls across Canada.

Despite a more unified brand, boiling down the consumer target to a granular level, and understanding which retailers will be exciting to which regions, is also critical, Anderson adds.

"At the end of the day, the discipline that comes with strategic

"Every piece of research we do shows how important the fundamentals are in experience," he says. Things like improving parking, customer service staff and even clean bathrooms have all been central to Cadillac Fairview's redevelopments.

The past year-and-a-half has also been about getting the fundamentals right for digital, he says. After consolidating agency partners, marketing budget has shifted toward investing in digital in an attempt to increase both traffic and dwell time.


For example, having the shopping centres' websites be optimized for mobile devices – and all under the new CF banner – was key, he says.

At the end of 2014, the company also worked with SapientNitro to launch its "CF Shop!" mobile app. "The app is a great example of a tactic that makes way more sense

once you have a brand strategy of uniting your 20 shopping centres across the country," Anderson says.

It has also taken a new approach to social media, again consolidating resources. Now, the company has five dedicated social media community specialists who are 100% focused on social, a shift from a more segmented approach, he says.

This past summer, for example, the company created a more consistent marketing approach when it launched its "#WhoWillYouBe" back-to-school campaign, centred on the insight that students see September as a "New Year" and time for reinvention.

Now, as Anderson gears up to enter his second year at the company, he will continue to lead its quiet reinvention – one that will see new store openings and redevelopment visions come to life. "The company is in this for the long haul." 

"WHAT I WANTED WAS A COMPANY THAT WAS FACING SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES BUT MEETING THEM HEAD ON."

marketing is the same," he says of moving from Microsoft to Cadillac Fairview. "The shopping centre industry traditionally has not had that kind of discipline as it relates to marketing."

Anderson's role at Cadillac Fairview has been about getting the basics right.

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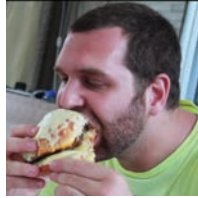
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OF THE BRANDS THE YEAR '15

If our 2015 Brands of the Year could be categorized in one simple phrase, “the rise of the little guy” seems appropriate. Each year we consult the industry, deliberate and create a long list of deserving brands that could be BOY contenders. Then we narrow it down to a handful (plus a few notable trending brands, see p. 36). Most of this year’s winners are not the largest in their categories, yet they’ve still made a lot of noise. ¶ Take Epic Meal Time – Harley Morenstein and co have learned how to take calorie-heavy YouTube videos and turn them into a genuine entertainment brand with millions of viewers and big-name brand partners. Epic Meal Time isn’t for everyone, but that’s part of its appeal. ¶ And Smoke’s Poutinerie (and its new offshoots) may not have the ubiquity or marketing budgets of a McDonald’s or Wendy’s, but its growth has been staggering, and it’s just getting started. ¶ Desjardins might not be a “Big Five” bank, but it tops international lists that measure financial institution strength, and it’s poised to become a big name in the rest of the country outside its home province of Quebec. ¶ Finally, Sport Chek might not seem like a little guy (since it’s owned by Canadian Tire) but it wasn’t so long ago that the retailer was seen simply as a place to buy running shoes, not the innovative, digitally-led retailer it is today. ¶ Read on to learn how all these brands are putting their stakes in the ground as industry disruptors.



Epic Meal Time is no longer the little guy

How Harley Morestein and crew have not only grown to be Canadian leaders in the YouTube space, but paved the way for others to see the same success.

BY JOSH KOLM

Clockwise, from top left: The title card from the "Epic Quesarito" video produced with Taco Bell Canada; Morestein eats a slice of pizza with products from multiple QSRs (two later became partners) in Epic Meal Time's first video; making a stadium bowl during the Super Bowl for Bud Light; Morestein; Epic Meal Time's logo; Taco Bell's tiger and the winner of a fan contest join the "Quesarito" video.

Despite the success of Epic Meal Time, co-creator and host Harley Morestein still occasionally finds himself in meetings with people who likely didn't watch a full video, but must have approached him based on subscriber and view numbers.

"After that, I'll get pitched an integration for a fruit or canned corn. And I have to say, 'No, fruit and vegetables don't work, we're the guys that sell a T-shirt that says, 'Fuck salad,'" he says.

The idea for Epic Meal Time, a YouTube comedy show based on building outrageous, meat- and calorie-heavy meals, came in 2010 when Morestein, at the

time working as a substitute teacher in his hometown of Montreal, was filmed by friend and co-creator Sterling Toth eating a reconstructed Wendy's hamburger made of six beef patties and 18 strips of bacon. The series began in earnest with a follow-up featuring a pizza topped with products from multiple fast food restaurants, all while an on-screen counter kept track of just how many calories the meal had with each addition.

Today, Epic Meal Time has uploaded over 400 videos that have been viewed over 800 million times (over 100 million from Canada) and is nearing seven million subscribers. It has since expanded with new online

show formats like cooking competition *Epic Chef* and instructional show *Handle It*. In 2014, the group produced 17 episodes of a televised version of the format, *Epic Meal Empire*, for A&E's FYI network.

The team is working on multiple new food-related show formats for its channel and has announced *Inventorprise*, previously *Epic Tool Time*, which takes the idea of over-the-top creations out of the kitchen and applies it to creating gadgets out of everything from pickup trucks to selfie sticks. The team has also launched a gaming channel, with Morestein and others on the team regularly live-streaming as part of YouTube Gaming.

Like most in the YouTube

space, Epic Meal Time's success has been built slowly on a combination of word-of-mouth and a unique concept. Morestein and his Epic brethren have done a few things to build out the brand over the years, including a line of apparel (mostly t-shirts) and a cooking set, and appearances on talk shows and even in movies (like Kevin Smith's *Tusk*).

It's mainly been in the past year that the growing number of subscribers, views and formats have also led to more interest from companies to do brand and product integration. In 2014, U.S. food company Hormel signed a one-year deal to have its Black Label brand be the official bacon supplier for the

show, one of Epic Meal Time's first brand integration deals that has since been renewed for another year. At the time, Morenstein expressed little desire to pursue other brand opportunities, which changed when Epic Meal Time was able to do so in a way that was natural and fit the format. Since then, Epic Meal Time has worked with Wendy's, Kraft, Bud Light and Hamburger Helper.

Here at home, Epic Meal Time made a video for Taco Bell Canada promoting its Quesarito that included the QSR's tiger mascot and the winner of a fan contest in the episode. But they did so while cracking jokes about both ("Who's this guy?" "That's the tiger handler, I bet.") and making their own "epic" quesadilla-burrito combination.

And it's not just food: the team has worked with Sprint, Holiday Inn and Nissan. To promote Ubisoft's pirate-themed *Assassin's Creed IV* videogame, they did a video dressed as pirates on a cruise ship.

While it seems working with bigger companies would result in more attempts to rein in the show, these partnerships have instead created more opportunities to engage with fans, and in bigger ways.

"It's a cooking comedy show, so to just show a clip from a pirate videogame would put someone off," Morenstein says. "But those bigger brands mean we also get a bigger budget to dress up like pirates and do the show on a ship. That lets us give them a much bigger episode and find a way to make something our audience will appreciate. But if working with a brand will compromise our brand, I'm

still totally comfortable turning something away."

Morenstein says the tide has been shifting to better brand relationships, especially over the last year. More companies are approaching him with awareness and respect for what Epic Meal Time represents, something his team repays to its partners.

"The people we are seeing in these meetings are getting younger and younger," Morenstein says. "If they know what we're about and our audience, the last thing they want to do is tell us how to do Epic Meal Time because that's why they come to us. If they offer us that, the last thing I want to do is compromise someone else's brand integrity. We can take out all the swearing or focus less on the calorie counter because we understand what maintaining your brand means ourselves."

Epic Meal Time was one of the early members of multi-channel network Collective Digital Studio (CDS), which launched in 2011 and opened a Toronto office in the spring.

The benefits of joining an MCN like CDS range from copyright management, monetization and establishing brand partnerships to production resources, something that can be vital for creators, who are often individuals or small teams working on their own, like Epic Meal Time.

Jordan Bortolotti, EVP of Canada at CDS, says despite demand from Canadian brands for Canuck creators and the fact that they are earning thousands (if not millions) of views on every piece of content they create,

many brands are still hesitant to work in the YouTube space. Morenstein has been a trailblazer in terms of bridging that gap.

"Harley and Epic Meal Time have done a huge service in terms of educating big brands and showing them it's not as risky an experiment as they think. They have a history in the space, which is important because they have this track record of success that can be pointed to."

Although Epic Meal Time debuted five years ago, they're veterans on YouTube. Bortolotti says Epic Meal Time has, due to its longevity and success on over 50 brand partnerships, made it possible for other creators to have the same kind of relationships.

It's not just brand relationships Morenstein has to consider though. Content creators on YouTube have to be mindful of their fan

than their colleagues in the space," Bortolotti says. "They're not afraid to push the envelope within their format and to create new formats that are true to who they are. To be that versatile and find ways to push a brand message and still make it 'epic' gives you a lot of licence for how you can entertain people."

While most of its brand integrations have been stateside, the Taco Bell deal was likely the first of many Canadian integration opportunities. Bortolotti says companies here are eager to work with creators who understand the market and culture. Epic Meal Time's team of eight staff is split between Montreal and Ottawa, and they've always championed their roots.

Bortolotti describes Morenstein as "CEO, brand manager, director of marketing, host and creative director all in one," and having him work with

The team invades the dining hall of a cruise ship as part of a promotion with *Assassin's Creed IV*.



relationships, possibly more than in any other medium, given how socially engaged they need to be with audiences. Some can find it difficult to work in a brand's product, message and values in a way that doesn't feel forced, which audiences can be quick to pick up on.

"[Epic Meal Time has] this innate ability to be more creative

CDS to bring more Canadian brands into the mix is something they should jump on now.

"We're proud of where we're from," Morenstein says. "We always talk about how we're Canadian in our videos. The idea of having more opportunities here and talking to the Canadian arms of these companies we are working with is a great one."



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Sport Chek's better is here

After a game-changing rebrand, the FGL-owned retailer continues to push the envelope, from its techy stores to its content strategy.

BY TANYA KOSTIW

Above: Sport Chek has put a focus on the retail experience, from tech-centric features to an actual broadcast studio in its new Maple Leaf Square store.

It was about three years ago when FGL Sports CMO Duncan Fulton told *strategy* about his vision to transform Sport Chek into “the most digitized retail environment in the country and maybe even North America.”

The bold goal followed Canadian Tire Corporation’s acquisition of Sport Chek’s parent company FGL, and was part of a plan to make it the superbrand among its sporting goods banners.

Digital has been a key part of Sport Chek’s quest to rebrand itself and the journey beyond, which has included carving its own innovative path while becoming an “always-on” brand – from its approach to content and new stores to the overall consumer experience.

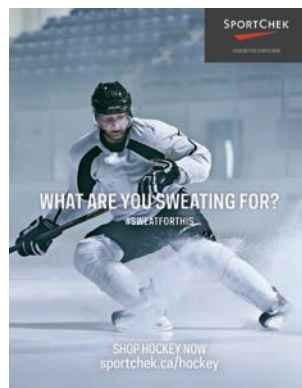
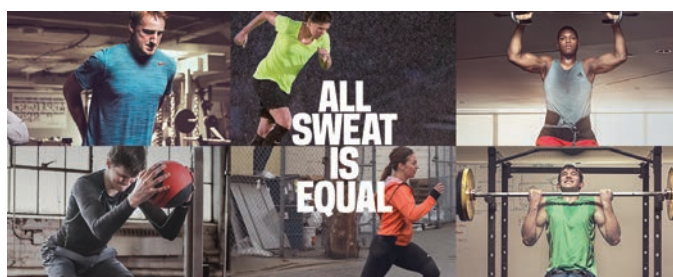
Since then, growth has been notable. In 2013, same-store sales increased 10.3%, with a 10.6% increase in 2014. As part of its evolution, Sport Chek identified a target demo – the achiever. It’s that sports influencer in your network who you’ll approach for advice on gear, and they make up about 20% of consumers (but they are responsible for 60% of sports activity sales). The brand learned only one in five of this cohort reads flyers, and it spurred what Frederick Lecoq, FGL’s SVP of marketing and e-commerce, calls the “digitization of the business.”

One of the steps in this process was transforming its traditional flyer by digitizing it. The advertising focus also shifted around 2012 and 2013, as Sport Chek started to become more content-driven, moving from a campaign-

style approach to being constantly on, says Lecoq, equating the on/off, “lunch and leave” model to the old days of marketing. He gives the example of how only talking about hockey in August and September (with a back-to-hockey campaign) is illogical – players are at it all year.

Leveraging sports rally points to develop content can yield epic campaigns, but everyday content is a way to connect with consumers and create brand stickiness, Lecoq says.

“I know everyone is chasing the one million hits because it’s good for the boss and it’s good for the board,” he says, (later adding it’s not that he’s disinterested in this approach) “but I think there’s much more to [gain with] that everyday content.”



In a bid to be “always on,” Sport Chek’s advertising has shifted from being campaign-driven to content-driven.

At the time of the rebrand, the retailer wanted to shift from being transaction-driven to having a more functional and emotional drive. And it developed a sense of purpose with a new tagline and campaign by Sid Lee and Touché! PHD, which won a Bronze Media Lion in Cannes in 2013. “Your Better Starts Here” tapped into people’s motivation for partaking in sports – looking or feeling good – and featured a high-profile TV spot with Sidney Crosby, plus messaging that targeted consumers at the start of their fitness routines, reaching them in places like lockers, gym entrances and tracks, as well as sport videos that served as pre-workout inspiration.

This core brand concept has been a touchstone since the relaunch, says Vito Piazza, president and partner at Sid Lee Toronto, which worked with the brand for four years.

“As they were making that shift to be more inspirational, it’s given them guidance in terms of how the brand should come to life across not only the marketing channels but also in the physical and digital experiences,” he says.

And while the brand has partnered with other big name athletes in addition to Crosby, like Steven Stamkos and Meaghan Mikkelson, a campaign like “All Sweat is Equal” tapped into the universality of sport and sport-based values, says Piazza, with a spot featuring a diverse group of athletes training. Similarly, the “What it Takes” Olympics campaign was about moving away from cheering for the athletes to how they can inspire people on their own journey towards self-betterment, he says. A spot highlighted how it takes

things like “missing the party” and “words of encouragement” plus “attitude, work and innovation” to be an Olympian. (Both Sid Lee and Touché! worked on those initiatives.)

And it’s the brand’s new-found emotionality that has helped it take this position around the Olympics and its partnership with MLSE, Piazza says. “If they would’ve remained a transactional brand, they would’ve had less leverage in building those strong relationships [with those properties].”

As part of its sponsorship of the Toronto Raptors, the “#MyNorth” platform tapped into basketball stories from various GTA neighbourhoods. Featuring an immersive map, neighbourhood posters and mini-documentaries produced in partnership with TSN, “#MyNorth” garnered nearly 1,500 story submissions, nearly 8,500 social media mentions and about 38.1 million social media impressions. Sid Lee, Touché! and North Strategic also worked on the campaign.

Sport Chek ended its AOR relationship with Sid Lee earlier this year, and has worked with Rethink on more recent creative, such as its “What Are You Sweating For?” content, which includes spots that share people’s individual stories of what they sweat for, while encouraging consumers to share their own stories under the #SweatForThis hashtag.

To support its evolution internally (the marketing team has grown from 35 in August of 2012 to 67 by the end of 2015), Sport Chek has brought folks

who previously worked on flyers up to speed with digital. Rather than creating a separate digital division, everyone took ownership, Lecoq says. It was a big cultural shift, but today, 95% of the brand’s digital assets are created internally. Resource reallocation also supported the shift (duties like email marketing, search and programmatic buying are full-time jobs, he notes).

Elsewhere in Sport Chek’s digital journey has been the digitization of its assortment. Lecoq points to techy product offerings (items like the GoPro and Fitbit) and how the retailer is selling more than just a device and its features, but a solution. It’s about the “total product offering,” hardware, service, accessories and application, he says. For instance, the “First Tracks” program in January gave consumers who purchased \$300 in ski equipment early access to ski hills ahead of the public and a one-day lift pass. It also partnered with the Burton, Rossignol, K2 and Ride brands on a social contest that

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"#MyNorth" shared basketball stories from neighbourhoods throughout the Greater Toronto Area.

offered a ski/snowboard adventure, which included the opportunity for the winner to make their own skis or board. And it tied into a video series with Olympic snowboarder Mark McMorris and skier Noah Bowman.

Lecoq also points to the "endless aisle" concept coming to the new Maple Leaf Square store in Toronto, where if a product a consumer wants isn't available (but in stock elsewhere), they can still buy it in store and have it shipped to their home. This notion of availability is being further brought to

life at this location, which is slated to have a shoppable window that lets consumers make after-hour purchases.

That store broke new ground in other ways, with a live broadcast studio built with TSN (with whom Can Tire announced a media, content and digital partnership last year) to run live segments and interviews with athletes and sports industry folks. According to the brand, it's about moving from the notion of POS to a "point of experience."

This store and Sport Chek's other new, highly digitized locations (which it refers to as flagships) are the incarnation of Fulton's vision. Building off the opening of its Retail Lab in Toronto in 2013, Sport

Chek's West Edmonton Mall flagship was unveiled as an interactive and techy environment with 470 screens, NFC-enabled units, tablets, a 40-foot monolith wall, interactive installations and custom brand shops. Sales have surpassed that of the mall's former Sport Chek and FGL-owned Atmosphere location by more than 45%, with average transactions totalling 28% more than the retailer's national average. Another flagship launched in Burnaby, B.C., while two more in the GTA are slated to open this fall (in addition to the Maple Leaf Square store).

Despite this convergence of physical and digital, Lecoq admits the retailer still struggles to bridge online and offline consumer behaviour to paint a unified view – a challenge many retailers face. For its part, Sport Chek has been connecting the dots with its data through channels like its website, email vertical (making a big investment, along with programmatic and retargeting) and partnership with Scotiabank's reward platform, Scene (members can earn and redeem points at Sport Chek).

But looking ahead, Lecoq shares a vision for its own loyalty program, aiming to build a system based on behaviour (like exercise), rather than transactions, in addition to focusing on things like personalization and community engagement.

And overall for the brand, it's about continuing to invest in the consumer experience.

"That's what it's all about at the end of the day," Lecoq says. "You just need to reinvent yourself all the time."

A LOT OF SWEAT GOES A LONG WAY.

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CONGRATULATIONS ON BRAND OF THE YEAR
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**CONGRATULATIONS
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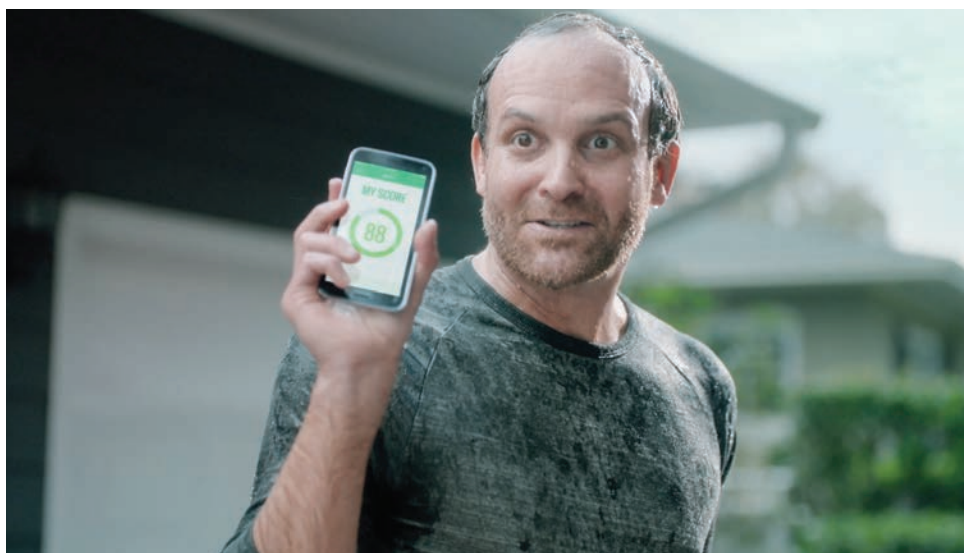
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lg2

Desjardins breaks through borders

With the launch of a new mobile bank, a first-of-its-kind app and a major acquisition, the Quebec-based financial co is making a splash in the rest of Canada.

BY EMILY WEXLER



The Ajusto app launched with different campaigns in English and French Canada, but kept a humorous tone.

Desjardins' VP brand and marketing communications, Nathalie Lachance, sums up the company's year in simple terms: "We try new things – that's probably the way we can categorize our year – new things."

That's putting it mildly. Desjardins has put its stake in the ground this year as a financial force to be reckoned with outside its comfort zone – Quebec. It made some big moves across Canada, including the acquisition of a major player in the insurance game with State Farm's Canadian business, the launch of a first-of-its kind app, as well as a concept store and an entirely new mobile bank.

Desjardins, a cooperative financial group that provides insurance, personal and business services, has over seven million members and clients. It also has over 1,000 caisses and service outlets in Quebec (55 in Ontario), and is a dominant player in its home province, both in insurance and financial

services, with 43% of personal savings, 23% of consumer credit and 36% of all mortgages.

For health and life insurance, Desjardins is the number two company in Quebec and number five in Canada. And since it purchased the Canadian operation of State Farm back in January of this year, it sits at number two in Quebec and number three in Canada for general insurance (home and car).

This year it ranked as North America's strongest financial institution by Bloomberg (beating out all the major banks in Canada and the U.S.) and posting a first quarter net income of \$73.7 million, compared to \$16.7 million for the same quarter last year.

And now it seems that the co-operative, which is ubiquitous in Quebec (it has 98% awareness in that province and 58 to 75% familiarity, depending on the business line), is keen to expand beyond its borders, where it is decidedly less well-known. The numbers dip outside the province to

between 52 and 82% awareness and about 20% familiarity.

To boost those numbers, Lachance knows the importance of tailoring messages for different regions. One of Desjardins' big national launches this year was the Ajusto app. It's a first-of-its-kind tool that tracks how a user drives (which can then improve their insurance rates), all done through their phone instead of a traditional device inside the car.

"We can talk more about empowerment in Quebec and driving well, and in Ontario we can be more price-oriented," says Lachance about its different campaign tactics, though humour is always a part of the company's messaging, to add a little fun to a traditionally dull category.

English spots by Lg2 featured drivers who became highly competitive with their neighbours once they got the app (one outfitting her car with Ajusto decals like a race-car driver, for instance).

Meanwhile, in Quebec, spots highlighted the mobile aspect of the tool, and a Facebook campaign by Montreal digital agency Ressac played to the gamification aspect of the app. The "Ajusto Challenge" got users to challenge friends (and get the loser to do things like dye their hair or wash the winner's car).

Lachance says this fall they'll be adjusting the Ajusto messaging, so to speak, outside Quebec, tweaking it based on what they learned from the first campaign.

"We were trying to sell both things at the same time – the app and the insurance. [But] you can do a 90-day trial [without buying the insurance]. This is new technology, people have to get used to it." So the new campaign will be more about getting people on board with the app, after which they'll do relationship



A new concept store appeals to youth by taking the stuffiness (and the counter) out of banking.

management to convert them to clients.

While Desjardins won't divulge specific numbers, Lachance says one in four new auto insurance customers enroll in the Ajusto program.

Another major launch this year was a new entrant in the banking category in Western Canada. Zag Bank, a branch-free mobile bank, is an evolution of West Bank, originally founded in 2003 and then acquired by Desjardins in 2014.

"This was a bold move because to start a bank in Canada, it's not like in another country where there are so many banks," says

Lachance. "Here, it's bigger players."

The bank launched quietly with a friends and family pilot in the spring in Alberta and B.C., followed by a digital campaign, by Lg2 and digital shop Jam3, which asked consumers to go online and create a jingle for the new bank.

In September, a humorous TV campaign launched showing how fast Zag services are (like depositing a cheque).

When it came to branding Zag Bank, Lachance says they opted not to use the Desjardins name because of its lower familiarity outside of Quebec, where it's mostly perceived as an insurance company.

However, she says, "what we're learning more and more with focus groups is that when people learn that Desjardins is behind Zag, it reassures them more than we thought."

She notes that in the future, consumers might see the Desjardins name attached to Zag on some materials.

So where does the name Zag Bank come from? "It's because we were thinking the

banks zig, we zag," explains Lachance.

That philosophy of going in a different direction also applied to several concept stores that opened in Quebec this year. The new retail locations take a cue from tech stores, with tablets for browsing and "products" in actual packages, like one containing info on mortgages, while staff can approach customers more casually.

Conceptualized by Lg2's design and branding shop Lg2boutique, the stores are project-based (rather than transaction-based) around things like buying a first home or saving for retirement. There are three concept stores aimed at younger people and one aimed at new immigrants.

Among young people visiting the store, there's been a 90% satisfaction rate, Lachance says.

The new concept stores and the Ajusto app are indicative of Desjardins' efforts to embrace innovative thinking, which it's able to increasingly do thanks to a more streamlined approach to marketing.

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It's not easy to be a highly decentralized organization with about 300 people working on marketing across the country (with a core national team of about 25 to 30).

"We have people from multiple business lines sitting together monthly so that we see the world in the same way, and we see the brand in the same way. That's a challenge," says Lachance. "And the brand belongs to the [people], so we have to be very careful and clear in what we stand for."

Desjardins used to work with over 100 agencies, but has reduced that number to about 30 (for services from social media to production/design), with Lg2 and media agency Touché as its AORs. And it is focusing on taking more of a hands-off approach.

"[The media landscape is] so complex that we gained a lot from stepping back more and working on giving good briefings," says Lachance, who has an agency background herself, having worked at Cossette and Sid Lee. "The [industry] is becoming so aggressive that we have to be

more innovative and creative and risk doing stuff that was not in our boundaries before."

That includes things like the Hop 'n S@ve app, which launched last year and allows users to put money in their savings account instead of making an unnecessary purchase (for example, putting \$100 away that you might have spent on a pair of shoes).

But despite the focus on new technology and the increasingly complex mediascape, at the end of the day, Desjardins still aims to be an "of the people" company.

Of the \$80 million a year it spends on sponsorships, 90% is invested in local community initiatives, Lachance says, with the remaining 10% spent on larger sponsorships like the Montreal Canadiens and the FrancoFolies music festival.

Social media has also been a key tool for the brand's community focus, Lachance notes, with about 125 different caisses having their own social presence.

"We were built out of communities. And as we got bigger, it was difficult to

stay connected. So for us, social media is a blessing because we can go back to participation, education – all the things that were easier for us to do at a certain time."

It's no surprise then, that according to data from Engagement Labs released in the spring, Desjardins is the second-highest ranked Canadian financial institution on Facebook, beat out only by RBC.

And while Desjardins is staying on top of social media and innovation while it pushes into new territory, Lachance says it's keeping an eye on the ever-changing financial landscape out there.

"New players – PayPal, Google, Amazon – they have lots of money and they're outside the industry, they're not regulated, so that's something we look at. So the competition is not just the other banks, it's these new global players," she says. "I'm on Google 50 times a day, what's going to happen the day they launch a credit card?"

We don't know, but we're sure when it happens, Desjardins will be ready for it.

COOPERATING TO BUILD A GREAT CANADIAN BRAND

IT TOOK A LOT OF COOPERATION TO BUILD THE DESJARDINS BRAND

and we want to thank our members, clients, employees, partners and agencies for their part in transforming Desjardins into what it is today.



Desjardins

Cooperating in building the future



Smoke's goes from small fry to gravy train conductor

The brand is no couch potato, with its sights set on a global empire of restaurants.

BY TANYA KOSTIW

Smoke's Poutinerie founder Ryan Smolkin can't contain his excitement over the launch of the company's first Burritorie, part of its extensive growth strategy.

“In a way I'm almost like the Messiah, I'm like the son of God, some people say. I wouldn't say that, but some people have. I'm just sayin,' alright?" laughs Ryan Smolkin from behind his mirrored aviators.

The founder and CEO of Smoke's Poutinerie is telling the "tale" of how the company's elusive fictional namesake (whose face in sticker format dons backpacks, laptops and even the cubicle of *strategy's* editor) came to him late one night with a vision for the concept.

Since then, he's become the essence of a brand that has taken a classic Canadian dish to new heights, with its sights set on "global domination," arguably spurring copycats from QSR giants along the way. And whether you subscribe to Smoke's eccentric origin story of sorts, even the most atheist of marketers would be hard-pressed not to recognize it's this kind of quirky storytelling and focus on branding that has laid the framework to support an aggressive expansion strategy.

Perhaps it's no coincidence that Smolkin recounts this tale from

the company's first Burritorie location in downtown Toronto on Sept. 14, its opening day. A line spills out along Adelaide Street, as eaters wait to try a specially priced \$1 burrito, with proceeds going to The Donkey Sanctuary of Canada. (The sanctuary is indeed real, but the company relates it to a faux adventure of Smoke's – when he was rescued by Mexican donkey herders after washing up on a beach and given burritos as medicine.)

The rollout of Smoke's Burritorie and Weinerie locations are the next chapter in the evolution of the brand, which has grown from its first Poutinerie in 2009 to more than 100, including three in the U.S. within the past year and more to come, a push into non-traditional platforms (30 new restaurants are slated to open on campuses and stadiums by 2015's end), and ardent plans to open 1,300 new restaurants across the globe by 2020. The private company doesn't share financials, but it believes its growth plans are doable based on targets set by year and area.

The Burritorie and Weinerie extensions have been part of Smolkin's plan since day one, and represent a calculated decision to diversify into multiple food categories under one brand, rather than adding new products to the Poutinerie's menu. Such a move would have deterred from the focus that's brought the brand success, he says.

"That's the biggest thing that I've been hammering internally and externally – it's not product extension, it's brand extension," he says. "Anybody can do product extension. We're doing brand extension, which is a lot tougher and it's a lot more risk."

It's the strength of the Smoke's Poutinerie brand that is supporting the Weinerie and Burritorie expansion. Smolkin says there has been immediate interest in the new Weinerie and Burritorie franchises because of the Poutinerie's success – a contrast to building out the latter franchises, which were "the hard sell for years and years."

To support the company's growth strategy, Smoke's brought on PR agency partner High View Communications, Reshift Media on social and All Points PR in the U.S. It's also built out its marketing team – which consisted of just Smolkin until about two years ago. Now five strong, and with a former McDonald's marketer at the helm, bolstering its events and developing new ones are among its priorities.

Paula Stephenson came aboard in May from the QSR heavyweight, where she says she "learned from the best." But working on a brand with a strong sense of identity and direction is "a marketer's dream," she says. Smoke's "sets course, and it just goes, it doesn't deviate."

For Stephenson, building up a solid team was an early task, which included hiring senior marketing manager Toni Stratis and promoting a digital supervisor. Digital will be a focus, she says, while another priority is to create internal systems that enable franchisees to easily execute programs.

But Smolkin doesn't want his company to turn into a huge corporate chain, and he fosters franchisees' independence (as long as they conform to brand standards). He says they can put their own twist on programs, and supports letting them try new things.

"I'm all about brand and brand integrity, and I'll fight tooth and nail if somebody messes up my brand," he says. "But let the interpretation of that brand evolve."

While Smoke and the allure of this infamous figure are central to the brand identity, Smolkin lauds the notion of how the brand goes beyond the food and service experience and is an entertainment company.

As such, events have been a core marketing component, namely the World Poutine Eating Championship, which has evolved from its modest start in 2009. It began as a single table and banner, while communications claimed the world's best eaters would attend, to make it seem more grandiose than it was. But that perception has turned into reality, Smolkin recounts, with last year's event at Toronto's Yonge-Dundas Square netting 15,000 attendees, complete with a Kiss cover band, dunk tank, potato launcher and even a DeLorean.

And this past summer, the brand completed its second cross-country tour, featuring free food, swag and prizes, and entertainment

from competitive eating champ Tim "Gravy" Brown. With a title aptly befitting the brand, the Smoke's Poutinerie World Famous Great Canadian Cross Country Plaid Gravy Train Fries Curd & Gravy Weird Wild and Wacky Poutine Eating Tour stopped in 21 cities, distributed 12,000 free poutines and netted more than 100 million media impressions. A web series on YouTube followed the tour.

Social has also been a key part of the strategy (the brand has more than 28,000 Facebook fans and nearly 18,000 Twitter followers). For instance, in conjunction with the cross-country tour, consumers in the tour cities were invited to post photos to Facebook depicting their love for poutine, with a poutine party and free poutine for a year as prizes.

While Smolkin favours the unconventional and cool factor, it's also been about trying to make an impact with limited resources. For example, he says the brand's popular plaid stickers with Smoke's mug (a mere double-digit budget campaign) likely has more impact than a multi-million-dollar promotion from a QSR giant competitor.

As such, the brand has had to carve out its niche, he says, going the route of events, PR and social. The budget has grown to \$450,000 for this year – still not enough to shoot a TV spot, he notes.

But even if he could afford to do it, he probably wouldn't. Despite zealous ambitions to grow and penetrate foreign markets like Australia and the Middle East, the plan is to stay the course with what has worked – events and social being key.

Education will be part of the strategy in markets less familiar with poutine, as well as adapting the toppings based on consumer insights. After all, it's just loading stuff onto fries – an international staple, he says. Moreover, it's about tweaking the communication – Smoke's uses the term "loaded fries" rather than poutine in the U.S.

Meanwhile, penetration into non-traditional segments has been a core part of the expanding footprint – from stadiums and post-secondary campuses to amusement parks and highway rest stops. Last year there were eight of these locations, while 60 more are expected by the end of 2015. The first foray into this segment at Rico Colosseum was about proving the model would work, he says, and generated interest from other non-traditional sites like the Air Canada Centre and Rogers Centre.

Fast-forward to today, amid the bustle of the Burritorie launch, Smolkin tells another story that's a powerful indicator of the evolution of his fry shop. Donning plaid, he recently accepted an invitation to meet with someone he's idolized, Gene Simmons, and his wife Shannon Tweed. (This followed the Hollywood location's launch, to which Canadian celebs, like Tweed, were invited.)

Smolkin recounts driving through a set of gates to a mansion (which he didn't realize belonged to Simmons at the time, as he had been told they'd meet at someone else's place). After emerging from his vehicle, Smolkin wasn't sure where to go, but suddenly heard a voice.

"Plaid guy, you're going the wrong way."

It was Simmons standing on the stairs leading up to his home, who proceeded to invite Smolkin in.

Like Simmons, Canada – and now the world – have let Smolkin and his eccentric brand in. No doubt they're going the right way.



From top: The dish that started it all for Smoke's; Smolkin rocks out at the Burritorie launch; the new Weinerie logo and branding take a cue from the Poutinerie, with its own colour scheme.



Also trending...

Keep your eye on these brands. They made big splashes this year and we suspect their momentum will only grow. From a major athlete to a cab alternative, here's what's had the industry buzzing so far in 2015.

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR **KYLE LOWRY A SLAM DUNK FOR BRANDS**

By Harmeet Singh

When the Toronto Raptors' Kyle Lowry was a starter at this year's NBA All-Star Game, he was also at the tip-off point of becoming a key player for some Canadian marketers.

In the months following that February game, the 29-year-old point guard signed several endorsement deals and partnerships with major brands, turning the Philadelphia native into a true Canadian star.

Lowry inked a two-year sponsorship deal with retailer Sport Chek (a *strategy* Brand of the Year, see p. 25) in February, making him part of the brand's "#MyNorth" clothing line and campaign.

Most recently, Lowry formally signed a deal with BMO (which also has deals with NBA players Andrew Wiggins, Kelly Olynyk and Tyler Ennis).

Back in March, Lowry worked with BMO and MasterCard Canada for a "Priceless Surprises" campaign, in which the player surprised Toronto fans in the downtown barber shop Lowry personally frequents. The fans got to see a Raptors game from MasterCard's suite at the Air Canada Centre, and a video spot, created by MacLaren McCann, captured the whole experience.

"I think there's no debate that Kyle's stock was certainly on the rise and the relevance with the Toronto Raptors has never been

stronger than it is now," says Milos Vranesevic, head of marketing for MasterCard in Canada.

Lowry's personality, and sharing of a personal place and ritual, also helped MasterCard bring a more intimate approach to its "Priceless Surprises," he adds.

"I think he's very organic," Vranesevic says. "He's got a very warm character."

Indeed, Lowry's "multi-faceted" personality – a confident athlete and family man – made him right for Unilever's portfolio of men's products, says Jessica Grigoriou, marketing director for hair and deodorant at Unilever Canada.

In February, Lowry helped the CPG co launch its Dry Spray Antiperspirants across its marquee brands including Degree, Dove Men+Care and Axe.

Then in April, the Degree brand launched a Twitter contest centred on giving a fan a taste of Lowry's favourite restaurants, hotel and more, with the winner getting a 48-hour VIP experience reflecting the player's life.

And what a good life it must be after the year he's had.



BRAND PARTNER OF THE YEAR NUTELLA'S PAIRINGS

By Harmeet Singh



Like the delicious pairing that is chocolate and hazelnut, Nutella has been hooking up with other brands and integrating itself into Canadian lives all year.

In April, the Ferrero-owned brand and Tim Hortons partnered on a limited-time chocolate hazelnut donut and Nutella-filled pastry pockets, along with the QSR making the spread available on bagels.

Nutella has really leveraged the passion people have for the brand and their desire to share how they use the treat to move from a breakfast food to one that can potentially grow the mature chocolate spreads category overall, says David Grisim, a former CPG marketer and current CMO and SVP, brand strategy at Exact Media (which has not worked with Nutella).

Not long after that partnership, Nutella teamed up with grocery chain Longo's for a pop-up kitchen serving crepes that use the spread, along with a social media campaign using "#NutellaMoments."

Then in June, the Nutella Truck Tour stopped in four Canadian cities. Boom! Marketing, Paradigm Public Relations, Noise, Touché! and High Road all worked with the brand for the campaign, which



featured recipes and guest appearances from Italian-Canadian chef Stefano Faita.

At that time, it also launched the "Add

Joy" microsite, where people could share their own recipes and play an interactive game for a chance to win a Nutella-branded "spife" (a spoon-knife hybrid), and it surprised Montreal and Toronto commuters with a Nutella breakfast.

Nutella's moves come a year after Kraft's chocolate peanut butter spread launched in Canada. This past July, Hershey also brought its Reese Spreads here.

"I'm sure [Nutella is] tempted to expand into other segments, and maybe they will one day," Grisim says. "But I think they've really owned that space so well."

Indeed, Nutella still dominates the chocolate spread category, according to Euromonitor. It has an 11% share of global spreads sales overall (including other spreads like peanut butter).

"I love to see brands that have really found that sweet spot – pardon the pun – of taking a great global property and making it feel very local," Grisim adds. "I think Nutella's done that in spades."

MAVERICK MAKER OF THE YEAR ETSY GOES OFFLINE

By Tanya Kostiw



If you attended a market or festival this past summer, you might have encountered vendors selling handmade or vintage goods from the online marketplace, Etsy. Or you might have even checked out one of the brand's own pop-up events.

Developing offline experiences has been part of the recent strategy for the brand in Canada, which, despite its 1.5 million active sellers and 21.7 million buyers globally, is still looking to develop brand awareness, as well as venture beyond its standard female (aged 25 to 44) demo.

This September marked the brand's second Made in Canada event, which featured a pop-up market of local sellers in 33 cities across the country, expanding from last year's 21. The goal for Etsy (which overall saw \$1.93 billion in gross merchandise sales last year) is for attendees to visit the site or open an account once they return home, says Jennifer Knox, PR and communications manager, Etsy Canada.

But what Knox believes to be unique to the Canadian market is the brand's strategy of piggybacking on existing marketplaces or events, such as the Calgary Stampede, music and arts festival WayHome

and Vancouver's West 4th Ave Khatsahlano Street Party.

And it deepened its community connection with its Etsy Maker Cities pilot this past summer, where it promoted the maker movement in four cities with free or low-cost programming like online photography and shipping workshops.

Etsy (whose Canadian team has seven staffers and two interns) has also found a more permanent way to get on physical shelves, namely through its partnership with Indigo, which began in 2014.

"We're trying to grow wholesale in Canada, as well as grow the Etsy brand to those consumers who many not be as comfortable in the online world," Knox says.

Etsy has also partnered with brands such as David's Tea, MEC, Kleinfeld and Frank & Oak, the latter giving it a chance to reach a male demo, offering products from Etsy sellers on a Frank & Oak microsite around the holidays.

The brand also recently set its sights on Quebec, its least penetrated market in the country. So it partnered with French-speaking PR shop Casacom, Quebec celeb Marie-Soleil Michon and *Chatelaine*, and rolled out its Etsy Design Awards – The Best of Quebec. People voted on their favourite sellers in six categories such as Jewellery and Home & Living, and the winners were featured in *Chatelaine*'s July issue.



NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR RIDING THE UBER WAVE

By Jennifer Horn

It took just nine years for Google to be added to the Oxford English Dictionary. Uber is six this year. That means it has three years to either beat or match the search engine's record. And based on its shoot to fame during the past year alone, we're willing to bet it won't be long until the ubiquitous ride-sharing app lands a spot in the lexicon.

The year 2015 was arguably when Uber went from small, but steadily growing player to behemoth brand that is (mostly) loved by the public, yet also seen, in the eyes of some cities and most taxi drivers, as a rabble-rouser that's threatening the traditional model. Not prepared to go down without a fight, the brand, currently valued at \$40 billion, has been hosting protests and public petitions to convince politicians to keep UberX (its low-cost and non-luxury car service, which has 400,000 Canadian users and 16,000 regular drivers, according to the *Toronto Star*) on the map.

Partnerships have been a key ingredient to Uber's success, launching services like UberEats, where subscribers can have drivers



deliver weekly curated menu items (from partner restos) to their doorstep. Closer to home, the Toronto-based arm (which launched in 2012) has partnered with companies to give back to the community. It teamed up with Roots to pick up second-hand clothing from people's homes and donate them to nearby Goodwills. And with non-profit Three Million Dogs, it delivered homeless dogs to people's houses and offices for 15-minute visits to create awareness for shelter pets. From MADD to Carnegie Mellon University to (Red), the list of social partnerships across 60 participating countries goes on.

While brand awareness has mostly been spread through word-of-mouth, the app has also been marketed in more deliberate and less-than-traditional ways. Uber worked with Rethink earlier this year to launch "Uber Safe," which helped out party-goers without a designated driver by giving them a breathalyzer test via a digital kiosk, and immediately ordering a free Uber if they were above the limit. That campaign later went home with a Bronze Cyber Lion at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.



HOT TICKET OF THE YEAR CANADA'S MUSIC FESTIVALS

By Megan Haynes

Hear that? That's the sound of millennials flocking en masse to music festivals across the country.

This year alone, a number of festivals kicked off, including Fvded in the Park and Levitation Vancouver in B.C., as well as Go Hard, WayHome, Bestival and Camp Wavelength in Ontario, joining an already crowded space.

Fan favourites are only getting more popular, like Squamish Valley Music Festival, which pulled in 118,000 attendees, Montreal's Osheaga (135,000 attendees) and Boots and Hearts near Barrie, ON (35,000), among countless others (one estimate for North America pegs the annual festival circuit at well over 1,000 per year). And brands are taking notice.

"In today's world, where there's such a focus on multi-platform, multi-screen, to have a real-life immersive experience is something people tend to crave," says Matthew Logue, VP strategy and COO at S&E Sponsorship Group.

He points to the Perrier Greenhouse at this summer's Bestival (held on the Toronto Islands), Osheaga and Squamish, as a prime example of a brand getting in on the action. Perrier set up a place for concert-goers to refresh, drink Perrier-infused cocktails and listen to their own private DJ (mixing from a booth covered in bubbles, natch). It was positively received by, of all people, music festival critics.

According to U.S. research from promotion company AEG and consultancy Momentum Worldwide, more than 90% of those surveyed liked the brands that sponsor live events, while 80% said they'd purchase products following a music festival experience.

That being said, Logue notes that while companies can create really immersive experiences on-site, some have a harder time translating that into off-site content.

This is an issue Andrew Oosterhuis, marketing director for Budweiser Canada, has noticed as well.

"Our challenge is to move beyond sampling and activation, and create a system where you're part of that culture that's unique to each festival," he says.

To address this, the brand is trying to capture the feel of the festival in its online channels (YouTube, Facebook, etc.), cutting short videos featuring real attendees. It's lean and production-light, he adds, which is appealing to the company as it moves towards more digital content, generally.

Having participated in three festivals this summer, he says early results indicate high engagement and play-rate completion, while social chatter has been positive.



OUT OF HOME remains a great way of getting brand messaging in front of consumers. From large format, static boards and transit shelters, to murals and digital beacon-enabled screens, consumers connect with OOH advertising approximately 70% of the time they are out and about.

It's an effective medium at that: One study by the Out of Home Marketing Association of Canada found 28% of the 90,000 consumers polled recalled seeing a digital out of home ad within the past week, while a full 50% remembered a static ad. While the 2015

Canadian Shopper Study (an annual report put on by Brand Spark International) found shoppers were undecided about their purchase 50% of the time, out of home advertising was one of the best ways of helping sway decisions. Eight out of 10 shoppers noticed out of home advertising, the study found, inspiring many a shopper (59% to be exact) to look up advertised products on their smartphone.

Read on to see how two companies are creating dynamic, highly targeted out-of-home advertising eco-systems that are getting the right messages in front of the right consumers.

Astral deepens its consumer connection

ASTRAL OUT OF HOME, a division of Bell Media, is in mega expansion mode.

In the past 18 months, the advertising network has acquired two companies and won a number of new contracts, expanding its reach across the country.

Back in December, Astral Out of Home acquired the assets of Toronto's Strategic Outdoor, giving it access to a range of out of home large-scale murals, deepening its footprint in Canada's biggest city. Earlier that year, it picked up Macdonald Outdoor, gaining a large format digital network in Edmonton; and has since expanded that network and entered into the Calgary market.

That's on top of the three new airport contracts it's won in recent months, including Halifax, Ottawa and Vancouver, adding to its existing airport contracts in Montreal and Quebec City. This is not to mention the newest installation of digital transit shelters in Toronto, featuring the first 4K digital screens in Canada and the recently awarded RTC Quebec City contract for Transit Shelters and Buses.

"We can give clients an extensive network of touchpoints through which to reach consumers," says Jordana Fatsis, VP sales, Astral Out of Home. "And with our research teams and GIS mapping, we're able to truly concentrate a brand's advertising efforts in a way that best meets its needs and reach its target group."

What's more, with Bell Media Mix, Astral Out of Home is an ideal partner for brands, as clients can easily integrate Bell Media's TV, digital media and radio properties. "It's a one-stop shop," she says.

The OOH network has also upgraded its internal software tools in recent months, she says, introducing a new way to buy ad space (on a total impression basis, rather than at specific locations only), allowing brands to maximize their budgets and reach.

Another recent development is the ability to synchronize RSS and conditional data for street level digital and large format digital campaigns from one completely centralized master control centre. "This means we're able to execute dynamic digital campaigns and are able to control every market across the country at a single point, rather than try to manage each market individually," says Fatsis.

She points to a recent campaign with Mondelez's Ritz Crackers in Toronto as a prime example of one of these dynamic campaigns. "Ritz Fitz" tapped into both traffic and transit data. For those travelling on a busy Toronto highway, their estimated commute time was displayed in crackers, while those waiting for transit, a countdown (in crackers, naturally) showed how much longer people had to wait for the next bus or streetcar.



To achieve that kind of stand-out originality and engagement, Fatsis advises bringing in Astral Out of Home early on in the discussions. "We're in a unique position where we can assist clients with their strategy to create customized campaigns," she says.

She points to a recent campaign with Quebec retailer Reno-Depot and Sid Lee, which used a camera and an app to determine the exact colour of the sky and match it to the available SICO paint colour available in stores. The campaign went on to win a Gold Pencil at this year's One Show.

To spark this type of creativity that takes unique advantage of the medium, Astral Out of Home is continuing to deepen its relationship with agencies. Beyond its proprietary measurement tool offered exclusively to agencies (which measures the probability of creative elements seen within the first three to five seconds), Astral Out of Home has hosted its home-grown annual Carte Blanche competition for the past six years. This year, the organization put to market 2014's winning campaign for Marks (also by Sid Lee). The campaign featured discounts based on the drop in temperature, she says, a great campaign for the long, cold months of Canada. The push saw a 21% increase in year-over-year sales in the markets the ad ran.

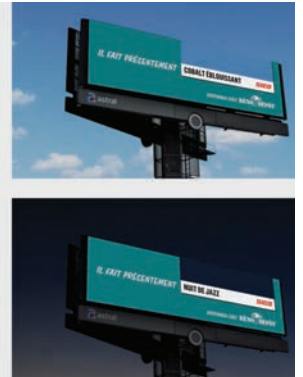
Going forward, Fatsis says Astral Out of Home will continue to invest heavily into digital out of home, including digital offerings in the newly awarded airports and at street level.

"We've been testing touch interactive applications at street level and at airports that are still in the development stage," she says. "Preliminary research proves that people on the street are willing to engage in new technology, especially the 25 to 54 demo."

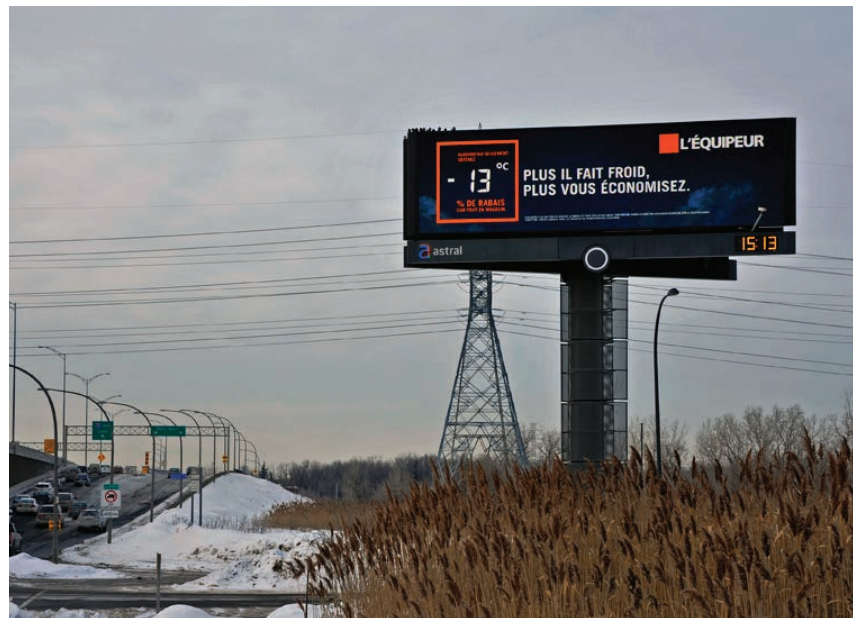
"Mobile and digital interaction is going to continue to grow," she adds. "Customers want more dynamic experiences from their brands, and out of home is a great medium to create these interactive experiences."



The latest Ritz Crackers transit campaign for Mondelez helped commuters out by counting down the minutes until their next bus or streetcar. Crackers made the perfect countdown clock.



Reno-Depot, Sico, Sid Lee and Astral teamed up to create this campaign, which tracked the colour of the sky in real time and matched it with a Sico paint colour.



Astral and Mark's (and its French version Equipeur) brought this Carte Blanche winning campaign to life across Canada. Tapping into weather data, the transit ads offered discounts based on the temperature drop – the colder it got, the more people saved.



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Billy Bishop's digital OOH ecosystem takes flight

IMAGINE FOLLOWING AN AUDIENCE from the start of their journey to the end...

With the opening of the long-awaited tunnel connecting mainland Toronto to the Billy Bishop Airport, marketers can now journey with consumers as they travel to and from their plane. And a new geo-synched app and comprehensive digital advertising ecosystem make it all possible.

Since opening its doors in August, the 853-metre walkway set 100 feet underground has seen a steady flow of foot traffic. And that's great news for advertisers, as with those feet come eyeballs.

Designed by media company BLACK on behalf of PortsToronto, The Billy Bishop digital OOH system is an ideal place for brands to reach a highly targeted consumer, says Dean Black, president and CEO.

"Unlike other airports, Billy Bishop has always been unique," says Black. "Even before the pedestrian tunnel, there was an opportunity for the airport to enter the experience economy and differentiate itself from competitors by providing passengers with a superior over-all travel experience. Keeping our focus on the passenger journey we were able to integrate a state-of-the-art, multi-platform media environment that actually removes pain-points from air travel and, most importantly, creates an experience halo that a brand can use to introduce their own story to a highly defined target audience."

Targeting the business traveller and the higher-income leisure passenger (about 68% of people who fly through the airport are under the age of 45, with the majority being university educated with an average household income of \$118,924), the digital out-of-home experience is complete with 4K and interactive screens, beacon technology, sponsored (and free) WiFi, as well as a mobile app. The ads are at scale with the people using it, with eight-foot tall displays and all signs along the moving sidewalk placed at eye optimal viewing angles.

Black points to a Land Rover campaign as a recent example of how marketers can use the system to its advantage. Working with Mindshare and Spark44, the car company ran an integrated program with interactive touch screens and digital OOH, as well as two display cars. Its "Discovery" campaign invited passengers to test their "adventure quotient," a fitting tag for those set to board a plane.

Similarly, a recent activation with BMO Wealth Management took advantage of the interconnected platform. To support the bank's overarching "We're here to help" campaign currently running across the country, the brand, Maxus and KBS+ installed automated banking machines, a full digital OOH program, as well as WiFi and app sponsorship, all driving the messaging that the bank is there to help.

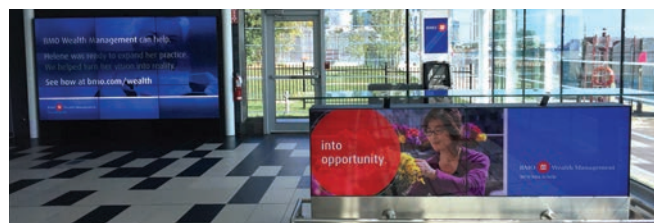
The entire advertising system is meant to align with the passenger's journey and allow marketers to tell their brand stories within the context of air travel, Black says.

The app, for example, provides travellers with the information they need at the times they need it. So while people are preparing to depart for the airport, a real-time flight, traffic and weather updates are available. As they arrive at the airport,

flight information can be pulled up, while business travellers are provided with a digital magazine that offers relevant articles around Billy Bishop's destination cities.

Marketers can tap into the app using beacon technology or geo-fencing programs, connecting the advertising directly with the content passengers are reading through native and mobile ads that are contextually relevant, says Black.

Having only been open two months, and considering the campaigns are still in market, it's too early to expect definitive results from the aforementioned campaigns, however he says both brands are considering a presence at the airport in their upcoming planning cycles, which is a good indication of early success.



Both Land Rover (top left) and BMO (above) tapped into the new "travel ecosystem," offered by Black, capturing passenger attention to and from the airport. It was all about the adventure for Jaguar, while BMO sold its "here to help" positioning.

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Solving the ‘human problem’

BY THOMAS KENNY

Good advertising is possible without a good brief, but it’s stumbled upon by chance rather than by design and is, as a result, far more elusive.

A good brief will set the parameters within which successful advertising can be created. We may not know the landscape of our final destination at the briefing stage, but we do know the criteria with which to evaluate whether or not we’ve found it. Writing a good brief is hard, but the formula is actually quite straightforward.

Far too many briefs focus on the desired business outcome when they should be focusing on the problem we’re solving for the people we’re talking to. Right now, most briefs begin with identifying the business problem. They describe how mainstream beer sales are down among millennial drinkers, or how millennials aren’t eating breakfast anymore, or the need to increase the millennial buy rate for chewing gum (it’s shocking how often these stubborn millennials seem to be at the heart of so many business problems over the past few years).

But the problem with beginning a brief this way is that it asks the wrong question. A brief that asks, “How do we get millennials to eat breakfast again?” doesn’t bring us any closer to finding a solution. Instead of asking, “What is the business problem to be solved?” the question a brief needs to ask – and usually answer – is, “What is the human

problem to be solved?”

It’s commonly agreed that the best and most inspiring briefs are insightful briefs. Sadly, “insight” is perhaps the most mercurial term in advertising. It is frequently evoked,

but rarely understood. It’s commonly defined, in the context of advertising, as the underlying motivation behind why someone behaves a certain way.

In my mind (and others would surely disagree), the insight we should all be seeking when writing a brief is the correct identification of the human need or human tension which our product will fulfill or resolve. In some instances that need may be functional (“I can’t get



Want consumers to uncap your product? Solve a real problem for them.

my tub clean without scrubbing it for 20 minutes”) and sometimes that need may be emotional (“I want a restaurant that reminds me of the comforts of home”).

By correctly identifying the human problem, we establish the role our product will play in people’s lives and can begin figuring out the best way to position our product as the solution to that problem. If we discover there is no human problem for which our product is the resolution, then, well, that product is a dud and no one is going to buy it.

When I graduated university and started interviewing for my first real job, my dad gave me a piece of advice. He said, “Don’t ever talk to a potential employer about what you’ll get out of a job.” Instead, he advised that I list the ways hiring me will benefit my employer. It was great advice.

Likewise, in 2013, Teehan + Lax published a great blog post on their “Jobs to be Done” approach to product design. In it, the team outlined how they viewed a product as a job applicant. They explained how consumers have needs – or to use their analogy, “jobs to be done” – and they set out to design the best products, or “applicants,” to fill those jobs.

The thinking they apply to designing products should logically be extended to the marketing of those products.

Where this approach (and unlocking a great brief) becomes difficult is in not simply taking the easy way out. If the task at hand is to sell a new deodorant, then the human problem to be solved can’t simply be “people want a great smelling, long lasting deodorant.” If that is in fact the human problem, then there are dozens, if not hundreds of deodorants that solve that problem. The key to writing a great brief is to identify the problem that our product can uniquely solve or solves better than its competitors.

Having identified the human problem to be solved, the rest of the brief becomes an exercise in positioning our product as the solution. At its simplest, a brief should consist of the target audience, the human problem to be solved and the words/actions required to convince the target our product is the best solution to their problem. Anything that doesn’t inform or provide context to one of these three things is extraneous and should be excised.

This approach does, however, presume there’s a pre-existing solution. In some instances, briefs will be required to solve human problems where there is not already a solution – new product development, websites, contests, apps, etc. In these cases, the same basic principles apply. But rather than convincing people that the perfect solution to their problem exists, our task is to create that solution.

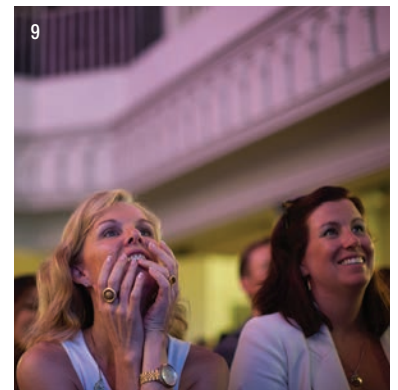
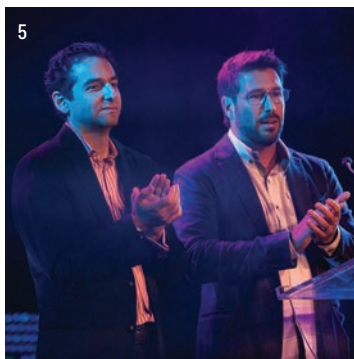


THOMAS KENNY
is strategy director at
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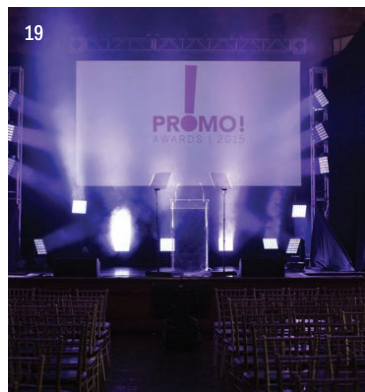
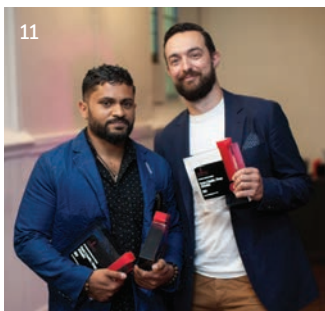
PROMO! AWARDS 2015



On Sept. 16 at Toronto's Berkeley Church, CAPMA's PROMO! Awards celebrated the best in brand activation. The audience was entertained by the evening's host, *Etalk*'s Jessi Cruickshank, who had some fun at the expense of millennials. The big winner of the night was *Carmilla*, a teen web series created by Geometry Global for Kimberly-Clark's U by Kotex brand, which went home with Best of Show.



1. Host Jessi Cruickshank entertains the audience | 2. Jeff Rogers of AMG and Derek Joynt from The Mars Agency | 3. Nicol Kalman from aNlthing is Possible, Twist Marketing's David Kane, Melody MacPherson of LPi Group and PROMO! jury co-chair Nicole Bleiwas | 4. Coke's Shelly Walia, Caron Watt, Melanie Isaac and Beth MacGibbon before picking up a Silver for the "Style Bar" | 5. CAPMA presidents Matthew Diamond and Chad Grenier | 6. Geometry Global's Robyn Dalley picks up Best of Show for U by Kotex's *Carmilla* | 7. *Strategy*'s Neil Ewen and The Taylor Group's Mark Radford play a millennial-themed game | 8. A VR installation, provided by Globacore and The Taylor Group, engaged the crowd | 9. Christine Ross and Kelly Power of Free For All Marketing enjoy the show.



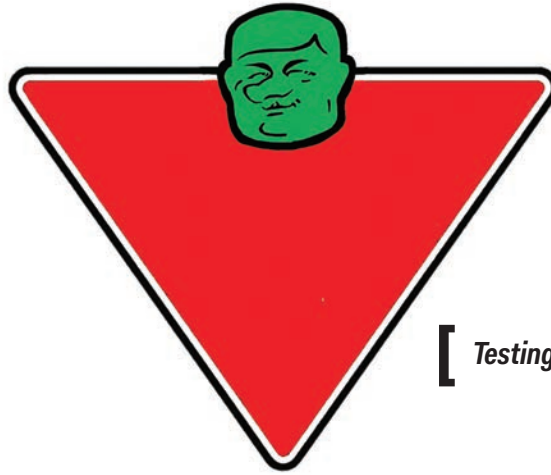
10. Jean-Simon Charland, Mélissa Desrosiers and Olivier Charbonneau of Cossette | 11. Leo Burnett's Anthony Chelvanathan and Morgan Kurchak | 12. MacLaren McCann's Rishi Gupta nabs a Bronze for MasterCard | 13. Josh and David Diamond (Diamond Integrated Marketing) pick up a Silver for TD | 14. Fuse Marketing's Kelley Doris snags a Bronze for Scotties' "Power of 10" | 15. Claudéric Saint-Amand of Bob Agence took home a Silver for a program with Unilever's Dove brand | 16. Zulu team members show off their wins with folks from Audi, Corona and Interac | 17. Taxi 2's Jeff MacEachern, Marc Levesque and Dan Cantelon | 18. Cossette's Louis Ray and Nadja Décarie, Perfetti Van Melle's Laurence Pichon, and Cossette's Thomas Nelligan and Léa Racioppi | 19. That's a wrap!

PHOTOS BY NICK KOZAK

Caveat emptor

Marketing is a big part of politics, and in today's over-branded, hyped-up world, are we that far away from political leaders becoming brands? And we don't mean the personal brands they've already crafted, but actual consumer brands (Rob Ford bobblehead, anyone?). Or maybe in the next election, we'll see Walmart or Tim Hortons take a run for Parliament. Is the idea really that crazy? Until that happens, we asked illustrator **Anthony Jenkins** to re-imagine the current Canadian party leaders as popular brands, and imagined some possible taglines. Buyer beware!

**Note: No brands were harmed in the making of this back page, nor are they in any way affiliated with the political leaders portrayed. It's just parody, people.*



[*Testing your patience in Canada*]



[*A long Canadian heritage of being ignored*]

ZIG-ZAG



[*A slow burn to the top*]



[*Doubling down on the budget*]

[illegible]

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