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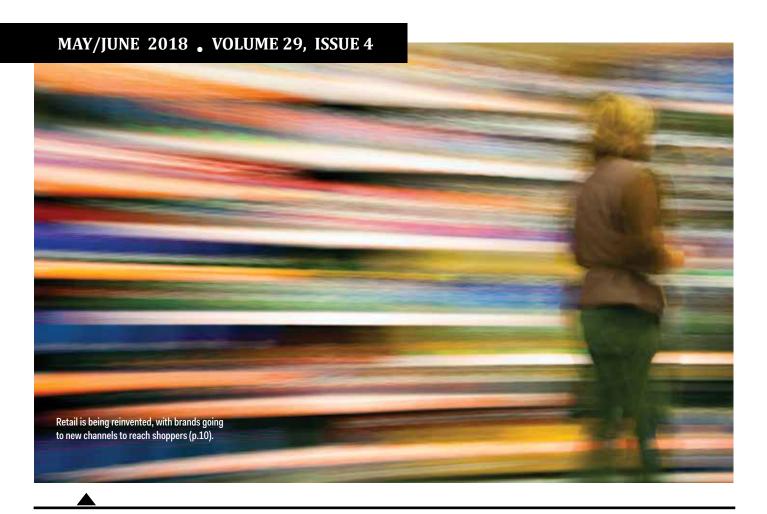








Oath:





It's time

Retail's entering another chapter. It's fast, digital, and direct. Here's how brands are retooling their strategies in the ecomm era.



Innovate & collaborate

The 2018 Shopper Innovation Awards applauds the best brand plans and retailer partnerships in Canada.



Mazda turns 50

A look at how the Japanese automaker zoomed into the Canadian market, and where it's going next.

4 Editorial Lessons in retail • 6 Upfronts Little Nestlé chocolate and big public billboards, plus Harry Rosen makes a play for a broader audience with a new (and first) look on TV . 34 Best Buy's sensorial and branded spaces helped it win Retail Innovator of the Year •40 Media experts gather at a roundtable discussion about the future of planning •74 Highlights from the AToMiCon in pictures •76 Forum Jason Dubroy's call for better trust strategies .78 Back page Lg2's tech reversal gives the feeling of shopping, from home



ON THE COVER:

Digital killed the single channel path. Mass brands are taking a page out of the niche player's book. And there's an abundance of ecomm choice, for shoppers and brands alike. These are the days of our industry's (disrupted) life. This issue's feature, by strategy reporter Justin Dallaire, digs deep into why brands are going direct-to-consumer (hint: data) and how they're moving fast and furious to meet consumers before they move onto something shiny and new. We got illustrator Sébastian Thibault to give us his take on mass brands' defensive play.

Comparing notes & thriving on chaos



mazon is opening grocery stores. Google is selling its phones in popups. And digital-native brands from Warby Parker to Casper are laying down bricks, while also making sudden and stark appearances in the Indigos and Targets of the world.

The term "Retailpocalypse" is starting to lose its dystopian ring.

But it's not just the disruptors that want to play in the same sandbox as the Goliath's of traditional retail. The industry is coming full circle on both sides, with mass brands from L'Oreal and Kraft Heinz, to retailers like Longo's and Sleep Country, crossing the line that separates the dichotomous worlds, going direct to shoppers in new digital ways (p.10).

The impact of brands going D2C is far-reaching, hitting close to home for

retailers that rely on products to line their shelves and bring in consumers.

L'Oreal says it's seeing store rejigs from merchandisers looking to match the online speed of retail, offering the beauty brand "flex spaces" to accommodate quick product switches.

In a similar vein, tech turnover was starting to threaten Best Buy's ability to quickly repond to product launches. The fix came with a massive renovation to accommodate faster turnaround, a play that helps the brand (which strategy named Retail Innovator of the Year, see p.34) keep up with ecomm-petitors.

That assimilation is an upshot of online bleeding into offline (and vice versa). Big or small, mass or digital, brands are observing and selecting what's missing from their retail stack, while - and this is important - still playing to their strengths.

Both e-tailers and retailers want what they don't have:

the speed, data and convenience of online + the visibility and intimacy of bricksand-mortar.

We're seeing the results of this watch-and-learn approach come to fruition with traditional retailers building at-home shopping environments through curated ecommerce (Best Buy's next venture), while digital natives enter physical retail with online toolkits (Amazon is using algorithms to populate its physical bookstore shelves).

There's always lessons to be learned in the evolution of an industry. And while disruption via innovation can lead to hard-to-digest sales dips and store closures, it's within that chaos that brands thrive. So, continue to watch, fine-tune, rejig, and repeat: what doesn't kill you, only makes you stronger.

Jennifer Horn, editor

MAY/JUNE 2018 VOLUME 29, ISSUE 4 strategyonline.ca

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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 #856051396 RT) Single copy price in Canada is CA\$6.95. Please allow four weeks for new subscriptions and address changes

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POSTMASTER NOTIFICATION

Canadian Postmaster, send undeliverables and address changes to: Strategy, PO BOX 369, Beeton ON LOG 1A0 strategycustomercare@brunico.com 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





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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NESTLÉ GOES BIG FOR MINIS

By Rebecca Harris

Above: Optical illusions and social media tricks were used to drive home

the size of mini Aeros.

hat blasted camera lens, it did it again: those mountains are behemoth in person, but when photographed, they shrink in size. It's a curse for anyone trying to express the sheer magnitude of their tourist sights, but for Nestlé, it's a blessing in creative disguise.

The confectionary co. and agency OneMethod have been pushing the boundaries of social, cinema and outdoor media for tiny versions of the brand's chocolates from Aeros to Turtles - to make the new Minis seem larger than life.

In transit ads, a bite-sized Kit Kat appears giant until a person snaps a pic and watches it shrink to scale. On Instagram, an ad for Aero Minis invites users to "pinch to zoom," so that the image shows the product's true size as though the candy is between the user's fingers.

Brooke Morrison, marketing manager at Kit Kat, says the campaign goal was to display the message in a relevant way for each platform, instead of forcing one piece of creative into multiple platforms.

Morrison says the tag, "A little of what you love," is rooted in millennials' desire for the balance of moderation and indulgence, as well as the growth in snacking behaviour, both in food and how they're sharing bite-sized content with friends.

"'A little of what you love' brings this to life with a straightforward, honest tone: Nestlé Minis are still that indulgent chocolate treat that you love, just mini," she says of the new format, which are now on shelves in convenience, grocery and pharmacy retail. "Interactive ads are a quick and bite-sized way to bring that story to life."

Nestlé is packaging the Minis in re-sealable, standup pouches, in order to tap into the consumer trend towards snacking and sharing, which is especially prevalent among millennials, Morrison says.

THE MAN BEHIND THE BILLBOARD By Josh Kolm

If you've seen a billboard in a major Canadian city, you've seen Jeremy Kramer's work.

The designer and firm bearing his name are responsible for most of the digital screens surrounding Toronto's own "mini Times Square" at Yonge-Dundas. In fact, many of the firm's designs have become recognizable fixtures in urban centres across the country. His team has also designed transit boards in Mississauga and Vancouver, and developed digital signage networks for Astral, Pattison and Cineplex.

Over his nearly three-decade career, Kramer has put a lot of thought into the impact that advertising media has on people and the public spaces they're in.

"One has to plan out how commercial needs can coexist with public needs," Kramer says. "We usually start not by asking what kind of display we should have, but by asking how the space is intended to be used. What kind of programming





might take place there and what elements could you create to support that?"

But should advertisers be keeping those same things in mind? Strategy spoke with Kramer about OOH and the responsibilities brands and agencies have when creating structures that interrogate the design of a public space.

Better platforms give birth to better work - once advertisers get up to speed.

When we designed the transit shelters in Toronto, our view was that building a higher caliber product might encourage better advertising [because] if I go back 17 years, you didn't have Apple or Gucci or Mercedes appearing in transit. But now it seems like an appropriate place for brands that might not have previously thought it was up to their level.

The techy stuff is still evolving, so I think the industry is still learning what the potential is as they go. At 10 Dundas [overlooking Yonge-Dundas Square], some more creative agencies have done campaigns where content moves between screens and creates an immersive experience. I think most are still learning how to extend that experience and make it something that isn't just a commercial message, but a piece of entertainment in its own way.

Ads are part of the urban experience...

I don't subscribe to the notion that signage and billboards are not a positive addition to public spaces. If you look at heritage photos of Toronto at Yonge-Dundas Square, there were always big dramatic signs designed to command attention,

> and I don't think it was viewed as negative. Part of the dialogue about being in an urban context is the mix of commercial messages. That's part of urbanism.

I'm not sure whether the responsibility is for advertisers to worry about being intrusive. When you're in a city, particularly in the heart of downtown, I would argue the signage, the graphics, the media messages are part of the vibrancy of that urban experience.

...if the work is good.

I think the duty is simply to do something people will

enjoy seeing. Any communicator, designer or marketer has the same responsibility an architect or interior designer has to do good work. For creative people, that means doing something that has some intelligence, isn't entirely predictable and has a special quality to it, whether it's the visuals or the message. A big part of the responsibility is being aware that you're doing something that a lot of people are going to see.



HARRY UPDATES ITS LOOK

Harry Rosen is one of Canada's most recognizable names in men's fashion, so it might be surprising that two new spots, created by Isaac Reputation Group, mark the 70-year-old retailer's first foray into TV.

Past advertising for Harry Rosen typically seen as the store for "Bay Street" professionals - has relied on print and,

recently, targeted online ads. But what it means to dress "professionally" has changed, so HR wants to reach a broader audience and challenge lingering notions of its image.

"There's a customer [Harry Rosen] wants to speak to that isn't seeing ads in newspapers," says Isaac partner and CD, Bob Goulart, who has been a consultant for Harry Rosen 20-plus years. "We can target them on digital,

but it's harder to tell a robust story there. TV allows us to express a contemporary air of confidence and youthfulness, and the diversity of [men's clothing]."

Looks go beyond work attire, featuring fashion-forward styles and designer streetwear. The TV spots were shot in tandem with creative for Harry, a twice annual magazine that Goulart says is "the best expression" of Harry Rosen and a pillar of its content strategy.

Harry's bread-and-butter was always the suit, an area where it is facing more competition. Younger men embrace madeto-measure, driven by online retailers like Indochino and Suitsupply that make custom suits accessible. In 2016, Harry became the exclusive Canadian retailer for Amsterdam's Atelier Munro, adding made-to-measure

> products with price points similar to online players.

But beyond competing on price, it's also focusing on in-store customer service, a pillar of its brand for decades.

To communicate this, OOH ads use sales associates dressed in its Munro suits, with copy stating the looks were made just for them.

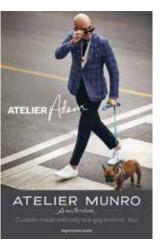
The ads don't mention Harry Rosen and drive to Munro's URL, allowing

the latter brand - built on youthful energy, contemporary styles and on-trend madeto-measure service - to stand on its own. But once consumers visit the URL, they are redirected to the Harry Rosen site.

"Munro has this [contemporary] attitude and design," Goulart says. "But then bringing them under the umbrella of Harry, where they know they get the service and expertise they can't get elsewhere, is what's really exciting." JK













REAL WORLD MEETS SOCIAL CONTENT

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL WORLD WITH PHYSICAL PLATFORMS IS THE DRIVER BEHIND LONG-RUNNING BRANDED CONTENT STRATEGIES. BY CHRIS POWELL

ravelocity's 14-year-old Roaming Gnome is something of an oddity among travel agencies. "With most travel brands there's no real relatable touchpoint, just pictures of pretty places," says Travelocity's director of communications, Keith Nowak.

The gnome's Twitter feed has more than 200,000 followers, who view pics and GIFs from his "travels" that have included stops as varied as a pizzeria in Durham, N.C.'s original fire station to the Buddy Holly Center in Lubbock, TX, as well as exotic locales like Bali.

"When we travel with the Gnome, we'll carry him down the street and it's like walking around with a

celebrity," says Nowak. "People will say 'Can I get a picture with him?' It's kind of nuts." He says the same is true online, where people regard the Gnome almost as a friend.

A growing number of Canadian brands are following in Travelocity's footsteps by getting physical in a bid for consumers' attention, with products that live in the real world but also drive the brands' digital strategies.

And the physical play seems to have staying power, with a few of these programs, like Bud's Red Light, evolving over many years.

A more recent entrant, Canadian Tire's Red Door initiative - a door frame equipped with an oversized video screen that facilitates life-sized interactions between people on either side - has been taking the company's "We All Play for Canada" marketing platform to a broader online audience since 2016.

"Real-time, unedited human reactions and interactions is the stuff that drives successful content and that's what [the Red Door program] is able to do for





From left: For more than a dozen years, Travelocity's selfie-taking Roaming Gnome has connected with travellers in the real (and digital) world, while Budweiser and Canadian Tire have been evolving their "phygital" marketing over the years.

us," says VP of marketing Eva Salem. The program saw the brand create content, from children using the door as a gateway to Santa in the North Pole, to Olympians connecting with loved ones while at the Games or during Canada's 150th.

Physical platforms, such as TD's Green Chair, have achieved a rare combination of longevity and versatility. Salem believes the Red Door possesses a similar ability. "What started as an Olympic activation in 2016 has evolved into a larger brand play," she says, adding that the brand looks at new ways to bring people together through the door.

Building something physical to take to digital was the aim in the retailer's Olympic-themed Golden Stick

> platform - a gold-hockey stick with a builtin counter to tally each "stick tap" made by Canadians as it travelled across the country en route to the Games. The stick eventually amassed more than 57,000 taps, a signal of respect, before arriving in South Korea, where it was featured in a short segment during CBC's coverage.

> "We wondered, 'What is an interesting way to connect athletes with the communities that helped them get to where they were?"" Salem says. "It was a way of bringing to life the values of 'We all play for Canada."

> > "WHAT STARTED AS

AN ACTIVATION IN

INTO A LARGER

BRAND PLAY."

Budweiser's Red Light has been making its way across retail, digital, social and TV, in the form of a giant light and beer pitcher since 2013.

"The ambition was always to develop a full content

plan," says Todd Allen, VP of marketing at AB Inbev. "We were excited about the response, and the creativity that came with being able to continually extend the idea into new channels."

2016 HAS EVOLVED Recently, the Red Light has led to a partnership with On the Bench, a pair of seemingly hapless hockey players (actually two minor hockey coaches from Alberta) who teach what they call the "fundies" (i.e. fundamentals) of hockey to more than 375,000 Instagram followers.

In the lead-up to the Olympics, the duo appeared alongside Canadian hockey luminaries including Wayne Gretzky and Paul Henderson in an online video promoting a gold-plated five-year anniversary edition of the Red Light (which sold out its entire run of 2,000 at \$399 a pop, along with another 10,000 "Goal-Synced

The video had the stars and Canadians gather together to sing "This Little Light of Mine," but changed the words to "This Red Light of Mine." That musical number was watched 10,000 times, while the Wayne

Gretzky anthem spot has more than three million views.

Budweiser partnered with the NHL Players' Association (NHLPA) to use an image of the Red Light in an ongoing feature called #FirstGoal that celebrates players' first career goal.

Elsewhere, online videos have chronicled the journey of a 25-foot tall replica of the Red Light in the Canadian Arctic, while its counterpart, the Goal-Synced Glass, was promoted at retail.

"[The Red Light] was an awesome way to springboard into content for us," says Allen. "Earning consumers' attention, versus interrupting them or just paying for it, is the new mantra that marketers should have.

"We have a mindset of 'How do we earn consumers' attention?" he adds. "Things are happening in the beer category's passion points and conversations are being had, so how do we insert ourselves into those conversations in an authentic way, and add value to people's lives?"

As more brands gravitate towards the idea of "phygital" marketing, companies that can help facilitate the move are springing up. Mark Stewart, who heads Toronto's WonderMakr, says that he started his shop two years ago as a way to help brands bridge the divide between the two worlds.

"We did so much online that we were starting to lose our connection with people at events," says Stewart, who was director of digital at The T1 Agency, an experiential marketing company. "By creating new platforms and technologies, we found a way to bridge those worlds."

WonderMakr has developed projects that range from

a cucumber organ for Hendricks gin, to a user-controlled holiday sculpture at Toronto's CF Sherway Gardens and "social vending machines" for clients including Air Miles, IKEA and the CBC.

Stewart says WonderMakr's creations are designed for brands to capture content or to encourage consumers to share the experience via social.

"Getting people to [share content] is harder and harder, so [brands] have

to up their game in terms of the physical experience... It's getting people to step outside of the ordinary," says Stewart, whose company worked with Canadian Tire to develop the Red Door.

Salem says the Red Door continues to impact key metrics around areas such as sentiment, engagement, awareness and impressions two years after its debut.

"If they're able to see something they haven't experienced before, the content capture is almost inevitable," adds Stewart. "When something like the Red Door opens, there's not a person that doesn't want to stop to try it."





From left: For more than a dozen years, Travelocity's selfie-taking Roaming Gnome has connected with travellers in the real (and digital) world, while Budweiser and Canadian Tire have been evolving their "phygital" marketing over the years.

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THE NEW SPEED (AND PATHS) OF RETAIL

HOW MASS BRANDS ARE GOING DIRECT AND DIGITAL IN EFFORT TO WIN CONSUMERS FIRST AND FAST.

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

Everyone seems to be champing at the retail bit these days.

It's anyone's game, and no player is safe from the disruption of digital – not the established CPG companies, nor the shiny new startups gnawing at their share. As the industry adjusts to the ever-complex retail battleground, opportunities and competitors spring up from unsuspecting places.

BuzzFeed, known more as a media powerhouse, is an example of how it's possible to morph into a consumer-facing, product-developing brand. With the help of Tasty,

its food vertical (famous for its top-down, time-lapsed video tutorials) BuzzFeed has been designing, producing and selling a line of cookware at breakneck speed. From hot plates to gadgets and tools, Tasty has created more than 90 products, which were recently added to Walmart's digital and physical shelves.

It all began when the New-York media company decided to aggressively experiment in the e-commerce space, launching BuzzFeed Commerce in October 2016. The idea for the division is to transform insights gleaned from its massive online following into tangible products.

At strategy's AToMiCon conference in March, Tasty's director of market strategy Leigh Riemer told the audience that her team scours comments and tracks content engagement, paying close attention to what people are saying online to identify trends. For example, when viewers expressed interest in tech that makes cooking easier, the publisher quickly developed the Tasty One-Touch, a single-element burner that can be controlled using a smartphone.

That constant feedback loop and speed to market has become the new gold standard of today's retail environment, with more manufacturers testing direct-to-consumer (D2C) models in response.

While bricks-and-mortar provide the benefit of scale and a distribution infrastructure already in place, reach is finite, and control over pricing and merchandising remains limited. Going direct through digital affords big brands, particularly CPG, the flexibility to launch new products fast,

a deeper access to data, the ability to quickly test SKUs and (retail's holy grail) hyperpersonalization.

HOW TO COMPETE IN THE AGE OF DISINTERMEDIATION

Digital-native brands, like subscription toothbrush brand Quip, are growing in numbers, stealing share and forcing major players to re-evaluate their strategies.

Some companies have been responding by buying smaller pure-play startups that further reduce friction between brand and consumer: Unilever marked its foray into men's grooming by acquiring the U.S.-based Dollar Shave Club subscription service for a reported US\$1 billion in 2016. The move positioned the CPG co against P&G, which has since launched Gillette on Demand, its own subscription service.

Some categories have seen more disruption from ecomm start-ups than others.

With the arrival of Casper, Canada's own Endy and Leesa, among other ecommfirst mattress companies, the bedding category has become one of the most visible battlegrounds for online retail. These brands have successfully launched national ad campaigns touting their products – and themselves – as viable options.

As Canada's largest mattress retailer, Sleep Country responded by launching its own digital-only offering in May 2017, calling it Bloom and selling the packaged mattresses on its newly launched ecommerce platform. For now, only Bloom and Sleep Country's sleep accessories are sold on the site.

Stewart Schaefer, chief business development officer at Sleep Country, says what's changed is consumer purchasing behaviour: there was a time when few would have considered buying a bed online without lying in it first.

When deciding whether to go direct online, the question wasn't whether Sleep Country could create a comparable product or handle the logistics of fulfillment (it has 16 distribution centres across Canada), but whether it could create a new brand that appealed to a demo interested in making bed purchases directly online.

Luckily, the Caspers of the world helped create that niche consumer segment. And now, Bloom ranks among the top five best-selling mattresses at Sleep Country.

The company has also been using its website as a starting point for guiding customers through the mattress-research process - conversations that often continue in store – and to test new products in the sleep category (such as throws and pillows) before pushing them into physical retail. Feedback is received from customers in realtime, and testing, which would have previously taken six to 12 months, can now be done in a matter of weeks.

Another hot category is meal delivery. The GTA's family-owned Longo's saw meal

BRANDS CAN NOW MINE CONSUMER DATA AND FEEDBACK (IN REAL-TIME) TO DESIGN, MARKET AND **SELL PRODUCTS AT FULL** TILT.

kit services like Hello Fresh and Chef's Plate gaining traction. It wanted to capitalize on the growing market, which - according to the company's VP marketing Alex Green - is projected to reach between \$150 and \$200 million (or \$25 to \$30 million in the GTA alone).

So, in March, Longo's launched its own multi-tiered meal kit in stores and online on Grocery Gateway, giving shoppers flexibility with a "buy as you go" model.

Unlike other subscription-based services, Longo's Meal Kit doesn't require customers to choose a set amount of meals to be delivered to their home on a weekly basis. Working with Conflict, it designed packaging with a modular labeling system to

accommodate shorter turnarounds so it could quickly launch new recipes, with the help of insights from Grocery Gateway.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

One of the advantages of going direct-to-consumer is that brands can mine data and feedback (in real-time) to design, market and sell new products at full tilt.

In November last year, Unilever made headlines in the U.S. when it launched ApotheCare Essentials, a line of hair care and skin cleansing products (not currently available in Canada) designed expressly for consumers seeking natural beauty products. It was the first brand the CPG co had launched in decades, and it had done so using a "startup mindset." Instead of spending the typical two to three years on product development, the environmentally friendly beauty brand went from concept to market in just over a year.

Unilever has been stepping up the scale and pace of its innovations globally, says Sarah Callaghan, Unilever Canada's hair care category marketing lead. Locally, the company recently launched a global line called Love Beauty and Planet using the same "startup mindset," she says. Both ApotheCare and Love Beauty and Planet have more of an indie brand design and PR focus than the typical mass launch M.O., helping them get a foot in the door as the industry enters the next chapter in CPG.







Top left to right: Longo's Meal Kit, Unilever's Love Beauty and Planet, and Sleep Country's Bloom were inspired by rising (and threatening) ecomm start-ups.

Bottom right and left: Kraft Heinz' Carlos Piani is exploring the "fundamentals" of D2C by beefing up the CPG's digital presence; L'Oreal's Balmain collection experimented with social commerce.





For Love Beauty and Planet, Unilever kept consumers and customers close at every stage of the development process and used their insights to shape the end-product, Callaghan says. The process began in October 2016 and products were on shelves by January this year. Unilever has been filling Love Beauty and Planet orders through ecommerce-friendly retailers like Amazon, Walmart, London Drugs and Well.ca.

GOING DIRECT BY GOING DIGITAL

From Amazon A+ pages (a premium offering that enhances vendor product detail pages) to Shopify stores and standalone ecommerce pages, brands have been cutting out retail middlemen by exploring new digital portals that sell directly to consumers.

Nestlé's Turtles, for instance, decided to beef up its holiday marketing last year when it worked with Shopify and OneMethod to set up a digital storefront for its "Project Love" program. The team created limited-edition tins with one less chocolate in them, as a way to raise funds for charity.

Time constraints forced Nestlé to go exclusively online, a move that, while unplanned, presented some advantages: the CPG co was able to control the entire selling environment for "Project Love" and test-and-learn the model for potential use in future programs, Erin Matier, Nestlé's marketing manager for confectionery told strategy at the time.

Meanwhile, Unilever explored the D2C model for Seventh Generation (a cleaning and personal care brand acquired in 2016), partnering with Toronto ecommerce agency Sovi Creative to build a digital storefront and geo-specific campaign.

Stephan Peralta, Sovi founder and creative lead, says Unilever leveraged the "massive amount of customer data" - from gender to purchase times to the average price of an order - through its Seventh Generation Shopify Plus site. The team also worked with ReCharge to create a subscription-style offering, which it first tested with baby care products (due to their higher turnover), with plans for other products going forward. It then drove traffic to a separate site using paid digital posts and search ads in the GTA. Meanwhile, customers outside of the area were directed to its retail partner's sites for online purchasing.

On the whole, D2C remains a relatively small business for Canadian CPGs. But while it's less developed in Canada than in other countries, like the U.S. and China, brands are nevertheless bolstering those capabilities. In the

U.S., ecommerce penetration of packaged grocery sits at around 3%, according to a 2018 consumer report by Nielsen. Here in Canada, the market is even smaller, with an estimated penetration of 1%, says Carlos Piani, president of Kraft Heinz Canada.

But that hasn't stopped his company from investing in D2C channels in anticipation of future growth. The Canadian market is expected to increase tenfold over the next eight to ten years, says Piani, giving it "huge potential" for Kraft Heinz. And south of the border, Nielsen found that the category has actually "matured" faster than previously expected and may even reach 70% penetration by 2022 (a percentage previously projected for 2025).

To capitalize on that growth opportunity, Piani says Kraft Heinz has been investing in "the fundamentals": increasing its assortment online and creating richer content around its product catalogue, such as recipes on What's Cooking, where the brand already has a loyal following via its longrunning CRM efforts.

Some industry experts consulted for this article warn brands, like Kraft Heinz, to be mindful of their overriding strategies when launching into new digital territory. The situation remains "politically tricky," says retail consultant Ed Strapagiel, as product manufacturers risk complicating their relationships and bargaining positions with retail partners when they look to sell direct.

While Canadian CPGs have been "dipping their toes" in D2C channels, Jennifer Lee, national retail and

omnichannel leader at Deloitte, says they aren't being "nearly aggressive enough." Many companies still feel beholden to their retail partners, and as such haven't adopted new channels as quickly as their U.S. counterparts. That has meant "missing an opportunity, not just in going direct-to-consumer, but also on the data that they can collect from consumer behaviour, purchase patterns, et cetera, to win the market."

TARGETING NICHE CONSUMER SEGMENT

One brand where the Canadian operation is taking an online relationship leadership role is L'Oreal. From an in-house studio chugging out digital content to creating chatbots, the brand's Montreal team has been forging a direct connection with consumers. Shoppers have embraced online beauty, making it necessary for the company to operate in the space occupied by the likes of Sephora and digital brands.

Worldwide, L'Oreal recorded \$2.1 billion euros in ecommerce sales last year, representing 8% of total consolidated sales, according to its 2017 annual report. That represented an increase of close to 34% of "like-for-like growth" in ecommerce, with sales taking place across its sites for brands like YSL, Diesel and Kiehl's; partner

COMPANIES NOT ADOPTING OTHER CHANNELS IS A MISSED OPPORTUNITY, NOT JUST IN GOING D2C, BUT ALSO ON THE DATA THEY CAN COLLECT FROM CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR, PURCHASE PATTERNS, ETC, TO WIN THE MARKET.

- Jennifer Lee, Deloitte

distributors such as Ulta Beauty, Walmart and Sephora; and pure-player platforms like Amazon and eBay. Here in Canada, L'Oreal's D2C sales are growing, but not as fast as the U.S. and China, where ecommerce is more advanced.

L'Oreal has 34 brands across four operating divisions, each with varying degrees of D2C penetration. For example, consumers can access L'Oreal's fourteen Luxe division brands across every channel: department stores, specialty stores, travel retail, own-brand boutiques and dedicated ecommerce websites. But the mass brands, including L'Oreal Paris, Maybelline and Essie, are distributed through mass market retail channels - NYX is the only one to have entered direct ecommerce.

Luxe brands are better suited to dedicated online channels than mass brands that require larger distribution, Stephanie Binette, CMO of L'Oreal says.

In the past, L'Oreal was limited to distributing its top-selling SKUs due to limited store capacity. Today, it makes a larger range of products available through ecommerce, because it doesn't need to carry inventory everywhere at all times. Binette says, "What we're striving for is to make our products available for the consumer at the time they want and where they want it."

The company also intends to leverage social commerce. Last year, L'Oreal Paris launched an exclusive lipstick collection with French luxury fashion brand Balmain. Through an online shopping cart, consumers could buy directly on social.

In response to the changing dynamics, retailers have begun to work closer with L'Oreal to bring the brand greater speed and flexibility in-store. Some of its retail partners have agreed to dedicate "flex space" in their shops, where products will rotate faster than average, allowing it to respond to market trends.

While going direct opens up opportunities for product innovation, Deloitte's Lee says brands must be careful not to innovate too much. "Customers expect core assortment," she says. "Innovation in products is important, but there needs to be a balance." B

AFTER CONSUMING COUNTLESS CHICKEN DINNERS, WRITER NICK MULLEN CRAFTED THE GOLD-WINNING ETHICAL FARMING AD. Save the World*
*OF ADVERTISING



Each of this year's Shopper Innovation Awards winners are bursting at the seams with insights from programs that pushed the marketing envelope - and you can find them all on the next page.

Two particular cases broke through the hardest, each winning a Grand Prix as a result. IKEA and its agency Leo Burnett picked up a top medal for coaxing customers to explore (and shop) less frequented areas of its store with the tasty "Cook This Page."

SickKids and Cossette also claimed an overall prize in Public Service for "All In," moving a nation of Canadians to pitch in. It's succeeding through punchy marketing that touches consumers at every point in the path-to-donate.

The Shopper Innovation Awards, judged by a panel of experts (see p. 37), celebrate the breakthrough work between brands and retailers. In all, 32 programs were recognized at this year's SIA gala, held in Toronto on April 30 during strategy's two-day Shopper Marketing Forum.

And this year's Retail Innovator of the Year, Best Buy, was recognized for its experiential locations that saw the retailer partner with brands to create shop-in-shops (a la department store) for easy tech sampling.

Read on to see the best of shopper marketing in Canada from the past year.

Embracing the starting position

First out the gate - that's the objective among diaper brands in their race to reach mom. The company to make it into mom's shopping cart first is the one she'll continue to shop for the remainder of her baby's diaper-wearing days (or so research has shown).

To get a head-start against category leader Pampers, Huggies inserted itself in the diaper conversation during a pivotal time in a baby's life (their birth) and in their first home (the hospital). It went directly to medical centres to create an experience that goes beyond functional claims, taking home a Shopper Innovation Award Grand Prix for growing its market share as a result.



Hugs are a part of Huggies' brand DNA. But more than just providing emotional comfort, the brand learned that hugs can help a baby thrive, according to the Canadian Association of Pediatric Health Centres (CAPHC).

This nugget of truth was used as the foundation for a program, by Ogilvy, that demonstrates the power of hugs.

Some moms are separated from their babies after birth so that they can recover, while others leave their newborn in the NICU to return home to their other children.

Huggies' "No Baby Unhugged" saw the brand set up hugging programs in hospitals, so that

needy newborns could receive the special treatment from volunteers.

Through online videos, Huggies documented the launch of the programs by capturing testimony from healthcare providers on the medical benefits of touch. The brand worked with pediatric experts to create a "Hug Plan," centered on the power of hugs, and promoted with a media tour, paid social, print and digital.

Mothers could learn more on the site and download the plan. The brand also made a \$5 donation to the program for every woman who uploaded a photo of herself hugging her baby or pregnant belly.

Between September and December 2016, Huggies' market share rose by almost 3%. Its online ads, including hyper-targeted placements on Baby Centre's website, achieved a click-through rate 10-times the industry benchmark. Over 8,000 moms visited the site to download the plan and 10,000 diaper samples were distributed.

THE HARDWARE: Kimberly Clark/Huggies "No Baby Unhugged" by Ogilvy & Mather Grand Prix, Gold Integration, Gold Reinvention, Silver Targeting



GRAND PRIX | PUBLIC SERVICE









Going direct to donors

So you have a little more disposable income this month, what will you do with it? More often than not, that extra cash will go to places like your closet, not necessarily your conscience. After all, charity is about choice.

"It's not that people aren't well-intentioned. It's just that's different from actually putting your money where your mouth is," SickKids' marketer Lori Davison told strategy earlier this year. "At the end of the day, the easiest thing to do is to do nothing."

Getting people to put their hard-earned dollars into the hands of those helping sick children is a tough ask in a world where consumers are becoming desensitized to messaging from an abundance of cause brands. And while SickKids was setting records for donations over the years, proving that its emotionally charged marketing was working, much of the funds had come from the same donor set (older females). The foundation needed to get more people - all Canadians, of all ages - to get off the sidelines and pitch in. So it rebranded.

The SickKids "VS" platform, which takes home SIA's Public Service Grand Prix, launched with the audacious goal of generating \$1 billion in donations over five years.

People are more likely to donate to a winning organization, knowing that their donations actually lead to tangible results (like building a new hospital). The foundation wanted people to stop seeing SickKids as simply a charity, so it started acting more like a "performance" brand in the vein of Nike and Under

To show SickKids taking on the greatest challenges in child health (and winning), Cossette created a powerful two-minute film to air on TV during the Toronto Maple Leafs' home opener. The team changed all of the signage at the hospital, created OOH billboards and dominated Dundas Square and TTC streetcars with "VS" creative. On SickKids' website. donors could identify and donate to specific causes. Patients were also given personalized t-shirts, and a giant neon "VS" sign was placed in the hospital for kids and their families to pose for photos while waiting for a doctor.

The following year, a series of online films told the powerful and emotional stories of SickKids patients like Hartley, who, after a dozen surgeries, expressed the need for more operating rooms. These films, which put the child patients at the centre of the SickKids' messaging, were then followed up with content built around the patients' parents.

To promote the hospital's Get Better Gifts program for Mother's Day (where consumers can gift moms of sick kids), the team created "MomStrong" - a raw look at the emotional pain a SickKids mom goes through. The spot begins with gut-wrenching lows, but then suddenly turns when the moms pick themselves up, wipe away their tears and greet their children with positivity.

The follow-up "DadStrong" spot was also meant to drive donations to the foundation, this time around Father's Day. In the film, the team followed a blue-collar father of a real SickKids patient as he went about his grueling workday in the rainy streets of Toronto. The day is purposefully long to mimic his drawn-out day. After finishing work, the spot shows the father alone and fighting back tears, but then finds peace when he joins his family in the hospital.

The "VS" platform and the follow-up content pieces helped SickKids report an all-time donation record of \$57.9 million from October 2016 to December 2016. Online donation revenue increased 695%, and the average donation increased 63%. Just as important, the foundation saw an unprecedented increase in male and millennial donors as a result.

THE HARDWARE: SickKids "VS" by Cossette Grand Prix Public Service, Gold Public Service Integration, Gold Public Service Original Idea, Gold Public Service Reinvention // "MomStrong" Gold Public Service Targeting // "DadStrong" Silver Public Service Targeting

Dynamite branding in new packaging





Most of us are guilty of judging a product by its packaging (which, some argue, is as important as the item itself). Outdated imagery, identity and package design can result in low relevance and a weak brand positioning. But where there's a will to renew, there's a way to breakthrough - just look at Boréale and Olympic, two brands on opposite sides of the country that connected with young beer drinkers and yogurt eaters by linking back

to their natural origins through rebrands.

Founded in the late '80s in the north of Quebec, Boréale is one of the pioneers of the province's microbrewing movement. But, over the years, it had lost fans to an explosion of newer microbreweries, and sales began to decline.

For millennials, the call of nature is enticing and disconnecting from their connected world is an aspiration. What a coincidence, then, that Boréale is a proponent for the great outdoors, as it brews beers exclusively using natural ingredients. That became the inspiration for a new brand positioning, "Celebrate life naturally" - a nod to Boréale's authenticity, the thirst for freedom and rejection of the superficial.

Working with Lg2, the beer brand's product line was redesigned and reworked into three large families, each aimed at a different consumer, and all tied into Boréale's new master brand platform. First, the Classic line was designed for more mainstream drinkers and included its popular brews. Second, the brand's Artisan series was created with the explorer beer drinker in mind and includes products that are more unique. Finally, the Episode product line consists of limited-edition draft brews that can only be found in select bars.

No refreshed packaging is complete without a campaign: "Free the Bear in You" was introduced to Quebecers in online and TV spots, as well as posters, web banners, POS and social content using a media budget of just over \$200,000.

The repackaging effort has paid off. Since launch, Boréale sales have increased 12.5%. During the same period, beer sales in Quebec decreased by 3.09%. Moreover, 54% of post-launch research respondents found the rebranding effort improved their perception of Boréale (that rose to 67% among millennials).

Packaging is especially important when your products sit crammed in the congested dairy aisle.

Olympic is a small yogurt brand from rural British Columbia. It competes against the likes of Danone, Yoplait, Astro and Liberté. One way to go head-to-head against these national giants was to create a

To broaden reach beyond 55-year-old Western Canadians, Olympic worked with Lg2 to refresh its image and position itself as a premium brand to connect with a younger set of consumers in different Canadian markets.

The brand's story, purpose and meaning lay in its west coast DNA: organic, healthy, ruggedly simple and inspired by nature. From this insight, Olympic repositioned itself as more inclusive with the tag, "Canada's premium yogurt brand made with a west coast spirit."

A new product portfolio was developed with three main segments: Organic, Indulgence and Natural. The new Olympic logo was designed to convey the feeling of rugged, unspoiled nature, with a forest green master brand colour. The "M" in the Olympic name reflects the silhouette of a mountain, the west coast's most iconic symbol. The packaging was developed with a clean and uncluttered design that reflects the product's origin.

In less than eight months (between August 2016 and March 2017), Olympic became the fastest growing yogurt brand in Canada, as well as every other region in the country (increasing 11% nationally, 9% in Alberta, 23% in Quebec, 101% in Ontario and 6% in Western Canada).

THE HARDWARE: Les Brasseurs du Nord/Boréale brand relaunch by Lg2 Gold Packaging, Gold Small Budget Big Impact, Silver Changing Behaviour // Ultima Foods' Olympic packaging by Lg2 Silver Packaging



Put a filter on it

While a complete makeover can be flattering to sales, sometimes a simple packaging tweak can do the trick.

To beat Coke during the competitive summer months, Pepsi became the first brand to leverage Snapcodes on-pack, giving



consumers exclusive Snapchat lenses to amplify their sun-filled moments.

Crafted in Canada, the "Snap It With Pepsi" program, by BBDO, included 20 unique lenses that could be unlocked by scanning a Snapcode on select bottles and cases of Pepsi. The team worked with an illustrator to create 20 designs that would

live on packaging, as well as every piece of campaign creative.

Each illustration appeared on bottles through the frame of a Snapcode. To drive awareness and trial, it created a teaser video and OOH creative that gave away exclusive lenses.

Partnering with ET Canada, Pepsi launched the first broadcast

lens, which featured hosts Rick & Roz overlaid with the brand's hero Moose lens during the show. The brand even dropped giant, physical Snapcodes in locations across Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

"Snap It With Pepsi" was the biggest lens activation Snapchat had ever done in any

market worldwide, and Pepsi sales for its key SKUs beat Coke by almost \$1 million in sales.



THE HARDWARE: Pepsi "Snap It With Pepsi" by BBDO Gold Integration, Silver Made a Splash! Seasonal/ **Event success, Silver Partnering, Silver Path to** purchase/out-of-store

Sponsorship as a social storefront

The design process isn't limited to product packaging: it can also apply to a brand experience, especially one that's as public-facing as a concert venue.



Budweiser decided to give the Molson Amphitheatre a facelift, designing a branded and shareworthy venue that would improve the concert experience, as well as

the brand's connection to music.

The newly named Budweiser Stage was riddled with consumer pain points - long queue times, minimal points of purchase and poor way-finding. By improving the experience with faster service and more entertainment options, Bud got consumers to interact with its brand for a longer time at the venue.

Working with Anomaly, they reinvented the stage with a clean design. It updated the beer can by creating venue-specific packaging that listed the summer lineup, which was widely shared online. It also revamped the venue's River Bar to create a hangout with a stage that

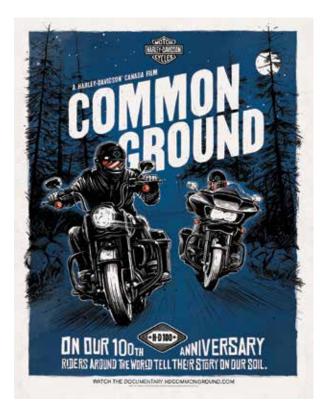
hosted local talent. The brand retrofitted a steel container to become a restaurant, in partnership with Webers, and added tap technology for easier payment.

The stage became one of the most instagrammable locations in the city with permanent installations, such as a 15-foot sign that lit up with each act.

As a result, beer sales at the River Bar grew volume 270% versus 2016 and by the third show of the season, food sales exceeded 2016 numbers. The venue upgrades also generated four million earned impressions.

THE HARDWARE: Labatt Breweries of Canada / Budweiser "Budweiser Stage" by Anomaly Bronze Custom Retail

TARGETING



Out-of-the-box targeting tactics

There's an art to infiltrating a brand with the right crowd, in the right place, at the right time. It can be as clever as a motorcycle brand creating content that has conversational currency among millennials. Or as complex as tracking aerobiology to alert allergy sufferers the moment a city is hit with a wave of pollen.

The first step is to decode and define the target audience. For Harley, that was anyone under 50 (and not a white male). While the Canadian motorcycle community admired Harley's history, they weren't riding its bikes and was percieved as a brand for an older rider.

With help from Zulu Alpha Kilo, Harley tackled this issue by showing the brand's rider base is as diverse as Canada.

It did this by creating a doc. Calling it the world's first "foreign exchange for bikers," Common Ground brought the world to Canada through 12 episodes of content showing bikers from New Zealand, Mexico and India riding alongside Canadians. A doc crew followed



them on a journey across the country.

Harley targeted younger riders online, with content shared by the bikers, the brand and even its dealer network on social. Instagram Story promos and wild postings drove people to content housed on HDCommonGround.com. CRM initiatives retargeted audiences and dealers hosted viewing parties.

Running from May to September 2017, the campaign supported a 1.9% increase in market share against Harley's nearest competitor, despite an industry decline of 3.8%. Social gathered media interest, which led to Discovery Canada showcasing Common Ground in a one-hour TV special with more than 475,000 Canadians tuning into the weekend airing.

While Harley zeroed in on a younger demo, Reactine dug deeper with geo-targeting.

To stay relevant when allergies are at their peak, the Johnson & Johnson brand, along with UM, customized messaging by the city to keep sufferers informed of pollen levels, in real-time and along their path-to-purchase.

Cities are hit with pollen waves at different times, so the brand's "Hyper-Targeted Pollen Alerts" helped it be the first to provide peak messaging when it counted most. It partnered with a lab to analyze pollen levels in cities across Canada, and targeted areas with sixsecond videos via YouTube's bumper ad unit.

Each piece of content was tailored with different pollen forecasts and later adapted to include a call-to-action. When pollen was low, the brand encouraged consumers to get outside. But when pollen was high, it acted as a warning to prepare. The media buys were optimized for each market, based on pollen aerobiology, shopper and consumption data.

The campaign helped the brand drive week-over-week share increases, reversing the decline it was experiencing before its launch. When the Maritimes were hit with high pollen levels in May, Reactine was the only brand to increase share in the region. In the West, where pollen unexpectedly hit three months later than usual, Reactine was the only brand to post a share increase across the category.

THE HARDWARE: Harley-Davidson "Common Ground" by Zulu Alpha Kilo Gold Targeting, Gold Original Idea, Silver Integration // J&J/Reactine "Hyper-Targeted Pollen Alerts" by UM Gold Path to purchase / out-of-store



Donation-boosting PR

All press is good press. In the case of cause marketing, you always want to make front page news - because

free media is the golden ticket to new

Case in point, when Starlight Children's Foundation created a gown for teens feeling the identity-crushing effects of anonymous hospital garbs, the foundation saw a 78% increase in donations after being picked up in almost every news outlet across Canada.

Starlight's "Wards+Robes" began with the desire to help hospitalised teens face the world. Partnering with Rethink and Canadian designers, the foundation found a solution to their identity crisis with the line of hospital gowns that were packed with personality.

Artists commissioned to create the gowns, ranging from a tattoo artist to a costume designer who had

worked with David Bowie, used colourful fabrics to transform the garments from camo to punk. The

> foundation then let kids choose the one that best resonated with them.

> The experience was filmed, and quickly spread on social media, earning more than 22 million unpaid views. The gowns received coverage from hundreds of publications, including CNN, Huffington Post, BuzzFeed and Teen Vogue.

And now, Starlight is expanding the program to its network of 130 hospitals worldwide.

THE HARDWARE: Starlight Children's Foundation "Ward+Robes" by Rethink Silver Original Idea



CPG gets (un) sexist

Women, for too long, have been portrayed in advertising as the primary cleaner of the house. But times are a-changing, and men are found holding the broom as both sexes begin to share the chores.

Understanding the new household dynamic, Mr. Clean decided to speak to both groups, looking to the SuperBowl's co-viewing audience to revive the 60-year-old brand.

In the process, it would recast the chore of cleaning from dreaded to

Looking at historical advertising metrics on Facebook, the brand found that when it portrayed the Mr. Clean character as sexy, it experienced a sales lift (up to 7%, in fact). So it decided to show that there's nothing sexier than a man who cleans,

with Mr. Clean being the "Cleaner of your dreams."

The campaign kicked off with a PR and radio tour, with supporting videos on YouTube. Ten days before game day, the Super Bowl spot was launched on The Today Show and retargeted through YouTube's TrueView.

The spot featured Mr. Clean seductively dancing and cleaning his way around a

woman and through the house. It ends with the dreamy Mr. Clean being revealed as the husband and the tagline, "You gotta love a man who cleans."

Following the Super Bowl, the brand continued the campaign in TrueView, and eventually swapped in product-focused messaging that ran on Facebook and into the spring cleaning season, while instore displays mimicked the same "sexy" messaging.

In the six weeks after the Super Bowl, product sales were up 3% to 5%. The 2017 campaign was covered by Ellen DeGeneres, Jimmy Kimmel, Conan O'Brien, Jimmy Fallon and more, generating eight billion impressions. On Super Bowl Sunday, Mr. Clean was talked about 26% more than the next highest advertiser (Budweiser), and its spot was the second most-shared that year.

THE HARDWARE: P&G / Mr. Clean "Cleaner of Your Dreams" by Leo Burnett Gold Made a Splash! Seasonal / Event Success

DRIVING BACK TO STORE



Exploring the unknown

Brands have been tapping into a pervasive and very human condition called FOMO for years through another (arguably less sticky) acronym, LTO. That's because driving urgency through special products is effective for companies looking to boost purchase frequency.

That was the case for Tim Hortons, which was facing declining share of the specialty drinks market, including espressos and lattes.

While it had lost 3.6% of its share to big (Starbucks) and small (independant) competitors since 2012, the brand had actually found that consumers preferred its blend of espresso beans over others through a blind taste-test. However, interest in the coffee was found to be much less among a control group that was told they were drinking Tim Hortons. Those Canadians simply didn't believe that Tims could make a "real" latte and defaulted to competitors with higher prices and fancy environments.

So, to prove that Tims can make tasty and authentic lattes, but in

an environment where Canadians can feel at home, the brand worked with Ogilvy to create an unbranded café in Toronto's trendy Queen West neighbourhood, calling it "Perfectly Uncomplicated Lattes."

Cheekily tapping into the fear of missing out on something new, the shop served only one item, a Perfectly Uncomplicated Latte, and was designed to look like an ultrahip and independent shop.

Two weeks after the grand opening, through PR, social and a live Breakfast Television broadcast at the café, it was revealed that the latte was actually from Tim Hortons. Canadians' stunned reactions were captured on hidden cameras placed around the shop, with the footage used in an online film. Since the stunt, Tim Hortons has seen a 307% increase in latte sales, thanks to the 188 media stories that generated a total of 48.3 million impressions.

Also faced with declining sales of a signature product, McDonald's similarly generated new interest for the venerable Big Mac. For this

OSR, the idea was to put a twist on the classic by changing up the ingredients ever-so-slightly with the addition of bacon.

It was the first time the Big Mac had been changed in 50 years, but the strategy was to drive appeal with "new news" among a younger target that values change.

The Big Mac has an ingredient list that doesn't include bacon, so the QSR played off the notion that this would cause consternation amongst its loval followers. To address this, McDonald's decided to ask consumers the question: "Is a Big Mac With Bacon Still a Big Mac?"



The brand and Cossette launched spots that featured friends arguing the existential question, each with an opposite POV. The team also covered the city with questions like "Is a tricycle still a bicycle?" on billboards.

The campaign helped support a successful relaunch with a 37% increase in sales over projections.

THE HARDWARE: McDonald's "Is it still a Big Mac?" by Cossette Silver Brand New, Bronze Path to purchase / Outof-store // Tim Hortons' "Perfectly Uncomplicated Lattes" by Ogilvy Canada Silver Brand New



Trial by participation

The thinking goes that if you succeed at trial, consumers will come back to buy. And while most brands get their products into the hands of shoppers the standard way - through samples in the mail and on the street - others, like IKEA and Cottonelle, are eliminating product unfamiliarity through more participatory programs.

To get shoppers excited to try (and buy) IKEA's food, the retailer and Leo Burnett developed a first-of-its-kind cooking method.

Most people struggle to get creative with meals and therefore hesitate to try new things. IKEA decided to show shoppers how easy it can be if they use its products, creating the "Cook This Page" parchment recipe series. The brand designed something entirely new with its interactive "fill in the blank" illustrated cookbook, allowing people to add ingredients exactly to measure, which they could then roll and simply bake.

The recipes incorporated IKEA food items and kitchen tools and were given away for free, generating excitement and traffic to its food and kitchen departments. Each of the 12,500 parchment recipe papers were available in 18 locations across the country, and were snatched up within hours by Canadians hungry to try something new.

Sampling can be as simple as putting ambassadors on the street with your product, but adding a layer of engagement can help convert shoppers.

Not only did Canadians not know about Cottonelle FreshCare Cleansing Cloths, but the few that did were only using it occasionally. Forty percent of Canadians aren't aware of these solutions for cleaning up after sex, so they typically turn to toilet paper and baby wipes.

With Toronto Pride being one of the largest celebrations in the world, the brand took Cottonelle to the streets in the hopes of introducing a new way for people to use the wipes. It developed a gamified approach, creating digital boards that featured the eggplant and kitty cat emoji (two of the most popular emojis used for sexting). Pedestrians were invited to "work them over" (for a total of 17 seconds) in exchange for a Cottonelle FreshCare sample. Brand ambassadors also introduced the product by speaking to participants about the post-sex cleaning benefits.

In dating apps, the brand also placed interstitial ads that gave users the choice to play with either emoji. They would then rub the nose of the pussycat, or shake their phone in a stroking motion to stimulate the eggplant, in exchange for a coupon that could be used at partner retailers.

A total of 15,000 samples were distributed at Pride and people interacted with Cottonelle every 38 seconds. Also, more than 78% agreed they'd buy Cleansing Cloths after engaging with the brand at the festival.





















THE HARDWARE: IKEA "Cook This Page" by Leo Burnett Gold In-Store Engagement, Gold Original Idea // Kimberly-Clark/Cottonelle "Strokeable Billboards" by Ogilvy Silver Made You Look! Awareness / Trial Breakthrough, Silver Targeting

The recipe for reinvention





Replace artificial ingredients with natural substitutes: educate shoppers on the benefits of your category and make it a hero; reintroduce a brand persona that's been hiding all this time - when faced with dwindling interest, sometimes reinvention can be achieved by tweaking a product, perception or positioning.

The task was recently taken up by A&W, who, for years,

has been opting to use better, cleaner, healthier ingredients. Why? Because it's what millennials want: few are interested in artificial additives like high-fructose corn syrup. So the QSR decided to substitute millennial-unfriendly ingredients in its signature root beer with sarsaparilla and all-natural flavours.

To get the message out on the new recipe, the brand and Rethink took a page from craft beer and built a Root Brewery. It was a social haven, with its hygge atmosphere and hip furnishings designed and built by Evoke and MakerHaus.

A&W's drink flowed from the taps for two days in a space designed for conversation and buzz. Celebrity chefs were invited, along with brewmasters and foodies, and 2,000 mugs of root beer were served.

The pop-up led into a national marketing campaign, with sales increasing 17% and foot traffic jumping 43% as a result.

Faced with similar consumer demand for quality and nutrition, Les Producteurs de lait du Québec also set out to reframe its perception.

Food trends and changing demos led the dairy industry to experience a steady decline in milk consumption. Quebecers are not convinced of the nutritional benefits of milk, nor do they believe they should drink more of it on a daily basis.

The Quebec producers decided to slow the erosion of white milk sales by reinforcing the perception of it being a healthy beverage.

The idea was to position milk as inspirational, so it created the

"Milk. Solid Stuff." campaign, portraying the white substance as an audacious hero with 16 essential nutrients.

Working with Lg2, the organization recruited history-making personalities to act as brand ambassadors. TV creative celebrated the perfect performance of Olympic gymnast Nadia Comaneci, as well as UFC World Champion Georges St-Pierre, playfully suggesting that milk may have played a part in their achievements. By having the heroes hold a glass of milk at the end, the idea was to show that it possesses superpowers.

For print and OOH, illustrators created 16 executions representing milk's 16 nutrients. A glass of milk was placed at the centre of each illustration, linking all of the campaign artwork.

Both consideration and purchase intent saw positive results thanks to the marketing shift. One out of two consumers said the campaign made them want to drink more milk, while three out of 10 non-drinkers said the same thing.

For the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, the problem was both misperception and low awareness. Very few Canadians actually know of the centre's existence. And if they do, they don't quite understand the full scope of what it does. That misperception and low awareness

is what the organization wanted to address, with a limited budget.

Essentially, the Banff Centre exhibits innovative art and hosts conferences with industry leaders that look to change views. In other words, it alters how you see and think about the world. Cossette came up with the tag, "Things You Can't Unthink," to show that the Banff Centre stays with you.

All of the creative was designed to haunt the



audience. In an online film, an old man is shown being played like a piano by a incredibly tall man in a tuxedo. And in posters, a man is listening to headphones made of two halves of his head, while a conch shell was shot with a tongue and some teeth. The creative reframed the conversation around the centre, burrowing into the minds of those who watched the video more than one million times.

THE HARDWARE: Les Producteurs de lait du Québec "Milk. Solid Stuff" by Lg2 Silver Changing Behaviour, Bronze Reinvention // A&W "Root Brewery" by Rethink Bronze Reinvention // Banff Centre for Arts & Creativity "Things You Can't Unthink" by Cossette Bronze Reinvention



A stigma-smashing pop-up resto

At the height of the AIDS crisis in 1988, Casey House was founded as a place where people could receive care without judgement. At the time, fear ran so deep that the first person to be taken in by Casey House was delivered to its door by medics wearing Hazmat suits.

Today, drug therapy allows people to live with HIV, yet the stigma still persists.

In a survey of Canadians, 70% said they'd

be ashamed to tell anyone if they had HIV. And although the disease can't be transmitted through food, half of them said they would not eat a meal knowing someone with HIV prepared it.

The goal for Casey House was to expose the stigma and change beliefs. Working with Bensimon Byrne, OneMethod and Narrative, the team created June's, the world's first HIV+ pop-up eatery, run entirely by an HIV+ kitchen staff and supported by the "Break Bread Smash Stigma" campaign.

For three nights only, Toronto diners were given a meal prepared



by 14 HIV+ volunteers-turned-cooks, who were trained by Fidel Gastro's Matt Basile. Tickets sold out in less than two weeks.

Using #SmashStigma, the digital team countered hate posts with myth-busting facts. Jars of soup made by the HIV+ cooks with statements like "I got HIV from soup. Said no one ever" were sent to media as invites to the resto. The social experiment led to coverage in 10 countries (generating 834 million

impressions), with journalists interviewing the cooks to tell stories of the stigma they face.

THE HARDWARE: Casey House "Break Bread Smash Stigma" by Bensimon Byrne/OneMethod/Narrative Silver Integration, Bronze Public Service Original Idea, Bronze Public Service Reinvention

INTEGRATION

High-flying doc drives cross-border traffic



Tourism is also all about making an impression. To show travellers in countries from the U.S. to China the rich diversity that Québec has to offer, the Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec created a

campaign that sparked interest in the province and increased tourism.

The centerpiece of "A Room with Many Views" was a social documentary (by Lg2) starring Glennis LaRoe and Kip Geddes, an American tourist couple who become the protagonists in a unique adventure. Transported in a mobile

hotel room to the four corners of the province, the couple never knew their next destination.

The room's itinerary (as well as the marketing material, from digital banners to PR) was determined by

search trends and online behaviour of potential visitors. The tourism board also offered a guided interactive tour, with a series of 360-degree videos that highlighted views in Québec and invited travellers to select and share their favourite spots online.

The campaign successfully contributed to a 10.1% increase in border entries, as 68.6 million people were exposed to the campaign's content. There was a 535% increase in interest from the U.S. and another 84% from those in France, helping Québec compete against some of world's best destinations.

THE HARDWARE: Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec "A Room with Many Views" by Lq2 Bronze Integration

SMALL BUDGET, BIG IMPACT

Targeting shoppers on a shoestring budget





Penny-pinchers and budget-stretchers can go far in a business where more is being asked for less (especially if it leads to positive ROI).

When you only have \$10,000 to get millions of Canadians to remember to use their WD-50 (instead of letting it gather dust), a resourceful idea is required. That's where the "Haunted Door" comes in.

Research shows that eight out of ten homes have creaky doors, but homeowners simply ignore them once they get used to the sound. Working with BIMM, the brand created the app to get people thinking about their creaky doors and WD-40 again.

The motion-activated sound-effects app was used on one of the busiest night of the year for front doors: Halloween. To use the app, people selected one of three creaky-door sounds, and then hung their phone on the inside door handle using a mailer from the brand. When the door opened for trick-or-treaters, the phone's accelerometer triggered the creaky-door sound.

The app was a media darling, with more than 100 outlets covering it in stories worth \$1.4 million in earned media. And WD-40 saw a 30% increase in sales.

With a slightly larger budget (but still miniscule in the grand marketing scheme) of \$40,000, Dunkaroos set out with a similar challenge of reminding consumers of its existence.

The brand had not advertised to audiences for years and attitudes towards diet had impacted the business, decreasing sales. As a result, the product was delisted in the U.S. and facing the same fate in Canada.

While the brand was popular in the '90s, most of that excitement had disappeared. There was, however, some appreciation for Dunkaroos amongst Americans with no access to the snack. Many had taken to Twitter to plead for someone to sell or gift them with a bag.

The idea was to connect Canadians with Americans who desperately wanted to get their hands on Dunkaroos through a smuggling program called "Smugglaroos." Americans could sign up through a website to have a Canadian smuggle boxes to a location near them. Likewise, Canadians travelling to the States could sign up to smuggle the product to an American.

The goal was to drive media conversations and reignite the product, which the campaign did. "Smugglaroos" was featured in the Globe and Mail, Huffington Post, Cosmopolitan, Vice, Vogue and Seventeen magazine, generating 55 million impressions (which equated to \$550,000 worth of free media).

THE HARDWARE: WD-40 "Haunted Door" by BIMM Gold Small budget, big impact, Gold Original Idea, Gold Made a Splash! Seasonal / Event Success, Bronze Tech Breakthrough, Bronze Reinvention // General Mills Canada / Dunkaroos "Smugglaroos" by Cossette Bronze Small budget, big impact



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OUT OF BOX RETAIL







Out-of-the-box and store

Any brand can place a print ad, air a commercial, broadcast a radio ad. It's another thing to think beyond the realms of static media to create interactive tech. Sports Experts has been pushing the limits of traditional marketing, creating not one, not two, but three physically engaging programs.

First, when it was celebrating its 50th anniversary last year, the brand wanted to create something that would truly support its brand purpose - which is not about celebrating extreme performance (like many sports apparel brands), but rather motivating Quebecers to discover the joy and benefits of an active lifestyle.

The idea was to encourage people to sweat at a time and place where they least expected: in Montreal's steepest metro station.

Working with Rethink, the brand created the "Thermal Discount" - a thermal imaging station that rewards commuters with discounts for running up the stairs and increasing their body temp. The station would measure a 13% change, for example, and then print a coupon for a 13% discount

The installation was equipped with an infrared camera and placed on the top floor of the station, where it intercepted commuters. For eight hours, hundreds of people "won" discounts from 12% to 78%. And the initiative was captured on film for a social content piece that generated more one million impressions, 500,000 views and over 10,000 comments and shares.

This wasn't the first time Sports Experts had used a quid pro quo approach to drive shoppers to its stores.

During the holidays the year before, the brand wanted people to think of it as a go-to gift destination, but first needed to educate them on its diverse product assortment. The retailer did this by creating a live, interactive crane game (similar to of those found in bars

and arcades) that encouraged Facebook users to play in exchange for Sports Experts products.

Using Facebook Live, people had to collaborate with each other in order to position the crane (using emojis for "like," "love," "wow," and "laugh") before releasing it to capture a prize. Each item that was caught by the virtual crane was then randomly awarded to one of the participants. People could win swag ranging from GoPros to FitBits and sports gear.

A few sponsored stories and media partnerships with fashion, sports and tech blogs promoted the four game broadcasts, each lasting 60 minutes. In total, "Grab-a-Gift" generated 2.2 million impressions and the average viewing time surpassed the eight-minute mark. During that period alone, sales increased 15%.

And, finally, tapping into its sponsorship of the Montréal Marathon, Sports Experts engaged runners with a program that went beyond giving away goodies.

The brand also decided to activate its partnership before the event, and went beyond marathoners, targeting those outside of the race as well.

Even though people recognize the feat of running a 42.2 km marathon, most will never try it. So Sports Experts challenged them to try a different kind of marathon - one that takes on a simple device, the smartphone.

"The Scrolling Marathon" is essentially a scrollable website that runs the length of 42.2 km (or 159 million pixels). To complete the digital marathon, people had to scroll through the entire site for the chance to win equipment and racing clothes. A chronometer tracked participants, with each one ranked once the two-hour session came to an end.

Thousands entered the marathon in less than six days. And visits to the site saw a double-digit increase, while sales in running were up compared to the previous year.

THE HARDWARE: FGL Sports / Sports Experts "The Thermal Discount" by Rethink Gold Tech Breakthrough, Silver Path to purchase / Outof-store // "Grab-A-Gift" Bronze Out of the box retail // "Scrolling Marathon" Bronze Out of the box retail



Transforming in-store with fintech





Banks are racing to become digital-savvy, just like the customers who shop the category.

China Zheshang Bank got wind of the trend happening within banking, as more transactions happen online and threaten the existence of physical branches.

CZ Bank worked with Shikatani Lacroix to re-envision its locations with a tech bent that would rival consumers' growing appetite for digital services.

The new contemporary branch (which was created in locations across China's biggest cities) was created to allow CZ to connect with consumers on an emotional level, instead of competing on size or

price. The concept features a vibrant building exterior, with digital signs promoting its latest services.

Inside, benches are located throughout and include tablets so that customers can browse the wide range of CZ Bank's services. Semi-private business pods allow employees to speak with customers, while a VR zone lets people talk to a virtual banking concierge or relax in a beautiful park

The concept store also has a VIP wealth management area for customers who want to explore

the bank's investment services and ATMs are surrounded by glass walls for privacy.

The flagship prototype branch opened in Beijing in November 2016, and the new design will roll out in more than 150 branches, increasing foot traffic and new accounts.

THE HARDWARE: China Zheshang Bank (CZ Bank) & Shikatani Lacroix Silver In-Store Engagement

Gamifying loyalty

Even a brand's most true-blue fans were once strangers. It takes time to build loyalty, but sometimes, with just the right program in place, those relationships can be nurtured at speed.

Enter Boston Pizza's Team HQ - a national loyalty program that rewards local sports teams for eating at the resto. The idea essentially came from what the franchise's managers had been doing for years at the restaurant level, giving local teams different sets of rewards for eating at their establishment. But, because of this localized and grassroots approach, Boston Pizza couldn't connect with sports teams beyond those locations.

Team HQ sits within Boston Pizza's MyBP loyalty program and provides members with a single set of rewards via a dedicated website and app. When a member submits a receipt from Boston Pizza (on the site or in the app), the team then gets back 10% of what



The brand developed special badges (such as "MVP" and "Online Hero") for members to earn and encouraged teams to go headto-head against others at their local Boston Pizza in order to claim the top spot on the restaurant's leaderboard.

Since the program launched nationally in September 2017, it has seen 3,600 teams sign up, which equates to more than 10,000 individual members. Almost \$2.25 million worth of receipts have been submitted and \$83,000 worth of rewards have been

redeemed. What's more, teams are spending more at Boston Pizza than they did before.

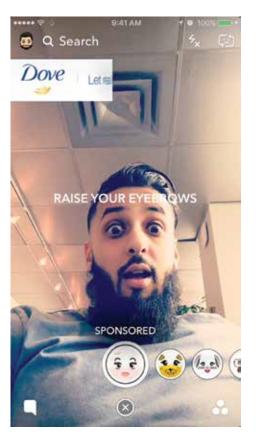
THE HARDWARE: Boston Pizza "Team HQ" by ICF Olson Bronze CRM & Loyalty

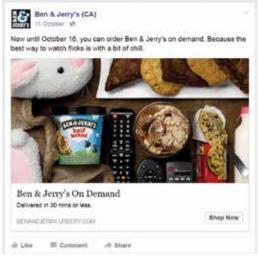
Bots & filters: the new P2P

It's no secret that millennials (and the younger cohort after them) are attached to their mobile devices. They're also not as receptive to advertising than previous gens, so banner ads simply won't cut it. Unilever brands - from skincare to snacks - have been tackling this fickle demo's attention span with marketing that goes direct-to-consumer.

Dove's commitment to "Real Beauty" is already widespread among women 30-plus. But when the brand wanted to speak to a younger target, the team (which included Ogilvy on creative) looked to Snapchat, a platform popular among young adults.

Snapchat data shows that the Beautiful Filter is the most used among the female demo, even though it's been linked to low self-esteem and self-consciousness. The





filter's job is to soften features and thin the face, which, ironically, does the opposite of what Dove has been trying to accomplish with its "Real Beauty" message. Critics believe it can distort the perception of beauty. So, in March 2017, Dove decided to take over Snapchat's Beautiful Filter.

Instead of adding a blueish tint, lightening the skin and adding lip colour, the hacked filter didn't change a thing. The filter included a message from the brand to users encouraging them to let their real beauty shine and post the #nofilter

photo of themselves. In those 24 hours, the hacked filter saw more than four million plays and 1.3 million story views.

Beyond an appetite for social, sharing millennials also crave convenience.

With time-strapped students back on campus, Ben & Jerry's knew back-to-school was the best time to go direct-to-consumer with a chatbot that delivered ice-cream right to their door.

Mindshare created an "Ice Cream Chat Bot" on Facebook Messenger so that consumers could order a pint of Ben & Jerry's for their Netflix binges. First, they order a pint through the chat bot. Then, they track their orders in real-time and interact with Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream gurus while waiting for their delivery to arrive in about seven minutes.

The team shortened the gap between the brand and consumers, and the ice cream bot became the number one retail location for Ben & Jerry's, which sold four times more pints from the campaign's start to finish. The brand has since continued to see year-over-year double digit growth.

THE HARDWARE: Unilever / Dove "Real Beauty Filter" by Ogilvy Canada Silver Made You Look! Awareness / Trial Breakthrough // Unilever / Ben & Jerry's "On Demand Ice Cream Chatbot" by Mindshare Bronze Tech Breakthrough



High-flying partnerships



It takes three to build a giant roulette-style wheel (and claim two Guinness World Records) in the Mojave desert.

To accomplish such a feat, Westjet partnered with Westbury and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), creating a gigantic wheel with lights that could be seen from a plane above.

It started when WestJet decided to do something remarkable

for its 21st birthday. With Vegas being a growth destination for the airline, WestJet decided to team up with the city for its milestone and bet on a unique experience.

For three nights in May, passengers on flights to Vegas could see the wheel from 12,000 feet up in the air (thanks to Westbury using lights that projected 4.5 million lumens, a world record in itself). As they looked out their windows, the wheel was shown spinning and when it stopped, it displayed a seat number of the winning passenger. In order for the piece to work, the team had to coordinate with pilots, in-flight operations and flight control centre.

The stunt was created into a spot, which helped the brand achieve four million impressions, coverage in more than 25 outlets and 1.5 million views. Canadians also reacted positively to the video with 15,000 reactions and more than 1,000 comments.

THE HARDWARE: WestJet/LVCVA "Desert Roulette" by Rethink Silver Partnering

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Cause marketing gets tangible

Selling physical things for fundraising is not super novel, so to draw attention to a charity, there needs to be a twist - a PRworthy one. To break through in cause marketing, brands have had to do more than simply pull at heartstrings. Some are shaking things up and leaving their mark in more tangible ways – or in the case of Jumpstart, on a piece of toast.

Working with Community, the Canadian Tire charity (which eliminates kids' financial barriers to sport) began with a ubiquitous daily ritual – breakfast – which inspired a set of toasters that impressed the faces of hockey stars Wayne Gretzky, Connor McDavid and Jonathan Toews into bread.

The "#GiveAToast" campaign was intended to reach millennials through humour and each toaster was promoted by having the players poke fun at their toast persona: Toews was represented as the serious "book lover," McDavid as the "future," and Gretzky as "the great

one" (naturally).

The toasters were decked out with "goalpost red" packaging and custom copy for each athlete, with the charity selling out in a single day. The campaign also helped Jumpstart earn more than 55 million digital impressions and another 44 million earned impressions in under a week.

The charity bear is a ubiquitous fundraising staple, and as such, not much help in the earned media front. So to reimagine it in the context of the world's refugee issue,

THE HARDWARE: Branch Out Neurological Foundation "Stranger's Voice" by Rethink Gold Public Service Tech Breakthrough, Silver Public Service Original Idea // Canadian Tire / Jumpstart "#GiveAToast" by Community Agency Gold CSR, Bronze Original Idea // COSTI Immigrant Services "Ahlan Bear" by Rethink Bronze Tech **Breakthrough**















COSTI worked with Rethink to create a product that helped break down immigration's biggest barrier: language.

With the arrival of some 37,000 refugees to Canada since November 2015, of which 60% are children, access to language services and entry to kindergarten is often delayed. Seeing this need, COSTI built Ahlan Bear to help bridge the language gap as quickly as possible.

Ahlan (whose name means "welcome") speaks a combination of useful and cultural phrases in English and Arabic to help build language skills and connect refugee children to their new home.

The bear also served as a tangible way to connect with consumers to encourage donations that help welcome Syrian children to Canada.

The initiative saw Canada's Minister of Immigration John McCallum fly to Toronto to handdeliver the bears to newly arrived

refugees. The organization is now working on a French-speaking bear for Canada, with plans to expand to even more languages in the future.

Sometimes the challenge is framing the charity's need in a tangible way, and again, with an eye to maximum impact.

The Branch Out Neurological Foundation faced the challenge around getting people to understand the barriers that exist for those with Alzheimer's. With the number of older adults diagnosed with Alzheimer's rising dramatically, the org needed to increase donations for research, while raising awareness of the disease by having people experience its effects first-hand.

Working with Rethink, the organization created custom phone cards and distributed them to people on Family Day as part of its "Stranger's Voice" campaign. The cards gave users the chance to call their loved ones anywhere in the

world, free of charge. But, what they didn't know was that the calls were routed through a hacked VoIP server. which modulated the callers' voices to render them unrecognizable.

After the call, users received pre-programmed text messages explaining why the listener didn't recognize them, and some of the conversations were then used in 60-second PSA radio spots.

The tech was then used in podcasts to drive listenership with a younger demo. Hearing the modulated (and unrecognizable) voices of the podcast's hosts. confused listeners reacted online before being told what had actually happened.

The campaign helped increase website traffic by 1,100% and saw donations shoot up 432%, with firsttime donors rising 56%, making it one of the most successful efforts in the foundation's history.











Best Buy morphs into your tech curator

This year's Retail Innovator of the Year is rejigging bricks-and-mortar to outrival ecomm.

BY JENNIFER HORN

ompact discs are going the way of VHS, the cassette tape and the floppy. Once a wall-towall item (and major sales driver) in Best Buy stores, CDs will reportedly be gone from Stateside shelves this summer.

The news comes as no surprise as the retailer reimagines its place in today's tech world. But in the age of digital-bred startups, Amazon and the like, Best Buy isn't ashamed of its big box roots. In fact, the retailer is betting its physical presence will be its saving grace.

For the past two years, BB has been gutting and retrofitting existing locations to become more "sensorial" spaces - alongside vendors from Google to Dolby to Miele - that allow people to touch and

try new tech behind shop-in-shop walls. The suite of "experience stores," as Best Buy calls them, aren't necessarily focused on what it sells, but how.

"We know that technology can be really complicated," says Angela Scardillo, VP marketing, communications at the retailer, "and so we wanted to demonstrate how it can actually make people's lives better."

Part experiential and part educational, the stores have rolled out across the country in 30 locations since the pilot in 2016. Last year alone, it launched 15, with 2018 calling for even more (although Scardillo wouldn't disclose exactly how many).

Some of the more noticeable differences are in the aesthetics. There's better navigational signage

The 2018 Retail Innovator of the Year was chosen by strategy's editorial team and presented at this year's Shopper Innovation Awards gala in Toronto. The retailer was picked based on innovation in-store and internally at the company, as well as its digital programs, marketing communications and e-commerce.

Best Buy has been overhauling some of its stores to exude intimacy and immersiveness, with tech brand partners at the centre of it all.

RETAIL INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR







and more open sight lines, thanks to poles obstructing traffic being removed and wiring placed under people's feet through raised flooring. The underwiring also enables managers to quickly change up merchandise, matching the speed of new tech launches with quick product rotations on shelf. Modern carpeting, wood grain accents and warmer, brighter lighting add "comfort" to the formerly 'boxy' shopping experience.

But beyond a more inviting architecture, it's the vendor-specific areas that are the focal point for the retailer's

strategy to keep consumers in stores through bespoke shopping experiences.

The experience stores could be mistaken for department stores, while the interactive expo vibe ties back to Best Buy's tech focus.

Weaving past a DJ that occasionally scratches music at the entrance, most of the new stores open up to a free-flow layout housing categories from computing to home entertainment and appliances on all sides. Contemporary wingback chairs sit across from a screen playing sounds from a 747 jet through Dolby Atmos speakers. Tablets show renderings of a person's home (based on a personalized questionnaire) to demonstrate how much broadband they'd need to power different smart home technologies, from Nest to Hue, through D-Link. Mock homes in the appliance section offer a place for shoppers to design their next kitchen using Miele products. And Google conducts workshops on its connected devices to small groups in its exclusive-to-North-America Home zone.

Each of these interactive areas were created in partnership with vendors and a consumer insights team that sits in Best Buy's marketing department of about 120 people. Scardillo says their job is to research the customers who shop the retailer's stores and website, translating that data into ways for brands to address a business problem - from needing to provide better decision trees to educating new-to-the-category

consumers. She also has an events team that will work with brands to map out opportunities to activate around Best Buy's promotional calendar, such as when Google hosts workshops for new products.

This level of coordination and collaboration isn't something Best Buy's marketing team is used to. While the group hasn't ballooned as a result of the changes, Scardillo says that different functions are learning to work better together, adopting an agency-type model where, for example, the digital team will meet with PR to determine how to capture in-store events for online.

"Who has the skillset to make it phenomenal? Let's put them together and make it work. We didn't want to work in a traditional manner because we're trying to think differently," says Scardillo, who has an agency background, having previously spent 16 years at DDB. The \$6 million to renovate the retailer's B.C. HQ with more collaborative spaces for cross-functional teams, as well as a new methodology that encourages experimentation among teams, also helped foster a cultural shift.

Receiving kudos from its U.S. counterpart in the form of potential future adoption, the retailer's concept stores are exceeding initial objectives in terms of store traffic and its NPS, according to the brand, which would not disclose exact figures.

Now, it's hoping to transfer in-store learnings to e-commerce through "private shopping environments," which essentially mimics its online retargeting strategy by curating deals, special pricing and first-in-line access to new products for certain audiences. So, for students going to university, for example, the system can offer dorm installation and special pricing for products curated based on a user's profile and previous searches, says Scardillo.

While the team works on rolling this out before the end of 2018, another area of focus is around "assured living," where the brand is looking at selling technology that helps older folk age in their home in a way that's safe, she says. It's also looking to pilot the States' "athome" Geek Squad program that sees its "blue shirts" visit member's homes and advise on how to create a smart home with the tech in its stores - all of which ties back into the brand's strategy to compete against e-tailers by providing a "human connection."

"It's all really about connecting with people through technology to make their lives better," she says. "And it's not just product and price, because anyone can sell products. It's about how we're continuing to stay relevant, and engaging our customers by showing what's possible with tech." S

For those who aren't fluent in tech, that means "Congratulations to Best Buy on being named Retail Innovator of the Year."



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HOW TO CREATE CONTENT THAT RULES RYOT Studios' Mark Charles reveals five best RYOT Studios' Mark Charles reveals five best

practices for winning with branded content







Content, as they say, is king, but if brands want to turn a campaign into a crowning achievement they need to make sure what they're creating commands consumers' attention.

According to media company Oath's Branded Content Omnibus study, branded content makes 74% of Canadians feel more positive about the brand. The trick for brands, however, is creating informative, entertaining and engaging premium content that consumers remember and want to share with their friends. To that end, there are five key best practices brands can use.

CONSIDER VIDEO

Video is effective at driving deeper understanding among audiences. That makes it ideal for delivering complex brand messaging that can't be communicated within the confines of a standard ad unit.

According to Mark Charles, director of Partner Studio by RYOT, it's about winning hearts and minds; the more informative, authentic and original a video seems, the more likely it will be to lead consumers down the path to purchase.

As an example, he cites a short film that RYOT Studio, developed for client Gatorade called "The Rugby Boys of Memphis." It's the kind of inspirational sports story that tugs strongly at the heartstrings. Two guys introduce the game of rugby to students at an inner city high school in Memphis, Tennessee, the kids discover the values and virtues of sport, they come together to win the national championship and one of them goes on to to earn a scholarship to the University of Arkansas.

"There, you're tapping into the emotive side of storytelling," says Charles. "Because the brand brought you that story, you're feeling an affiliation with that brand."

That's how video can create advocates, harnessing emotion, and brands are becoming wise. Mobile video is particularly important for driving engagemeent given its significant reach. In its 2017 State of the Video Industry global research study, Oath also revealed that two-thirds of advertisers expected to increase mobile video spend by at least 25% in 2017.

USE INNOVATION TO ENHANCE STORYTELLING

By harnessing innovation, brands can make the content they create more memorable. The key, says Charles, is to think "story first" - grow the brand story and then use innovation to amplify it.

For example, a recent social good initiative saw RYOT Studio team up with the Huffington Post to buck the harsh realities of the art world, known for its elitism and restrictive access, by using innovation to democratize the museum-going experience. Using augmented reality (AR), RYOT created an immersive experience that brought the Louvre to a class of fifth grade art students located in Los Angeles, who would never otherwise have had the opportunity to witness its fine works first-hand.

A short film documenting the experience showed the kids' faces lighting up when the AR technology brought the museum's magic to life in an empty warehouse, making some of the Louvre's most exquisite artistic treasures appear in previously empty frames hanging on a wall.

While that kind of innovation can serve as a solid story amplifier, brands should tread carefully, says Charles.

"If you can take innovation and elevate the story, that's when the content becomes king, rather than innovation for innovation's sake because I want to win an award; [that] can backfire," he explains.



RYOT and HuffPo used augmented reality to democratize the art museum experience and bring the magic of the Louvre to a fifth-grade art class in Los Angeles.

UNDERPIN CONTENT CREATION WITH DATA AND INSIGHTS

Using data and insights to inform content creation is key. That's the only way branded content will create emotional connections.

"Data and insights allow us to target the right audience at the right time with scale," explains Charles. "Imagine you know what consumers have purchased, what articles they're reading, what they're sharing and what time and on what device they're consuming their media content. You can craft content for those individual touchpoints. This type of insight is very powerful."

The better informed brands are about consumers' online behaviour, the more able they are to craft a story that's likely to connect with them in the spaces they frequent. That makes consumers more likely to be receptive to the brand message.

CREATE AN EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

Marketers can create the best content in the world to share their brand story, but if they don't have the distribution mapped out they're wasting their time. What they need, says Charles, is a mix of owned, earned, and paid media.

"You need to partner with a network that has multiple brand safe and premium destinations," says Charles. "That way you can deliver the content, and your story, in a more contextually relevant environment."

Branded video content, for example, is best viewed in a native environment. According to a 2018 ad formats study from Oath that compared branded video to non-native static ads, branded video is 2.4 times more likely to drive awareness. That's due to contextual relevance; native content is less intrusive because it feels part of the overall experience.

Another important distribution strategy for brands to consider is marrying content with programmatic delivery. By fusing creativity with programmatic, says Charles, brands can immerse audiences in their story from end-to-end, foster growing engagement, and uncover richer data and insights for further brand building.

"If you're able to create content and sequentialize it, you can create a story and bring people through the funnel."

ENSURE UPFRONT COLLABORATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

Finally, brands should align key stakeholders (media agencies, creative agencies, publishers and other content partners) before anything is rolled out, baking the aforementioned best practices into the process from the get-go.

"You've got to work with people who know how to craft a story that can connect with consumers in a more meaningful way and that's across the whole ecosystem," says Charles.

"[Brands should] take a step back [from the outset] and work out what the pieces are—who's coming to the table with what—and then come up with a more strategic plan."

Ultimately, strategic success for brands lies in creating an "engagement continuum" focusing on story first, leveraging innovation when and where it makes sense, developing content rooted in data to create emotional connections, working with publishers to deliver that content natively via premium channels and optimizing through programmatic and using richer programmatic data and insights for further brand building. Only then can marketers capitalize on content that truly engages audiences. It takes a village to create a kingdom.



Gatorade tugs at the heartstrings with "The Rugby Boys of Memphis," a short video sharing an inspirational story about the virtues of playing sports.









OK, media: what's the plan?

If you want to know how media planning is changing, talk to those leading the charge. As part of strategy's ongoing series of industry roundtables in partnership with Media in Canada, we check in on how strategies are evolving as clients ponder new tech and what the industry needs to deliver stronger ROI.

BY JEROMY LLOYD AND BREE RODY-MANTHA

STRATEGY: When you're building plans, what are clients asking for more and more? Where's the change?

JODI PEACOCK, THE MEDIA KITCHEN: Since last year, it's been about being able to tie back to something you've done. That's just easier in digital. Clients are saying, "We know they went into a Walmart, but did they go into the shoe section?" It's now about digital attribution and listening for signals. We need to understand where people are in their path to purchase.

RICHARD IVEY, MEDIA EXPERTS: We've seen a focus on proprietary research. Every time there's a campaign, there's a study to see what worked and what didn't. The digital players can say, "You're going to spend money with us and we'll show you that it worked." The traditional media aren't doing that enough. Sometimes you have to take those studies with a grain of salt, but I like the direction that it's taking the industry.

PEACOCK: The definition of efficiency is changing too. Efficient doesn't mean cheap. It means "productive," getting the most value out of your

In our world, programmatic means the lowest dollar. The brand safety issues of last year shed a light on that. I don't have any clients that would go straight to open exchanges and lowest CPM now. You would have seen that a few years ago for the sake of efficiency.

ADRIAN CAPOBIANCO, VIZEUM: Some clients are focused on getting







the lowest cost per [consumer], and some are about the best cost for the best audience. That might mean spending more. It depends on what their business drivers are.

Are brands putting more money towards direct-to-consumer tech?

DEVON MacDONALD, MINDSHARE: Voice is getting bigger. I think that's going to be the main interface for people to use technology. We communicate amongst ourselves most effectively with voice. Whether that's in your car or at home, they're all getting better. We're educating clients on what that means for media.

And are AR and VR still on the radar?

IVEY: Brands are waiting for the killer app that's actually going to make it work. People talk about it, but there hasn't been a practical use for it. It's likely to start somewhere other than advertising. It seems great, we can sell an ad, but the consumer has to want to engage with it.

MacDONALD: I disagree a little bit. I think native AR in a phone allows for a branded experience. We saw it manifest first in Snapchat.

IVEY: Snapchat gave people a very narrow, specific use. I don't think it necessarily translates to "When are we going to do VR ads everywhere?"

Have the troubles at Google and Facebook shaken confidence in online spending?

MACDONALD: It's about consumer trust. People are more aware of data collection and of what's happening when people are served ads or not. This is going to become a critical education point, which is why advertisers or brands need access to that information. Typically, Google and Facebook have acted like walled gardens. They don't like sharing.

PEACOCK: The walled gardens are walled universes - Facebook versus Google versus the entire open web. It's not that hard for an advertiser to actually buy that way.

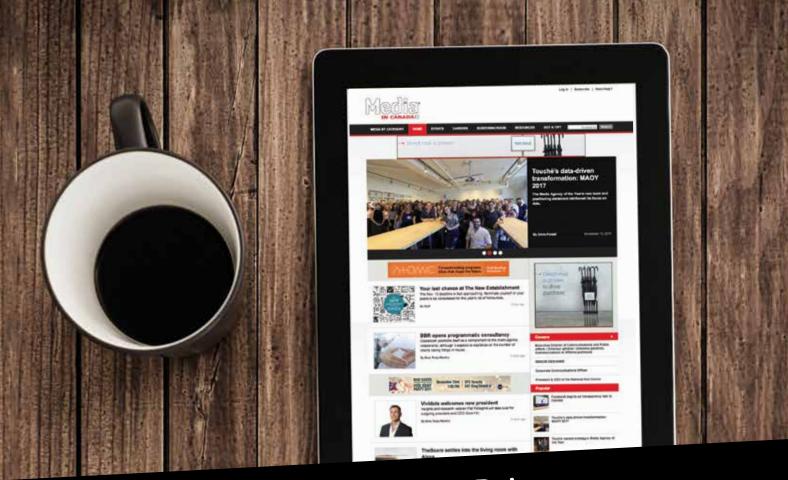
KEVIN JOHNSON, MEDIACOM: But another five years will bring another revolution. And if we know one thing, it's that no organization is safe if they don't evolve and change with the times. We have all used the Kodak analogy. But how many other organizations in the last five years have dissolved because they couldn't evolve? No one is protected from that. I don't care how big you are. Anything could happen.

That leads back to the brand planning topic. How are all of these things - from tech to transparency to trust - affecting planning?

JOHNSON: I think the one concern that I have today is the over-reliance and focus on shortterm results at the sacrifice of brand building. I'm really struggling with that.

CAPOBIANCO: But is that new?

JOHNSON: It's more prevalent than it ever was. Even those who are committed to brand building are losing their way.



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CAPOBIANCO: I'm surprised by how sensitive some marketers' business models are. It's surprising to me how quickly a strong competitor can bring massive changes over a single quarter. So I get that they're under tough pressure.

But I don't have a single client that isn't hungry for better data and for a better understanding of how to invest their dollars. They're all under increased pressure to rationalize their investments.

MacDONALD: I see the emphasis on campaigns going away. Clients are willing to let consumers self-select where they interact. Campaigns are shorter and have pressure in terms of deliverability. They turn over faster. It's one quarter short-termism and three quarters recognizing that consumer demands are faster.

PEACOCK: Five years ago, you might have had to guess consumer intent from a television schedule. Now we're talking about Al and big data and all of the ad tech that detects intent.

Campaigns are still important for peaks and launches, but more clients are invested in the always-on strategy.

But to Kevin's point, the risk on the other side of being so focused on visible ROI and capturing intent, is that we have to help our clients manage the balance of what they're investing.

JOHNSON: A lot of clients are foregoing the cost of creativity and relying on specific, low ROI.

Let's close out by future-looking... The to-do list: what should the media side of the business be doing better?

IVEY: It's about being tighter with our clients, getting behind the curtain in terms of what their data looks like. That bleeds into the type of people we're hiring – people who understand how to manipulate data, pull insights out of it.

There's a threat to all those things – those big consultants that are sitting there, trying to get between what agencies do with clients.

JOHNSON: That's all good and I agree with every single point that you made. But, sorry, can we just get some of the foundational stuff out of the way? Can we get some proper competitive data as an industry that includes digital? Stuff that's category-specific? Category benchmarks? Can we get a proper OTT box system that is across Canada and functioning and has the depth that the U.S. has?

PEACOCK: Pfft. We can't even get WiFi on a subway.

MacDONALD: The only common denominator available across media channels is reach. There needs to be a new common denominator. Interest versus intent across channels would be incredibly advantagious to publishers, to advertisers, to agencies. A big part of the solution will come from advertisers who have access to more information in other markets to better inform planning and delivery.

IVEY: We didn't have a universal tool where we can say, "This is what we've seen happening with your media spend." We've had to pull in media that works, and if we don't have it, we're building something and trying to get to the truth. But why should we have to do that? There should be a better way.

Is the leadership going to be from international marketers who have the weight behind them? Or is it going to be from this table?

IVEY: It better be from us. S



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HOW CANADA'S TOP SHOPS ARE EVOLVING



Advertising isn't about gadgets or newfangled platforms. It's about the ideas behind it all.

A great idea can take a brand to new heights, and the purveyors of these genius insights still, overwhelmingly, come from the agency world.

The A-List profiles prove that theory by sharing some of the media, PR and creative strategies that recently helped elevate brands.

This year's A-List is about the people and culture behind

Canada's top shops and how they're evolving – to give you a sense of where the industry is headed and what's important to brands.

We don't use the term A-List lightly: The A-Listers topped the Creative Report Card, shortlisted for Agency of the Year or picked up major hardware at top advertising award shows around the globe.

So read on to see who has the pulse on that next bright light bulb moment.



Zulu Alpha Kilo

Saying no to the status quo

ulu Alpha Kilo has been described in many ways – innovative, disruptive, cheeky – but what always comes to mind first is the shop's acclaimed creativity. Launching at the height of the recession a decade ago, the agency has always believed in delivering more than just award winning-work with what it calls 'creativity with purpose' for brands.

Zak Mroueh, founder and CCO/CEO, says, "Our idea of creativity is rooted in the belief that, as an independent shop with skin in the game, our sole purpose is to serve our clients' business challenges versus the business challenges of a holding company. We've found holding companies give their leaders an impossible task – win awards at Cannes to fill awards quotas, win new business to fuel revenue growth, cut costs, reduce staff and, of course, report strong profits to shareholders."

He adds, "Clients barely fit into the equation. This self-serving model has opened up a door for independent shops like ours to thrive."

On the global stage, the Toronto shop has certainly thrived, recently being singled out as the top-ranked Canadian agency on the WARC

October is associated with two things for riders: the end of riding season and Halloween. Tapping into these two dates, Zulu created a provocative retail design and social post made up of Harley-Davidson Genuine Parts.

100 list of the world's most effective agencies, coming in at #29 globally. Produced by the Gunn Report, the WARC 100 is an annual ranking of the world's top agencies and campaigns based on business impact they've had on their clients' business. Zulu was the only independent Canadian agency on the list.

This year, the agency also landed on another prestigious list alongside Canada's business elite. Zulu was named as one of Canada's Best Managed Companies through a rigorous selection process led by Deloitte and CIBC. Zulu was recognized for fearless leadership, creative innovation and world-class business practices. *Maclean's* and *Canadian Business* profiled the agency in their April issue.

Before setting up shop in 2008, Mroueh's vision for the company was to be as innovative in the way it operated as in the creative it would produce. For Zulu that has meant being in a constant state of evolution.

"Who knows what an agency is going to look like in 10 or 15 years. We're always thinking about how to get ahead of the curve rather than just following the same worn-out path that most agencies take," says Mroueh.

Zulu's future-forward leadership team includes president Mike Sutton, who joined the agency in 2010. Sutton's digital marketing, client service and strategy expertise is a balanced complement to Mroueh's disruptive founding vision.

Sutton says, "Creativity is the one discipline that clients haven't been successful at bringing in-house. It's why they hire us. Yet in many shops it gets the least attention. Creative success for us lies in having trusting relationships and true business partnerships with our clients. Each business challenge is unique and needs to be tackled from a unique strategic and creative perspective."

That entails strength across disciplines, which is another goal the shop has mastered. Zulu was one of only a few shops in Canada shortlisted in three categories of *strategy's* annual agency of the year competitions: Digital, Design and Advertising. That capped off a breakthrough 2017 that included recognition from *Ad Age* in the US as International Small Agency of the Year for the second year in a row.

Zulu's body of purpose-built creative work has always been the best advocate for the shop's creativity.

Recent examples include an eight-hour Facebook Live event, which had the KitchenAid Professional Series blender creating smoothies out of emoji food combinations. Zulu also excels at crafting connections through emotional storytelling. A PSA campaign for Uber Canada with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) delivered the powerful message that no mom should have motherhood taken away by impaired driving. For Zulu's newest client Tim Hortons, a social activation brought together neighbours who had never met, documenting their first conversations over a cup of coffee.

"Creativity can be a scary word for cautious clients," Mroueh says.

"But embrace it as a business tool and it can unleash your brand, giving you an unfair advantage over your competition."



Zulu was cited for its disruptiveness and profiled in the April issue of Maclean's after being named one of Canada's Best Managed Companies. The rigorous selection process of identifying 2018's top companies was led by Deloitte and CIBC.



As an iconic Canadian brand with a love for community, Zulu's first work for Tim Hortons brought together neighbours across the country who had never met. The Zulubot production team documented these first meetings over a cup of Tims coffee. The content was part of a brand-building campaign that included Instagram Stories, Facebook and Twitter posts.



Having already created an immersive environment for bikers with 1903: A Harley-Davidson Café, the agency did the same for Harley-Davidson employees. Zulu's design group designed the entire Harley-Davidson Canada head office complete with a "Let's Ride" sign made out of 1,100 motorcycle handgrips in the lunchroom.



Produced for Uber in partnership with MADD, this emotional PSA takes the viewer on a journey through a grieving mother's memories of her son. As she travels all the way to the moment he was born, the final, chilling words appear on screen, "No mom should have motherhood taken away."



During the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Games, this epic film made it clear that the best Olympic moments are best enjoyed on Bell TV services. It featured a skier catapulting across Canada and landing right into a viewer's home TV screen.



To prove the power of KitchenAid's new blender, Zulu's digital team turned emojis into smoothies for eight hours via Facebook Live. From classic fruit to bizarre spaghetti, pie and popcorn, consumers submitted emoji combos in the comments. They then watched as the KitchenAid Professional Series Blender powered through the real-life equivalents.





The Colony Project

The heavyweight start-up

he Colony Project is an earned-first PR agency whose goal is to create fully integrated programs that take brands beyond their traditional audiences. The two-year-old Toronto firm is already doing work that is being noticed, taking home Silver at strategy's 2017 PR Agency of the Year awards.

Managing director Amanda Shuchat says, "We often call ourselves the Goldilocks of agencies. We're not a massive agency and not a boutique but we're nimble enough to really react quickly. We have a start-up mentality and work much like a start-up so we can become an extension of our client's team. On the flip side, we have a team of people experienced in working with massive brands plus we can tap into the expertise of Vision7 network heavyweights when it makes sense."

The agency doesn't rely on traditional PR tactics, impressions and press releases but instead uses insights to look for more innovative approaches. These include influencer partnerships, content development, events, experiential activation, social and online content. Key to its efforts is integration and to have everything working together seamlessly.

When it opened its doors, The Colony Project had a staff of three plus three clients, Hyundai, Bayer Healthcare and Alcatel that chose to move from Citizen to follow Shuchat for her continued leadership. Now it has close to 20 staffers and a client list of 20 that includes La Roche-Posay, Social Lite Vodka, Tourism Yukon, Ascensia Diabetes Care and Guinness World Records.

A good example of helping brands reach new audiences is the work that The Colony Project does for Hyundai. Rather than traditional automotive PR, the agency is tasked with helping the carmaker reach new audiences. Part of that mandate is to convince men aged 18 to 35 to want to buy a Hyundai, not because it's affordable but because it's a high-quality product with excellent service. One campaign involved creating Tinder Canada's first-ever partnership with an automotive brand. The campaign to support the launch of the Hyundai lonig compared the similarities of dating through Tinder profiles to celebrity dates in Hyundai cars using engaging video and social content.

"It's really about thinking in new ways about how to get different people onboard with a brand. That's been the biggest thing for us from the start,"

Over the past two years, this award-winning PR firm has grown to a staff of 20 with a roster of 20 global brands including La Roche Posay, Hyundai and Ascensia Diabetes Care.

says Shuchat. "We really have no boundaries, no silos so we try to borrow creativity from everything we do. Who is to say that something we do on a technology brand won't inspire us to do something for a beauty, healthcare or food brand, for example."

The Colony Project's startup sensibility prompted the firm to launch the Common Good Project last year. The initiative is designed to help entrepreneurs gain some brand awareness.

Shuchat explains, "Starting out, what helped us was this great network that we're a part of and we realized that others aren't lucky enough to have the same support. Many new businesses fail in their first few years so we put together a program to provide free counsel to help startups in their quest for brand awareness."

Five startups were selected to take part in customized workshops covering PR and social media.

"We're very insights based," says Shuchat. "It's our goal to create a collaborative team culture while executing industryleading work, innovative initiatives and campaigns. The Colony Project is really about being on the cusp and doing things differently for our clients and our team."



Amanda Shuchat, managing director of The Colony Project, was vicepresident at sister agency Citizen Relations before the set up of the new PR shop two years ago.

The 'Ultimate Date' campaign was executed in partnership with Tinder to support the launch of the Hyundai Ioniq and develop a new audience for Hyundai







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Citizen Relations

The performance PR agency

ith a new influencer platform, proprietary measurement tool, system of billing tied to success, a New York-based CEO and a first-ever Canadian creative director, Citizen Relations has had a busy year. (And that's not to mention all the award-winning work from the agency, which culminated in a Bronze PR win at strategy's Agency of the Year gala.)

The flurry of activity is all part of the agency's three-pronged strategy designed to grow the PR shop eight-fold. To achieve this ambitious plan, it is in the midst of modernizing and diversifying it's offering with an eye towards globalizing its reach, says president Nick Cowling.

On the diversification and modernization front specifically, Cowling says the agency has been purposefully picking out areas of expertise it knows CEOs, CMOs and CCOs are demanding, such as strategy and analytics.

PR and earned media still make up the majority of Citizen's focus, he adds, but over the past five years, the agency has been deepening its expertise in specific areas that public relations might not have touched on before.

Today, for example, Citizen is in the software space, with Cultivate, a pilot platform that allows influencers and brands to connect.

Launched at the beginning of 2018, Cultivate invites influencers of varying reach to sign up, and brands are able to view the influencers' basic statistics - like what vertical they fall into or how many followers they have - but it also gets a bit more granular, Cowling says.

For example, Cultivate is able to determine what percentage of food versus travel content an Instagrammer creates, how many conversations that person inspires with followers and even how much reach those followers have. The platform also facilitates payments based on agreed upon figures - for example, if a YouTuber accepts a deal to create three videos for a brand, instead of waiting until all three have been completed, the brand can release payment for one-third of the payment price upon completion of the first video.

And what excites Cowling the most is that, because it was built in house,

Citizen created an experiential program for Shoppers Drug Mart at CF Sherway Gardens to promote its 2017 "Top Picks" campaign. The experience positioned Shoppers Drug Mart as a health, beauty and convenience influencer, while generating buzz, excitement and shareable content. More than 8,900 consumers engaged with the brand.

Cultivate is a dynamic and fluid software, which can evolve as the needs of brands and influencers do. What's more, it creates opportunity for the PR shop to bring forward new influencers that the agency didn't necessarily have on its radar before. "We never want to hear from our clients 'You keep bringing back the same old people - isn't there anyone else," he says.

It's still in its infancy, and Cultivate has only worked with a couple of brands in beta at press time, but early results have been positive. Cowling points to campaigns for Doritos, Quaker, Dyson and Tim Horton's where Cultivate has been instrumental in uncovering new micro and macro influencers that generate results.

Metrics are always a popular topic for Cowling, and last fall Citizen unveiled its proprietary Citizen Pulse platform, which he hopes will help better capture purchase intent, rather than just measure attention and reach. Citizen Pulse has been in the works for the past three years, and measures across influence, organic conversation and engagement from third party content (i.e. media and influencer coverage).

"It's a hugely powerful tool that allows us not only track the trajectory of a story but also how it is impacting the end consumer and how that engagement is a source of data that impressions alone can't deliver," he says.

"Ultimately, Citizen Pulse allows us to apply data science to storytelling."

Joining Citizen Pulse and Cultivate is a third digital-fuelled offering currently being tested with a U.S. client. Cowling says the end goal is to be able to offer clients a "performance PR" model, based off the performance-marketing model, which rewards agencies based on results. (So, for example, if click-throughs are the primary metric, the agency gets paid only when people actually click through.)

Beyond the new software programs, Citizen has also been staffing up with an eye towards globalization and diversification. It partnered with Provident Communications, a strategy-led corporate comms outfit, to beef up that skillset; hired New York-based Jim Joseph to lead as its global CEO; and more recently, brought aboard its first-ever creative director.

CD Noah Feferman joins Citizen from sister agency Cossette, where he worked as an ACD with Cheerio's, Sick Kids and Public Mobile. He's been working with Citizen over the past several months, says Cowling, and was instrumental in helping the PR shop with its January Netflix win.

Feferman's primary goal will be to make sure all the work coming out of Citizen is "spectacular," says Cowling, adding the agency will still work closely with its Vision 7 sister companies.

Citizen leads in earned media and influencing conversation that drives results, he adds. In its simplest form, the agency wants to own the conversation on behalf of clients, and believes approaching PR through a strong creative lens - backed up with strategy and metrics - is the way to break through the earned space and deliver on business results and engagement that fuels clients own sector growth.

"Every marketing discipline is changing, and changing fast," Cowling says. "We want to do more than keep up. We're going to lead."





To bring credibility to the Doritos "Ketchup Capsule Collection," led by BBDO, Citizen worked with Instagram photographer Jamal Burger to capture imagery for the lookbook, website and social channels. In addition Citizen handpicked a mix of lifestyle, fashion and music influencers to model the collection to further amplify the campaign.







In support of local charity, Skate to Great, the Febreze Hockey Heroes program collected previously used hockey equipment across the GTA and donated it to youth in need. The program kicked off at Toronto City Hall collecting sticks and skates while ambassadors interacted with families and skaters in Nathan Phillips Square.





In September, more than 2,000 guests including corporate sponsors, private patrons, athletes, celebrities, and patients descended upon Mattamy Centre at Ryerson University to recognize donors and launch the new fundraising campaign to help build a new hospital. The event garnered more than 20 million impressions, and kicked off the public campaign with over \$570 million in philanthropic donations and pledges.



Leading up to Valentine's Day, Citizen worked with Netflix to remind Canadians of their first time... binging that is.





Juniper Park\TBWA

Powered by Disruption®

fter bringing the power of Disruption to its clients, this borderless agency is turning its sights on itself and redefining the category in the process.

Jill Nykoliation has taken her agency's philosophy of Disruption to heart and is on a mission. The Juniper Park\TBWA CEO has assembled an international leadership team, launched a new content production studio and is aggressively growing the agency's roster of Canadian and U.S. clients. She's also prioritized diversity and is creating an internal culture that reinforces the agency's Disruption philosophy while supporting career growth.

The approach is working. In the past year, the agency has won six new clients and more than 200 global, regional and local awards for creativity, design and effectiveness.

"We've been so successful in helping our clients disrupt their own categories that we thought it was time to apply the same approach for our business," says Nykoliation. "The process has been nothing short of transformational and we've created incredible opportunities for growth."

As part of the agency's commitment to thinking differently, Nykoliation eschewed tradition and looked outside of Canada to recruit top talent.

"Being able to recruit globally has been an absolute game changer for us," says Nykoliation. "This international experience is exactly what clients want, and what their business deserves. If you really want the very best, don't put geographical fences around it."

The agency's leadership team includes CCO Graham Lang who brings senior experience from the UK and South Africa; CSO Mark Tomblin from UK; and managing director David Toto from France. In May, new ECD Jenny

The Juniper Park\TBWA leadership team, from left to right, CSO Mark Tomblin, CCO Graham Lang, CEO Jill Nykoliation, Managing Director David Toto. Lang joined the agency in December from South Africa.

Glover arrives from legendary agency, TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris in Johannesburg. The team's creative credentials are impressive. Lang, who joined JP\TBWA in December 2017, has 30 Cannes Lions and 16 D&AD Pencils to his credit and Glover, one of the most awarded female creatives in the world, has won 21 Lions, including a Grand Prix, and four Pencils.

For CCO Lang, creativity is not bound by borders. "Toronto has such an amazing appeal because of its diversity. This plays perfectly to our borderless ethos and taking on international projects with U.S. clients." he says.

The diversity of JP\TBWA's entire team provides fresh and distinctive thinking to the agency's work. With 57% of the agency team being female, 52% having lived in

another country, and 48% of staff able to speak two or more languages, clients benefit from global thinking on their business.

Under chief strategy officer Tomblin, JP\TBWA has invested heavily in data and analytics and adopted Disruption Live, a propriety approach to identifying cultural triggers that intersect with a client's brand.

The power of JP\TBWA's approach can be seen in its work. The agency recently disrupted the automotive category, winning three CASSIES in two years for its client Nissan, including one for five-year Sustainable Success. The JP\TBWA team also helped shift perception of GoDaddy from a domain registration service to an integral partner of the entrepreneurial movement. And, they've helped catapult CIBC to be the most breakthrough bank in Canada with a highly engaging brand platform that stands apart in the homogenized financial services category.

In March, JP\TBWA launched its new content production studio, BOLT Content, a standalone entity designed to offer a more nimble approach to developing online content. In April, the agency unbundled its design service to create a separate design company led by group creative director, Louis Duarte. It will also soon be introducing a new data capability.

Nykoliation says launching some of the agency's expertise as standalone entities is an important step because each one is such a powerful tool on its own. "Specialization is critical for our continued growth strategy. Clients are looking for demonstrable expertise in content, data and design and it's important that we're evolving too in order to stay ahead of this trend."

Bottom line, Nykoliation says the goal is continuously pushing for greater precision, while also being more nimble. "We use the power of Disruption to build amazing brands that drive results."

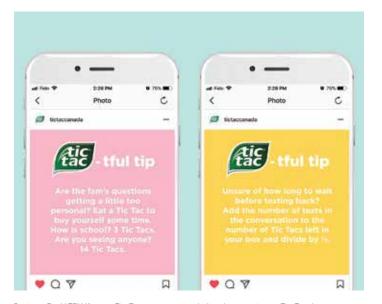




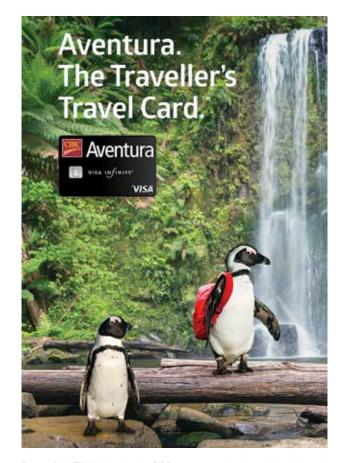
Using out of home ad space on the subway, Juniper Park\
TBWA and GoDaddy illustrated people's thoughts and business ideas that GoDaddy could bring to life online in less than an hour.



Juniper Park\TBWA and Nissan have worked together to win three CASSIES awards over the past two years for their work on the 'Conquer All Conditions' platform. The most recent work featured the Return of the Snowman.



 $\label{thm:linear_park_TBWA} \textit{ Juniper Park_TBWA gets Tic Tac on everyone's lips by creating a Tic Tac language on social media.$



Juniper Park\TBWA's platform for CIBC has consistently achieved breakthrough success in the sea-of-sameness financial industry. Their newest work for CIBC's Aventura card pushes this brand platform further forward.





MSL Canada

Content and workplace culture



SL Canada's new brick-and-beam offices at 445 King St. West are only about four kilometres away from the company's former space at Yonge and Bloor Streets, but they might as well be a different world.

For the agency named strategy's 2015 PR Agency of the Year for innovation in influencer marketing and converting impressions into sales, the move is helping fuel fresh momentum.

With a string of new client wins, new hires, and a breakthrough approach to harnessing the power of influence, MSL continues to deliver on the promise it showed with its pioneering approach to redefining PR more than a decade ago.

For Mia Pearson, who assumed the CEO role when the Publicis Groupe shop acquired her agency, North Strategic, in November 2016, the move has been transformative.

"It's been a turning point for the agency as we drive growth in 2018 and beyond," says the veteran PR practitioner. "It's one thing to try to work around culture and break down barriers within teams, but you cannot make a full change without creating a space where people are energized and inspired."

Pearson says the open-concept approach not only enables MSL's 30-person team to make faster decisions, but also fosters collaboration while providing staffers with easier access to the agency's senior leaders.

Workplace culture has become a key focus for MSL as it looks to position itself for the future. Pearson jokes that the social committee has "pretty much been given the keys" to develop team-building exercises, while a new head of HR and a comprehensive onboarding process have contributed to an employee turnover rate of less than 10%.

That is driving both client retention and new business growth. MSL has been agency of record for iconic brands including P&G and Indigo for more than a decade and was recently awarded Coty's Consumer and Luxury portfolios. The company also signed on new clients including Cogeco Peer 1 and Esurance, along with new mandates from P&G brands including Pampers and Metamucil.

The agency also recently secured the assignment for the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society, which is holding its first ever event in Canada in advance of this year's G7 Summit in Toronto in early May.

The MSL team in its new offices on King St. West. The move marked a "turning point" for the agency says CEO Mia Pearson.

"We look for opportunities where we can give back and supporting women's issues in Canada is important to us," says Pearson.

While MSL continues to offer industry leading PR functions like media outreach, consumer events and crisis management, a 2017 global rebrand around the concept of "Influence. Impact" signalled a shift towards becoming a bigger player on content and extending their award-winning work in influencer marketing.

Nadia Beale, senior vice president at MSL has been at the forefront of the agency's leap into influencer marketing and has been instrumental in pioneering this fast-growing part of the agency's business - which now sits at about 50%, compared with 30% two years ago. MSL's work with influencers is increasingly being used as content on platforms as diverse as Amazon and clients' e-commerce channels.

Recently, MSL established an in-house Influencer Marketing Incubator that tests and learns new ways of reaching and converting consumers, specifically on social and digital channels.

The focus is on staying ahead and finding new ways of making brands stand out, driving purchase intent and trial.

"It's really important for us to keep moving and innovating," Beale says. "This is an incredibly dynamic time and we can't afford to do the same things we were doing a year ago, or even three months ago. We work with brands in incredibly competitive categories and we've made it our mission to ensure we are always thinking and doing the next and new."



Indigo's yearly holiday PR campaign nets over 1 billion in impressions. In past years, PR has contributed to a 8.2% boost in revenue and an increase of 7.9% in online and in-store sales during the year's most important sales season.



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Bleublancrouge

The time experts

t's been a transformative few years for Montreal and Torontobased Bleublancrouge. The creative agency launched its first office outside of

Quebec, with Wahn Yoon as president of BBR Toronto; picked up a number of national and international clients; and unveiled a host of new disciplines and client offerings, including a data consultancy, a content studio and a team of 14 people who specialize in mobility and transport.

The rapid growth and evolution at the agency stems from a shift in philosophy, says BBR Montreal president Simon Cazelais. "Everything we've done over the last 18 months [at the agency] has been around creating utility and meaning for consumers, not strictly advertising." he says. "Advertising is about being 'intrusive,' but to us good marketing is about being essential, embedded - something consumers simply can't imagine living their lives without."

The reasoning is simple, Yoon adds: "Amid a deluge of information, the most valuable commodity for a brand is a consumer's time. And we know that in many parts of the world, including North America, people are working longer hours and doing more with less time.

"Getting consumers to spend more time, and repeated time, with our clients' brands has become the mission of the agency," he adds. "In the 20th century, agencies were really focused on CPG brands, so the tools and offerings [they had] were designed to move units of goods. But today, the world isn't made up of 'stuff.' It's made up of experiences, and we want to focus in on how to deliver those experiences."

Part of the effort has been to increase expertise in specific fields, adds Cazelais. While the agency was never on the "jack-of-all trades, master of none" spectrum, having deep-level expertise in certain industries and disciplines is helping differentiate the agency for clients, especially industries such as retail, hospitality and entertainment, where time spent is the holy grail. He points to data and analytics, experience design and gamification, for example.

A window into the soul of BBR: Amid changing consumer habits, the agency is looking out to the future of the agency, with a new office, new approach to expertise, and a new philosophy on what matters most for brands.

This year, the company launched Glassroom, its own marketing data consultancy, a space where clients are invited to work alongside the agency. This new offering is custombuilt to help clients get the most out of their of marketing and business data. "In a market where holding companies are keeping clients dependent on their platforms, we decided to build a new path, designed around total transparency and proprietary data for the client, not the agency. Everything is shared openly: knowledge, observations, expertise, insights, and ideas. It's a place where everyone - as one team continuously explores, analyses, learns and applies those learnings immediately," says Cazelais

But the agency has been investing in more than just skills development. This year, it launched Commuter, the first in a series of industry practices that will hyper-focus on contemporary verticals that represent where people will be spending the majority of their time and dollars, but in whole new ways.

The intent of Commuter is to be a catalyst for mobility projects of the future. "The rapid evolution of modes of mobility

and transportation is transforming how brands are bringing their products and services to consumers" says Cazelais. "We've built an ecosystem of subject matter experts to guide organizations in this major change, a practice dedicated at keeping everyone centered around evolving human needs.

The 14-person team will be able to help BBR clients like Toyota or French Tech company Vulog identify the new ways consumers are moving about, the brand challenges this creates and solutions that span creative to media to even business practices.

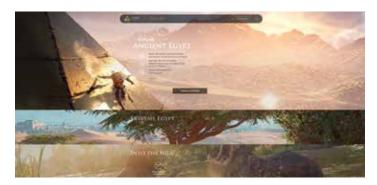
"Agencies have been slow to catch up to major behavioural and lifestyle changes," says Yoon. "We're focusing on staying ahead of the curve."

The plan is to introduce similar practices around entertainment, retail, hospitality and placemaking (real estate and mixed-use development).

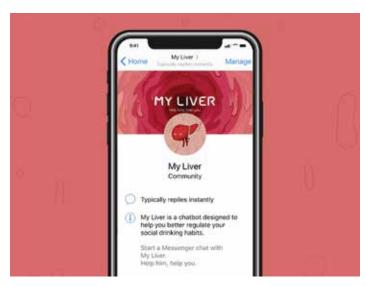
The result of Bleublancrouge's evolution over the past 24 months has been a marked uptick in new client wins - including D-Box, Breville Canada, Plan Canada, Dulux, and multiple brands at Marriott International. It's also picked up a number of awards, including a wood D&AD pencil for its work with Ubisoft and nine Creas for clients including paint brand Sico.

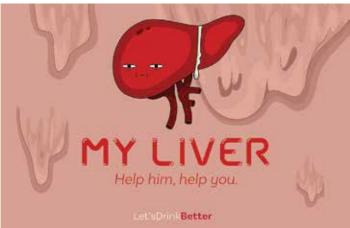
BBR has also increasingly been leading strategy and creative for clients with global reach, says Yoon, pointing to upcoming work for Plan International Canada, as well as the new global brand strategy for Sheraton. Both are expected to enter the market later this year/early next and are transformational projects. "We've found we're very good at reinvention and brand transformation," Yoon says.

BBR is also part of an independent group called Humanise, companies all led by entrepreneurs like Cazelais and Yoon. Humanise is a collective made up of leaders, creators and thinkers committed to the idea of helping brands do good in the world. "This means helping them get back to their purpose and their unique way of making a contribution to society, their real reason for being," says Cazelais. "Our job is to help them figure this out and find endlessly creative ways for brands to contribute to human lives."



To help Ubisoft launch the latest of its super-popular Assassin's Creed franchise, the BBR team took fans behind the scenes. Ahead of the launch, the team rolled out a rich exploration of the game's setting, Egypt, which allowed players to run through as "tourists." Audiences would also capture their favourite moments and share them directly on Instagram.





To convince young consumers to be more mindful of their drinking habits – without coming off as "preachy," BBR rolled out an Al-powered chatbox that encouraged youth to be smarter with their alcohol intake. The chatbot took the guise of the liver – one a bit bitter from years of abuse – and spoke to audiences in the way a good friend might (offering tips to avoid hangovers and reminding people to be responsible), in order to modify behaviour in real time.

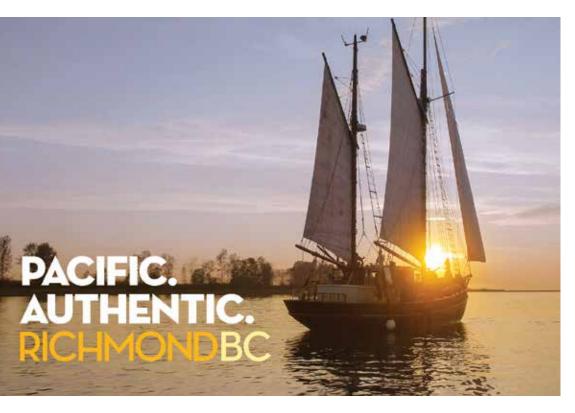






Working with Cadillac Fairview, the agency created the Magic Gift Workshop, where mall shoppers could have their presents wrapped by a the "Tufties," mythical fuzzy creatures that audiences interacted with on screens set up at a mall's core. This past year, the agency took that idea further, and created a digital playground rolled out in malls across Canada. Audiences got to meet the Tufties with a short film in theatres across the country. Once at the mall, they got to play in new interactive zones, participate in an AR treasure hunt or colour in an AR colouring book while waiting to sit on Santa's lap, and of course, get their gifts wrapped while they waited.





C&B's Tourism Richmond campaign, 'Pacific. Authentic.', launched in November 2017 across digital channels with compelling content that brings the people and places of Richmond to life.

C&B Advertising

The brand behind a brand

or a small agency, Calgary-based C&B Advertising has made a big impression in Western Canada. It was founded in 2012 by Phil Copithorne and Leigh Blakely, industry veterans who, for 15 years, worked on some of the most high-profile, successful brands in Alberta such as Travel Alberta, and ATB Financial.

Their experience is paying off. At last year's Ad Rodeo, C&B took home Anvil awards for Banff & Lake Louise Tourism, Calgary Stampede and Calgary Co-op campaigns.

C&B doesn't put a lot of stake in titles and boasts that it has no bureaucracy, no head office, no layers. What it does have is a talented team of 16. Managing partner Leigh Blakely says the shop's size and structure gives it independence and personality. It has also allowed C&B to keep a close-knit team that can work quickly and efficiently while providing a more personal touch.

Blakely says, "Despite being small, we have some of the market's highestprofile clients including Big Rock Brewery, Calgary Stampede and Travel Alberta. In the six years we've been in business, we've established ourselves not only as a team capable of delivering effective, evocative creative work, but as professionals our clients can trust as true partners in their business."

C&B views itself as an extension of its clients' marketing departments, a belief brought to life in their own positioning, 'the brand behind a brand'. As consumer trends change at a moment's notice, many clients have added creative resources in-house, so it's important that the agency is set up to work collaboratively with them.

From marketing and brand strategy to message development and planning, C&B takes brands to market by developing and producing integrated campaigns that span all media and disciplines from direct to social. C&B's 'brand behind a brand' partner approach entails a focus on steering brand

positioning, corporate identity programs and internal brand workshops.

As client needs have evolved, so have the agency's capabilities. It recently added an associate content strategist to the team. Nicole Farris joined C&B in March after completing her M.A./Ph.D. in Depth Psychology. Nicole's expertise in behaviour drivers as well as human decision-making, will assist C&B's strategy and digital functions and add to the shop's understanding of audience motivations.

According to Blakely, C&B's most important work has been creating compelling brand stories that transcend advertising and tap into something deeper and longer-lasting. "We've consistently been able to get people to look at brands they've known for years with fresh eyes. We are passionate about building long-lasting, integrated brands that can extend into product development, employee programs, and of course, new customers."

One example is their recent work for Tourism Richmond, "Pacific. Authentic." which launched in November 2017. The two-pronged approach developed by C&B included engaging tourism industry stakeholders and visitors, and then developing compelling content across a number of digital channels highlighting the coast and culture, the people and places that combine to bring to life the authentic Pacific appeal of Richmond.

Blakely says, "We want our clients to be confident they've made a great investment in their marketing. We believe great work drives better business results for our clients. If the work itself, or our agency, gets industry recognition along the way, it's a welcome side effect, but our clients' success remains our primary focus."





Billboards and bus shelters were part of, 'It's A Stampede Thing', campaign created by C&B for the 2017 Calgary Stampede. It also included TV, digital, social, print and radio.



C&B designed unique new looks for each of the four flavours of Big Rock's Rock Creek cider using a fresh and vibrant colour palette.



C&B created gingerbread people, Ginger and Brad, for Calgary Co-op's 2017 festive season campaign, 'Holidays Made Easy', which included billboards, a radio soap opera, television, social and in-store media.









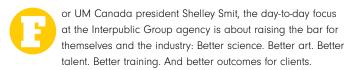
C&B created a new brand identity and positioning for Bromwich+Smith, Licensed Insolvency Trustees and Debt Relief Specialists. The branding seamlessly translated to all digital properties and the company's website and included the production of a 30-second video.





UM Canada

Obsessed with better



It's an approach that has not only translated into a rash of new business wins, including GoodLife Fitness, Expedia, Tim Hortons, Netflix and CAMH, but also significant industry recognition - 36 awards in the past year alone - making UM the most decorated media agency in Canada.

This includes international recognition at Cannes Lions and Festival of Media awards and "effectiveness" wins at the Cassies and Effies across a broad range of clients and categories. UM was also the most-awarded agency at the 2017 Media Innovation Awards (16 trophies, including Best of Show for the "Budweiser Light Up the Nation" campaign).

UM is creating the template for a modern media services company, one boasting highly engaged employees delivering data-driven, creative media.

"We're committed to proving that media can be a topline growth driver," says Smit. "One of the challenges for our industry, and our clients in particular, is that they're under enormous pressure to deliver results. We've always been focused on outcomes. It's not about [ad] impressions. It's about driving sales and delivering impact in the market."

Smit and her leadership team are uniquely familiar with the demands on Canadian marketers to deliver results: nearly three-quarters of UM's senior leadership has client-side experience (Smit herself spent a decade with AB InBev before joining UM in 2008).

"[Our employees] have been clients themselves, so they can have those high-level marketing discussions," says Smit. "It helps them become a real business partner with the marketing team and work collaboratively as one."

There is also another word that comes up frequently in conversation with Smit: craft. "You can use a whole bunch of words to describe what you do, but we've got to the point where craft is our culture," she says. "The craft of what people do in their role within UM; the craft of

UM president, Shelley Smit: "We are always trying to go beyond the expected and do more. Fueling that passion is important to us. It is the passion of our people that drives our success and our quest for better."

unearthing and identifying powerful insights that fuel innovative work; and the craft of honing the best strategic approach to consumer connections."

From campaigns like the trailblazing web-based adventure series "Jeep Unclimbed", which celebrated the awe-inspiring journey of two Canadian mountaineers, to the creation of Netflix Download Zones, which surprised cottage-bound travellers with free wi-fi to download their favourite shows to enjoy later in cottage country's internet-free areas - UM challenges itself to create results-driven work that goes beyond the simple media metrics that once defined campaign efficacy.

UM is also helping clients achieve their goals through the use of proprietary global approaches like the Business Analytics Engine (BAE), which embeds business analysts inside each planning group to model campaign outcomes in real time, and WAVE 9, the world's largest ongoing social media study, which provides a comprehensive overview of people's social media habits in 65 countries (including 1,500 Canadians).

Smit says that adding rigor to media thinking and data to creativity is helping set UM apart in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Its proprietary relationships with data partners such as Amobee - which captures 60 billion online interactions each day - are helping the agency develop insight-fuelled, high performance media plans.

"Our Decisions Science team uses [Amobee] to understand consumer behaviours across a range of categories [so we can] map out feelings, emotions and needs - even the devices and platforms they're using - in those specific moments," says Smit.

There are also some key "soft" examples of how UM's emphasis on better is benefiting the agency, most notably by contributing to employee satisfaction and retention.

Programs like the in-house training and development program Better U - which provides employees with inspiration and guidance on everything from how to develop better insights, to building powerful connection strategies, to managing your personal brand - contributed to an employee turnover rate of less than 10% in 2017, well below the industry average of 30%.

"By creating a culture that champions the craft of what people do, and building programs that foster growth and support each and every team member, [employees] are getting the best out of their work, they're feeling valued, challenged and supported," enthuses Smit.

Cultural fit is also key. Smit meets with every potential new hire at UM, from assistant planner to senior VP, placing an emphasis on what she describes as "high-performing, dynamic people who really believe in propelling their own careers."

She adds, "Over time, we have become a team who lives a 'YES &' culture where we are always trying to go beyond the expected and do more. Fueling that passion is important to us. It is the passion of our people that drives our success and our quest for better."



The bilingual content series, "Jeep Unclimbed", followed two Canadian adventurers attempting to tackle the unclimbed peaks of Nepal. Housed on Jeep.ca and distributed across digital, social and broadcast, it drove a huge sales lift vs. year ago, with flat budgets.



For "Reactine Pollen Alert," UM's J3 partnered with Aerobiology Research Laboratories to analyze pollen levels for various cities - using the data to optimize media-buying in real time and creating branded regional updates using 6-second YouTube bumpers.





UM staff celebrated an industry-leading 16 awards at the 2017 Media Innovation Awards, including Best of Show for "Budweiser Light up the Nation", featuring the "Red Light Goal Notification App". UM is Canada's most awarded media agency, with over 36 awards in the past year alone, including international recognition at the Cannes Lions, Festival of Media Global and the Effie Award shows.



Prominently displayed near UM Canada's main entrance, the "YES &" sign embodies the spirit of an agency intent on creating the template for the modern media services company.



UM helped prevent the great Canadian getaway from turning into the great Canadian entertainment gap by creating Netflix "Download Zones" along key routes into cottage country. The zones enabled travellers to download their favourite shows for off-line viewing in areas with spotty internet coverage.





Carat helped launch Coca-Cola's new fruitwater sparkling beverage with a campaign that included Instagram Stories and digital billboards in Toronto's Yonge-Dundas Square.

Carat

Redefining media through collaboration

Along with media capabilities, the Dentsu Aegis Network, Carat's

arat introduced the global positioning statement "Redefining Media" as a bold assertion in the competitive global media landscape. Soon after, its ambitions were validated when its Canadian operation was named Agency of the Year at the Advertising Club of Toronto's annual Digital Day.

Carat Canada CEO Jeff Dack says the accolade was a welcome acknowledgment of its growing investment and expertise in digital, which now accounts for up to half of its yearly billing volume.

Canadian brands are voting for Carat's strategic digital prowess by rewarding the agency with increased new accounts and expansion of services across the Dentsu Aegis Network Canada's creative, insights, social and measurement companies.

"Great work comes from a level of trust and transparency, and a rhythm and rigour that can only develop over time," says Dack. "Client tenure averages between five to ten years, making us serial monogamists and allowing us to create significant client market advantage."

Carat contributes an estimated 12% of Canadian media activity according to the French research firm RECMA. For 10 years running, it also topped the company's Global Qualitative Evaluation report - which measures agencies' ability to attract and maintain business while diversifying services.

"We're fortunate to have incredibly collaborative client partners," says Dack. "Clients are demanding more cross-functional teams that eliminate artificial silos and facilitate working together to solve business challenges and create real market advantage."

parent company, fosters a shared performance strategy to drive client results. On any given account across the network, anywhere from three to seven agencies work on campaigns simultaneously.

Integrated thinking and improved speed-to-market are the most significant by-products of the multi-agency approach. Dack notes the network's unique one P&L model helps to create efficiency while eliminating the infighting that might bog down other multi-agency models.

Carat has brought this multi-agency approach to many of its clients, including Subway (whose team is collectively known as "The Franchise @ DAN North America") and on a growing scale with clients including Coca-Cola and Mattel.

Buoyed by a series of high-profile account wins, Carat has grown to more than 200 employees across four offices in Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver, while boasting a client roster that includes GM, MasterCard and P&G among others.

Since Dack's arrival, Carat has been experimenting with a more fluid work environment that provides teams with greater latitude about when and how they work, enabling them to become real-time resources for clients. "We are here to solve our clients' problems, and those problems don't always happen nine to five," says Dack.

"Empowering our teams to align to their client's culture has resulted in real-time solutions and an incredible environment of curiosity and energy," he says. "We're all motivated by the same thing, which is great work and incredible client results."







The comprehensive media plan for the re-launch of Diet Coke included streetcar wraps and subway ads, complemented by Instagram Stories, YouTube banners and large-format out-of-home.





A multi-disciplinary team known as "The Franchise at Dentsu Aegis Network North America" oversees the Subway account, which went to market earlier this year with the "Make it What You Want" campaign.



Carat's media strategy for Barbie's "You Can Be Anything" campaign featured YouTube ads that showcased "Dads Who Play Barbie," focused on inspiring and nurturing the limitless potential in every girl.





DentsuBos led a global campaign that highlighted Hitachi's efforts in social innovation, with an eye towards improving the quality of life both now and in the future. The campaign ran in 21 countries.

DentsuBos

Respect for the creative craft



Free-spirited and constructive debate permeates every aspect of DentsuBos' approach to creating brand advantage. Regardless of whether the ask is for strategy, design, creative, digital, production or client services across its offices in Toronto and Montreal, agency leaders work alongside marketers to uncover the core of issues and aspirations.

"When we empower our clients and our teams to have honest discussions about their challenges, what comes out of it is meaningful solutions," says DentsuBos president and CEO Stephen Kiely. "It's in our DNA to help clients go from number five, to number two, to number one."

The results speak for themselves: a record 23 awards in 2017, many related to creative excellence that celebrate significant brand ROI.

Accolades included a silver Marketing Award for its "Snowden CCTV" out-of-home campaign for the Oliver Stone film Snowden - in which it tracked unsuspecting pedestrians as they walked through Toronto's Yonge-Dundas Square and broadcast their images on one of the large digital billboards overlooking the public space.

DentsuBos also won a silver CASSIE for the launch of Arterra Wines Canada's premium brand, Bù. The strategy contributed to 2.16 million bottles sold in the first ten months and the second highest awareness level for an international import grocery-store wine.

Recent account wins including Subway add to an impressive list of local, national and global clients including Canada Dry Motts, Hitachi, Lexus and Purolator.

To bolster ability to craft great work and edge that gives brands in the market, Kiely focuses on identifying strategic talent capable of providing an entirely different lens on projects.

"We're as strong in Montreal as we are in Toronto," says Kiely, who regards himself as the poster child for the Dentsu Aegis Network (DAN) agency's philosophy of steady upward movement for the people who help fuel the business.

It was a philosophy that contributed to last year's promotion of Montreal native Sebastien Rivest to chief creative officer and managing director, and Lyranda Martin Evans and Travis Cowdy named VP, ECDs at its Toronto office.

The strategy department has also evolved, embedding a business strategist with a brand-planning strategist. On the digital front, DentsuBos' digital unit 360i provides support for everything from performance media to social, and the inhouse resources offer clients greater control over costs and quality. "Once you know how to do the how, it makes dreaming a bit easier," says Kiely.

The same is true for production capabilities, especially video, where DentsuBos can build the strategy and execute the campaign to perfection from shoot, edit and retouch. Kiely says the goal isn't to bring everything in-house, but to best serve creative ideas. "The more we can do in-house to protect the product and help our clients do more with increasingly tightened budgets, the better we're serving them."

"We are a slave to the idea and whatever sets it up for success."



Morinaga Milk Industry Co. Ltd. introduced the first ever Japanese-style aloe vera yogurt into the American market, and partnered with DentsuBos Montreal for the creative.

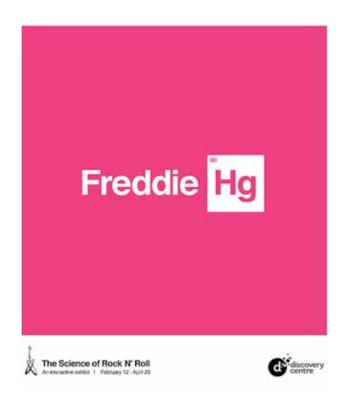




The "Make it What You Want" campaign for Subway launched with a 60-second anthem spot comprised of a series of fast-paced vignettes positioning the chain as all things to all people – especially those young in body and mind.



To help launch the Oliver Stone film Snowden, DentsuBos and Elevation Pictures deployed an eye-catching surveillance operation around Dundas Square.



To promote "The Science of Rock N' Roll" to Gen-X parents and their families, DentsuBos Toronto created a campaign that cleverly combined the names of rock stars with the periodic table.





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University of Toronto launches fintech hub



The BIMM team: the agency has a roster of 65 fulltime staffers.

"Today's consumer is not a one and done, see a spot, buy a product. It's ongoing," says Sanchez. "Consumers are constantly exposed to brands and media, screens and devices. You have to plan how to influence them with those impressions. The more you know about where your customer travels, the more successful you can be in terms of influencing their behaviour."

BIMM

Marketing with greater certainty

hirty years ago, BIMM was founded with a belief in the power of marketing using consumer data. When Roehl Sanchez and Mike Da Ponte bought the agency 10 years ago, their goal was to transform BIMM from traditional direct marketing to a fully-integrated data-driven creative agency. The shop still places a lot of weight on consumer data but it now has more tools with which to pull out insights for planning and strategy.

CCO Sanchez says, "Our tagline is "marketing with greater certainty". We use data to ensure that what we propose to the client can be quantified or qualified. We put a big emphasis on results and measurement to make sure that the brand work we create is effective."

BIMM is serious about providing measurable results and puts money on the line by having results-based compensation agreements with some clients.

The agency has a full-time roster of 65 and at the heart of it all is a data and analytics department where in-house analysts and data scientists feed into the insights that drive the shop's planning service. This hub draws on data from all sources, traditional research to store intercepts and client performance data.

Executing on plans often involves BIMM's technology department, which handles front and backend development as well as programmatic media buying. Although the shop collaborates with media agencies for traditional buying, it found it was more efficient to handle programmatic for clients.

BIMM's recent work supports its belief in data and helped it win silver in *strategy's* 2017 Digital Agency of the Year. One of BIMM's standout campaigns is Bully Ads, created for Canadian Safe School Network, which racked up 28 domestic and international awards. A series of banner ads featuring messages such as "Nobody likes you." and "That shirt makes you look stupid.", stalked influencers to create a visceral reaction – and a lot of buzz.

Sanchez says, "We were able to take a small group of influencers, target them using email and use their behaviour to retarget them with individualized banner ads and track response. Once they clicked on the email message, we had them. They were now cookied and could be tracked, and then we could start serving them our ads."

The results of the very custom, very niche experience were massive.

Over 23 million impressions and year-over-year donation increase of 37%.



BIMM won awards for its Haunted Door App for WD40 that supplied creaky door sound effects designed to provide some spooky ambience when homeowners greeted trick-or-treaters.



Created for Canadian Safe School Network, the Bully Ads campaign won 28 awards for its series of banner ads that stalked influencers across the web with bullying messages.





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Veritas

The influencer agency

oronto's Veritas Communication literally trademarked the idea of influencing the influencers, which has manifested in some of the agency's recent award wins, including Holmes Report's "Top Five Most Creative Agencies Globally" or the Holmes' title of "Canadian Agency of the Year" twice in a handful of years.

But a changing market reality means that to stay ahead of the trends, the PR agency needs to be even more strategic and creative with its offering. To do this, it's doubling down again on creativity, deepening its ties to its community of influencers and investing more in strategy.

It's all starting with whom the company hires.

"From this day forward, every hire we make needs to be an influencer and a practitioner," says Krista Webster, president, Veritas. "You might be a copywriter, but we also want you to be a photographer or a foodie or an artist. Multiple passions and skills makes you innately more creative, and we want this expressed in the agency at every level."

She points to Rob Dean, the agency's newest creative director addition, who joins the team as a Cannes awarded advertising agency veteran. While Dean has a strong background in marketing - and will be tasked with further building out Veritas' creative approach - his entrepreneurial background also factored into the decision to bring him aboard, says Webster. For example, he helped his wife design and launch Glory Hole, the popular donut store in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood.

Having people with a secondary talent or a strong social following makes a lot of sense for the agency that bills itself as one that influences the influencers, Dean says. "These days, almost everyone has a side hustle, a creative outlet - especially creative department people," he says. "This side hustle gives them an even stronger understanding of things like social media or influencer media work. When talking with clients, there's a certain amount of clout that comes with having successfully launched your own business or having 1,000 Instagram followers."

Built around sunset moments, Veritas and Corona invited a cadre of influencers up to a cottage to help create Instagram and YouTube worthy content.

Coupled with this backbone of on-the-job and off-the-job creative employees, Webster says the plan is to begin inviting influencers to co-work in the Veritas office. While the agency has always brought aboard its influencer set - both in the social media and media world to work with brands on campaign launches, inviting them to share the workspace formalizes that co-creation relationship, she says.

Today, everyone works with influencers, and it's very normal to pay these social media stars. But the more people play in this space, and the more money that exchanges hands, the less authentic these relationships and pairings can become. Bringing people in house to co-create with a brand and looping these stars into planning sessions, creates a stronger dialogue between the agency, the brands and these influencers.

"It helps us get to a place where they feel invested in the work, in what the brand believes," Webster says. "The end goal is to make sure they don't feel like they've just been handed a project they have to complete."

The co-working plan should also result in a symbiotic relationship between the influencers working in the office and the staff - they can ask questions of the PR professionals to amplify their own reach, and vice versa.

She points to recent "Casa Corona" campaign as an example of this approach. Working with the likes of Jeff Isy, a popular Instagram photographer, YouTuber Chris Hau and more, the influencers were given key objectives, legal parameters and overall brand guidelines but were given free-range to create content that was meaningful to them. The end result was a long-weekend getaway built around sunset moments. The pair photographed and filmed the excursion, who then shared the content organically with their own followers. The campaign achieved 5X the social impressions KPI.

In addition to bringing influencers further into the agency fold, Veritas plans to add three to five ADs and copywriters to its creative team, led by Dean, to guide the content and experiential output from the agency. It also plans to grow its production team. Right now, about 60% of all content production is handled in house, Webster says. The goal is to have about 90% handled internally by this time next year. To do so, the company is actively hunting for illustrators, videographers and animators to join the team (such as the recently hired videographer, Krishan Thapar who, as a side project, built his own 4K 360 camera).

Finally, Veritas plans to bring aboard more strategically minded employees to lead planning efforts for clients, such as media or channel planners who can help guide how the below-the-line activations are seeded out beyond the earned media space.

"We want the influencer content we put out to the world to be the equivalent to the great spots that advertising partners are putting out there," she says. "I want to get to a place where, when we put paid media behind the amazing below-the-line work we do in digital influence and social it performs the same, if not better than, the content from other creative agencies."



Ashlev Therrigult

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MAZDA, WELL-CRAFTED

THE JAPANESE AUTOMAKER IS TAKING A PAGE OUT OF CRAFT BEER'S MARKETING BOOK AS IT CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF FUN-FAST CARS AND ENERGETIC MARKETING. BY MEGAN HAYNES

ith its 50th anniversary on the horizon, Mazda is pivoting its brand from a fun-to-drive, value vehicle towards one of affluence. It's a sensible shift as the young adults the brand targeted in the early '00s have grown up and are ready to spend on a car that meets their more premium demands.

For Mazda, its new approach doesn't hinge on providing a sense of luxury or exclusivity. Rather, it's about craftsmanship and attention to detail - creating the indie coffee shop or craft beer of the car world.

Like any well-"crafted" brand, the car company is reflecting on its roots.

Many people don't realize that Mazda selected Canada as its first North American market in 1968, ahead of the more populous U.S., says Neal Bouwmeester, national manager, brand communications.

The smaller country, with less allegiance to home-

grown car manufacturers than the U.S., made for an ideal entry into North America. Mazda sold 3,000 cars in its first year, landing in the ninth spot among car companies in Canada. By 1980, it was moving 13,000 vehicles annually (though, in comparison, Honda, launched four years after Mazda and was selling 25,000 cars annually).

Early marketing included print and TV (handled by FCB Vancouver) and focused on purchase incentives and vehicle features, but much of Mazda's success in the '70s and '80s came from its Japanese origins – and a consumer primed to want something a little different.

At the time, Japanese cars were seen as better value than Ford, GM or Chrysler. "The Japanese auto industry found its way into this position by delivering a lowcost, high-quality, efficient, value-for-money product," wrote professor Kenneth Courtis and Ph.D student Paul Summerville in a 1986 Toronto Star article on the popularity of Japanese vehicles.

Mazda's competitors Toyota, Honda and Nissan, were

seen as trusted and often cutting-edge manufacturers, having collectively invested more than \$6 billion (\$13.2) billion today) in high-tech automotive R&D by 1984, the

The result was an industry divided. North American

manufacturers focused on creating high-volume production with little room for modification to the line. Japanese makers were more likely to have a mixed-batch production system, allowing them to quickly introduce new vehicles or features. That, coupled with a competitive price point, enabled the East Asian brands to flourish.

However, rapid growth wouldn't last long, as Canada and the U.S. introduced import quotas on Japanese manufacturers in 1981, which stymied the market, says Gregory Young, director of brand engagement at Mazda.

In response to government-imposed limits, Japanese manufacturers began shedding their "good value" image in favour of a mid-market pricing strategy, targeting niches like mini vans or mid-sized sedans, says Young. It worked (to an extent), allowing the car companies to weather the quotas until they were lifted in the mid-'80s.

For Mazda, it wasn't until 1988 that growth accelerated, thanks to a mini sports car.

The brand's Miata launched to such fanfare (and with almost no marketing spend) that it became a bit of a legend in the company's PR department.

The zippy sports car was the only one of its kind in the market, says Young, many manufacturers had stopped producing light-weight vehicles. That also meant no one was selling fun-fast cars. Mazda saw a white space - and Miata was a hit.

The word-of-mouth on Miata was a success and the car co pulled its advertising, opting for a PR push. In its first year, without a cent of ad dollars behind it, the company sold 3,500-plus sports cars, with consumers added to a wait list. Anecdotally, Young heard stories of people following transport trucks to dealerships, offering them thousands of dollars to stash a Miata aside so they could get ahead of demand.

The success of the the vehicle prompted two significant changes at Mazda. First, the company launched a PR department in 1991, headed by Young, to support the marketing team. Second, it bolstered its product pipeline, rolling out new models, like mini vans, to meet growing demand from new consumers.

In '91, during his first six months at the company, Young helped launch five cars. In comparison, up until the '80s, Mazda was lucky if it launched two a year.

"We realizated that [the brand] had enormous potential and there was a lot of investment in product development to expand the business," Young says.

The car co's PR and marketing strategy shifted. Prior to the early '90s, much of the focus was on individual features, with little thought given to the overarching Mazda brand. Miata was a hit and did not struggle with name recognition, but few consumers were able to say "Miata is a Mazda," says Young.

"We were not going to grow and be who we wanted to be strictly through fixed marketing and incentives," he adds. "At that time, we didn't talk about building the brand, we talked about building corporate image. But... to grow our business [we had to invest] in traditional marketing and PR, in dealer development and expanding our network."

Work began to build the Mazda brand overall, with the company name taking greater prominence in ads.

Two years into Young's tenure, the Japanese market took a tumble. Momentum evaporated, and focus shifted to stay afloat.

In 1992, Mazda was the third-ranked import manufacturer in Canada, moving 62,000-plus vehicles annually. While North American car companies saw a sales bump, Japanese manufacturers growth faltered, and Mazda saw a continual decline in sales. By 1994, it moved less than 55,000 cars. By 1995, the company laid off 200 employees in Canada.

That same year, Mazda was forced to take investment from Ford, turning over management to the North American car co.

Compounding the change, the parent company of Mazda's long-standing agency partner FCB, True North Communication, purchased another agency that counted Chrysler among its clients. Dome/FCB, as it was known at the time, was forced to resign the Mazda account, shuttering its Vancouver office in the process.

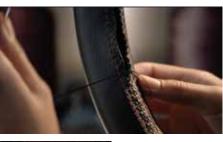
To find efficiencies, the decision was made to have one agency partner for all of North America, with strategy and creative handled centrally.

In 1998, Mazda selected Doner, a Michigan shop that had worked with Ford, and the result was a new brand identity that helped propel the car co to new heights. (Mazda worked with Doner's Toronto office on creative for Canada, with strategy coming from the U.S. arm.)

In the RFP, agencies were tasked with creating a video that captured Mazda's brand essence, Young says. Doner came back with a youthful video, full of energy, with the tag "Zoom zoom." It won the account.

Despite the popularity of "Zoom zoom" internally, the decision was made to go with a stronger call-to-action to move people into dealerships, he says. As such, early marketing from the agency focused on the tag "Get in, be moved," while the brand's colour scheme shifted to yellow and black to reflect the road.

But "Zoom zoom" percolated in the heads of agency





Top left: The young boy in one of Mazda's most iconic and longrunning commercials whispers the catchy chant: "Zoom zoom" Clockwise: As the brand matures, so does its marketing, with the car co leaning toward more "crafted" branding and ideals.

staff, and when Mazda began reinvesting in product development, Doner resurfaced the whispered chant.

To launch Mazda's SUV, the agency unveiled two pitch videos to showcase possible "personalities" for the brand. One featured the SUV surrounded by Miatas, with a somewhat forgettable spokesperson. The second was a 12-year-old boy, dressed in a suit who simply said, "Zoom, zoom."

The marketing execs loved it, but were stunned when Doner introduced an upbeat song from Brazilian group Serapis Bay that repeated "Zoom zoom."

"We thought they were nuts," Young recalls. But the idea tested well and rolled out in theatres. Within six months, it was one of the most recognizable taglines of the year, with 5% of Canadians naming it with unaided recall.

With that recognition came sales. Between 1998 and 2000, the company sold around 27,000 per year. By 2006, it nearly tripled that number, moving 80,000 plus vehicles annually.

The target began to shift, Young adds, with the brand cementing its status as a "fun to drive" vehicle. In the early 2000s, Mazda was one of a few companies going after first time buyers in their early 20s who, at the time, made up less than 15% of new car buyers. Back then, Young told *Marketing* magazine that if it could secure their loyalty, the brand would have it for life. Other activations, such as partnerships with Flare magazine or clothing brand Roots, cemented the company's push towards a young audience, though nothing was as effective as the youthful "Zoom zoom" push.

The parent company relaunched its popular Protégé line as the Mazda 3 in 2003, much to the chagrin and protests of the Canadian marketing teams, Young says. But Mazda 3 succeeded beyond expectations to become the car company's most popular line, thanks to the equity of "Zoom zoom."

But that equity comes with its own set of baggage, says Ari Elkouby, VP and CD at J. Walter Thompson, which took over the account from Doner in 2010.

"Zoom zoom' is probably one of the most iconic taglines for a brand," he says. "That's good and bad. It's recognizable, but it's bad because at the time it was written. Mazda's products were fun-to-drive cars and not much else. That spirit of youthfulness was right at the time, but the product has evolved







Left: Retro-style artwork (created by Guy Allen) grace the walls at Mazda dealerships in celebration of the brand's 50th in Canada.

tremendously since."

So on the eve of its 50th anniversary, the car co is shifting gears, aging with its target and going after more premium branding. The shift in tone began when Ford and Mazda split ways in 2013.

"We're a relatively small player in the grand scheme of things," says Bouwmeester. In 2017, Mazda sold 67,000 cars compared to Honda's 197,000. "We knew we had a different product, so now we're focusing on creating a different experience."

The car co shifted its target towards a psychographic, aiming to reach those for whom a car is more than a large appliance that gets you from point A to point B, and for whom driving is a pleasure rather than a chore.

"These drivers tend to be a little more affluent," says Bouwmeester. The goal is to become a premium brand, but not one built on exclusivity, like those of Mercedes or Lexus.

Bouwmeester likens the change to that of the craft beer industry. Since Mazda is a smaller player and doesn't compete on volume, it's focusing on the story and craft behind its cars' production. The result is a more cinematic, less fun-and-flirty tone, says Elkouby.

As part of its 50th anniversary campaign, Mazda profiled designers and artists behind the vehicles - those who model the cars out of clay before they hit the assembly line. The campaign, launched in January with a media buy from Mindshare, and will have more directed 50th anniversary communications, and dealership activations throughout the year.

Mazda is also introducing its new image at the dealership level, adding more white space, as well as anniversary illustrations from artist Guy Allen to make the showrooms comfy. Dealers are trained to be better storytellers, so when a customer speaks with a salesperson the process doesn't feel like a pitch.

"The end goal is to get to a place where price doesn't really factor into the conversation right out of the gate," Bouwmeester says. "The perfect interaction for us is when people walk into a dealership, instead of saying 'How much will it cost,' it's a discussion around [features], like why the doors are shaped a certain way." So

With files from Adam Stanley













WHILE THE BADGE ON THE FRONT HAS CHANGED, THE PASSION REMAINS FOREVER.

CONGRATULATIONS ON 50 YEARS IN CANADA.

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2018)/\/|CO|

The 2018 AToMiCon was held March 28 at Toronto's Arcadian Court. The conference merged the Brand Content Expo and the **Entertainment Marketing Summit, with the AToMiC Awards** culminating the day. How to build a content brand, and how to build a brand with content, were (respectively) tackled in keynotes from BuzzFeed's Leigh Riemer and Absolut's Craig Johnson. And the Grand Prix nods for Canada's most breakthrough work went to Leo Burnett and IKEA for "Cook This Page," and SickKids' "VS: All In." by Cossette.

























1. AToMiCon opening keynote and BuzzFeed strategist Leigh Riemer shares insights from Tasty's data-driven platform. | 2. The closing keynote was given by Absolut's Craig Johnson. | 3. Globe and Mail's Jon Banack on how to leverage brand purpose through storytelling. | 4. AToMiCon co-chair and Wavemaker CEO, Ann Stewart. | 5. Bell Media's Matthew Cowling and Mark Montefiore of New Metric Media discuss building the Letterkenny brand. | 6. Walmart's Heather Cameron is also this year's AToMiCon co-chair. | 7. Red Lion's president and CEO, Matthew Litzinger, on how to make an impact on a shoestring budget. | 8. Mark Charles at Oath's session on attention as the new currency. | 9. Shaftesbury's Christina Jennings on how to turn a branded content series into a global phenomenon. 10. The judges and producers after a Dragons' Den-style face-off that saw the latter pitch their marketing plans. | 11. Mike Armstrong at Google talks about mass one-to-one marketing. | 12. Michael Alexander of Astral presents the Best Print OOH award during the AToMiC gala. | 13. The team at Leo Burnett took home the Grand Prix for IKEA's "Cook This Page." | 14. Rethink with all 18 of its AToMiC trophies. | 15. Vince Lynch of IV.Al on how to use artificial intelligence to reach audiences at scale. | 16. The guys and girls at Bensimon Byrne and Narrative celebrating their big wins for Casey House' "Break Bread Smash Stigma." | 17. SickKid's Lori Davison gives the acceptance speech for the Public Service Grand Prix.











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