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## CANADA'S POT-BRANDING RULES ARE A BUZZKILL



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Cannabis producers sift through regulatory rules to find a sweet spot for their brands.

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### Oh, cannabis!

A look at Canada's biggest licensed producers and how they've been navigating unpredictable regulatory terrain.

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**ON THE COVER:** Stressed about the new branding rules for cannabis? Mellow out, we got you. *Strategy* weeded out some strategies on how to market pot in Canada once it finally becomes legal this summer. The laws laid out by The Man (a.k.a. the federal government) feel, well, a bit uptight, man. Photographer Justin Poulsen perfectly captures this feeling in the cover photo featuring a nerdy guy (played by character model Michael Martin) – who looks like he could use a little mood-altering sativa – as he holds up packaging that's pretty close to what you'll see in stores.

# What's a pot brand to do?

**C**reativity, meet constraint. You're going to help cannabis brands navigate uncharted, yet confined, territory.

Little carte blanche has been given to licensed producers when it comes to packaging (see our back page), distribution and marketing of their products. The language around where to sell, how to sell and what to sell, as outlined in Bill C-45, is pretty darn bleak.

But this isn't the first time in history when a (once illegal) market faced challenging business constraints. Remember those little liquor permits, issued by the LCBO post-prohibition until the mid-70s and containing lists of every mickey you've ever purchased? The government measure to control intemperate behaviour was coupled with in-store surveillance (clerks vetted whether

shoppers were "moral" enough to purchase) and a rather bland shopping experience (choosing items from lists on beige boards) in stuffy buildings reminiscent of banks. The Ontario Cannabis Store (OCS), in all fairness, is not as highfalutin in its agenda. Stores will get a comfortable lobby and some of its retail space will even sell accessories. Online shopping and convenient home delivery will be possible, thanks to Shopify.

So while packaging and distribution restrictions are a little less stodgy for weed than they used to be for alcohol, there's still a lot to be desired when it comes to marketing old Mary Jane. Brands are prohibited from representing weed as "exciting," nor can it be "glamorous" or "risky" or "daring." It certainly cannot evoke positive (or, oddly, negative) emotions, and shelf marketing must be stripped of almost all branding – save for a logo and name. Marketers are, however, allowed to promote their wares through direct communications,

at sponsored events, and even possibly at OCS counters. Beyond that, you're on your own. But maybe that's a good thing.

Months, if not years, before cannabis was legalized (although, even now as I write this, news media peg Labour Day as a more realistic start-date), pot players were crafting inventive solutions to the dictum dilemma. They've been finding legal work-arounds through education and CSR, hosting workshops, events, and using empty stores and websites as information (and awareness-driving) tools, as reported by Josh Kolm in this issue's cover story (p. 22). Even a few years back, Canada's own Tweed was thinking like an outside-the-box marketer, coupling up with internet-friendly Snoop Dogg on an exclusive name brand (and even getting onto a Times Square billboard thanks to the rapper donning the brand's insignia on his shirt).

We're still in the infant stage of this trial-and-error era, so we've yet to see what pot brands come up with. Soon, though, new thinking, radical models and alt strategies could emerge out of this necessity, trickling down to brands in outside categories facing their own set of disruptions.

As they say, nothing breeds creativity better than constraint.

Jennifer Horn, editor



## strategy

SUMMER 2018 VOLUME 29, ISSUE 5

strategyonline.ca

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

# Strategy is the mother of (real) reinvention

THE BANFF WORLD MEDIA FESTIVAL held a new initiative this year in collaboration with the CMDC, an invite-only media leaders summit to host frank conversation between media companies, agencies and brands. It kicked off with a keynote by *Content Trap* author Bharat Anand, who said the rush to blame digital disruption for all business model woes may be simplistic. Identifying the broad trigger is easy, but isolating the biggest impact and developing a way to connect and win with audiences is where companies often go wrong.

The Harvard prof's book explores how brands believe that creating amazing content – or a superior product – will win the share battle, when at the core, it's about creating customer connectivity and capitalizing on related opps.

In breakouts, execs discussed challenges and where there might be a more sustainable working model. One thing is clear: nimbler more collaborative approaches are needed, with greater across-the-board scrutiny on strategy.

The heightened competition,

shifting regulatory environment (Bill S-228) and new brand challenges puts more pressure on every decision. As the CMO's role evolves to encompass so much more than advertising, partners need to step up.

When asked about Canadian agencies' growing investment in strategy departments for a *Cannes Daily* article, Koho CCO Jason Chaney observed that the importance of the CSO remit grew in tandem with the expanding role of the CMO. The award-winning strategist previously at Cossette says: "A great CSO can isolate the opportunity, de-risk it through insights and data points, and create contingency plans for any potential challenges."

Strong insights can also be a catalyst for longer-horizon programs. As per Metrolinx CMO Mark Childs: "The opportunity to get closer to a client's business through real-time customer behaviour, refreshes the insight potential of the brief to inspire creative that not only builds brands, but balances shorter term objectives and customer loyalty." He cautions that "until everyone has the confidence to make bigger bets,

stop chasing trends and ignore instant gratification, short-term thinking will always be a part of the game."

On a positive note, Chaney says, "hopefully, as a wave of incredibly talented strategic leaders take hold in the industry and grow in influence, we will see change."

That type of change – tapping new consumer insights and isolating where and how to win – will be on the agenda at the Marketing Evolution: C-Suite Summit. The fall edition will cover brand reinvention, the CMO's expanding role and the impact of new leadership and go-to-market strategies. Since the focus is on building brands for the future, wrapping the day with a round-up of the year's best strategic marketing makes sense. So, now, the Strategy Awards will move out of the Agency of the Year show to its own spot on the calendar, culminating MES.

Join us for what is shaping up to be a transformational and inspirational day, and keep sharing your stories of collaboration and change.

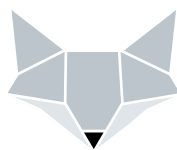
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**Mary Maddever, SVP/Publisher**

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## SAVING THE WORLD WHILE WINNING AWARDS

By Melissa Dunne

**Above:** A study in contrasts - Cossette won two Best of Shows, one for McD's brightly-coloured billboards and another for SickKids' anthemic film.

**W**hat do billboards showing a new take on McDonald's iconic golden arches and a goosebumps-inducing video for SickKids have in common? Well, not a heck of a lot, except that they both came out on top at this year's Marketing Awards.

Cossette won a Best of Show for McDonald's "Follow the Arches" OOH campaign, featuring a deconstructed version of the bright-yellow M logo. The national agency also won the Public Service Best of Show for SickKids' "VS: All In" campaign that set out to find new donors to help fund its \$1.3 billion building.

The awards co-chairs, Mia Pearson, CEO of MSL Canada, and Lance Martin, ECD and partner at Union, said they decided to award two Grand Prix's because they wanted "to honour the impactful efforts showcased within the commercial landscape, while recognizing the significant work executed for important causes."

Cossette was the night's top winner taking home 33 awards in all, including 13 Gold Ms. Also leaving with an impressive haul were Sid Lee (five Gold, six Silver and five Bronze) for its work with clients including Loto-Québec, Molson Coors and Vidéotron, as well as Rethink (four Gold, four Silver and 12 Bronze) for brands such as WestJet, RGD, Playland and YWCA.

The brand new Craft category saw 29 awards go to 10 agencies. The "VS: All In" campaign dominated the production-focused category, taking home awards for cinematography, direction, special effects and editing. As for the Design category, Sid Lee won the most prizes, taking home two Golds for "retro"-fitting stores in "Molson salutes the depanneurs." No Golds were handed out in Multicultural, however Captus Advertising's work for the British Columbia New Democratic Party snagged a Silver and two Bronze prizes for helping to swing the election vote.

## KOHO'S GAMING APPROACH TO FINTECH By Justin Dallaire

There's no shortage of Canadian fintech startups promising to solve consumers' thorniest money issues. But rare are those that market their brand as something of a gaming company.

That approach is behind Koho's new brand identity and marketing campaign. The Toronto-based startup was launched publicly in 2017 in response to Canadians paying among the highest banking fees in the world, says Jason Chaney, who joined as CCO in 2017 with the task of re-positioning the challenger brand.

While research shows that Canadians generally trust their banks, they can also take issue with their activities. For example, a 2017 survey by J.D. Power found that 81% of consumers trust



their financial provider, but 14% say they feel "significant" sales pressure from banks.

The former chief strategist at Cossette says technology can level the playing field and give people the ability to take charge of their finances. That thinking laid the foundation of Koho's new "Restore Balance" platform, a nod to its promise to help consumers take control of their finances without making too many sacrifices.

But positioning itself against the banks, as most fintech players do, was not enough. Convincing loyal bank users to join Koho required taking an almost-radical approach to every aspect of the brand.

For starters, Chaney envisioned Koho as a gaming company rather than just a fintech player, believing that it has “gamed the system” by letting consumers manage their money at no cost.

That approach can be found in a highly cinematic film by Cossette called “Dream Thieves,” which tells the company’s foundational story in a provocative (for a fintech brand) way.

The tone presented in the spot is “more akin to a PlayStation or an X-Box” than a financial institution, says Craig McIntosh, creative director at Cossette.

Debuting at Toronto’s Fringe Festival on July 13, the film abounds with references to things like *The Matrix*, *Donnie Darko* and *Poltergeist*, painting a dire portrait of a world struggling to break free. The spot suggests that while banks routinely tell customers to dream big, they make it more difficult to achieve those dreams by imposing hidden fees. By the end, however, the protagonist usurps the system with technology’s (i.e. Koho’s) help. An explosion of colour heralds a new world order in which consumers hold all the power.

“We had to jolt people out of their apathy, to get them to realize that there’s a different way of controlling their finances,” says McIntosh.

The effect is a film whose main purpose is to drive a sense of enlightenment, says Chaney, who spent nearly 80% of his

marketing budget on its production, believing that “if you tell incredible stories, people will be attracted to that and the media will sort itself out.”

While “Dream Thieves” is rather “hard-hitting” on the banks, the overall Koho branding is meant to be more approachable, positive and empowering, says Bryan Collins, ECD at

123W, which helped create its identity.

Koho operates on a design system that creates flexibility with a near-limitless range of colours. Jeff Harrison, design director at 123W, says the company is looking into custom software that would allow users to upload colours to the app, creating their own brand fingerprint.

The brand logos and identity feature two colours that represent the opposing sides of financial life – splurging and saving. It’s also split in a way that can be scaled according to how much a person’s finances are being spent vs. saved. Chaney says the iterative look takes into account that balance means something different to everyone and that a person’s financial priorities can change, sometimes from one moment to the next.



## AI TRENDS TO WATCH

### FINDING MICRO-INFLUENCERS

There seems to be as many influencers on social media as there are stars in the sky these days.

AI Social Discovery, a new app by Toronto-based startup Quoints, was created to help companies navigate the social universe and find the right influencer for their brand.

The app helps marketers find micro influencers (with followers in the 5,000 to 50,000 range) using AI and personality profiling based on their social activity. Quoints claims influencers with smaller followings “generate higher levels of trust, engagement and purchase intent” compared to celebrity influencers with larger followings.

Since its launch in late 2017, brands like Aeroplan and Live Nation have used the app to find influencers. Other companies, such as Brand24 and Grin, also use technology to sift the Internet to do similar star searching.

### HIGH ON ROBOTS

Findify says it can locate the perfect strain of weed for Canadians.

The cannabis plant “has 144 cannabinoids and over 100 terpenes,” according to a press release from Vancouver-based Namaste Technologies, which recently bought Findify. This means

many consumers will be hit with a sobering array of choice once legal cannabis brands hit store shelves this summer.

AI technology, like Findify’s, will help people cut through the smoke and find the best options for them.

Canadians could spend as much as \$10 billion on marijuana products per year, according to one chief economist at CIBC World Markets. And brands looking to get in on this green rush will likely keep an eye on how AI can help them find new customers.

### AGENCIES EYE AI

Ad agencies are getting in on the AI gold rush.

Cossette recently teamed up with Stradgi AI to work on artificial intelligence products and apps for clients. The joint venture is based in Montreal and will focus on applied AI and building customized solutions for businesses.

Over in Quebec’s capital city, Havas has also opened an office focused on AI. Its centre is not about “driving new R&D or inventing the new Alexa,” says Jan-Nicolas Vanderveken, president and CEO of Havas Montreal, adding that it will rather focus on applied AI solutions that directly address client challenges. **MD**



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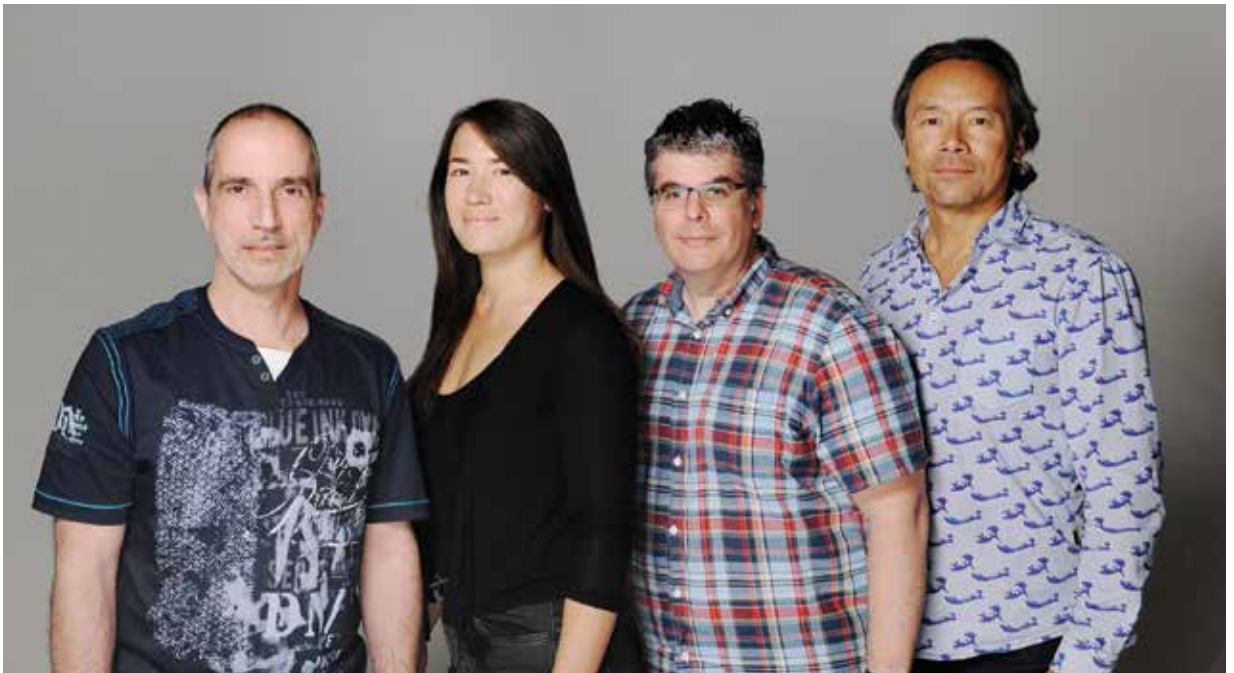
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# TURNING A NEW PAGE

By Josh Kolm



**Above:** The Turn Lab's leadership team consists of Frank Aloise, Malina Kaija, Steven Aronovich and Howard Chang.

**T**oronto independent agency Top Drawer Creative is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. And to mark the occasion, it's rebranding to become The Turn Lab and adopting an entirely new business model.

"We're blowing the place up without burning it down," says CEO Howard Chang.

Top Drawer made a name for itself by being a registered B Corp, having its office be carbon neutral and pursuing clients in purpose-driven spaces: green energy companies, social causes or hospital foundations trying to fundraise. The Turn Lab will still operate sustainably, but it will work with any client looking to transform its business, as well as those that align with the agency's values.

The big priorities at The Turn Lab are going to be digital, tech and consulting, which might seem familiar to anyone who works at an agency that's evolving for today's business. But the way it's deploying its services is unique: Turn Lab, going forward, will sell and license the IP and products it creates.

"One of the big challenges, be it at a network shop or an indie, is that everybody is still selling time for money," Chang says. "We're moving away from that."

Over the last 15 years, Top Drawer developed plenty of customized platforms for clients who weren't happy with "stock" options available to them. But the agency could see that, in many cases, elements of what it was building – be it a CRM platform, an ecommerce solution, a media reporting tool – was in high demand among other clients.

"We've seen a lot of different business problems, and a lot of them fall within the same bucket," says Frank Aloise, VP of interactive. "So when we create a solution, can we really say it's just for one client? We can find a lot of common functionality in what we build, especially when it comes to those things where you're amazed it doesn't exist already."

Selling access to the agency's IP won't be limited to tech and digital. On the consulting side, it also operates a consumer insights panel, one that it plans to expand across North America.

Chang says they have had to downsize and let some staff go, but that it was a "tough change" that needed to be done to bring in the right talent, particularly within data and analytics.

Advertising remains an important tool in its offering, but Malina Kaija, business builder at Turn Lab, says staff will no longer have traditional agency job titles. Instead, they will be organized by discipline, so they can be easily pulled into projects as their skillsets are required.

Working on different parts of a client's business is becoming a priority for many agencies looking to survive disruption. But as The Turn Lab's transformation shows, it's not just big network agencies that could – or should – commit to a business evolution.

"We've been pitching with this new model, and we're in front of Fortune 100 companies," Chang says. "We're entering big agency territory but coming at it from a different way."



# MAPLE LEAF AND SCHNEIDERS CRAFT A REAL FOOD MANIFESTO

SPELLING OUT THE INSIGHTS AND STRATEGY BEHIND THE BOLD REBRANDING OF TWO OF CANADA'S OLDEST FOOD BRANDS. BY JOSH KOLM

The hero ad reintroducing the Maple Leaf brand to Canadians didn't feature any images of bacon or ham. Instead it showed young kids on a stage during a spelling bee, looking unsure about how to spell the word just presented to them by a voice off-camera.

The word? Butylated hydroxytoluene. To use it in a sentence: Maple Leaf's bacon no longer contains the food additive butylated hydroxytoluene.

"The idea came from the notion that Maple Leaf is moving to only using real simple ingredients, the kinds that you or your kids can actually spell and pronounce," says Jeffrey Da Silva, ECD and partner at Sid Lee, the agency behind the May 2018 campaign that states: "If you can't spell it, you won't find it in our food."

By the end of 2018, no Maple Leaf product will include artificial preservatives, flavours, colours or sweeteners – a change that covers 120 SKUs. The reformulation process has been going on for the last 18 months, and is largely based on research and interviews conducted with more than 10,000 Canadian consumers.

"It's pretty clear that consumers are wary of big CPG companies that aren't forthright and honest and transparent about what's in the food," says Adam Grogan, SVP of marketing and innovation at Maple Leaf Foods. "Consumer expectations are changing, and the Maple Leaf brand had to rise to that challenge."

The brand is also returning to large-scale, multi-platform campaigns, which includes a full redesign





**From left, clockwise:** Schneiders' sausages are hung by hand in a spot showcasing craftsmanship; Maple Leaf's spelling bee ad reinforces that products have been stripped down to easily comprehensible ingredients; Schneiders' streamlined packaging adorns its full range of products from ham to hot dogs, while ads explain Maple Leaf's 'real food' manifesto; A food truck activation shines artisanal lustre on Schneiders' meat line.

windown" in getting Canadians to take notice of the change. Throughout the year, Maple Leaf will roll out new creative that shows the authentic, family meal occasions the company is targeting with the relaunch. Marketing will also zero in on other elements of the brand's new "food manifesto," such as its goal to become "the most sustainable protein company on earth."

Elsewhere within the Maple Leaf Foods family, a new campaign has also launched for its Schneiders brand. Created by John St., videos take Canadians inside a Schneiders plant, where a gravelly voice describes the craftsmanship and process behind creating different products, such as how its sausages are tied and hung completely by hand, or the kind of wood it uses to smoke its meat. The creative celebrates its recipes, some dating back to 1890.

While Maple Leaf's advertising is highlighting new changes in ingredients for the future, Schneiders is looking back to history and tradition. Upcoming ads from Maple Leaf will show families enjoying products at home, but Schneiders will literally show Canadians how

of the Maple Leaf brand identity and packaging to create a simplified, consistent look across its portfolio.

"Everything we're trying to do should be based on communicating this really simple insight around being real," Da Silva says. "Photographing things in real situations, depicting real Canadian families in real scenarios. We really wanted the packaging to reflect what was inside too, so the packaging looks as simple as the food."

Grogan describes the first ad as "the brick through the

its sausages are made.

"There's clear consumer appetite for indulgent foods, ones crafted in a way that gives it a story," Grogan says. "I see a lot of brands out there trying to invent that, and we already have one with the credentials and history that can deliver that in an authentic way. And we wanted to tell people about that more softly, because it's something already part of the brand DNA to an extent, as opposed to Maple Leaf, where it was a dramatic change we needed to announce."

Schneiders also underwent a rigorous exercise to guide its own recent reformulation, one that was more focused on taste. A panel of 14 restaurateurs, chefs and food critics were brought in for blind taste tests over the course of a year, putting 100-plus Schneiders products up against offerings from "artisanal" competitors on attributes such as appearance, smell, texture and taste. Many of the changes involved going back to recipes and processes pulled from the Schneiders archives – in some cases, turning away from more technologically advanced methods – and no product went back to market until the panel was satisfied.

Members of the panel will appear in social videos to talk about the Schneiders products they tasted, while a "craft meatery" food truck tours Canada this summer and fall. Working with Mosaic, the tour will include events Schneiders has an established presence at, such as Oktoberfest, but also new ones, like Pride Toronto.

Maple Leaf Foods is looking to reach the same family target with both of its flagship brands, but the company is still looking to differentiate the two. This is because, Grogan says, two big but very different "demand spaces" emerged from the extensive research that informed both relaunches.

One space is "responsible parenting," when an adult is mindful of the ingredients that go in their family or children's meals. The second space is "connecting savoury," when those same parents come together with other adults to celebrate or connect with each other. In the latter moment, the target tends to be more interested in taste, indulgences and food with an artisanal story than in the former, when they care more about nutrition. Those two spaces represent

85% of the situations where products in its category are consumed, notes Grogan.

"What we learned was demographics were the least important thing we could be looking at," he says. "The most important thing to consumers is for a company like ours to understand their needs and that those needs can change depending on the time of the week or who they're with." ■

**"WE LEARNED  
DEMOGRAPHICS  
WERE THE LEAST  
IMPORTANT THING  
WE COULD BE  
LOOKING AT."**



# Zulu! Alpha! Kilo!

BY  
CATHERINE  
PHILLIPS

## A DECADE OF NON-CONFORMITY, CREATIVE DISRUPTION AND STICKING IT TO THE (AD) MAN.

Zak Mroueh was fired at 22-years-old for being too “creative.” Thirty years later, the same creative streak that got Mroueh canned has helped the 52-year-old build Zulu Alpha Kilo, which celebrates its tenth anniversary in July. He started out in Saatchi & Saatchi’s

mailroom, then moved on to a junior copy editor gig at a now-defunct agency when he was shown the door.

“Once you’ve been fired, it’s liberating because you think, ‘What’s the worst thing that could happen? I could get fired.’ I guess that’s where it comes from for me – not being afraid of the outcome,” Mroueh tells *strategy* in a boardroom at his agency’s downtown Toronto office.

Releasing himself from the fear of

failure has led to great success. Speaking out against spec pitches was scary. He did it anyway. Eight years ago, his shop stopped participating in the age-old tradition, which he has publicly denounced.

Even the prospect of not being able to pick up new clients didn’t stop him from taking a stand.

“I think that by liberating yourself from the fear, it lets you do the right thing. I think a lot of agencies live in fear – fear of New York, fear of the holding companies,” Mroueh says. “I guess for us, we just want to do what we believe is right.”

When visiting Zulu’s office, it’s clear – from an in-house café and a *Mad Men*-themed room to a drum kit adorned with the agency’s band name “Zuligans” – that this is not your average creative agency.

Zulu went from 12 staff in 2008 to over 100 today and boasts an annual revenue of \$20 million, says Mroueh.

During Zulu’s infancy, the team would place some unusual bets when entering a pitch – ones that its president Mike Sutton would often lose. In 2011, he shaved his head after the agency won its pitch to Corona. Another time, Sutton lost a bet that required him to wear a Speedo to work. He opted, however, to don a slightly more modest Superman costume instead.



That growth has led to Zulu winning prestigious titles, such as *Ad Age*'s Small Agency of the Year in 2016 and International Small Agency of the Year in 2017.

In its 10 years, Zulu has amassed over 1,000 awards, including merits and shortlists, both locally and internationally.

In 2014, the award-winning agency branched out and launched Zulubot, an in-house content creation and production studio that now includes seven editing suites and a state-of-the-art audio recording studio.

The division has helped the agency break into the branded content scene, from CAMH's "Mental Health is Health," highlighting the discrimination experienced by those with mental illness, to the Harley-Davidson

digital documentary series, *Common Ground*, which was featured on the Discovery Channel.

"In terms of growth, it's got the biggest potential," Mroueh says of the studio. "I can see Zulubot eventually someday being bigger than Zulu Alpha Kilo the agency."

Years after getting fired, Mroueh's career trajectory took another big swerve. This time he was in the driver's seat when he chose

to leave his position as CCO at Taxi in 2007, even though colleagues and friends warned him to pump the brakes on such a bold move. But, while staring down middle-age, he took his own route.

"I was about to turn 41, and I thought, 'Is this all there is?' I had been doing this for nine years, really proud of what we'd built, but I could see what the next year looked like and I knew the company was eventually going to be sold," recalls Mroueh about his bold decision. "And I remember there was a moment when I imagined myself [at] 50 and never having built my own thing."

Today, paving its own road is what Zulu does best, right down to the way its headquarters are designed. There's a café that once housed a gym, as well as a noticeable lack of awards or Zulu-created campaigns on the walls. Instead, they're filled with posters of an eclectic mix of cultural disruptors, from director Stanley Kubrick to Canadian icon Terry Fox to guitar God Jimi Hendrix.

"When people walk into the agency, I don't want it to feel like an



agency," Mroueh says. "I want it to feel like you're not really sure what kind of company we are: 'Are we a design house? Are we an architectural firm?'"

When Zulu was first figuring out what kind of agency it was, one of its first projects was "THINK Box," a social experiment in which ordinary Torontonians could have their problems creatively solved by Zulu in 20 minutes – all from inside a room-sized box in the middle of Yonge-Dundas Square. Zulu solved over 20 problems in one day, later turning the project into an award-winning website.

"It was all about a belief that, sometimes, the hardest part is figuring out what the question you're trying to solve is," says Mroueh. "Ideas need to happen fairly quickly and a good strategy should elicit good thinking. It also informed my philosophy [of] thinking inside-the-box versus thinking outside-the-box. When you know the parameters of the problem it forces you to be more creative."

At this point, Zulu had only been operating for four months, but Mroueh says the methodology stuck.

Since then, major campaigns for Harley-Davidson, Interac, Audi and Tim Hortons have helped strengthen the Zulu brand. The

One of Mroueh's sons handcuffed himself to a gag gift sent by O'Keefe Reinhard & Paul after Zulu won *Ad Age*'s Small AOY in 2016. Every shop that wins the title will congratulate their successor with a gift. In this case, the Chicago agency gave Zulu a pair of handcuffs attached to a briefcase, which was filled with two bananas and bottle of bourbon. Luckily one Zuligan knew how to pick locks.

**Left:** Zulu Alpha Kilo's creative vibe is reflected in its airy, open concept office, which has a café, a 'Zuligans' drum set and graffiti-adorned walls.

**Top right:** Zak Mroueh, donning classic Converse high-tops, meets with the Zulu team in their hip Toronto office.

**Bottom right:** Mike Sutton, president of Zulu, and Mroueh, pose with their *Ad Age* 2017 International Small Agency of the Year awards.







agency's counter-intuitive approach was apparent in its Participation campaign, which urged people *not* to visit the non-profit's website, as well as when it fought back against

entrenched credit card companies with "Be in the Black" for Interac.

Over the years, Zulu has picked up a slew of big name clients, including Whirlpool, Uber and Nikon.

Long-term client, Bell Canada, has long appreciated the small agency's personal

touch. Devorah Lithwick, SVP of brand for Bell, sees the agency as being responsible for creating a platform and brand positioning that has stood the test of time.

"Even with the agency's growth and success, Zak's personal involvement and dedication to drive Bell's business growth has never diminished," Lithwick says.

In its early days, David So, the CFO and COO, says Zulu focused on "smart growth" by putting a moratorium on new business after it picked up its first few major clients. The smart strategy paid off, with the agency growing at its own pace.

Zulu will soon be creating a 10,000-square-foot workshop on its upper floor, where creative and strategic teams can showcase campaigns-in-progress to clients.

"It does feel like we [have] this momentum [and] that we're the only ones that can stop it," Mroueh says. The agency founder recognizes the importance of quality over speed, saying he'll only expand into other markets once Zulu is "recognized as the best agency in the world."

"To me, until we get to that point where we can say we're the best agency globally, then I [don't] feel we have the right to open up somewhere else."

Once Mroueh can say Zulu is no longer seen as a small agency, but simply a great agency, Mroueh says he'll likely show himself the door this time around, noting that:

"We're still on the mission to get there. We still have a long way to go."

Shortly after leaving Taxi, Mroueh came across the book *Small Giants: Companies That Choose to be Great Instead of Big* by Bo Burlingham, which had a big influence on his decision to start his own business. Mroueh got to chat with Burlingham when the author wrote a profile on him for the May 2018 *Forbes* issue.

**Top left to right:**

Some of Zulu's best work includes: Corona's Day of the Dead packaging; People for Good transit ad; Puma Canada's 3D OOH campaign; Simply Orange's juicy billboard; Harley-Davidson's *Common Ground* poster; and Fangoria's Kiss campaign poster.



**STARTING ANEW** When first entering Zulu Alpha Kilo's headquarters, visitors are greeted with a painting first started by Zak Mroueh back in 2008.

The painting has come to symbolize Mroueh's belief in both synchronicity and new beginnings. Sparked by his desire to visibly set his agency apart from the others, the painting became a way for people to participate in the creative process taking place within its walls. New business clients, Mroueh's own family, staff and even Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would all go on to make their mark on the large canvas displayed in the agency's lobby, a process which has been recorded on camera over the years.

Then, in 2015, Mroueh decided to paint over the colourful

artwork, covering it in a layer of clean, white paint. He always knew he would paint it over, something he says represented a rebirth.

Zulu's president Mike Sutton describes the agency as having moved through several phases, from its chaotic start-up era with big ambitions and a small number of resources, to a gangly teen that makes mistakes and learns from them.

"You can see potential and growth when you're an adolescent, but arms and limbs aren't all the same size," he says. "I think around 2015 to 2016, at least for me personally, I started to realize, 'We're starting to become a really mature company now.'"

With ten years under its belt, the mature company continues painting its own story – both on and off the canvas.



Cheers to our  
partners at  
**Zulu Alpha Kilo**  
for owning  
ten years of  
awesome.



~~Quit job~~

~~Start an agency~~

~~Hire talented people~~

~~Do good work~~

~~Win new business~~

~~Build agency reputation~~

Sell to a holding company

Worry about quarterly profits

Focus solely on pitches

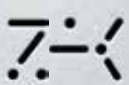
Lose major clients

Institute a salary freeze

Quit caring



**We're most proud of the things we haven't accomplished.**  
To our staff, clients and friends, thanks for 10 great years.

  
zulu  
alpha  
kilo



# WELCOME TO THE WILD WORLD OF WEED

HOW BRANDS IN A NEW BILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY ARE NAVIGATING REGULATIONS AND SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS AS THEY PREPARE FOR LIFTOFF.

BY JOSH KOLM

Bill C-45 is more than the document that legalized recreational cannabis in Canada. It's also a compendium of the rules and regulations around how licensed cannabis producers can communicate with consumers. Those rules inevitably shape the framework that companies must use to differentiate themselves, with the hope of succeeding in an industry where dozens of brands are scrambling for a piece of the multi-billion dollar pie.

But until recently, the rules were still subject to amendments from Ottawa. Combined with the slow trickle of announcements around retail regulations and packaging standards, licensed producers (LPs) dealing with this uncertainty felt like they were running at top speed over sheets of thin ice.

Ray Gracewood, COO at Moncton, N.B.-based Organigram, says his company dealt with the lack of clarity by researching multiple packaging and branding solutions, making investments where it wouldn't "come back to hurt us."

David Bigioni, CMO at Canopy Growth, was less focused on having multiple plans for his Smith Falls, Ont.-based LP. Rather, the company stuck with one clear strategy underpinned with options for different tactics and marketing opportunities. That kept Canopy's strategic approach consistent, but also flexible enough to evolve alongside the regulatory environment.

Not having a clear sense of packaging rules, or even the types of cannabis that could be sold, made it hard for Organigram to invest in things like automated packaging systems or different consumption methods, like edibles or sprays. This was especially challenging since retailers would likely look for products as soon as C-45 received royal assent.

"That's not a boat we can miss," says Gracewood. That's why Organigram was focused on ensuring its seat at the table by cultivating relationships with jurisdictional partners. It will supply product to stores in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, among the first producers to reach such deals.

But going into those meetings with solid branding was still vital. "We focused on putting our brand portfolio and SKUs together so we can be as many things to as many different consumer groups as possible. That's how we can go into those jurisdictions, have educated discussions around

category management and put us in the position to be their preferred partner.”

Consumer research was a major part of the prep work. Matt Coulson, group account director at Virtue, agency of record for Napanee, Ont.-based producer ABCann, says a lot of time was spent looking at U.S. jurisdictions like Colorado, where recreational cannabis is already legalized. Canopy’s Bigioni points out that there were still plenty of insights to be gleaned in Canada.

“We might think of what we’re doing as introducing a category, but we have to appreciate that it’s been around for hundreds of years,” Bigioni says. “There is almost 25% of the adult population already participating in the category at least annually. There’s a lot of rich knowledge to help us understand the details of why and when different consumers use cannabis, which is the foundation to knowing our consumer.”

One thing that has been consistent among LPs is the idea that they’ll need to operate a portfolio of brands to succeed in the recreational market. The particulars of market segmentation are slightly nuanced across the LPs, but broadly speaking, many split adult recreational consumers into two major groups: experienced and inexperienced. As the terms imply, the first are those who currently or recently engaged in regular cannabis consumption (typically through the illicit market), with the second being those who aren’t, but intend to consume cannabis once it’s legal. They are different groups with different concerns, knowledge and levels of comfort with

cannabis, which is why LPs didn’t just launch one, but multiple brands to reach both types of consumers.

“It was clear that one brand could not play all these roles across different segments,” says Coulson. “We did a fair bit of research to break out what we expected to be the main market segments. A portfolio approach emerged as the best strategy very soon after we began our research.”

MedReleaf was the first to put this multi-brand approach into action in a visible way. In February, the Toronto-area producer launched a campaign with agency Grip for San Rafael ‘71, a brand that “celebrates classic cannabis culture” of California in the ‘70s. While slightly more mature than might be expected, the campaign used humour, with weed puns in ads and a radio spot that was nothing more than 30-seconds of giggling. While it couldn’t outwardly promote cannabis yet, a partnership with Amsterdam Brewery on a San Rafael-branded beer gave the company a product to advertise and get consumers familiar with the name.

MedReleaf followed that with the creation of AltaVie in April, a brand rooted in



**Above:** Canopy Growth and Delta9 partnered to set up shops in Manitoba.

the increasingly popular wellness space. Working with Bensimon Byrne and Narrative, the brand created a Toronto gallery event that looked more like the launch of a lifestyle brand than a cannabis one, with authors and artists discussing wellness issues and the different ways they express “living in the now.”

“It speaks more to the premium consumer who is a little more discerning about life in general,” said Darren Karasiuk, VP of strategy at MedReleaf. “They won’t identify with the classic cannabis culture, and are probably new to the category. There’s a big difference in terms of how we need to speak to them and the kinds of things cannabis can serve.”

MedReleaf has since been acquired by Vancouver’s Aurora, with San Rafael and AltaVie now the cornerstone of the recreational brand portfolio for what has become a cannabis giant.

Battling against Aurora to hold onto its spot at the top of Canada’s cannabis mountain is Canopy Growth. Launched as Tweed in 2014, it may be the most well-known company in the industry. The producer’s portfolio includes Spectrum for medical customers, and it signed a deal with Snoop Dogg to create the Leafs by Snoop brand. It is also licensed to distribute Amsterdam-based brand DNA Genetics for those interested in the particulars of cannabis cultivation.

But Canopy is deviating from its competition by having Tweed, by and large, serve both experienced and inexperienced customers in the adult recreational market.

With a welcoming brand voice to go with an established history (relative to the





**Clockwise:** Product being inspected at an Aurora facility; the former packaging of some of Canopy Growth's brands; San Rafael '71 attempted to get a head start on introducing itself to Canadians; a Tokyo Smoke store brings cannabis upscale; branded merch was the subject of a late amendment to marketing rules; what most cannabis packaging will look like.



space), it has both a track record and friendliness that appeals to experienced users who respond to credibility, as well as those looking for a trusted brand to guide them through a new category.

"It's a great platform for us to build on and evolve, so it was a great thing for me to inherit," says Bigioni, who joined the company from Molson Coors last year. "It's also built on our values as a company, which is going to be so important in this category."

According to Vividata, 29% of Canada's adult population still opposes the legalization of cannabis as they associate it with negative effects and believe it to be a gateway to harmful drugs. Even those in favour of legalization have been guilty of some NIMBYism: when the Ontario Cannabis Store – mocked by some would-be customers in the province for what they saw as bland branding and sterile in-store environments – announced its first locations, local residents were shocked that it would be in their "family oriented" neighbourhoods (despite, in some cases, the presence of LCBOs in the same communities).

"There is a social stigma around this still," says Lance Mortlock, national strategy leader at EY Canada. "Part of it is the need to have a modern and enjoyable brand experience, but it's also important to improve trust, public image and community acceptance through things like CSR."

For Aphria's Solei brand, the CSR emphasis is on sustainable and environmentally friendly growing practices, while dozens of others have prioritized keeping its products out of the hands of youth by working with groups like MADD. Across Canada, Tweed is expanding on its history as a contributor to the economy and community of Smith Falls with a "4/20 Fund," which will give \$20 million to community initiatives over the next four years.

CSR isn't just important to combat stigma. Standing for something is going to be one of the few things that will help LPs differentiate in an environment where communication channels are limited.

Resembling marketing and communications rules in the *Tobacco Act*, guidelines in C-45 essentially prohibit cannabis brands from advertising everywhere except through direct communications to people over 18 years of age; in places where young people are not permitted by law; at point of sale; and through telecommunications, such as online platforms.

Many cannabis producers hoped it would be different. In November, a coalition of LPs

and cannabis industry associations worked with Ad Standards to develop their own proposed regulations for advertising. While the government taskforce's proposed rules were nearly identical to the tobacco industry, the coalition's were closer to alcohol: they recommended being allowed to advertise on most platforms, but not promote the act of consuming cannabis or advertise to people under the legal age and stated that they would include responsible use statements. Marketing for the recreational market, according to the coalition's recommendations, would also need to stay clear of implying that cannabis could have therapeutic or health effects.

Some LPs had previously been working to drive as much awareness as possible, but then began to scale back as Bill C-45 made its way through the Senate and regulations got closer to being enforced. Images of intricate packaging that was beautifully designed by producers, but not compliant with Health Canada's standards, were removed from web portals. Activations that were tactical but not in a prescribed area (where messaging was legally allowed) were cancelled or removed from the market.

Though rules are strict, sponsorship remains a place where LPs have some room to build profile. Aurora was the presenting partner of the NXNE festival and Tweed hosted a "wellness zone" as part of its sponsorship of Pride Toronto.

In provinces where private retail is allowed, some LPs have been going through the process of establishing their own stores, which would give them another touch point with customers. Tweed is among those brands, while Toronto's Tokyo Smoke – one of the first to bring cannabis into the mainstream using a lifestyle approach – acquired LP Doja earlier this year and created parent company Hiku, which can sell cannabis alongside its accessories and fashion lines.

But the main thread – which has been consistently pegged as an opportunity for LPs throughout their preparation – is education.

When Leamington-based Aphria launched Solei in April, it targeted "novice users" by baking education directly into its products. Instead of different strains, Solei organized its products into "moods" and occasions, be it unwinding after a long day of work, or invigorating a social gathering with friends.

"We were keen to create a brand that really allowed users to open up and discover the new opportunities cannabis can bring to the table," says Meghan McCrae, VP of marketing and communications at Aphria. "We're letting consumers focus on how they want to feel. We're not looking to create one mood; it's really about offering experiences across the various moods or occasions that cannabis can be a complement to."

But education is also important for those who are already regularly using cannabis. These are people who, in many cases, received recreational product from a trusted source and "their guy." They know what they like but not what its components are. Just because someone participates in the illicit market doesn't mean they know which specific strain is indica vs. sativa or the effects of different THC levels better than anyone else.

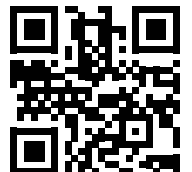
In May, Tweed launched its web portal, where visitors are immediately welcomed by the word "Hi" in big colourful letters, as well as answers to different questions, ranging from the difference

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## The who's who of cannabis

### CANOPY GROWTH

**Brands:** Tweed, DNA Genetics, Leafs by Snoop, Spectrum

**Marketer:** David Bigioni, CMO

**Agency partners:** Cossette, Behaviour, Konrad Group

Besides its established presence in Canada, Canopy is also entering medical markets, with investments and distribution deals touching South America, Europe and Australia.

### AURORA

**Brands:** San Rafael '71, AltaVie, Woodstock, Aurora, MedReleaf

**Marketer:** Savior Joseph, SVP, global marketing  
B.C.'s Aurora is challenging Canopy for the title of largest LP in Canada through acquisitions of established producers like MedReleaf and – following a drawn-out takeover process – CanniMed this year.

### APHRIA

**Brands:** Solei, Aphria, Broken Coast

**Marketer:** Meghan McCrae, VP of marketing and communications

**Agency partners:** Jacknife, Diamond, Edelman

Based in the greenhouses that have occupied Leamington, Ont., for decades, Aphria not only has the size to meet the demand that will come with legalization, but it also has sustainable and environmental growing practices that will help it connect with consumers.

### HIKU

**Brands:** Tokyo Smoke, Doga, Van der Pop, WeedMD (pending approval), Maitri

**Marketer:** Josh Lyon, VP marketing and partnership

**Agency partner:** Jackman Reinvents  
Tokyo Smoke made a name for itself by being among the first to take cannabis culture

mainstream by selling cannabis accessories, fashion and lifestyle products. It acquired LP Doja, creating a vertically integrated company and bringing its own cannabis to store. It's also one of the few cannabis retailers to have pre-existing brand caché.

### ORGANIGRAM

**Brands:** Ankr, Edison Cannabis Company, Trailer Park Bud, Organigram

**Marketer:** Ray Gracewood, chief commercial officer

It's not as big as some of the others on this list, but Organigram is punching above its weight with brands that include Ankr (which leans into the company's roots in organic production), Edison (for the consumer looking for a high-end, scientifically crafted product) and Trailer Park Bud (a budget-conscious brand for fans of Ricky, Julian and Bubbles.)

**Above:** Tweed's "Front Yard Shindig" concert outside its Smith Falls factory.

between CBD and THC to information about the company itself. Once visitors go to the product page, they're given a list of things to do, such as watch a movie, socialize or take a nap, with the brand suggesting Tweed products best suited for those activities.

"When recreational cannabis comes online and you walk into a retail store, the amount of choice that's available is going to be overwhelming no matter who you are," Bigioni says. "Education is just as vital for the daily or weekly consumer because they don't have a point of reference."

While the rules were still subject to change, most LPs had some idea of what communications channels would likely be available to them. That knowledge influenced their marketing departments, prioritizing skills for direct, PR and digital channels, namely things like data, CRM and research. But despite the fact that cannabis marketing will end up being highly tactical, Bigioni says the importance of

creativity becomes raised, not lowered.

"It's that David Ogilvy line: 'Give me the freedom of a tight brief,'" Bigioni says. "To stand out in an environment where all you can see is walls, you need to see opportunity instead. We would have liked things to have played out a little differently, but we're going to embrace what's available and make the most of it." 

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# FALL TV'S BALANCING ACT

**D**uring Upfronts week, broadcasters' fall television presentations usually reveal a central theme in their programming strategies. Two years ago, there was a wave of nostalgic reboots. Last year, it was a return to mass and feel-good TV (and some more reboots). This year, however, the theme seemed to be that there is no theme. Instead, networks focused on balancing their schedules by occasionally playing against type with the genres they've picked up. A pinch of procedural here, a heaping cup of comedy there, and yes, a few more reboots. Networks pulled in new shows from every direction. City, which is historically focused on comedy, bolstered its schedule with dramas and superhero titles, while Global, after a year of rolling out numerous hour-long episodic series, brought in three new half-hour comedies. CTV made a bold move with a new primetime talk show, while CBC shifted one of its most popular comedies to midseason. But fall TV has always been about more than just the new shows; it's also about strategic scheduling, digital offerings and exciting new ad products. Read on to see how the big Canadian TV networks are preparing for the upcoming season.

BY BREE RODY-MANTHA & CATHERINE PHILLIPS



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TUESDAYS 10/8mt



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MONDAYS 10/8mt



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Source: Numeris, Total Canada (8/28/2017 to 5/6/2018), Primetime





**Top and bottom:**

Global has a mix of offerings this fall, from light-hearted fare, such as *The Neighborhood*, to police procedural, *FBI*.

**WHAT'S NEW ON THE TUBE?**

There's change in the air, with most of Canada's networks making slightly different moves from last year.

Corus Entertainment's Global is rolling out seven new shows, from action dramas and episodic comedies to ensemble dramas and family-friendly reality shows.

Most of the network's pickups last year contained themes of heroism and epic triumph, with titles like *SEAL Team*, *S.W.A.T.* and *The Brave*. The picks had mixed results: *S.W.A.T.* performed consistently, with an average audience of 1.2 million. *SEAL Team* was less consistent, missing the one million viewer mark for a few weeks, but eventually getting renewed in the U.S. and Canada. *The Brave* started out with modest audiences in the 1.1- to 1.2-million range, but after several months on the air, the show struggled to stay above the million viewer mark and was subsequently cancelled by its U.S. network, CBS.

This fall, EVP Barbara Williams says Global has more well-rounded shows and "not necessarily ones that have violence at the centre."

One of those shows is medical drama *New Amsterdam*. Despite

the hospital setting, Williams says it's less about the day-to-day operations and more about the relationships between the characters. She compared it to CTV's ensemble drama *This is Us*, known for its intricate plot points, a large cast and plenty of tears.

*New Amsterdam* stars *The Blacklist* alumni Ryan Eggold as Bellevue Hospital's newest medical director, who arrives with the hopes of getting more meaningful work done. Supporting cast includes Freema Agyeman (*Doctor Who*) and Jocko Sims (*Crash*), with the show airing Tuesdays at 10 p.m. It follows another newcomer, *FBI*, at 9 p.m. *FBI* is another procedural, executive produced by Dick Wolf (*Law & Order*) and looks at

various FBI agents (including Missy Peregrym, Jeremy Sisto and Zeeko Zaki) and their work at the bureau, as well as their personal lives.

Global has also added a bevy of new comedies with big names, such as Cedric the Entertainer in *The Neighborhood* and Damon Wayans, Jr. in *Happy Together*. The two comedies, both focusing on neighbourly relations and family dynamics, kick off Global's Monday lineup, with *The Neighborhood* at 8 p.m. and *Happy*





**Right and bottom:** Global's got the hotly anticipated *New Amsterdam*, while City is going after Boomers with *The Cool Kids*.

*Together* following. On Thursday nights at 9:30 p.m., it's got *I Feel Bad*, produced by Amy Poehler and starring Sarayu Blue (*Sons of Tuscon*) as a working mother who strives to "do it all" while plagued by persisting mommy-guilt.

It will also bring new ensemble comedy *Abby's* to midseason. The series from the producers of *The Good Place*, stars Natalie Morales (*Parks and Recreation*) and Neil Flynn (*The Middle*) and centres around an unconventional watering hole – an unlicensed bar in titular character Abby's back yard.

Williams says comedies are harder to read in terms of their potential longevity, but big names like Cedric the Entertainer, Damon Wayans and Amy Poehler give the network "a little more faith."

Taking a cue from dance competition shows and "junior" editions of reality shows, Global will also roll out *Dancing with the Stars: Juniors* on Sundays at 8 p.m.

CBC, which went heavy on serialized drama last year with the likes of *21 Thunder* and *Burden of Truth* has also added more lean-back and episodic content, such as the



heartwarming family drama *Northern Rescue*, which stars William Baldwin (*MacGyver*) as a search and rescue officer and a widower who takes up residence in a rural northern town. Programming GM Sally Catto says the drama, which is produced by Don Carmody Television (*Between*) is ideal for family co-viewing. The time slot it's set to occupy is still TBD, but CBC has confirmed all episodes will begin streaming on its app in December.

"There's a very core audience that loves episodic series that they can drop in and out of," says Catto, citing

the success of CBC series like *Frankie Drake* (which drew an average audience of 782,000 for its first season, prompting a move from midseason to fall). "We want to bring more of that to the schedule this year, to come in and out of the world."

Most of CBC's new series won't touch down until midseason, however. There's the new legal procedural *Diggstown* (Wednesdays at 8 p.m.) from creator and showrunner Floyd Kane (*This Hour Has 22 Minutes*). The series has yet to decide who will play its title character Marcie Diggs, but the goal is to cast a black actress,



## TALKIN' BOUT MY GENERATION

With the 18- to 34-crowd increasingly shedding their pay TV subscriptions in favour of SVODs, broadcasters have spent the better half of a decade trying to get young people to watch live.

But this year, there's a new perspective. What about the older crowd?

City, for example, has always had a good track record among the under-34 audience. But now the network is raising its profile with Gen X and Boomers through the reboot of *Murphy Brown*, as well as retirement home comedy *The Cool Kids*.

Rogers' Hayden Mindell, VP of TV programming and content, says these two shows will likely connect with the 45- to 55-year-old demo, while also attracting their kids as a periphery demographic.

The CBC's Sally Catto echoed the sentiment that children and families should be a bigger priority. She's hoping the broadcaster can keep up its tradition of attracting families to its Sunday night lineup with *Anne* in place of *Heartland*, but it's also adding a junior version of *Canada's Smartest Person* (hosted by *Kim's Convenience* star Paul Sun-Hyung Lee) to Monday nights mid-fall.

Global, which has plenty of procedurals and dramas targeted at 25 to 54, is also aiming for co-viewing with *Dancing with the Stars: Juniors*.



**Top and bottom:** CTV is betting two police procedurals, *The Rookie* and the *Magnum P.I.* reboot, will bring in eyeballs. **Right:** CTV snatched *The Resident* from City this upcoming season.

making *Diggstown* Canada's first original drama to feature a black female lead.

Also coming to midseason for CBC is family comedy *Cavendish* (Thursdays at 9 p.m.), which is created by Andrew Bush and Mark Little of *Picnicface* fame, who also star in the show as brothers who return to their quirky hometown to take care of their ailing father.

The public broadcaster is bringing on dark procedural *Coroner* (Mondays, 9 p.m.), created by Morwyn Brebner (*Saving Hope*) and follows a widowed coroner (star TBA) as she investigates mysterious deaths. Then there's the buzzed-about revival of '90s classic *Street Legal* (Mondays, 9 p.m., following the finale of *Coroner*). Cynthia Dale will return as crusading lawyer Olivia Novak as she pursues a new venture. Finally, true crime series *Unspeakable* (Wednesdays at 9 p.m.) revisits Canada's tainted blood scandal and stars Sarah Wayne Callies (*The Walking Dead*) and Shawn Doyle (*Bellevue*).

CTV, which had a knockout season with hits such as *The Big Bang Theory*, is currently focusing on content and audience diversity.

New crime dramas *The Rookie* and '80s reboot

*Magnum P.I.* give the Bell Media network some edge to contrast the feel-good energy of last season, which paid off for the network with series *The Good Doctor* and *Young Sheldon* ranking among the top five series of the year for all demos, according to Numeris.

*Magnum P.I.* (Universal Television) stars Jay Hernandez as Thomas Magnum and airs Monday at 9 p.m. Much like the original, the show revolves around an ex-Navy SEAL who starts up a private investigation business in Hawaii.

Bell Media's president of content and programming, Mike Cosentino is particularly excited about *The Rookie* (Tuesdays at 10 p.m.), a new cop drama produced by and starring *Castle*'s Nathan Fillion.

"It has the chemistry, star power [and] story... it feels authentic and real," he says. "To me it jumped out of the pack as the standout

pilot and [it's] in the sweet spot of what we think our viewers expect."

Of course, CTV is also bringing some positive vibes to screens. It's picked up *God Friended Me*, which stars Brandon Michael Hall (*The Mayor*). Produced by Warner Bros. Television and executive-produced



by Marco Siega (*The Vampire Diaries*), Hall stars as an atheist radio host whose life takes a bizarre turn when he gets a friend request from God. It's also adding *The Alec Baldwin Show*, which features the former *30 Rock* star in a primetime talk show position. Both air Sunday nights, with *God Friended Me* at 8 p.m. and *The Alec Baldwin Show* at 10 p.m.

To complement its other medical drama *The Good Doctor*, CTV also snatched *The Resident* from City, bringing it to Monday nights at 8 p.m., two hours before *The Good Doctor* airs.

CTV is also bringing comedy to midseason with CTV original, *Jann*, starring Canadian singer Jann Arden as a fictionalized version of herself dealing with everyday trials and tribulations. *Jann* is produced by Project 10 (*Spun Out*) and Seven24 (*Heartland*).

Over at Rogers Media, City has gone the escapist route with *The Gifted* (previously on CTV), bringing the superhero show to Tuesdays at 8 p.m. It's also picked up *The Simpsons*, which aired on Global for the last three decades. Airing Sundays at 8 p.m., it anchors a trio of adult comedies (which includes *Bob's Burgers* and *Family Guy*) previously acquired by the network. That block is followed by new comedy *Rel*, created by and starring Lil Rel Howery (one of the breakout stars of critically acclaimed *Get Out*) as a newly single father trying to move on from his failed

marriage with the help of his family and friends.

And, for those seeking to escape to a different time, *Murphy Brown* is also being revived on City. The '80s classic will air Thursdays at 9:30 p.m. and bring back Candice Bergen as the beloved hard-hitting reporter as she gets up to speed with the state of journalism today.

Other new programs on City are 20th Century Fox and ABC Studios comedy *Single Parents*, starring *Gossip Girl*'s Leighton Meester (Wednesdays, 9:30 p.m.), which follows the ups and downs of raising kids while starting new relationships; drama *A Million Little Things* starring Allison Miller (*Thirteen Reasons Why*) whose group of friends comes to appreciate life more after a death (Wednesdays, 10 p.m.); and World War Two-era crime



## SHAKING UP SPECIALTY

What's in a name? It would seem a whole lot, considering the major rebrand Bell Media's specialty channels underwent in June.

Bravo, Space and Comedy networks will now be reimagined as CTV Drama, CTV Sci-Fi and CTV Comedy, with the more recent network Gusto taking on the moniker CTV Life.

Bell's Mike Cosentino, says the changes help leverage brand recognition through a cohesive CTV umbrella and is a sign of the ever-changing specialty TV landscape.

Last year Corus pivoted W's focus away from a lighthearted "female network" to a destination for intense dramas targeted at women, featuring more edgy shows like *Valor* and *Mozart in the Jungle*. Daniel Eves, SVP of specialty networks says Corus tracked its highest audience rating in 13 years.

Now, it's doubling down on the dark and dramatic slate.

New series to W include: high school football drama *All American* (Warner Bros and Berlanti Productions) starring Taye Diggs, reboots of 90's classics *Charmed* and *Roswell* (both by CBS Studios and the CW) and a spin-off of *Pretty Little Liars* (Warner Horizon Television) – all geared primarily toward children of the '90s and early-aughts, while new seasons of *Outlander*, *The Good Wife* and *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* cater to W's older audience. While W did a good job last year of retaining the 25 to 54 crowd, Eves says this newest slate is targeted at those age 18 to 34 and 18 to 49.

Corus is also using ABC Spark as a net for young adult audiences.

According to the network, *Grown-ish* finished the season as ABC Spark's fourth-most popular show, a significant achievement for a new series.

Now, the *Black-ish* spin-off will be joined by new coming-of-age comedy *Besties* and *Good Trouble*, a spin-off of LGBT-themed drama *The Fosters*. Timeslots have yet to be set for Corus' specialty series.





**Top and bottom:** City added crime drama *The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco*, as well as the sitcom *Rel* to its slate for fall.  
**Far right:** *Happy Together* joins Global's Monday night lineup this season.

drama *The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco* about British women who solve mysteries and break codes, starring Jessica Harmon (*iZombie*) and airing Friday at 8 p.m.

Hayden Mindell, VP of television programming and content at Rogers Media, says that this year, the task was to mix easy-viewing comedies and heart-felt dramas that “connect with viewers on a deeper level.”

## TIME(SLOT) ON MY SIDE

Broadcasters know that it's not just the shows you acquire that put you over the edge. The art of scheduling a series can often mean the difference between a renewal and a premature cancellation. And all of the networks are working on the perfect formula.

For example, CBC is scheduling family-friendly content around the Sunday 7 p.m. timeslot because it's still “strongly tied to appointment viewing,” says Catto. *Anne* will take the slot, moving from midseason to fall for its second season following a successful first season run with an average of 900,000 viewers. Sunday night mainstay *Heartland* will move from fall to midseason and take the same spot in the winter.

Also making a move is *Still Standing*, previously a summer show. It will come to fall in the 8 p.m. timeslot on Tuesdays and has big shoes to fill as it's taking over from the popular *Rick Mercer Report*.

Catto says *Still Standing*, which has a similar satirical style to Mercer's show, has experienced some momentum in terms of its audience (its second season

pulled in an average of 492,000 viewers, up 15% from last season), and the show recently won its second consecutive Canadian Screen Award for best writing in a factual program.

With a dependable audience and subject matter close to Canadians' hearts – with comedian Jonny Harris (*Murdoch Mysteries*) visiting small towns across the country and interacting with the locals – Catto says it made sense to put *Still Standing* in the anchor spot for Tuesdays, which has long been a “comedy night” for CBC.

*This Hour Has 22 Minutes* will hold the 8:30 p.m. slot and the *Baroness Von Sketch Show* is moving from summer to fall in the 9 p.m. slot. Although *Baroness'* linear audiences have been middling (season one took an average audience of 265,000), its online videos have seen greater success, generating millions of views per video. This prompted a renewal as early as last fall.

*Kim's Convenience*, on the other hand, will move to midseason. *Kim's*, which boasted an average audience of 715,000 for its second season, is a “dependable” pick to kick off Tuesdays at 8 p.m., Catto says. *Kim's* will be followed by other midseason comedies, *Schitt's Creek* and *Workin' Moms*, in an effort to sandwich the three popular comedies. Catto says while CBC usually aims for as diverse an appeal as possible, the broadcaster had to play around with the Tuesday night schedule between fall and midseason to avoid alienating audiences.

“*Kim's* really is an 8 o'clock show, but *Baroness* is not,” she says, referring to *Baroness'* slightly more subversive and adult styles of humour, compared to *Kim's* family comedy offering.

Similarly, Corus' Williams says the broadcaster had to do a bit of juggling to get the formula right. The network has added 9-1-1 to fall, following its surprise success in midseason (the emergency room drama started last season with fewer than one million viewers per episode, working its way up to an average of 1.5 million viewers for the finale).

Unlike CBC, Williams says Global likes to balance dramas with comedies in the same night. For example,

she says the lighthearted and boisterous *Neighborhood* and *Happy Together* add “a sense of balance” to Monday nights, which also contain heavy subject matter from 9-1-1 and *Bull*. She also pointed to *I Feel Bad* airing Thursday nights at 9:30 p.m. just before the intense and action-packed *S.W.A.T.*

With *The Neighborhood* and *Happy Together* kicking



off Mondays, followed by *9-1-1*, Williams says that it's "basically an all-new Monday night" – and having *Bull* (which finished two seasons with an average audience of nearly two million per episode) at the end of the night (10 p.m.) should make for a solid lineup.

It's also bringing newbie *FBI* to Tuesdays at 9 p.m., pairing it with *NCIS*, which pulled in an average of more than two million viewers last season. While Williams believes *FBI* has the makings of a hit artistically, placing it next to *NCIS* will likely give it a boost. "*FBI* is a show that deserves a really big launchpad," she says.

According to Colette Watson, VP of broadcast television at Rogers Media, City's strategy includes creating a lineup that flows from show-to-show and reviving its 10 p.m. timeslot with series such as *A Million Little Things* and *Manifest*. Mystery thriller, *Manifest*,



has been dubbed "the new *Lost*" and got plenty buzz of coming out of the Los Angeles screenings, Watson says.

The cancellation of action-drama show *Scorpion* on Monday nights made room for *Dancing with the Stars*, which Watson considers a "nice, regular block that flows nicely into *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*."

"That means our Monday nights will flow from September all the way to May and June, and that was our strategy for Mondays," she adds.

As for having its *Murphy Brown* reboot compete with shows like CTV's *Station 19* in the 9:30 p.m. timeslot, Watson says City didn't have a drama to put against *Station 19*, so it went for another audience.

"A completely different viewer would be watching *Murphy Brown* than would be watching *Station 19*," she notes, adding that City's target is those age 25 to 54.

"We were excited about the reboot of *Murphy Brown* as we know there is an audience who is hungry for topical and satirical programming," she says.

"We think this show is a perfect brand fit for Citytv and works well in the 9:30 p.m. timeslot as a complement to our hit returning comedy, *Mom*." 🐾

## DIGGING INTO DIGITAL STRATEGIES

Broadcasters have been fighting an uphill battle against online streamers. Netflix alone now penetrates more than half of Canada's Anglophone households, according to the Media Technology Monitor. Smaller players, like Amazon Prime Video and CraveTV, are also gaining market share.

But there's still hope – according to the MTM, more than 70% of OTT users subscribe to traditional television.

With that in mind, broadcasters are arming themselves for the digital age with new streamers, apps and subscription offerings.

Rogers Media introduced two new ad-supported streamers for City and FX. The model, akin to Rogers' Sportsnet Now app, is free and ad-supported, but requires users to already have subscriptions to City or FX. Subscribers can watch shows immediately after TV broadcast, as well as access seasons-long archives of City and FX's current shows.

According to Rogers' Collette Watson the apps are part of an effort to extend the viewer experience, not to compete with the likes of Netflix and Amazon, adding they marry "the immersive experience of premium and primetime television with the immediacy of on-demand."

Bell Media has had its similar Go apps for CTV and TSN for several years. However, it's now refreshing its mode, offering a new "super-hub" of subscription and streaming services. The hub will include properties under the CTV banner (Comedy, Sci-Fi, Drama and Life, as well as CTV Vault and Movies) as part of an effort to drive discoverability. The Vault and Movies services (launching Q4 2018) will be free and ad-supported, while the others will require users to subscribe to their linear counterparts.

Corus, meanwhile, has its own on-demand platform for Global TV. Greg

McLelland, EVP and CRO, says Corus is focused on "aggressively scaling" its digital product by adding Global content to connected TV products such as Apple TV and Chromecast.

Corus is also diving into social content, launching a new content studio called So.da and pairing with Twitter Canada on new programming featuring *ET Canada* and Food Network Canada personalities.

New programs include *#OneDirtyDish*, a series featuring Food Network Canada's celebrity chefs creating meals using ingredients selected through Twitter polls; *#TrendingTonight*, a twice-weekly round-up of big news in the entertainment industry; and *#ThisIsViral* (working title), a daily series that covers trending topics.

McLelland says the shows are all aimed at millennials, and were chosen to complement the social setting.

As for CBC, it's rolling out new digital originals (mostly short-form) to the new CBC TV App, which includes a free, ad-supported tier and an ad-free, subscription-based tier. New series on the platform range from mockumentary to irreverent comedy.

CBC will also unveil 11 short docs and three new podcasts. Dark new series *Uncover* and *Kaitlin Prest* take a cue from returning hit *Someone Knows Something* (which has been downloaded more than 32 million times), while *Tai Asks Why?* will court kids as tween host Tai Poole looks for answers to life's biggest questions.

For CBC, digital has been in the forefront since launching its "Strategy 2020" initiative three years ago.

According to ComScore numbers from CBC, the pubcaster has reached some of its targets two-and-a-half years early, boasting an average online reach of 18 million unique monthly visitors.



## WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE BUYERS?

**M**any of Canada's TV networks are rolling out major upgrades to the way they sell ads. While no one broadcaster has gone fully programmatic or addressable yet, many have taken a cue from digital by adding additional targeting options through first-party data.

Bell Media's new Data-Enhanced Television product (DETV) is set to roll out Oct. 1. Buyers will be able to choose their ads based on parameters including age, gender and KPIs, which will prompt the platform to create an optimized linear television schedule.

Stewart Johnston, president of Bell Media sales, marketing and TSN says the aim is to "dramatically" increase reach for advertisers.

Rogers Media's new ad offering, Rogers Enhanced Data (RED), has been a year-in-the-making. The self-serve platform will leverage first-party data from clients, combined with Rogers' own behavioural, location-based and demographic data, enabling buyers to create and target custom audiences and track campaign success.

Alan Dark, SVP of Rogers Media sales says the development came from an increasing demand for real-time data.

Rogers also recently partnered with

Megaphone, a platform that invites sports fans to engage in events through the Sportsnet App. Dark says the partnership, which runs until June of next year, will provide sponsorship opportunities for in-app engagement through live voting at a Toronto Blue Jay's game, for example, as well as integrating its brands into Q&As posed by fans at the games, as well as those at home or at pubs.

"Sports fans in general are rabid," he says. "They are very social, they love to engage with multi-screen, they want to talk about what's going on."

Dark says that the Jays and Sportsnet Central are both on board, with in-app integrations set to kick off in July. Other sponsors include talk show *Tim & Sid*.

Corus, meanwhile, has been experimenting with data-enhanced TV buys for several years now, testing an addressable product in 180,000 households since late 2016. Greg McLelland, EVP and CRO at the network, says it's now going further for advertisers, adding dynamic ad insertion on its VOD platforms and using AI capabilities to provide more contextual data for its digital ad placements.

On linear, McLelland pointed out that Corus and other Canadian media companies

are mostly subject to the changes of their U.S. network partners. South of the border, NBC has vowed to cut the length of commercial pods by 20%, and Fox has introduced a special Sunday night pod that will only see two 30-second commercials.

"As these networks to the south reduce their commercial minutes, Corus will need to adopt a similar format," says McLelland. He added that the company is open to the idea of bringing in sponsored, commercial-free opportunities. It has also begun rolling out six-second television spots this year.

CBC isn't bound by American commercial formats, but Mary Kreuk, executive director of multi-platform media sales and marketing, says it's focusing on ad product innovation on the digital side, adding dynamic ad insertion for its digital content and podcasts.

Asked why CBC wasn't pursuing more opportunities for dynamic ad insertion on linear, she says investment goes beyond one network. "I think the U.S. is a lot further than we are," she says. "Numeris is definitely playing catch-up, but this is an industry solution, not a business solution."

CBC's French-market arm, SRC, introduced themed pods in which all of the commercials in a break revolve around a central theme, like food or music. The first rolled out during episodes of cooking competition show *Les chefs* in June.

Kreuk says there's no immediate plan to bring the offering to Anglophone Canada, but it's watching SRC's new venture closely.

But many of CBC's changes are coming from the back-end. It recently partnered with software provider NeverCryWolf to automate its ad buying process. The software will automate factors such as the rotation of creative, scheduling and frequency of different spots.

Corus has also made back-end changes, introducing a new automated buying platform, Cynch. McLelland says it simplifies the buying process and also improves reporting timelines for buyers. It entered a soft-launch period in May and will fully launch in the fall.



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# COMPLAINING AND EXPLAINING

No matter how flashy your Upfront is (or how many celebrities you roll out), you can't please everyone – especially media buyers. Every year, *strategy* lends an ear to the industry to hear their gripes about TV buying. What needs to change? What's confusing? And what's driving them utterly mad? Then, we share their complaints with the networks and see how they respond.

BY BREE RODY-MANTHA

## FALLING AUDIENCES AND RISING PRICES

**THE COMPLAINT:** More and more viewers are moving away from ad-supported TV to Netflix, and the like. This shift is leading to a scarcity in TV ratings, which in turn drives media pricing higher as networks claim “high demand” on the remaining inventory (or use up a lot of the inventory to make good on audience under-deliveries). When is the industry going to address the issue of continually declining ratings? Higher pricing to compensate for this decline is not a sustainable model moving forward. What are you doing to address this trend which, if left unaddressed, will eventually end up driving advertisers to look elsewhere for audiences?

**Richard Ivey, chief procurement officer, Media Experts**

**THE RESPONSE:** The fact is, TV and premium content delivers the best value for your media dollar. Increasing media investment with cross-platform premium content accelerates growth... We [Bell Media] grew our lead by 12% and now sit 45% bigger than our next competitor. That's great audience momentum. And, while technology has given people a lot of choice, television still reaches 95% of Canadians and the vast majority of that is live. People shouldn't be distracted by the noise in the marketplace that says otherwise.

**Stewart Johnston, president, media sales, marketing and TSN at Bell Media**

## BUYER & SELLER GOBBLEDYGOOK

**THE COMPLAINT:** The language of planning, buying and selling TV is changing. It has become more opaque, mysterious and vague with the passing of each season. For example, I recently received in an email: “STB data helps inform along with other digital and TV data flags,” actually means: “STB data provides insights.” I think. How about: “TV schedules are optimized to align to a specific strategic audience target defined by the client.” Which I believe means: “The schedule reached the target.” And “data-enabled linear TV buying” means, well, I'm not sure what it means. Only the very boldest in meetings say, “Sorry. I don't understand. What do you mean.” Let's keep things simple. Just because it's simple doesn't mean it's not smart.

**Rob Young, SVP, planning services, PHD Media**

**THE RESPONSE:** Agreed. As we modernize TV with new data sets, automation and eventually self-serve buyer interfaces, we will have to think about simplifying the process for our customers. A key thing that the big digital social platforms have done over the last few years is offer scaled products that



are easy to buy. We're replicating that.

**Jon de la Mothe, senior director, ad product and operations, Rogers Media**

## WHY NOT WORK TOGETHER?

**THE COMPLAINT:** The TV industry is waging a TV-versus-digital war by expropriating digital terminology. There is so much the TV medium could do while staying in its own lane, such as: reducing and reformatting ad loads, customizing co-branded content, connecting with viewers in a visceral way through good old-fashioned storytelling and, above all, focus on reach. Reach is TV's unique selling point.

**Melissa Kotsopoulos, VP director, trading and analytics, PHD Media**

**THE RESPONSE:** We don't think about it as TV versus digital, but TV *and* digital. How do you understand a common audience segment and their collective behaviour across [all] platforms? With those insights, you can tell a big and beautiful brand story with a 30-second TV spot, and follow that up the very next day with offer-based creatives targeting the same people on digital platforms.

**Rogers' Jon De La Mothe**

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

**THE COMPLAINTS:** The merging of set-top box and mobile engagement data has certainly opened the door for us to optimize our media purchase decisions on multiple platforms. The opportunity lies not only with a standardized measurement and contract system that is device-agnostic, but also to make these data points a metric that can be traded on.

**Trevor Clark, director of trading, Mindshare Canada**

The sooner the broadcast industry's 'Working Group' can use set-top box data to enhance Numeris PPM data, the better. We're a small country. We've always needed to cooperate. We invented co-ops like Numeris. Broadcasters need to work together and utilize their STB data in a more robust and unified way.

**PHD's Kotsopoulos**

**THE RESPONSE:** There is a definite need for the whole broadcast industry to work together to provide a unified, standardized approach around STB data. Numeris is right now playing a role in trying to define what that means, but the reality is we are living in an ecosystem that is dominated by vertically integrated companies. Between media and telco, there are sometimes competing interests around what's needed. But I agree that as an industry, we have to get together to enhance that. But if we want to talk about STB data and the approach and work that's required around it, then we can't be saying the language around TV buying has become too convoluted. STB data is going to be one more means of refining target and data around TV consumption.

**Jean Mongeau, GM and CRO, CBC**

## INNOVATING WITH OTT

**THE COMPLAINT:** U.S.-based OTT vendors are on the rise within our borders and they seem to be surpassing the VOD services offered by Canadian BDUs – with dynamic ad insertion only available within Ontario. There is a real opportunity for Canadian BDUs to innovate in the VOD space so that brands can increase their investment with local programming.

**Ricky Lui, director of trading, Mindshare Canada**

**THE RESPONSE:** We can target ads to our current VOD service now, however there is no question that it's not with the same capability that we can offer on IP-based services. At Rogers, we recommend advertisers use advanced data to understand the likelihood that a consumer will receive their messages on current linear platforms, and look to IP-enabled services to immediately take advantage of dynamic, localized, and data-driven targeting.

**Rogers' De la Mothe**





# NATIONAL FALL TV SCHEDULE 2018/19 \*

Mon.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	11:00
CBC	Murdoch Mysteries		Frankie Drake Mysteries		The National	
City	Dancing with the Stars				Manifest	
CTV	The Resident*		Magnum P.I.		The Good Doctor	
CTV Two	The Voice				The Goldbergs	Seinfeld
Global	The Neighborhood	Happy Together	9-1-1		Bull	
Tues.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	Still Standing	This Hour Has 22 Minutes	Baroness Von Sketch Show		The National	
City	The Gifted*		Lethal Weapon		Mom	Mom
CTV	The Voice		This is Us		The Rookie	
CTV Two	The Big Bang Theory	The Kids Are Alright	The Big Bang Theory	Splitting Up Together	The Goldbergs	Seinfeld
Global	NCIS		FBI		New Amsterdam	
Wed.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	The Great Canadian Baking Show	Canada's Smartest Person Junior	Vanity Fair	Mr. D (late fall)	Vanity Fair	Unspeakable
City	Black-ish	Cool Kids	Modern Family		Single Parents	A Million Little Things
CTV	The Goldbergs	American Housewife	Grey's Anatomy		Criminal Minds	
CTV Two	Carter		The Detail		The Goldbergs	Seinfeld
Global	Survivor		SEAL Team		Chicago P.D.	
Thurs.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	Dragons' Den		The Detectives / From the Vaults (late fall)		The National	

City	Bad Blood		Mom	Murphy Brown	Mom	Mom
CTV	The Big Bang Theory	Young Sheldon	Station 19		Law and Order: SVU	
CTV Two	Pre-Game Show	Thursday Night Football				
Global	Superstore	The Good Place	Will & Grace	I Feel Bad	S.W.A.T.	
<b>Fri.</b>	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	Marketplace	In The Making	CBC Docs POV		The National	
City	The Bletchley Circle: San Francisco		Hell's Kitchen		Mom	Mom
CTV	Blindspot		How to Get Away with Murder		Blue Bloods	
CTV Two	CTV Movie				The Goldbergs	Seinfeld
Global	MacGyver		Hawaii Five-0		Midnight Texas	
<b>Sat.</b>	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	Hockey Night in Canada					
City	Hockey Night in Canada					
CTV	CTV Movie				The Big Bang Theory	The Big Bang Theory
CTV Two	Drama encores		Drama encores		W5	
Global			Not yet announced			
<b>Sun.</b>	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	The Nature of Things		The Fifth Estate		The National	
City	The Simpsons*	Bob's Burgers	Family Guy	Rel	Mom	Mom
CTV	God Friended Me		Shark Tank		The Alec Baldwin Show	
CTV Two	Football Night in America	Sunday Night Football				
Global	Dancing with the Stars: Juniors		NCIS: Los Angeles		Madam Secretary	

Note: The grid covers the national networks' schedules based on Toronto timetables (ET). Regional times for networks such as City will vary. All information is tentative and subject to change. Bold indicates all-new. Bold with \* indicates new-to-network.



# THE INTIMATE FUTURE OF DIGITAL MEDIA

Oath's David Shing looks at what brands can learn from punk, how small moments ladder up to meaningful connection and why consumers want to get up-close-and-personal.





David Shing's title might be "digital prophet" and he spends his days exploring and theorizing on the future of connected lives to help Oath clients navigate their online presence, but his own digital life sometimes causes him anxiety.

It started four years ago, he says.

Nearly two decades ago, when he ventured first online, there was an implicit trust in what he was reading, who he was connecting with. "It was an individual web," he says. "It was an open web." The sources where he got his news from were accurate, the people he spoke with online were real people he chose to connect with. But amid today's bot-filled, fake news-heavy world, that trust has eroded. "And I don't think I'm alone."

Indeed, a 2016 survey by Marketing Sherpa found that while trust remained high in traditional media formats like print, TV and radio (82%, 80% and 71% respectively), digital ads fared much worse. Only 39% of consumers trusted banner ads, sponsored posts fared a bit better at 43%, while search engine results fared best with 61% saying they trusted the information.

It's not strictly advertising either: A Knight-Gallup survey found that seven in 10 Americans worry about the spread of misinformation while an IPG media study found that 75% of consumers are concerned about the protection of their private information.

But it's more than just the nebulous concept of trust that's changing, Shing says: the way consumers communicate is also shifting.

When social media took hold, people were generally pretty public with their information online. And, as new platforms emerged, a sort of hegemony took hold.

"Digital and social media means everyone believes they are now creatives," he says. "Technology has facilitated that. Phones make it incredibly easy to take beautiful photos, and if they aren't perfect, you can add filters.

"It's great, but it means a lot of things look the same, and it's become boring." He adds. "What's more, I know with so much of our lives spent online, it can often feel like you're seeing your life through a different type of lens. I know for myself, I often felt like I spent less time living my life, and more time observing someone else's online."

The result of these two forces means consumers are increasingly turning inward, he says, likening today's digital shift to that of punk in the '80s. "While rock and roll was mainstream, there were all these pockets of people in garages developing an entire new

genre of interesting music," he says. "That's happening online today. We're seeing cool things happen in these closed off quarters away from the mainstream."

For example, in recent years, the rise of "Finsta accounts," or fake Instagram accounts, has taken hold, with teens increasingly putting out fake, idyllic, and heavily edited versions of their lives on these fake account, keeping their actual day-to-day interactions with friends and their un-edited lives on display in private "rinsta" (real Instagram) accounts, only meant for the eyes of their real-life friends.



**Brands really need to take a minute and think through what and how they're communicating, but more importantly, why. They need to get better at asking themselves 'why should someone care if a brand is participating in this conversation?'**



But what does this mean for brands?

"Up until now, the easiest way to participate in the popularity of the web was to jump on the memes, hijack the conversations," Shing says. Those well-timed dunk-in-the-dark-style Tweets or on-point burn, were culturally relevant and still quite mass-reaching. "Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't."

But as consumers shift towards more private modes of conversations, brands need to rethink their approach to digital conversations, he says. "We've really moved from an awareness-based advertising system to one of advocacy and peer-to-peer. Brands really need to take a minute and think through what and how they're communicating, but more importantly, why. They need to get better at asking themselves 'why should someone care if a brand is participating in this conversation.'"

Consumers are looking for more intimate connections generally, he adds – not just with their own social circle, but with the companies they choose to connect with.

That desire for intimacy can be mistaken for a need for personalization – and that's definitely a useful tool in marketers' tool belts. Shing points to the ever-growing list of names on Coca-Cola cans (and its continued popularity as a packaging program), as a prime example of consumers buying into that personal touch.

"But the problem is how do you make marketing feel one-on-one en masse," he asks. "There's a cost to it that most brands aren't willing to pay."

Instead, he says companies need to start better identifying their own brand DNA and finding ways of authentically participating in cultural conversations where it makes the most sense. It can be simple like Ikea's acceptance and advocacy for the popular online Ikeahack movement (in which consumers adapt and personalized the mass-produced line to their own liking). Or it can be something as un-fussy like McDonald's recent "Wayfinding" OOH campaign – which uses chunks of the iconic M to help direct passersby to the nearest QSR. The iconic brand understands its DNA so fundamentally, Shing says, that it only needs to use a small portion of it to communicate – and while this is an offline only campaign, there's no reason it couldn't work online.

But it can also extend out to broader mass-reaching marketing efforts, he adds, pointing to the recent digital by Heineken, which tried to tackle the concept of bias. The campaign put people with opposing viewpoints in a room together and provided team-building exercises to help them bond. Then, the brand offered a beer at a pub stool and played the participants differing views. One particularly poignant clip featured a man speaking against trans men and women, only to learn his companion is a trans woman. He stayed for the beer regardless. It was a touching commercial that encouraged people to come together to discuss their differences.

"What was great was Heineken had a view point," Shing says. "Brands that don't have an opinion of point of view are not going to be culturally relevant in a world where people want that deeper, more intimate connection.

"I think, as an industry, we need to pause for a moment, take a deep breath, and ask 'How are we going to participate in these new relationships,'" he asks. "I feel very optimistic about where we are – we're just in a very interesting crossroads."



1. **LISA KIMMEL**, president and CEO, Edelman Canada
2. **TYLER TURNBULL**, CEO, FCB Canada
3. **SUBTEJ NIJJAR**, president, strategic leader and partner, Union
4. **STEPHANIE MCRAE**, global human resources director, Taxi
5. **JACQUI FACLIER**, SVP, client service director, DDB
6. **JASON CHANEY**, CCO, Koho Financial
7. **TIFFANY CARVER**, integrated shopper marketing solutions, director, General Mills Canada

BY MEGAN HAYNES

# The diversity dilemma in a #MeToo era

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Five years ago, *strategy* explored the issue of diversity in the ad world through a series of articles. The results weren't great. At the time, little measurement and tracking of women or people of colour in agency positions existed. The upper echelons of companies were looking eerily similar to the '60s *Mad Men* era. However, some progress has been made – indeed, a count of our 2018 Creative Report Card revealed a 6% bump in female creatives on the lists, while major agencies and holding companies like DDB, Cossette and MDC have appointed female CEOs to lead.

But more needs to be done. A study by the 4As in early 2017 found that a third of women were discriminated against because of their gender, with one in four feeling they'd lost opportunities to their male counterparts. It's more than just women: according to a 2017 study by Adobe of U.S. creative professionals, people of colour were twice as likely as their white colleagues to feel like they weren't being provided with advancement opportunities, and only 55% of those who identified as people of colour felt their work was valued.

There's no quick fix to get people of colour and women into top spots at agencies. Implicit and explicit sexism and racism is still present – the top tier of the agency world is still decidedly male and white. But times are changing and the #MeToo movement has helped to shine a spotlight on the issue. *Strategy* gathered participants from across the agency and marketing world to discuss diversity at the top.

## Have your companies implemented programs and policies to address the gender/racial imbalance?

**Edelman's Lisa Kimmel:** In 2011, we looked at our global data and saw that 68% of our workforce was women, but only 34% were at the most senior levels. Richard Edelman [the global head of Edelman] made a commitment that, within five years, we'd be at 50/50 gender parity at the most senior levels of the firm. We didn't get to that point in 2016, but we're at 47% [now]. Our goal is to get there by 2020.

I oversee our global women's executive network. One of the things we've done on a global basis is direct our recruitment teams to ensure there's an equal pipeline of men and women for all positions including creative, recognizing there are an equal number of qualified female candidates for these roles – it might just mean you need to look harder.

We also just conducted a gender pay analysis on a global basis. We found a [few] regions with a couple discrepancies, and we made adjustments. [W]e're very proud to say women are making \$.99 on every dollar [a





man makes] on a global basis, including Canada.

At a leadership level, we're [also] doing diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias training, so we're looking at existing talent in a different light.

**FCB's Tyler Turnbull:** We measure everything [and] we also have to report it to FCB and [parent company] IPG. It's now part of our [leaders'] annual review, compensation structures and rewards to make sure we are moving the dial.

Here in Canada, 68% of our management team is women, 62% within the agency are women, and 22% are visible minorities.

We started by asking those top-line questions about where we are as a company, and those have led to more questions – like around pay equity, which led to a full salary review for every position at every level to identify discrepancies. That led to policy changes in the hiring process around how we engage a candidate around a negotiation standpoint. Instead of asking the candidate how much they'd like to make, we lead the conversation and say, 'This is the band this role pays.'

We think those simple changes can lead to a longer-term impact on pay equity.

#### And what about inclusion and bias training?

**Turnbull:** It's a mandate for all our staff (8,000 worldwide), a session that happens twice a year.

For us, it's manifested itself by recognizing that everyone has unconscious bias, no matter who you are. It might be very small, and it might not be limiting of a co-worker or peer, but it exists.

At agencies, we're guilty of being really busy. [When choosing a candidate, it's about] who you know and how you can find people really fast. The challenge is that we have biases towards people we already know.

In Chicago last year, and in Canada this year, we signed up to Free the Bid – which is a commitment that on any broadcast production we do, there must be a female director on a shortlist of three. The selection of the director isn't mandated. We just want to make sure we're looking.

When we implemented it in Chicago, 6% of our spots were directed by women the year prior. The next year, 40% were directed by women.

#### What if you don't address those issues?

**DDB's Jacqui Facier:** In advertising, we live in a fishbowl. If everyone is one type of person, you can't understand your audience. If you hire just like you, people at agencies turn into trading cards. They're all the same – you just switch us around.

**Koho's Jason Chaney:** I've implemented a simple program, or philosophy. I didn't want to go down the path of filling quotas or finding people to fit the roles. When

looking for hires, we ask 'Is this person fundamentally different than me and the people on the team?'

This philosophy brought in people we wouldn't normally have in advertising, and it led to a natural diversity. It was a very simple rule for people to follow.

**Union's Subtej Nijjar:** That's a far larger problem than just advertising. Harvard MBAs hire Harvard MBAs. But the people who go to Harvard probably fit a very specific profile. The same is true in our industry as well.

**Chaney:** It's a lot of favouritism, friends of the CEO, who tend to have very similar financial resources. There seems to be a socio-economic disconnect between the people sitting [in the C-suite and creative teams] than those they're trying to reach with their marketing.

That's a longer-term solve. But we have to find a way to affect kids at a very early age.

#### What role are clients playing in this conversation?

**Kimmel:** Clients are demanding it. The CMO at HP, a global client, said they expect all agency partners to have diverse teams. We need to, on an annual basis, provide [HP] with a composition of the teams.

**General Mill's Tiffany Carver:** When we talk about the diversity issue, it's not just about women, and people of colour, or gender and sexual orientation. It's about

thought, and how different a thinker you can be. We want the best thinking that is going to reach the broadest audience of our target market. If [agencies are] bringing in people from different parts of the country, from different ethnic backgrounds, etc., then that enriches what we're going to get from a creative perspective.

#### Has there been enough investment in diversity?

**Chaney:** I don't think anyone is thinking about this longer term. I think we need to do a better job at getting ourselves in with younger people, and in different communities. I think we're investing in solving what's in front of our face right now, plugging the holes.

Programs like Girls Who Code is increasing the number of women who know how to code, and I think 10 years from now, we'll see a wave of female programmers.

**Taxi's Stephanie McRae:** Part of adding diversity is outreach and going to different communities – even if it's just meeting with diverse university students and making that connection. You might not get anything then, but three years from now, it might pay off.

For me, growing up with immigrant parents, I don't think advertising is an appealing career.

**Nijjar:** I wasn't allowed to go into it. I was supposed to work for Microsoft.

On some teams, like the dev side, we way over-index [on people of colour], and you have to course correct. But we can't find an equal number of females. The pool isn't there. We've had max two developers who've been female... not from a lack of trying.

**Kimmel:** And specifically around women and working mothers, it's really challenging. We typically see a drop off when a woman has had her second child. We need to figure out how to make accommodations so that you can still maintain the best talent, but being more cognizant of their realities outside the agency.

#### Let's talk about sexism and racism, which have historically kept women and visible minorities out of top positions. What is being done to address those issues?

**Nijjar:** I think we all understand what the industry has tolerated in the past. A lot of people can agree that a lot of wrong things were allowed.

I think if you create conditions in which it's tolerated, you're a part of it. And I think the thing you have to

change is that it's not a soft 'Don't do that.' It needs to be a 'You're going to be fired.' And I think way too often in society – advertising included – the attitude has been, 'That's not right.'

#### The power imbalance still prevents a lot of people from coming forward. How do companies create a place where women or people of colour can safely say 'I'm feeling discriminated against?'

**Carver:** We have an anonymous ethics line [at General Mills]. With so many employees, you're going to have people who feel very confident about coming forward and people who aren't. But if the issue is that they want to just fix the problem, the anonymous line allows

“#METOO AND #TIMESUP HAS PUT THIS TOPIC ON STEROIDS. THE CONVERSATIONS ARE TURNING INTO ACTION. I HOPE THAT DOESN'T FADE.” **Jacqui Faclier, DDB**

someone to help take action against the problem. It's giving people a voice in an environment they might not feel like they have one.

**Nijjar:** As [the owner of] a smaller agency, some people, like junior employees, might feel uncomfortable talking to me. So I have to make sure that there is a network of people that employees will feel comfortable talking to so that the message will get to the right person.

**Chaney:** The onus is still on the leadership. One thing that's not trained well at leadership levels is empathy.

Yes, people need to feel comfortable talking to senior leaders about [discrimination or harassment], but there needs to be a clear and decisive reaction from the top.

**Faclier:** You have to remove fear. They need to know if

something happens, [as the person coming forward,] you're not going to lose your job.

[Victims of discrimination and harassment] don't know everything we know, like how it'll be handled or whether it stays confidential. Employees need to be educated about the process, and know that there's zero tolerance.

**Turnbull:** It's also having policies that don't just look directly in the agency, but also across client and vendor relationships. When we talked about some of the [discrimination and harassment] stories from people in our office, some happened inside the agency, some at other agencies they've worked at, and some were with clients or vendors.

The policy has to be broad enough that employees know we will go to bat for you as leaders inside the agency, even if it might have a financial implication.

**Nijjar:** We work in a great industry and you want to create conditions where people have fun working with their co-worker. But it's tough right now. You know what's right and wrong. It's the grey part that gets hard. What do you encourage/ don't encourage?


#### How do you navigate those shades of grey?

**Turnbull:** We try to talk about it – as trite as that sounds. From some of the inclusion workshops we do, that's where we have conversations around what is acceptable behaviour. That could be questions like, 'Is it okay to compliment someone on what they're wearing; is it ok to have a relationship with a direct report?'

#### Obviously, some answers are more clear-cut than others. Final question: what can everyone do day-to-day to help achieve parity?

**Chaney:** We're in the business of telling stories. We have a responsibility to look at ourselves as telling the right stories. In the end, we shape culture. We need to be careful about what we're saying and how we're saying it.

It's not just having representation of the stories you're trying to tell. It's being a good person, being interested in others, being empathetic and responsible in challenging your own personal assumptions and biases.

**Faclier:** We're also at this point, where people have the very best intentions. People are just extremely busy, but #MeToo and #TimesUp has put this topic on steroids. The conversations are turning into action. I hope that doesn't fade. 



# BRANDING AGROPUR

AS THE DAIRY CO-OP CELEBRATES 80 YEARS, IT'S FOCUSING ON MARKETING TO DRIVE ITS EXPANDING PORTFOLIO.

BY MEGAN HAYNES

**D**airy is a complicated industry, managed by third-party bodies (such as the Dairy Farmers of Canada and the Dairy West coalition), sold through multinational CPGs (like Kraft, Saputo and Danone), and often making headlines for its regulatory hurdles and complex supply chain management processes.

But on the eve of its 80th anniversary, Granby, Que.-based Agropur, one of Canada's largest and oldest dairy co-ops, is putting marketing at the forefront in the hopes of unlocking future stability and growth.

Amid turbulent trade talks – which could put a damper on milk producers' outputs – and cutthroat competition from brands feverishly launching new

yogurt and milk products, the co-op has turned its branding away from simply having logos on packaging and a corporate website housing its 21 brands. Working with Lg2, which handles the company's brand work (save for Iögo, led by Montreal's Alfred), Agropur has been putting its Canadian roots front-and-centre.

In a 2017 push, the brand rolled out a 60-second spot highlighting Canadian farmers, all fist-bumping (to the sound of cash registers) and showing local support for Agropur products. A more recent 2018 animated campaign shows how buying from the co-op helps build the local economy. The media buy was handled by Touché, which manages all Agropur brands (except for Iögo and Olympic, both handled by Bloom).





**Above, clockwise:** An animated Agropur spot explains its co-op roots; A woman rocking a bouffant sits with Crino and Mil-ko products; Natrel's Milk Bar promoted the brand in Toronto; Retro Crino products; A milk mockumentary raised a glass to lactose-free products; Natrel pop-up shops popped up in parks; Natrel was rebranded.

The decision to highlight the farmers stems from insights that Canadians want to support a different kind of business model for their food purchases (co-ops, for example, redistribute profits to members), says Jean-François Couture, VP marketing, who joined the dairy co-op in 2016.

"It's in line with the new sharing economy," Couture points out. "We know that model is valued by consumers, but they aren't aware that Agropur is a co-op."

While the campaign's sales figures haven't been announced Agropur's brand awareness has increased 250% and participating lines (Natrel, Oka and Iôgo) all received a sales bump following the initial run, Couture says.

It's this kind of marketing success that the dairy co-op hopes to replicate as it builds

out Agropur's masterbrand and big drivers Natrel, Iôgo and Oka, he adds. The company has risen and fallen, and risen again, through years of experimenting with product innovation and unconventional-for-the-category marketing.

Formed in 1938, the Agropur Co-op, like many of its time, was the result of economic difficulties. Amid financial fallout from the Great Depression, 87 Granby area farmers banded together to stave off the devastating effects of the economic downturn. The primary purpose of the co-op was to provide feed, seed and fertilizer at a reasonable price, as well as to organize sale of livestock.

Then, in the 1940s – with the economy on-the-up – Agropur began focusing on processing milk produced by its members.

Unlike other co-ops of the time, Agropur had an eye towards expansion, declaring the organization would "know no borders." It went beyond Granby farmers to the rest of Quebec to attract new members, growing to more than 1,000 by 1950. Being the province's only dairy co-op of that scale, the company was able to secure a contract with Kraft, supplying cheese and other dairy products to the food giant.

With the purchase of a fluid milk company and a

licensing agreement with France-based yogurt brand Yoplait in 1971, Agropur got onto grocery shelves in a significant way.

In 1978, it dipped its toes into fine cheeses (which it would later fully commit to with the purchase of Oka in 1981). The goal, then-president Reynald Charest told the *Montreal Gazette*, was to diversify its product offering to encourage growth.

These new products were a gamble for the company: milk was (and remains) a high-volume, but low-profit product, while yogurt (though growing in popularity) wasn't a staple of Canadians' diets at the time. Despite trepidations around breaking into new categories, business began to boom – thanks in no small part to changing consumer tastes. By 1985 the company's dairy milk alone was pulling in \$300 million in sales almost exclusively from Quebec.

Product diversification would shape Agropur's biggest marketing strategy for the next few decades. In the early '80s, it released a number of new innovations – such as longer-lasting creams, drinkable yogurts, and even milk-based savoury sauces – all with the goal of creating new consumer demand.

But while the company had seen rapid growth into the mid-'80s, dairy consumption remained stagnant-to-declining among Canadians, who, on average, spent 15% of their annual grocery budgets on milk products – a number that remained relatively unchanged for years. It didn't seem to matter how many new products Agropur (or its competitors) launched, consumption of dairy overall stayed the same.

Agropur began branching into soft drink territory in search of growth. First, in 1982, it acquired Quebec-based soft drink bottling plant Kik Cola, followed shortly after with the purchase of Orange Maison, makers of an orange cola. In '85, it licensed Swiss brand Rivella, a milk-based soft drink, which flummoxed pundits and co-op members alike.

Then-marketing director Ken McCaughey told the *Gazette* that the drink was aimed at 18-to-35-year olds, as it was the first soft drink to be made from milk, natural fruit and plant extracts. The decision, McCaughey said, was made after studies found that traditional soft drinks were in decline, and Agropur believed Rivella could create a new market.

The company spent upwards of \$1.2 million (\$2.9 million today) in advertising for the Rivella launch – projecting more than \$1.5 million in sales in the first year alone.

At this time, Agropur also dove into the meat business, purchasing Quebec-based La Tour Eiffel, ostensibly to support cheese on charcuterie boards (Eiffel also made vacuum-packed TV dinners).

Neither division fared as expected. Rivella's launch



**Top:** Natrel had milk enthusiast, Santa Claus, conduct a taste test. **Right:** Comedian Colin Mochrie celebrated Oka cheese's Canadian roots and history.

was a flop, and Agropur got out of soft drinks by 1987 when it sold Kik, Rivella and Maison Orange to Cott. Its meat venture fared slightly better, lasting five more years before La Tour Eiffel sold to McCain Foods in 1992.

While the company was still the largest dairy manufacturer in the province, its growth had slowed, with sales dipping from more than \$700 million (\$1.7 billion today) in 1982 to \$500 million five years later (\$1.2 billion today).

It wasn't all bad news during the '85 to '95 era: well-established lines like Oka and Yoplait thrived, helping to grow the company's bottom line. One odd marketing push for Yoplait featured a woman swimming in a milky fishbowl surrounded by goldfish. To promote the campaign, agency Publicite Vickers and Benson sent live goldfish to media.

The company also turned its attention towards expansion outside the province when it purchased cheesemaker Anco in 1990, and later Natrel in 1995. It was during the late 1990s and early 2000s that the company began seeing major growth on the backs of some of its biggest brands, such as Oka, Natrel and Yoplait.

But marketing efforts became fragmented across product lines, says Dominique Benoit, SVP institutional affairs and communications, who has been with the



**"It's in line with the new sharing economy... We know that the [co-op] model is valued by consumers, but they aren't aware that Agropur is a co-op."**

differentiate Iögo from globally owned competitors that had already captured the majority of the yogurt market.

Launch creative, with bouncing and cheerful umlauts, was playful and targeted a large swath of Canadians. In its first 10 weeks alone, the brand captured 12.3% market share. By 2017, it was closer to 15%. Brand growth was quick, with Iögo launching new products, such as probiotic, drinkable and Greek versions, shortly after its 2012 debut.

To maintain a consistent look, in 2017 Agropur hired Toronto design agency Davis to create a unified look for the entire brand. Every product now features a vibrant vortex of fruit around the signature "o" with umlauts,

co-op since 1997. Growth wasn't marketing-led, but rather via expansion of its footprint and new product lines.

It wasn't until 2006, when Agropur became a billion-dollar company, that its focus shifted towards five pillars: innovation, cost leadership, human capital, national/international dev (through acquisitions) and, for the first time, branding, says Benoit.

In 2008, the co-op decided to raise the profile of its own company name. For the first time, the Agropur brand was put on the back of packaging labels. It also began investing more dollars behind cohesive marketing that spanned entire portfolios, but it wasn't until it hit a major licensing set-back that the company realized the power of its branding.

In 2010, Yoplait pulled its licensing agreement with Agropur subsidiary Ultima (Yoplait accounted for 95% of Ultima's revenue).

"Members had two choices: Sell the plant to General Mills and leave the yogurt category. Or launch our own line," says Benoit. The company opted for door number two, tapping DentsuBos to develop and launch a new brand of yogurt.

Over the course of 18 months, Agropur (via Ultima) poured nearly \$60 million into developing 45 products across seven lines under the new Iögo brand. The company tapped into its Canadian roots to



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Celebrating 80 years of innovation in dairy.  
Congrats, Agropur.

**lg2**



while the back packaging shows the umlauts forming into smiles with the fruit. To promote the redesign, the brand rolled out a fashion show that featured its new look (a grocery store acted as the runway, with the clothes inspired by the package design), as well as a new masterbrand platform called “Daily Dose,” in which the dots are personified into everyday situations, like waiting for the bus.

“It’s less about us and more about the busy Canadian lives we’re trying to fit into,” Simon Small, VP of marketing at Ultima Foods told *strategy*. “The dots are the spokesperson for the people buying and loving the brand today. We’re not talking about health or probiotic science or something that might be alienating. It’s grounded in busy lives, which is something Canadians can relate to.”

The goal, Small said, was to create a unified brand that stands out on shelf – particularly since yogurt is such a competitive category. “Shopper confusion is massive right now,” he said. “The consumer also doesn’t always understand we have multiple segments. They might buy us in one segment but their awareness of the other segments isn’t as high. If they see the Iögo brand they already know, it might draw them in.”

It’s a similar effort the brand undertook for its Natrel line, which was redesigned in 2013.

Led by Lg2, the milk brand redesigned its entire packaging to be more contemporary and have greater on-shelf awareness. It also played in quirky spaces, with new pop-ups like the Milk Bar – a branded café to help people associate Natrel with their morning cup of Joe – and rolled out a campaign with French and English YouTube spots that brought in improv actors to guess which glass of milk was lactose-free and which wasn’t.

Natrel has continued that fun approach to creative with AR-enabled milk cartons that sing classic holiday carols and a documentary about a lactose-intolerant grandson of a milk man.

More recently, Natrel has re-launched itself again, this time with updated packaging and a unified marketing approach across all its product lines, Mylène Couture, marketing director at Agropur told *strategy*.

As Natrel expands into other dairy categories, like

butter and ice cream – and soon cheese – its new “Taste the Possibilities” approach is meant to help familiarize consumers with the entire brand line, as well as position Natrel as a “culinary partner,” she said. Creative for the new platform, by Lg2, showcases how Natrel was able to add a “touch more” to consumers’ recipes using delectable #foodporn photography.

Following its relaunch in 2013, Natrel was voted one of the most trusted brands in Canada, while its lactose-free offering captured a whopping 60% of the lactose-free market immediately following its launch. Today, the milk brand has a 13.9% of the total liquid dairy market, according to Agropur’s annual report.

Over on the cheese side, the brand’s Oka line also released its first national masterbrand campaign, focused on its broad portfolio of products. The brand’s light-hearted campaign from Lg2 shows how Oka has a cheese that’s “Fine for any occasion” (such as smoked cheese after a tough day at the office).

Dairy remains a fragmented category, and different product lines (like yogurt) move much quicker than others (like cheese). So, while still maintaining consistent branding, Agropur is taking different creative approaches for each of its products: Natrel, for example, is attempting to be Canada’s most exciting dairy brand; while Oka is all about celebrating tradition, authenticity and craftsmanship; and Iögo is building lines for families, millennials and kids.

Overall, the company is trying to change marketing directions, adds Benoit. Teams, while still dedicated to individual brands, are now centralized into a single department and supported by “centres of excellence” – dedicated to things like shopper marketing, digital and consumer engagement or consumer insights and innovations.

“We’re making a major shift [from] being supply-fed to being demand-led,” Benoit says. “Before, our business model was very much about transforming the milk of our members, whereas now we’re trying to define ourselves as a food and beverage organization that’s in the marketplace to meet the consumer needs.”

*With files from Josh Kolm and Justin Dallaire*



**“Shopper confusion is massive right now. If they see the Iögo brand they already know, it might draw them in.”**

**Right:** Lattes made with Natrel milk drew the connection between the brand and coffee.



# thank you for your support.

To all our sponsors, partners, and industry artists who supported the cause on May 30<sup>th</sup>, your talents and creativity is much appreciated.

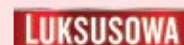
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Quote worthy.

## SMF & SIA | 2018

The Shopper Marketing Forum was a two-day event held on April 30 and May 1 at Toronto's stunning Arcadian Court. *Strategy*'s sixth-annual Shopper Innovation Awards capped off the first day of the Forum. Ogilvy Canada and Huggies took home the first Grand Prix, while Cossette and SickKids snagged the Public Service Grand Prix.



1. The SIA host, Sandy Marshall, partner at Norman Howard, is flanked by the awards co-chairs Nancy Modrcin from Metro and Nancy Marcus from Kruger Products. | 2. Martin Williams, VP of strategy for Idea Couture, spoke about how to connect with Gen Z. | 3. SMF Advisory Board member and Weston Foods VP, GM Andrea Hunt addresses the crowd. | 4. Bond Brand Loyalty's Sean Claessen presents his research in a bold blazer. | 5. Leger Marketing's Christian Bourque unveils the hidden secrets behind Quebec consumers. | 6. *Media in Canada* reporter Bree Rody-Mantha (far right) chats with Facebook's Sam Galanis and Twitter's Andrea MacDonald. | 7. Stefano Faita, a chef and entrepreneur, spoke about the power of design. | 8. Julie Markle and Robyn Hutman from Ogilvy take home the SIA Grand Prix for Huggies' "No Baby Unhugged." | 9. Roehl Sanchez, EVP, CCO and owner of BIMM bags a few SIA awards, too. | 10. Olivia Lorrimer reveals findings from Bond's 2018 Loyalty Report.





## MARKETING AWARDS | 2018

The Marketing Awards were held on May 31 at The Carlu in Toronto. Cossette was the big winner of the night, taking home Best of Show and Public Service Best of Show.



1. The Marketing Awards video, created by campaign partner Union, entertains the crowd. | 2. Peter Ignazi, Cossette's global COO, and Nancy Crimi-Lamanna, CCO at FCB Toronto, chat as Heather Clark, VP of direct and digital marketing for SickKids, looks on. | 3. Mike Dubrick and Aaron Starkman, both creative directors at Rethink. | 4. The awards co-chairs, Mia Pearson, CEO of MSL Canada, and Lance Martin, ECD and partner at Union, present some awards. | 5. Andrew Simon, CCO of Edelman, accepts several Gold "M"s for HP's "In the Head of a Hacker." | 6. McCann's Meghna Srinivas spoke for the Multicultural jury. | 7. Lg2's Claude Auchu hands out Gold awards for the Design category he co-chaired. | 8. The team from McDonald's and Cossette win Best of Show. | 9. Bensimon Byrne's David Mueller and Gints Bruveris take home two Golds for Casey House. | 10. SickKids' Kate Torrance and Heather Clark accept the Public Service Best of Show.

PHOTOS BY MATT FORSYTHE

# Say my name

The cannabis advertising gods have spoken: There's not much to work with at shelf. To stand out from the pack, cannabis brands only get a name and a logo. Luckily, that can go far. Won't be long now until these brand positions are claimed.





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